

Papers of the Forty-second Annual

DAKOTA CONFERENCE

A National Conference on the Northern Plains

Western Highways: Journeys through Space & Time

Augustana College
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

April 23-24, 2010

Compiled by
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Major funding for the Forty-second Annual Dakota Conference was provided by Loren and Mavis Amundson CWS Endowment/SFACF, Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission, Carol Rae Hansen, Andrew Gilmour, and Grace Hansen-Gilmour, Carol Martin Mashek, Elaine Nelson McIntosh, Mellon Fund Committee of Augustana College, Rex Myers and Susan Richards, Blair and Linda Tremere, Richard and Michelle Van Demark, Jamie and Penny Volin, and the Center for Western Studies.

The Center for Western Studies
Augustana College
2010

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PREFACE

Dedicated to examining contemporary issues in their historical and cultural contexts, the Dakota Conference on Northern Plains History, Literature, Art, and Archaeology is a signature event of the Center for Western Studies, which provides programming in Northern Plains studies at Augustana College.

Titled “Western Highways: Journeys through Space and Time,” the Forty-Second Annual Dakota Conference returned to the multi-year theme of transportation to examine paths, trails, roads, and highways that crisscross the Northern Plains and trace their impact on the lives of indigenous and immigrant peoples of this expansive land. Previous conferences on transportation considered railroads (2007) and rivers (2008). For 2010, presenters discussed various forms of ground transportation, from moccasins to motorcycles, and also spiritual and metaphorical road journeys.

Nine of the seventeen sessions were devoted in their entirety to the conference theme, with additional papers on roads and highways included in other sessions. More than 220 attendees traveled from as many as twelve states and were treated to presentations by students and scholars, readings by writers, a panel discussion on a new history of Dakota Territory, and music by guitarist and songwriter Jami Lynn.

The conference’s unique blend of academic and non-academic presenters has won the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which awarded a Challenge Grant to the Center for Western Studies, citing the conference specifically as deserving of support. If you, also, value learning about the past through the lively debate of a conference, there is still time to help CWS meet its NEH endowment match.

Thanks to each presenter and session chair, whose dedication to research and writing made this conference possible. Thanks, also, to the major underwriters of this year’s conference: Loren and Mavis Amundson CWS Endowment/SFACF, Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission, Elaine Nelson McIntosh, Richard and Michelle Van Demark, and the Mellon Fund Committee of Augustana College.

Please note that not all papers presented at the conference were submitted for inclusion here.

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

JOHN & DENA ELM FAMILIES

Loren H. Amundson

Stonecutter John Elm

John Elmer Elm aka Johan Hjalmer Alm, was born about 1863 in Sweden, and came to America but his emigration path is not known. Alm was a military term in Swedish and the Elm family wonders if his skills were honed from military experiences. It seemed likely to the family that he emigrated sometime after 1880 as he is not shown in the 1880 U.S. Census however he has not been located on shipslists to date.

It is not known when or from where John came to Dakota Territory but he was found working as a stonecutter in the quarries at East Sioux Falls and lived there before he married Dina Mathison in Sioux Falls on November 20, 1887 at the residence of Probate Judge, R. E. Hawkins. John E. Lind was the only signed witness to their marriage; he was born in Sweden November 26, 1849, was a retired laborer when he died October 2, 1924 of a stroke and was buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Sioux Falls October 5th. John E. Lind's wife's name was Hilda, born in Sweden April 28, 1866. She later married Ernest V. Bliss who was the informant on her death certificate when she died November 13, 1955 in Sioux Falls. Hilda Lind Bliss is buried next to first husband, John Lind, at Mt. Pleasant near the Bliss lot where Ernest was buried after his death in 1987.

Who was Dina aka Dena Mathison? She signed the marriage license in 1887 as *Dina Mathison*, born in Norway and married at age 25. It was not known when she came to America but was not found in 1880 U. S. Census records. Where her roots were had not been determined but she was likely related to Hamre and Aker families who homesteaded Minnehaha County and had originated near Sorfjord in Hardanger, Norway. Elm and Hamre-Aker genealogists have attempted to identify Dena's family of reference in Minnehaha County as four of the five children were given to Hamre and Aker ancestors settled in the county by the turn of the century.

John and Dena lived in a quarry company owned home at East Sioux Falls where all five children were born within a decade. Their first child, Oscar, was born in 1888 and fifth child, Mabel, in 1898 when wife Dena died within three months after childbirth, likely from "child-bed fever." Mabel survived.

A book, "Where the Sioux River Bends," by Wayne Fanebust [Pine Hill Press 1985], chronicled quarry days and its trials and tribulations with featured stories about individuals and families. [Ed. One story told the tragic circumstances of John Elm, a stonecutter at the quarry, who was believed to have committed suicide on September 19, 1899 from despondency over the death of his wife a year earlier. A housekeeper

found him in extremis when John was gasping his last. A physician, Dr. Files, performed an autopsy the next day and reported that he died of excessive alcohol in his system. [Elm, like so many of his fellow quarry workers, turned to liquor for pleasure, solace or both.] His funeral was at his home and he was buried next to his wife at "Hockenson" Cemetery where graves were free for the needing.]

Elm family records have shown that Rev. N. N. Boe officiated at both Dena and John's funerals, held in their East Sioux Falls home. Rev. Boe was pastor of St. Olaf Lutheran [now First Lutheran] in Sioux Falls and also for Split Rock Lutheran congregation which became part of the Brandon Lutheran Church parish of today. A search was done on 1898 and 1899 church records located at Brandon Lutheran Church and there were no Elm names nor was there mention of Rev. N. N. Boe. This was an original church book record. There are no recorded obituaries for John or Dena.

John and Dena are shown to be buried at Hokenson Cemetery in Sec. 22 Split Rock Township Minnehaha County on the SW quarter of the Robert Ode farm some two miles northeast of former East Sioux Falls. The cemetery is maintained by the abandoned cemetery committee of the Sioux Valley Genealogical Society. There are no named stones for the Elms but their graves are recognized in updated abandoned cemetery records and in Minnehaha County grave records.

Based upon funeral home Elm and Hamre family records, four of their five children were taken in by relative families in Minnehaha County upon her and husband John's deaths in 1898 and 1899. It was said by Elm and Hamre families that none of the siblings saw each other while they were being raised in Minnehaha County. Three of the boys were taken in by Hamre-Aker families: Oscar by Peder P. and Helena Tollefson Aker who lived in Taopi Twp. northwest of Colton; Victor by Elias and Sarah Peterson of Lyons Twp. ["E.P." and Synva Hildahl Eide]. Synva's grandparents were Tosten and Synneva Na Hamre who homesteaded southwest of Baltic and are claimed to have been buried at Pioneer Nidaros Cemetery. Matt was taken in by Aad and Aadina Aker Hamre who lived four miles east of Colton. Mabel resided in the home of Edward and Anna Hildahl Peterson in Minnehaha County in 1900 and 1910 census tracts, and again in 1930 when caring for them in Sioux Falls before they died in 1931 and 1932. Sibling Elmer was given a home by assumed non-relatives Petter and Alma Petterson. They were natives of Sweden and Petter also worked at the quarry in East Sioux Falls. Petter or Alma could have been Swedish relatives of John E. Elm.

Son Oscar was listed in the 1900 census as a "laborer" living with Peder and Helena Aker who lived northwest of Colton, S.D. It was said by the Elm family that he lived in an abusive home and was given to running away. They got fed up with fetching him back home so the last time he ran off they let him go. In

November 1900 he was said in Letters of Guardianship to be living with Jacob Hildahl in Lyons Township. In the 1910 Census he was found living as a boarder with Andrew and Julia Nelson, both born in Norway, and their children [5 children ages 20 to 6 years] in East Sioux Falls and was a laborer at the quarry; John Ordahl and Edward Reynolds were also boarders here at this time.

His obituary stated that he moved to Iowa in 1911 and married there in 1916. He was a farmer and in the 1930 Freemont Township, Hamilton County Census, they had two lodgers, Bert Coleson and Henry Van Sickle, living with them. They farmed south of Duncombe in Webster County for seven years and then moved to a farm northwest of Webster City. In 1953 they moved to Webster City to make their home. Here he was employed at Naden Industries. Oscar's funeral card in 1958 from Foster Funeral Home in Webster City, Iowa showed his mother Dena's surname as Aker. In 2006 Angie Buchhop Elm provided this scribe with a photo of the four brothers and two of Oscar and his wife Mamie. One was taken before they were married and one from later life.

Son Victor was said by the Elm family to live with Elias and Sarah Peterson at Lyons, S.D. after his parents died in 1898 and 1899. Elias and Sarah aka Elias Pederson "E. P." Pederson Eide and Synva Hildahl, had Victor living with them in Lyons Township, Minnehaha County, S.D. in the 1900 Census. In November 1900 Letters of Guardianship, Victor was said to be living with Iver Hildahl in Burk Township, Minnehaha County.

Eide descendant Eunice Eide Hovland said that her Eide family enjoyed and appreciated having Victor in the family. The story goes that Ole Johanson Questad, a nearby neighbor and Hamre relative of E. P. Eide's wife, Synva, had died in 1899 and his widow Martha needed help as their three young children were born during the 1890s. This was said to be a painful separation for the Eide family as they offered to have Victor moved to live with Martha [now in third re-location since his parents died in 1898 and 1899] to help her out on the farm.

Eunice provided this scribe with a copy of a photo taken at the Eide home that has Victor Elm standing next to her father, Ingvald Eide. Also in the photo are a hired girl, great-great-grandmother Hildahl, and Eunice's uncle, John Eide, who then operated the farm. Eunice also said that one time in later years Victor contacted her father, Ingvald Eide, who was just 2 years older than Victor and they had grown up together during those early years when Victor was with the Eide family. It is not known how long Victor worked at the Questad farm, as outlined above, but was at the farm yet in 1910 before his move to Iowa between 1910 and 1917.

Victor married Bertha Davidson and they farmed in the Badger, Iowa area until moving to Dayton in 1938. He was employed by Webster County in the maintenance department until he retired in 1965. He died in 1978.

Son Mathias "Matt" was given a home by Aad and Aadina Aker Hamre as a youngster after his parents, John and Dena Elm, died. Matt is shown living with the Aad and Aadina on both the 1900 and 1910 Censuses. Matt moved to Webster County, Iowa in 1916 and was married Agnes in 1917. They lived with wife Agnes Jacobson's family in 1925; their own son Stanley and adopted nephew, Harold, the son of Matt's sister Mabel also were in the household. Matt and Agnes farmed near Duncombe for many years and retired in December of 1958. Matt's sister Mabel had a baby, Harold, born in Ramsey County, Minnesota out of wedlock in 1922, and gave him to Matt to adopt and become a part of their family.

After retirement Matt made his home with his son, Stanley, and family near Fort Dodge, Iowa, where he died in 1959 after a long illness. He was survived by sons Stanley and Harold, six grandchildren, brothers Victor and Elmer Elm and a sister, Mabel Metcalf of Salem, Oregon.

Son Elmer was born October, 1895 and lived with Petter and Alma Petterson and 14 year old daughter Signun, all three born in Sweden, in East Sioux Falls where Petter was quarry worker, as was Elmer's father, John E. Elm. They took Elmer after his parents died in 1898 and 1899 in East Sioux Falls, S.D. Elmer was said to be living with 'P. E. Peterson' at Rowena, S.D. in November 1900 Letters of Guardianship. The family is not shown in East Sioux Falls or Split Rock Township records in the 1900-1905 Sioux Falls City Directory and may have left the area by then. There is no evidence that Petter and Alma were relatives of the Elm family and it is not known if Elmer spent his early childhood with the Pettersons.

Elmer was said to have lived in Webster City, Iowa as a youngster and then served in the U.S. Army during WWI. His family has a WWI draft card dated June 5, 1917 with his address at Duncombe, Iowa. After the war he married and the couple farmed in Duncombe, Vincent, Badger, and Thor areas in Iowa. They moved to Ft. Dodge in 1945, retired in 1960, moved to Renwick in 1974 where his wife died the same year. Elmer then made his home with daughter Eleanor and Lloyd Swanson in Renwick where he died in 1979. He was survived by his two children, 10 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Daughter Mabel was born in 1898 and was about three months old when her mother Dena died, likely from "birth-bed fever." The 1900 East Sioux Falls Census Records show that Mabel was provided a home by Edward and Anna Hildahl Peterson and went by the Peterson name until she turned 18 years of age. November 1900 Letters of Guardianship found Mabel living with them. Edward Peterson, blacksmith at the quarry, was born 1862 in Sweden and his wife, Anna Hildahl, was born 1852 in Norway. Their son, Arthur,

was born 1894 in East Sioux Falls. Mabel was related to Anna Hildahl Peterson as both were part of the Hamre, Eide, & Hildahl families. Mabel was still with the Petersons in 1910.

Petition for Letters of Guardianship: In Minnehaha County Court, State of South Dakota, November 17, 1900 "In The Matter Of The Estate Of Oscar Elm etal, minor children of John Elm, To the Hon. Wm A. Wilkes, Judge of the County Court, Minnehaha County, State of South Dakota, The Petition of Edward Peterson of said Minnehaha County respectfully represents: Oscar Elm a minor aged 12, Victor Elm a minor aged 10, Matthias Elm a minor aged 9, Hjalmar [Elmer] Elm a minor aged 5 and Mabel Elm a minor aged 2 years, that said minors are residents of this County: that they have no living mother or father, or other legal guardian residing in the State of South Dakota; that said Oscar is now living with Jacob Hildahl in Lyon Township, and said Victor is living with Iver Hildahl in Burke Township, that Matthias is living with A.T. Hamre in Burke Township, that said (ed.Hjalmar-Elmer) is living with P. E. Peterson at Rowena, S.D., and Mable (ed. Mabel) is living with your petitioner: That said petitioner has looked after and cared for said children and placed them in the several homes where they now are. That petitioner has property in his hands belonging to the said children derived from the sale of miscellaneous family affects amounting to about one hundred fifty dollars clear of expenses, which practitioner desires shall be saved for the use of said children, and that your petitioner for the purpose of properly saving said property and desires to be appointed Guardian of said minors, Dated November 17, A.D. 1900, Edward Peterson.

By this action above, Edward Peterson was named Guardian of the John and Dina Elm children in November 1900 and served until 1917 when Mabel, the youngest, turned 18 and received her portion of the remaining funds accrued from the sale of Elm family goods at public sale after the parent's deaths. The sum total of about \$150 earned about 4% interest while under Edward's careful eye over the years. Each child was given their portion at age 18, hence Oscar about 1906 and Mabel in 1917. The account was then closed by the court and Edward's care became a matter of legal record and thanks.

Family information reveals that Mabel's first marriage was to Eddison Owens on November 8, 1916 in Canton, Lincoln County, S.D. and their son, Arthur E., was born on June 22, 1917. Her second son, Harold Elm, was born in 1922 in Ramsey County, Minnesota after she "went away" to give birth [birth certificate #1922-54041] and was given to her brother Matt and his wife Agnes that year to adopt and live with them as their own. Harold's mother was listed as Mabel Owens. Mabel was shown on the 1930 Minnehaha County, S.D. Census to be living with her adoptive Peterson family, whose son Arthur had died in 1929; her marital status was listed as divorced. Edward died in 1931 and Anna in 1932, so it is likely that Mabel came back to live with and care for them until their deaths.

It is not known where Mabel lived after the Petersons died but she had moved to Oregon by 1948 and married a Metcalf. Mabel lived in Salem, Ore. about 15 years and died there on 11 Feb 1963, having had a

heart attack in December of 1962. She was shown as Mabel Julia Metcalf who was survived by a son, Arthur. She was also said to have a sister, Mrs. E.G. Biaggeli, of Culver City, California, whose relationship to her is not known but may have been a sister-in-law. Mabel's son Arthur E. Owens lived in Salem, Oregon. at the time of his mother's death in 1963 and died there in 2000. Mabel's son Harold Elm was given to her brother and wife, Matt and Agnes Elm, to adopt and be a part of their family. He died in 1979.

Elm Family Genealogist Angela Buchhop is married to Kip Andre Elm. Angie and Kip have a daughter, Jacquelyn Claire Elm, and live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Kip is a great-great-grandson of John and Dina Elm. In 2009 this scribe, a direct lineage descendant of Hamre-Aker families, and Kip's father, Jerry Luverne Elm, a direct lineage descendant of the John Elm family, had their DNA profiles created through DNA@Ancestry.com in hope of confirming common lineage through Hamre and Aker ancestors from Sorfjord in Hardanger, Norway.

Review of the two DNA reports show this *Ancestor Match* to be within "**5 Generations, Approximately 125 years ago.**" John & Dina were married 20 November 1887, 123 years ago in 2010. Intense re-review of Hamre-Aker lineages offered new insight. In this scribe's records, "Oddina(e) Mattisdr Kvestad, daughter of Mattis Torbjornson and Brita Torbjornsdr.Larsson, was born, in Norway in 1858 and came to America in 1882. No further records have been available. A sister, Kari [Carrie] Mattisdr Kvestad, left Norway for America in 1883, both dates confirmed by Norwegian shiplists. Older twin siblings of Kari and Dina came to America during those same years and were lost to follow-up. Another sister married and spent her life in Norway. Their parents died in Norway in 1899 and 1904.

Carrie, born 1852 and six years older than Dina, married Mikkel P. Georgeson Aker, 15 years her senior, on 29 Apr 1886 in Minnehaha County Dakota Territory. On the marriage license of John and Dina, Dina is shown to be 24 years of age. She married John Elm, five years her junior based upon Norwegian birth records showing her birth in 1858. Perhaps Dina gave her age as that shown on the shiplist [24]. Using this hypothesis and the DNA studies, family genealogists agree that she is Dina [Oddine Mattisdr Kvestad] Mathison.

HUNTIMER, MINNEHAHA COUNTY: THE SETTLERS, CHURCH AND HAMLET

Loren H. Amundson

Huntimer Settlers

Valentine Hundemer [son of George & Genevieve Munde Hundamer]: Valentine sailed from Le Harve, France, to New York [or New Orleans, then also a port of entry] from July 16 to September 4, 1846. After marrying Catherine Follert in December 1846 in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, on the trip north on the Mississippi River, they settled at Potosi, Wisconsin in 1847. Valentine was a stone mason until 1870 when failing health made him change his occupation to that of farming. He died in 1882 and was buried in Potosi/Tennyson, Wisconsin where the family had settled and where their 12 children were born. Catherine and Valentine also had two children who died young.

He was said to have been a man endowed with all the energy, industry, and honesty characteristic of his nationality. He loved home and family, was strict, yet ruled his household in love and kindness. His word was his bond, he had charity and the many tired and hungry that found food and rest under his roof could testify in his favor. One thing he never forgot, that it was his duty as a citizen to leave the country of his adoption a testimonial of his regard for it, which he did in a family of children that as they grow up they take their places among their fellow men as moral, upright, industrious men and women.

No greater tribute than this fact could be paid him, as his memory will be carried down in human tablets.

M. Catherine Fallert: Another surname spelling of Catherine was Follard. Catherine's ancestry originated in Baden, Germany. Her family likely immigrated to America on the same sailing ship as Valentine and she and Valentine likely knew each other in Germany [both were from Baden, Germany]. After Valentine died she continued to live in the Potosi, Wisconsin area for some time until moving to Plankinton, S.D, where she lived with family. She died there of "la grippe" nine years after Valentine, and is shown in the Bessie Dakota Huntimer history book to be buried back in Potosi/Tennyson, Grant County, Wisconsin.

C. B. Huntimer: Charley B. came to Minnehaha County, Dakota Territory in 1878. The 1903 Minnehaha County Plat Book showed that he homesteaded, farmed and then owned all but the SE Qtr of Sec. 2 and the west half of Sec. 3, and also owned the NE Qtr of Sec. 1, all in Taopi Twp. The original St.

Joseph's church was located a half mile east on Cotter land where the cemetery is located, and an early Huntimer area School was located about a half mile west on the south side of the road in Section 10.

C. B. was said to have owned 1000 acres in the county. He was known as a good farmer who made the most of his opportunities. His properties were considered to be among the best in the county, and he kept a large stock of cattle, horses and hogs. He was also admired as a good neighbor and respected citizen.

He was one of seven incorporators of the Taopi Creamery in 1897 [3 miles S. of Huntimer corner and became Colton in 1899] and in 1905 built an elevator to take advantage of the new South Dakota Central RR headed through this hamlet three miles north of Colton, by the end of the year, creating Chester on its way to Wentworth. It continued north in 1906, Rutland and Sinai becoming new communities as a result, and reached Watertown in 1907, laying rail through Arlington, Lake Norden, Hayti, Thomas, and Foley on its way.

By 1907 the competitive Milwaukee Railroad was built south from Madison through Huntimer on its way through Colton and to Sioux Falls. Both tracks would be used for shipping livestock and grain and each track had a small depot for passenger travel.

Charley's new development was named Charles City after him but was changed to Huntimer in 1909 as there was confusion with Charles City, Iowa. The elevator was followed the same year by a store run by N. M. Scheckle and later also dealt in machinery when operated by R. T. Dresh. Also in 1909 a new St. Joseph's church was built here to replace the original structure a half mile east where church and cemetery were in use by 1890.

A full eight-grade country school provided education for surrounding farm children who fed Chester, Colton and Dell Rapids schools in early years.

Huntimer families populated the area and those early settlers were laid to rest in the nearby Huntimer Cemetery.

Arthur Sweeney, father of Ellen Sweeney Huntimer and Susan Sweeney Cotter, came to America in 1839 and claimed land near Holy Cross in Dubuque County, Iowa, across the Mississippi River from Potosi in Grant County in SW Wisconsin. He began clearing and fencing this land for crops. His younger brother John and other friends joined him a year later.

It is not known if Arthur had married Alice before coming to America. Family records show that a few years after his first wife, Alice Swift, died he returned to Ireland and married Catherine Swift. It is assumed that the two ladies were related, possibly even sisters. He is the only one of the brothers not listed in the

burial records at Holy Cross Cemetery but family say that he is buried at Holy Cross and the burial was not recorded. His obituary was found in the Dubuque Herald July 28, 1881. His farm was said to have remained in the family until the 1980s.

William Hundemer: William went to Iowa to work at age 20 years and moved with his brother John to Sioux Falls, DT in 1871. He took up land in Sec 33, Sverdrup Twp north of Renner where grasshoppers harvested his crops. While threatening to leave the farm he was persuaded to stay and eventually farmed 400 acres in the township. In the 1899 county history he was said to be, "not only a good farmer but is a good neighbor and citizen." William [m. Catherine O'Brien] had a second wife, Margarat Malloy. They likely lived in Lake County his last years as he died there. Burial permit for St. Michael's Cemetery in Sioux Falls is on record at the county register of deeds.

John Huntemer, an older brother of C. B., married Mary Hare and they became the parents of Rena Huntemer, who married Dr. P. D. Bliss of Colton.

Rena Huntemer: She was related to the Huntimer families who resided in and near the hamlet of the same name three miles north of Colton. Family surnames include: Hundemer, Huntemer, and Huntimer, the latter most commonly used once they settled in Minnehaha County, Dakota Territory. The Hundemers came from Baden, Germany, across the Rhine River from Alsace, France, and settled at Potosi, Grant County, Wisconsin on the Mississippi River north of Dubuque, Iowa. The earliest known movement to Dakota Territory was Rena's father, John Huntemer, in 1871. Others followed. It was said that not all family members were of the Catholic Faith.

She married Dr. P. D. Bliss sometime after his arrival in Colton in 1900. There is no marriage record in Minnehaha County, S.D. Records were not required in South Dakota until 1905 and may have been the reason. They adopted two girls and she died in 1920; death certificate at register of deeds showed pneumonia as cause and place of death as Sioux Falls. She is buried in the Bliss Lot at Woodlawn Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

Most of the Huntemers are buried at St. Joseph the Workman Cemetery a half mile east of Huntimer corner three miles north of Colton. The church continues in 2010 as a beacon for Catholic families in the area.

Dr. P. D. Bliss [m. Rena Huntemer]: Colton's health care was provided over much of the 20th Century by a small number of qualified and caring physicians and their efficient office staffs. Dr. Bliss was the first.

Dr. Peter D. "P. D." Bliss served the community during the first 30 years of the new century. He was born in Wisconsin in 1870 to parents with roots in England and New York State. It was said that his father walked from NY, where he was born, to Wisconsin and first settled in Baraboo. P. D. was born northeast of there at Cambria. The Bliss family moved by covered wagon from Wisconsin to Renner, Minnehaha County Dakota Territory in 1880 and homesteaded there. P. D. had five siblings, Stanley being the youngest.

P. D. grew to adulthood, completed medical school and training at The Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, and started practice in Colton in 1900 where he was instantly successful, in part because he could speak Norwegian which he had learned as a lad growing up in the Renner area. P. D. had a home and barn built for him as he used a buggy and team of horses in his medical practice. He and wife Rena were charter members of the Baptist Church in Colton in 1907, a building that later became the Methodist Church. He was responsible for starting the baseball program in Colton and managed the team. He later purchased the first "Western Flyer" automobile built in Colton in the teens. He was also known to be a good friend of Eurby Lifto, this scribe's maternal grandfather.

P. D. and his first wife, Rena Huntemer, adopted two daughters, Katherine and Connie, and he and his second wife, Amalie [Mollie] Berg, had two sons born, Donald and George [Bud].

During his practice years there P. D. had partners for short periods of time; Dr. Batterton, Dr. Ogle [a Norwegian physician], and Dr. Edward Oscar Thorson who practiced in Colton 1907-1908 and then moved to Luverne, Minnesota where he completed his career. Dr. P. D. died in March of 1930 from complications of diabetes. It has been said that he participated in early trials of Drs. Banting & Best's newly developed diabetes drug, Insulin, during the 1920s. He and his family are buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

Dr. Vincent Sherwood then practiced in Colton 1930-1933 and delivered this scribe on December 15, 1931 in Sioux Falls. After a short career there he relocated and Dr. Herbert M. Dehli, a native of Harpers Ferry, Iowa and graduate of the University of Iowa, chose Colton for his livelihood in the early 1930s and there became our family's physician and delivered Loren's three younger siblings during the next decade. Dr. Dehli married a local girl, Alma Devick, and they had three children. He was well respected and likely the reason this scribe decided on a career in medicine.

In 1951 Dr. Dehli was joined in practice by his brother-in-law, Dr. J. Stanley Devick, who was born in Colton and graduated from CHS in 1937, served in WW II and finished medical training at Marquette University in Milwaukee. During their practice years together, Dr. Dehli died in 1958 in a tragic auto

accident while on a night-time rural house call southwest of Colton. In 1960 Dr. Devick and his family moved to Sioux Falls but continued his practice in Colton until he retired in 1989. He died in August of the same year from recurrent esophageal cancer.

The following years found the community served by physicians from the Dell Rapids Clinic and their affiliation with Avera Health System. P. D.'s son Donald and his Colton-born wife, Ruth Dybvig, lived in Sioux Falls most of their married life, where Don died in 2006.

St. Joseph the Workman Church

Ralph J. Schaefer

1907-1998

History of Minnehaha County

Historical-Biographical Sketches

1987

During the pioneer days of Dakota Territory when the settlers were homesteading here, they had to build their own churches, roads, stores, schools, town, and railroads.

In the year of 1878 C.B. Huntimer moved to a farm on the SW quarter of Section 2 in Taopi Township, Minnehaha County. Others followed him in the 1880s. They didn't have a church to worship in, so Mrs. Henry Bell wrote to the Bishop requesting that a priest be sent occasionally to say Mass. Her request was met and a priest came once a month to celebrate Mass in the family homes.

Early in 1888, Father Guay of Flandreau came to Dell Rapids to organize three settlements, including Huntimer, into a parish. The project failed on account of distance. The idea of a church could not be dimmed in the hearts of the Huntimer settlement and was sparked onward by the statement of Mrs. Dan Cotter who told her husband, "If we don't get a church here we are going back to Iowa."

In the fall of 1888, St. Joseph's Parish was organized under the direction of Father Flynn of Madison, S.D. He was the first priest to be ordained in Dakota Territory. In the spring of 1889, a small church at a cost of \$1,500 on land donated by Dan Cotter in the SW corner of the SE quarter of Section 2 of Taopi township. Eleven families comprised the first congregation. They were as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Huntimer, Dan Cotter, Gus Huntimer, Val Huntimer, Pete Bowen, Karl Eulberg, Joseph Huntimer, Pat Glennon, Mrs. Henry Bell, John Conway, and F.J. Huntimer.

The first baptism was Martin Huntimer, son of Charles B. and Ellen, in 1889. Clara Bell was the first burial at the cemetery. She was 16 years old, died in April of 1891, and made them promise that her father's body would be moved from Sioux Falls and buried beside hers. The first marriage was Frank Hundamer and Mary Bohan in 1894.

In the year of 1907 a parish rectory was built near the town of Charles City. The land was donated by Charles B. Huntimer and was located in the SW corner of Section 2 just west of his home. In 1909, with about 43 families and eight singles, a new church was built near the rectory at a cost of \$1,500 and a seating capacity of 170 people. The young people bought the bell. Father Trainer was the first resident pastor.

In 1949 a monument was built at the cemetery at the site where the original church stood. By 1950 the parish was once again outgrowing the church and by 1960 it was decided to build a third church. Father Thomas Ryan was assigned to the Huntimer Parish of about 80 families in 1963, and under his direction and many meetings, plans were made to go ahead with the construction. Early in 1965 the parish met for the ceremony of solemn blessings of the ground on which the new church and hall would stand. By August 1 of that year the first mass was celebrated at the new church. H. V. "Dick" Huntimer built the bell tower on top of the hall and the original bell was placed there. The name of the old church was St. Joseph Church, and with the new church the name was changed to St. Joseph the Workman Church. Father Larry Rucker from Sioux Falls, S.D. became pastor.

The parish had about 100 families in 1987 and celebrated its centennial year in 1989. The parish continued to grow and by the spring of 2005 there were 150 families registered.

The Hamlet of Huntimer

Huntimer, S.D., A Forgotten Town

Tri-County Farmerettes

April 1972

with

special contributions by the R.E. Anthony, Gladys Reddin, Ralph Schaefer,

Bernice Schaefer, and Lionel Huntimer Families

Future Dakota Territory was surveyed in 1859. The Territory was created in 1861. The Federal Homestead Act became law in 1862 and immigrants from most central European countries, as well as Scandinavia, arrived to settle the land in increasing numbers by the 1870s.

German immigrants by the name of Hundemer [the family name spelled Huntimer by some and finally as Huntimer in later years] arrived in future Huntimer, Minnehaha County near the Lake County line in 1878, led by Charles B. Huntimer. He crossed Skunk Creek with a team of oxen, a wagon, \$500, his wife, Ellen, and one year old Susan and settled in Section 2 Minnehaha County [named Taopi Township in 1880 by J. B. Goddard, founder of the Taopi hamlet three miles west of future Colton, Minnehaha County, Dakota Territory]. C. B. had to unhitch the team and turn the wagon box over, the family and belongings were put atop the wagon box and across the creek they went. Later a bridge was built to make the crossing easier. There was a ferry running at Dell Rapids several miles east by that time and allowed homesteaders to cross the Sioux River.

More families followed the Huntimers: John Conway in 1883, G. V. [Val] Huntimer and Joe Huntimer and Peter Bowen in 1884, August Huntimer in 1885 and Mrs. Henry Bell, Pat Glennon, Dan Cotter, and Frank J. Huntimer by 1888. In 1884 the three homes of Val and Joe Huntimer and Pete Bowen were under construction when a cyclone struck destroying all three houses. Grandma Huntimer and Baby Alice, and Mrs. G. V. Huntimer had gone to Dell Rapids by buggy. Grandpa Huntimer saw the storm coming and took the children into the cellar. Val rode horseback to look for the women and found them safe at a farm yard.

By 1886 the Bishop was requested to send a priest be sent to the area occasionally to say Mass. Early services were held in family homes and also in an early nearby school house in Section 10. Early in 1888 Father Guay of Flandreau came to Dell Rapids to organize three settlements, including Huntimer, into a

parish, and that fall St. Joseph's parish was organized under the direction of Father Flynn, the first priest to be ordained in Dakota Territory.

In 1907 Charles B. Huntimer founded the original hamlet, named Charles City in his honor, located a half mile west of the original church. The newly built South Dakota Central RR from Sioux Falls to Colton headed on north through this area to create Chester in 1905 and would reach Watertown by 1907. Mr. Huntimer built the first elevator along the RR line which was to become the start of Huntimer as a community. Also by 1907 the competitive Milwaukee Road was completed heading south from Madison to run parallel tracks with the SDC through Huntimer and Colton on its way to Sioux Falls.

In 1909, members of the parish built a new church adjoining the rectory at this location, and in the same year the name of the town was changed from Charles City to Huntimer in honor of the Huntimer families who were prominent in local affairs and successful farmers in the area. While business was transacted in Huntimer for years, it was never incorporated and no post office was ever established there; postal services were provided by the long established office in Colton.

Other businesses to appear on the Huntimer horizon were stockyards north of the elevators and between the two rail lines, and then a general store. With the coming of the automobile, a gas pump was installed in front of the board-walk of the store. The general store was torn down in 1944 and usable lumber was used to build a granary on the farm a mile north, later farmed by Howie Siemonsma. In 1945 a fire destroyed the elevator.

Two school buildings were utilized over the years. An 1884 county map shows a school building west of future Huntimer, located on the NW quarter of Section 10 that was owned by H. P. Glennon by 1888. This first school was later remodeled into a granary and located on the Gerritt Burgers farm near its site. A second school building was built in the 1920s north of the church at Huntimer corner and remained at there until the existing church was built in 1965. This school building was bought that year by Clifford Anderberg and remodeled into a garage. It continues in use on his former farm southwest of Colton, now owned by the Lloyal and Shirley Amundson family of Colton.

[Editorial excerpts, comments, and additions by author Loren Amundson]

THE FIRST SOUTH DAKOTA VOLUNTEER REGIMENT AS POLITICAL PAWNS

Grant K Anderson

It was a splendid little war in the eyes of Theodore Roosevelt. The United States declared war on Spain 20 April 1898. President William McKinley called on the states to mobilize a portion of their National Guard units to form a fighting force. South Dakotans supported the war effort. Governor Andrew E. Lee activated the state's National Guard 30 April 1898. Over 1000 men, in twelve companies, formed into the First South Dakota volunteer Infantry Regiment. With the Legislature not in session, Governor Lee raised money from private sources to equip the troops. He personally lent four thousand dollars, of the nearly sixteen thousand totals, to outfit the unit. The Fighting First, as they were known, mustered into federal service in mid May and deployed to Luzon, the Philippines.¹

Andrew E. Lee, a Vermillion businessman and farmer, won the South Dakota state house in 1896 and was returned in 1898, winning both elections by a combined 689 votes. He represented the Fusion ticket, a coalition of Democrats, Populists and Silver Republicans. The Fusionists endorsed the freeing of Cuba from Spanish rule, but later criticized the Republican effort to annex the Philippine Islands.²

The Filipino uprising, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, began 4 February 1899, two days prior to US ratification of a treaty ending the Spanish American War. Aguinaldo declared the Philippines an independent republic and launched a guerilla war against American control. The First South Dakota Volunteer Infantry Regiment saw considerable combat duty in putting down the revolt.³

Back home their continued participation in these hostilities became a political issue. While Republicans lauded the US actions, anti-imperialists such as Governor Andrew E. Lee and South Dakota senior Senator Richard F. Pettigrew opposed the United States acquisition of an overseas empire.⁴ Andrew Lee was, in fact, a vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League that included such prominent Americans as Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, and former President Grover Cleveland.⁵

The Treaty of Paris, ending the Spanish American war, was signed 10 December 1898, but not ratified by the United States Senate until 6 February 1899. Passage was by one more vote than the necessary two thirds majority. Among the dissenters was Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota who steadfastly opposed overseas expansion. The Senator demanded the American flag be hauled down, troops withdrawn, and an apology be made to the world for US actions to deny Philippine independence.⁶

Andrew E. Lee concurred that the volunteers should be brought home. He claimed their term of enlistment expired with the ratification of the treaty ending hostilities. To continue combat, and incur

casualties, was illegal argued the Governor. "I shall take measures along this line soon," Lee wrote a Faulkton supporter April 6.⁷

He sent a communiqué to President William McKinley dated 10 April 1899. Lee claimed to speak for his constituents as he believed it "...to be the almost universal wish of the people of my state," that the First South Dakota Volunteer regiment be discharged as soon as possible. Lee reminded McKinley "... when your Excellency called upon South Dakota for volunteers to defend the flag of our country in a war undertaken in the interest of humanity against the Kingdom of Spain," the state oversubscribed its quota. That war was over and "...my people feel that the South Dakota volunteers have fulfilled every obligation which they owe to their country and its flag..." and "...we view their present or future retention in the service as unconstitutional and a violation of the law which called the organization into being..."⁸

The Governor, speaking for his people, contended "...the fighting which has been done in the Island of Luzon is regarded as an enterprise which lacks the consent of the Congress." He further maintained "...the people of this Republic have been in no way counseled or consulted."⁹

The Filipino Insurrection was a "...prolonged struggle for the subjugation of a race," Lee continued. This is "... a course which is repugnant to the fundamental principles of this government, a violation of the Declaration of Independence, a reputation of the theory upon which we engaged in the war with Spain," continued the South Dakota chief executive.¹⁰

McKinley was assured "... the hundreds of relatives and thousands of friends of this regiment would willingly bear the loss of the best manhood of the State for just course. However, South Dakotans have "reason to regard the further sacrifice of our soldiers in a conflict waged against liberty and in the interest of exploiting capitalism as...a more grievous hardship than we should be compelled to bear."¹¹ The First South Dakota must return home at once.

Doane Robinson, future eminent South Dakota historian, took Lee to task for his "...long letter burdened with claptrap that has nothing to do with such purpose as he intends. And to add to the indignity of his screed, he scatters it broadside before it reaches the President."¹² A West River journalist contended the letter was published by the South Dakota media before it was even sent to Washington D.C.¹³

In extreme southeastern South Dakota, a Fusionist newspaper observed, the "...letter has attracted more attention and been the subject of more comment than any document which has been issued in the past year."¹⁴ The firestorm spread beyond South Dakota to become a national debate. It first flared with questions of who actually wrote the epistle and if it did accurately gauge the feeling of state residents.

A Canton News article maintained the communiqué was “evidently written by someone else.”¹⁵ That someone was a “blatherskite hanger on at Pierre,” deduced a Black Hills opinion molder.¹⁶ The Governor merely signed and dispatched the document.

Miner County gave rise to a unique theory on the letter’s origin. A Howard pundit explained if he “were to make a guess on the governor’s letter, it would be that Frank Pettigrew, fearing the Populists might drop him and take up Lee for senatorial candidate, had instigated the letter for the double purpose of keeping up his copperhead howl and killing off a dangerous rival.”¹⁷ There is however, no evidence to substantiate this notion.

Whoever it was, the author “exceeded his authority in attempting to speak for the people of South Dakota.”¹⁸ Estimates of a 5% to 10% approval rating by residents were common statewide. The *Armor Chronicle*, among others, saw the letter as “...a disgrace upon the fair name of South Dakota.”¹⁹ Easterners would be misled to believe this was the actual opinion of South Dakota residents feared. That the letter was a “remarkably seditious paper,” and “verges very closely on treason,” were commonly held positions. “It is one of those fool hardy, hasty, unwise things which forever discredit the author before the people,” read a column in the central part of the state.²⁰ From Hot Springs to Vermillion, editors were quick to agree. The *Parker Press* even suggested “Andy had better subject his letter to the initiative and referendum before he claims it is what the people desire,” of Washington.²¹ The latter was a reference to Governor Lee’s solid support for the initiative and referendum which he saw as clear demonstrations of direct democracy.²²

A second letter from the South Dakota executive branch arrived at the White House about ten days after the first. This time it was Lieutenant Governor John T. Kean who sought to lobby President William McKinley. The fellow Republican felt it “my duty to express to you the real sentiment of the people of this State, as evidenced by hundreds of letters, by public and private expression, and by the utterances of the great majority of the newspapers,” of South Dakota. Kean assured McKinley that “from expressions of indignation, which have come to me from every side, I feel fully justified in declaring that the letter of Governor Lee is a gross misrepresentation of the sentiment and feelings of the people of South Dakota.” Kean maintained his constituents “...did not believe that the suppression of a band of outlaws and guerrillas is ‘the subjection of a race’ or ‘a conflict waged against liberty in the interest of exploiting capital,’ as charged by Governor Lee, but “we believe it to be the wise and humane policy of this government to build upon the ruins of Spanish misrule in the Philippines.” South Dakotans “...will never endure a policy which

would haul down Old Glory at Manila and substitute the red flag of Anarchy and our boys in the ranks... will be slow to forgive the charge," in Kean's opinion.²³

His letter appeared in the *New York Times* and most South Dakotans embraced it. One editor thanked Lt. Governor Kean for "...coming to the rescue so promptly and efficiently and officially as well."²⁴ Another congratulated him for drafting the letter himself.²⁵ "If Kean isn't careful he will put himself directly in line of gubernatorial succession," predicted a major Midwestern daily.²⁶

"A document that gives aid and comfort to our enemies is likely to retard, rather than hasten the day of discharge," reasoned a daily in the state capital.²⁷ A letter to the editor of the *Mitchell Daily Republican* contended, "...Governor Lee is advertising our troops as cowards and our people as unpatriotic."²⁸ The letter "...in effect asks the president to unconditionally surrender to the Filipinos," wrote another citizen.²⁹ Governor Lee's letter demanded "...all United States troops in the Philippines lay down their arms in the presence of the enemy and turn tail and seek safety in flight," concurred the *St Paul Pioneer Press*.³⁰ Another outstate daily chided the Governor for his argument that no declared war existed between the United States and the Filipinos. The daily pointed out "...the government does not bother with a war declaration every time a tribe of Indians goes on the warpath. It simply sets about suppressing the insurrection," as it is doing in the Philippines.³¹

"Governor Lee is an enemy of the United States," boomed the *Sioux City Journal*.³² Harsh criticism and character assassination were leveled at South Dakota's chief executive. His course of action was "a living exemplification of how great an ass, in small caliber, the state of South Dakota can elect a governor," summarized a Sturgis journalist.³³ A gentler Deadwood editor characterized Lee as "...a cheerful large lunged donkey."³⁴ Across the state, the *Big Stone Headlight* portrayed Lee as "a small bore, pop gun Governor, who has again made an ass of himself," in demanding the troops be returned home.³⁵ Andrew Lee was simply a political hack in the eyes of constituents. Many questioned his ability to successfully govern the state and took exception with his demands on President McKinley. "Mr. Lee's utter incompetency precludes him being the author of a good many state papers," deduced a Pierre daily.³⁶

It was "an attempt to manufacture political capital and promote the interests of the Populist Party."³⁷ That attempt would fail, predicted John Longstaff in the *Huron Daily Huronite* who foresaw "if the Populists of the state would like to make a campaign on the basis of Lee's letter, the Republicans will welcome their platform and carry the state by an old time Republican majority."³⁸

Evidence indicates Longstaff was correct. "We have not heard of even one Populist who dares to openly commend...Lee's action," informed the *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*. That southeastern daily

carried on an extensive exchange service with newspapers statewide. A thorough study of South Dakota Populist leaning media led the *Argus* to conclude "more than half of them do not mention the letter at all, a most significant omission." Of those that did "...not more than one-third of them give it any support. And of those which comment favorably more than half confine their commendation solely to the demand for the return of the boys and in no way endorse the treasonable sentiments with which the demand was accompanied."⁴⁰

The Republican leaning opinion molder also reproduced "some of the criticisms passed upon the Governor's notorious letter by the newspapers of the state."⁴¹ Over a two day period, the *Argus Leader* presented excerpts from ⁴⁷ newspapers that met their anti-Lee bias. From Sisseton in the northeast to Yankton and Vermillion in the southeast --- from Sturgis in the northwest to Hot Springs in the southwest and Pierre and Chamberlin in central South Dakota - most snippets were from small town weeklies that formed the majority of South Dakota journalism. They demonstrated the indignation the letter had spawned," and "...show that the Governor has met with an overwhelming rebuke," by constituents.⁴² "Criticism comes from all classes and from men of all political parties," editorialized a *Clark Pilot Review* column reprinted by the *Argus Leader*.

But Governor Andrew E. Lee was not without his supporters. Interviewed in Sioux Falls a few days after his letter became public, Lee acknowledged he was the brunt of severe criticism over his actions. "He appeared to have reached the conclusion that he has made a very unpopular move," observed the *Sioux Falls Press* reporter, "but still he sticks by the sentiments made, and the opinions expressed..."⁴⁴ The Governor noted he had received many letters of support. He felt his action was "...just and right and therefore I do not fear any criticism which I might receive," he explained.⁴⁵ Lee offered his interviewer another reason for his request to bring the South Dakota regiment home. Although not in the text sent to President McKinley, the Governor explained his "...main reason for asking the speedy return of our troops is the unhealthy season is near at hand, and I do not desire to see any of them unnecessarily sickened."⁴⁶ No mention of this was made before or after the interview. Perhaps it was a ploy to garner support that went awry.

Amidst all this criticism, accolades continued for the Governor. Letter writers across the state assured Lee "...your noble letter expresses the sentiment of every liberty loving person in South Dakota."⁴⁷ A. J. McCann, Chairman of the Pennington County Commissioners, wrote from Rapid City, "No honest patriotic citizen can do otherwise than admire the truthful, bold, and fearless manner in which you handled the

subject," of trying to bring the troops home.⁴⁸ E. B. Page concurred, writing "...You did just right and I admire a man who has the courage to do his duty."⁴⁹

Thomas Ayers, the Governor's private secretary, provided space in his *Vermillion Plain Talk* to present supportive letters to his readers.⁵⁰ Compliments appeared from around South Dakota, nearby states, and as far away as Massachusetts. Some of the letters did not disclose the writer's name or address leading the Republican opposition to charge fraud. One that did, from Albers S. Parson, of Mitchell, lauded Lee's "fearless letter". Parson explained, "I am a travelling man..." and "...have felt the public pulse pretty thoroughly, and every one has added a hearty amen to your action except one, a drunk man who was looking for an argument."⁵¹ Endorsements regularly occupied *Plain Talk* columns.

Editor Ayers tried to rally pro Lee support. An April 13 article cried, "the time has come to speak out in meetings and for one this paper is not afraid to do so."⁵² This call to action went unheeded as no evidence of protest rallies has been discovered.

The *Sioux Falls Press* and the *Yankton Press and Dakotan* were spirited Lee backers. A smattering of weeklies statewide joined the chorus. An example was the *Chamberlin Journal* published by South Dakota Railroad Commissioner W. F. LaFollette. The letter was "cheered to the echo" in central South Dakota according to LaFollette.⁵³

Late in April, Governor Lee asked his most rabid supporters in various communities to get their neighbors to endorse his action by gathering as many signatures as possible. The circulators had been instructed to secure signatures from as many parents and relatives of regiment members as possible.

Andrew Lee had been quoted as claiming he received many letters from soldiers' families and friends. A central theme was that the volunteers had done their duty for which they enlisted and should not be kept beyond that. Quite a few volunteers felt "they are fighting against the fundamental principles of our government," Lee informed a reporter.⁵⁴

A father of a volunteer in the Philippines from Brookings learned of Lee's letter to President McKinley through words of the *Sioux Falls Press*. He wrote the Fusionist author claiming to have seen numerous letters from the soldiers and they all voiced the desire that, now that the war with Spain had ended they should be discharged at once.⁵⁵

Private R. J. Moes, Company H, First South Dakota Volunteers, agreed. He wrote from Manila to Senator Richard F. Pettigrew that 90% of the unit desired to be mustered out immediately. Moes implored the Senator to use his political clout to get the volunteers home.⁵⁶ Lee Stover, also in Manila, told the senior senator it was more like 99% of the enlisted men who wanted to be brought stateside.⁵⁷ A month

later another letter from Stover to Pettigrew said the troops "...want you to keep things moving to get us out," as rapidly as possible.⁵⁸

Richard F. Pettigrew reportedly received 119 request from First South Dakota Volunteers asking to be discharged.⁵⁹ Based on these, he too wrote President McKinley arguing the regiment had done its duty and should be returned home. The Senator also wrote Russell A. Alger, Secretary of War, informing him the sentiment was growing more vigorous in South Dakota for the return of the regiment. Pettigrew also forwarded to Alger a petition gathered by E. P. Hoover, of Blunt, urging the unit be brought home.⁶⁰

Republicans were quick to refute claims the First South Dakota volunteers were anxious to leave the Philippines. They argued the troops wanted to return home but only after their replacements arrived. Officers and men of the regiment wrote Congressman Charles H. Burke, Republican of South Dakota, letters strongly antagonistic of their governor's action.⁶¹ Lt. J. Q. A. Braden, writing from Manila, maintained, "...the volunteers will not appreciate the frantic efforts made by Pettigrew and Lee...or the cablegrams sent to the officers inciting them to mutiny." Lt Braden was certain "...the regiment...does not want to be discharged through political influence and does not want the disgrace of being the first volunteer regiment ordered home.⁶² The *Pierre Daily Capital Journal*, the *Aberdeen Daily News*, and the *Sioux Falls Daily Argue Leader* advanced similar arguments. "Now that the letters are coming in from the Philippines, the backers of Governor Lee and his letter are keeping very quiet," observed the latter.⁶³

The War Department made known in late April the volunteer forces would be discharged as soon as it was expedient. The availability of transport ships would factor into the discharge dates.⁶⁴ Already those troops who desired to leave because their family depended on their return, or for urgent business concerns, were being discharged.

William McKinley instructed the Adjutant General's office to respond to Andrew J. Lee's letter. That office did so May 15 stating the First South Dakota Volunteer regiment would be sent home as soon as regular army replacements arrived in the Philippines.⁶⁵ Volunteer units were being mustered out in the order in which they entered federal service. For the South Dakota boys this meant they could expect to ship out sometime between mid-June and July 1.

Lee was informed General Elwell S. Otis, Military Governor of the Philippines, reported the regiment did not wish to depart until current operations were completed. The South Dakota regiment would remain on the front lines until adequately replaced.⁶⁶

It would be 11 August 1899 before the South Dakota Volunteer Infantry sailed from Manila bound for San Francisco. Senator Richard F. Pettigrew petitioned that the unit be sent home via the Suez Canal so

they could say they had sailed around the world.⁶⁷ This request was denied. A month later they disembarked on American soil. Governor Andrew E. Lee reviewed the regiment the next day in San Francisco.⁶⁸

The unit travelled via train overland to South Dakota. A welcome home reception took place in Aberdeen 14 October. President William McKinley was there to congratulate the unit and praise it for refusing to stop fighting until relieved, although their enlistments technically had expired. Senator Pettigrew, and Governor Lee, both deeply concerned about bringing the troops home, were conspicuous by their absence.⁶⁹

The idea of a governor asking the President to return volunteer units was not limited to South Dakota. The chief executives of Nebraska, Colorado, Minnesota, and North Dakota also petitioned to have their state units returned home. All were Fusionists except Frederick B. Fancher, of North Dakota, who was a Republican. Like Lee, they argued their troops had volunteered for the Spanish American War and with its end the soldiers obligation should also end.

Charles S. Thomas of Colorado repeatedly wrote the President asking for the return on his state's forces. Unsuccessful, the Rocky Mountain Fusionist contemplated taking the matter before the Supreme Court.⁷⁰

Closer to South Dakota, Minnesotan John Lind sent a message to his state legislature asking for action to return the state troops. The body was in session but both houses simply laid the request on the table.⁷¹ Had South Dakota lawmakers been meeting, the Republican controlled body would have dealt Lee's letter a similar stinging rebuke.

A rumor circulating in Washington had prosecutors contemplating charging Lee and Lind with treason for the letters they wrote to President McKinley. Charges would be based on the manner in which the requests to bring the troops home were presented, as well as "the language in which they were couched."⁷² The matter never advanced beyond the talking stage.

Governor Lind was hailed as a hero in Minnesota while Governor Lee was booed as a villain across the border in South Dakota. Both made the same request of President William McKinley ---- send their state's troops home. Lind left it at that whereas Lee injected partisan politics into his request. Andrew E. Lee's anti-expansionist feelings were common knowledge.

In addition to requesting the discharge of the South Dakota volunteer troops, Lee criticized the Republican administration's policy of fighting an undeclared war in the Philippines. No President had deployed troops overseas before and now McKinley was continuing combat beyond ratification of the

peace treaty. The Governor resented what he called the slaughter of volunteer force in an attempt to exploit capitalism.

Constituents read the Lee letter before President McKinley did. Its' widespread distribution touched off an intense debate. At the center was rather Governor Lee presented only his own views or those of all South Dakotans and how the nation would perceive the action.

South Dakota soldiers earned a brilliant combat record in the Filipino Insurrection and home folks did not want politics to tarnish it. A Republican controlled legislature was at odds with a Fusionist governor and this spilled over to the troop discharge issue.

Andrew E. Lee would leave office the next year. It is doubtful his action had much impact on the return of the regiment. The War Department announced volunteers units would be returning before the firestorm erupted. Lee was not the first South Dakotan to request the unit be discharged. Richard F. Pettigrew made similar demands earlier in 1899. Did Pettigrew's action inspire Lee to write to the President? Circumstantial evidence makes this a possibility.

FOOTNOTES: THE FIRST SOUTH DAKOTA VOLUNTEER REGIMENT AS POLITICAL PAWNS

Grant K. Anderson

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- ² Oyos, Lynwood E., ed, Over A Century of Leadership: South Dakota Territorial and State Governors, (Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD: 1987), 68. See also Lindell, "Populists in Power," South Dakota History, Winter 1992, 345.
- ³ McSherry, Patrick, "A Brief History of the 1st South Dakota Volunteer Infantry," www.spanamwar.com/1stSouthdak.htm.
- ⁴ Pettigrew, Richard F., The Course of Empire, (Boni and Leveright, New York: 1920) 232, 241. Pettigrew maintained "I shall oppose the acquisition of the tropical countries no matter what happens to me politically. I am willing to be defeated upon that issue." Pettigrew to John W. Hays, Faulkton, SD, 17 February, 1899.
- ⁵ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 26 May. 1899, 4.
- ⁶ Pettigrew, The Course of Empire, 232.
- ⁷ Richard E. Lee Papers, South Dakota State Archives, Outgoing Letters, September 1898—May 1900, Lee to H. A. Humphrey, Faulkton, South Dakota, 6 April, 1899.
- ⁸ Lee Papers, Lee to William McKinley, 10 April. 1899.
- ⁹ IBID.
- ¹⁰ IBID.
- ¹¹ IBID.
- ¹² Sturgis Weekly Record, 21 April 1899, 3.
- ¹³ IBID. See also Watertown Public Opinion, reprinted in Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 25 April, 1899, 6.
- ¹⁴ Vermillion Plain Talk, 27 April 1899, 2.
- ¹⁵ Canton News, reprinted in Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 4.

16 Sturgis Herald, reprinted in the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 4.

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32 Sioux City Journal, reprinted in Mitchell Daily Republican, 19 April 1899, 2.

33 Sturgis Record, reprinted in Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 6.

34 Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times, 19 April 1899, 4.

35 Big Stone Headlight, reprinted in Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 6.

36 Pierre Daily Capital Journal, 6 May 1899, 2.

37 Mitchell Daily Republican, 17 April 1899, 2. Populism was becoming an antonym for patriotism to the Huron Daily Huronite, 29 April 1899, 2.

38 Huron Daily Huronite, 22 April 1899,2.

39 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 17 April 1899, 5.

40 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 6.

41 IBID.

42 IBID.

43 Clark Pilot Review, reprinted in Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 April 1899, 6.

44 Mitchell Daily Republican, 19 April 1899, 4.

45 Lee Papers, Lee to Richard F. Pettigrew, 18 April 1899. J. B. Moore, of Deadwood, claimed the Populists unanimously approved Lee's letter, Queen City Mail (Spearfish), 26 April 1899, 1.

46 Mitchell Daily Republican, 18 April 1899, 4. Pettigrew Papers, R. Warne, Manila to Richard F. Pettigrew, 8 March 1899. The next three months will be the worst for the soldiers regarding health according to Warne.

47 Letter to the Editor from A. M. Allen, Brookings, SD, Vermillion Plain Talk, 27 April 1899, 1.

48 Lee Papers, A. J. McCain, Rapid City to Lee, 29 April 1899.

49 Lee Papers, E. B. Fagel, Niles, North Dakota, to Lee, 20 April 1899.

50 Thomas Ayres was called the power behind the South Dakota gubernatorial chair. Mitchell Daily Republican, 3 October 1899, 2. If Lee's letter to McKinley was typewritten, it was probably the work of Ayers. Pierre Daily Capital Journal, 6 May 1899 2.

51 Letter to the Editor from Albers S. Person, Mitchell, South Dakota, Vermillion Plain Talk, 27 April 1899, 1.

52 Vermillion Plain Talk, 13 April 1899, 4.

53 Chamberlin Journal, reprinted in the Aberdeen Daily News, 1 May 1899, 4.

54 Sioux Falls Daily Press, reprinted in Vermillion Plain Talk, 20 April 1899, 1.

55 Vermillion Plain Talk, 27 April 1899, 1.

56 Pettigrew Papers, Letters Received, 1899, Pvt R. J. Moes, Co H, 1st SDV to Pettigrew, 25 January 1899.

57 Pettigrew Papers, Letters Received 1899, Lee Stover to Pettigrew, 6 February 1899.

58 Pettigrew Papers, Lee Stover to Pettigrew, 16 March 1899. Stover hoped, "... the politicians of our state bring such pressure to bear that the Administration will have to relieve us."

59 New York Times, 18 April 1899, 9. Senator Pettigrew had been urging the administration to discharge the troops

for some time. Pettigrew Papers, Pettigrew to Henry L. Ferry, Vermillion, 28 January 1899.
60 Pettigrew Papers, Pettigrew to Russell A. Alger, Secretary of War, 23 January 1899.
61 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 9 May 1899, 2.
62 Mitchell Daily Republican, 28 April 1899, 4. See also Queen City Mail, 3 May 1899, 1; 24 May, 1899, 1.
63 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 May, 1899, 4.
64 Vermillion Plain Talk, 27 April 1899, 4.
65 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 May 1899, 6.
66 IBID, 4.
67 Pettigrew Papers, Letters Sent 1899, Pettigrew to President William McKinley, 27 January 1899.
68 St. Paul Weekly Globe, 14 September 1899, 3. Senator Pettigrew was also slated to go to San Francisco but
did not. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 17 October 1899, 4.
69 Parker New Era, 13 October 1899, 1. This weekly reported the soldiers had had their fill of Pettigrew and his
politics. See also Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 30 September 1899, 3.
70 New York Times, 8 May 1899, 1. See also 14 May 1899, 2.
71 Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 17 April 1899, 4. See also Miner County Democrat, 9 June 1899, 8.
72 Aberdeen Daily News, 24 April 1899, 2.

ALICE CHAPMAN TO MRS. GRIGSBY, MAY 12TH, 1906

Adam Bockelman

The following letter was most likely written by an Alice Chapman to a Mrs. Grigsby on May 12th, 1906 from San Francisco. It was difficult to determine who the author of the letter was since she left no signature, however if one were to examine the same archives in which this letter is stored a number of similar letters to a "dear Mrs. Grigsby" with the same handwriting, and the unique way of organizing the pages (front, then back, then middle) all signed by an Alice Chapman. While this isn't the most conclusive piece of evidence it's the best available. Mrs. Grigsby, on the other hand, is much more difficult to identify as she could be a number of female members of the Grigsby family.

The letter mentions a Fannie, so one might assume that it's not to Fannie Grigsby, however there are two Fannie Grigsbys; Mrs. Fannie Louise Kingsbury Grigsby who married the famous Col. Melvin Grigsby, and her daughter Fannie Leon Grigsby. Most likely the letter wasn't addressed to the younger of the two Fannies, because it would probably be considered rude, if Alice addressed the daughter as Mrs. and the mother by her first name. More importantly if the younger Fannie was married as implied by the "Mrs." then it would be doubtful that she would be referred to as Mrs. Grigsby. There is also a good chance that Alice is writing to one of the Fannies' relatives, such as one of Melvin's sister-in-laws or one of the elder Fannie's daughter-in-laws. Since Melvin only had one brother who died when he was around 8, we can narrow it down to one of the daughter-in-laws: Josaphine Tyler Grigsby or Patricia Chapman Grigsby. Since Patricia's maiden name is the same as our writer's and because Alice includes the phrase "love from Mother", and because Alice mentions a "George", a name of one of Patricia's sons, we can jump to the conclusion that the letter is probably written to Patricia Grigsby.

The letter also mentions a Jon several times, most likely it is one of Alice's friends, but there also is a good chance that it is in fact John Grigsby, Patricia's brother-in-law which would make some sense. It already appears to be the case that Alice is good friends with Fannie, and it wouldn't be unusual for her to have a good relationship with the rest of her sister's family members.

Unfortunately there is little information about most of the Chapman and Grigsby families, not including Melvin or Sioux, so most of their life outside of what can be extrapolated from this and other letters. However, Melvin is a well-known figure in South Dakotan history, and American history. Melvin fought in both the American Civil War, and the Spanish-American war. During the Civil War he was captured and held at the infamous Andersonville Prison in Georgia, and it was his experiences there that

led him to write the book, *The Smoked Yank*. Between the wars he moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota where he became the attorney general before being asked to assemble a volunteer "cowboy" cavalry for the Spanish-American War the Grigsby's Rough Riders. They were modeled after their more famous counterparts led by Teddy Roosevelt and are sometimes confused.

The majority of Alice's letter is about her encounter with the infamous San Francisco earthquake on April 18, 1906, and the subsequent fire that started. The earthquake lasted for about a minute and modern estimates place the death toll at around 3,000, and the damage caused by it to be about \$500,000,000, making it the worst natural disaster in California's history, and one of the most devastating disasters in American history destroying over 80% of San Francisco. The earthquake was felt as far north as Oregon, south as Los Angeles, and inland as Nevada. Estimates place the magnitude of the 1906 earthquake between 7.7-8.25. The earthquake broke gas mains causing fires to break out all over the city, which might have caused even more destruction than the original earthquake itself. To make matters worse, poorly trained firefighters resorted to using dynamite to destroy houses in an attempt to make firebreaks, however because they weren't adept in the use of explosives they needlessly destroyed houses, many of which would have survived the fire, and even started new fires through the explosions.

The transcription is an accurate reproduction of the original letter, however some modifications have been made in brackets to clarify parts of the letter. In the original letter it appears that the author used two methods to represent what we would use as a comma today, a dash at the bottom of the line and a period. While the dashes have been replaced with a [,] the periods have been kept. One can distinguish the difference between these periods that represent commas, and periods that end a sentence by seeing if the next word is capitalized. Some words are split up by a hyphen; this is simply to denote that being on different lines broke up the word. Some words were very difficult to decipher and the 'best guess' has been used to determine what they are supposed to be, other words were so unreadable that [indecipherable] has been left in their place to denote this.

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3159 Jackson St

May 12th

My dear Mrs. Grigsby.

Many

thanks for Jons letter. Mother asked me to write to Jon for her. I have been here since. nary since the Earthquake as Jon will where † we have moved. We came here in January. It is such a nice flat. and we were so happy too[,] but this awful calamity has upset many plans I fear! I did not write to Jon until I found out if those four [page break]

mentioned in Jon letter were burnt out: but quizzically none of them have been. I have ma-de inquiries though the fire came within his blocks Jon friends on Capp St. I don't doubt but what they have left town[,] nearly every one has. but if Jon write to any of them their mail will be forwarded to there[,] 709 Capp St. is Mrs. Luis Address[,] Jon would never know S.F. it is a horrible picture of desolation as far as you can see[,] over 26 miles burnt to the ground[,] as far as [indecipherable] they checked [page break]

the fire there. we watched it. we have a perfect view of the city and Bay from our windows. so we saw the fire better than we could have done down town. it was terrifying! it looked as if it was right on us. Jon know how hilly S.F. is[,] well. I wish Jon could have seen it rush down hill. it came at a terrific rate. the wind even was against us. it blew it right towards us. we got ready to leave the house three times. the fire looked so much nearer[,] though in reality it was 14 blocks away. I shall never forget Thursday night. (19th) we just sat at the window and watched. we all felt so helpless. I never for a moment dreamt we could possibly escape. the red hot has cinders fell thickly all around us. the roof was covered[,] and as it is a frame house and so dry. I thought surly we'd catch fire[,] Thursday every thing was at it's worst. [page break]

I consoled(?) my self with the fact that we were going to have a tidal wave! the Bay looked so queer to me. they reported in the Eastern Papers that this part of town was swallowed up. that was really the only part that was exaggerated, I think. as every thing was pretty bad for three whole days. it is like recalling [?] a horrible nightmare. What remains of the city is a wreck from the earthquake[,] great stone mansions a split from top to bottom. walls fell out. and roofs fell in[,] [page break]

this flat stood it very well. we had a huge brick chimney fall in through one of the bed room † windows. and our walls are dreadfully cracked my bed room wall bulged[,] pictures fell off the wall. Some friends say theirs turned com-pletely around. and their piano fell over. our china and glass ware is a wreck. and all ornaments. Jon has no idea how perfectly awful it was[,] it lasted a minute, (though some try to say it was only 30 seconds[.]) we couldnt [page break]

stand up. it threw us around so. it was such a vicious one. They usually rock back & forth. but this one seemed to twist. Every church ste[e]ple and chimney in town fell[,] we are all cooking in the street. Every one in town. no one can make a fire in the house it is so queer to see rows of improvised kitchens all along each street. but people seem awfully cheerful. Every one has lost all they had the awful part was[,] the shock broke the water mains. and there was no † water to fight. the fire with: all they could do was dynamite. so many people were abroad. & left every thing locked up in their f[a]m[i]ly homes[,] but the soldiers spared nothing. they of course did their duty. we were under martial law from the start. some of our friends were dreaming the fire would reach them had 15 minutes to "get-out". as their home[,] [page break]

was going to be blown up[,] it has been an awful thing. and San Francisco will never be fo^r^gotten[,] we were spared the horrors of the flames and death[,] the loss of life has been frightful[,] I overheard a conversation on the street the other day. and they were saying that it would not be exaggera-ting in the least to say 20,000 died. Jon say the fire covered up a great many horrors of the earthquake [page break]

and we never will know how many died! The worst of it was I couldn't telegraph the lines were all down, & we were cut off from the world. I wrote at once to find[?]. and as soon as he got my letter he telegraphed to Elizabeth and others. I tried to get the line to Alaska when they got the lines fixed. but that was down. She, in the meantime telegraphed to the Sam Rayash[,] to find out if we were safe[,] and they wired at once to say [page break]

"Yes". So she heard as soon as possible. Mother saved from water the morning of the 18th in the tubs. a good thing to. as it was cut off for two whole weeks. we have it now. but we are of the lucky few. gas & Electric lights, & telephone were also "off" now we have electric lights. an improve-ment on candles[,] for the first five nights we were not even allowed a candle. Every house was in complete darkness. They were so afraid of another fire starting, and no water. However every thing is over. it is surprising the headway they have made. All the debris is nearly cleared away. and they say in a year San Francisco will be prosperous once more[,] it looks a hopeless task[,] Market St: is a black ruin, all there buildings are down. it is awful. But what a lot I've written. Forgive me dear Mrs. Grigsby if I've bored you. Give Fannie our love and ask her to write[,] Love from Mother and Felt Sincerely Yours Al[wa]ys. [letter end?]

[sideways addition]

J[e]ssie the baby a darling. he is just perfect: and so like George dont you think so?

THE NOBLES ROAD – A NOBLE IDEA

Wayne Fanebust

In keeping with the theme of this conference, that is to say, road building and trails west, I will talk about the creation of Nobles Road, which forms a chapter in my new book, *Cavaliers of the Dakota Frontier*.

Roads were the building blocks of American society and its cities and towns. Frontiersmen were constantly probing into the unknown regions of the wilderness and began making trails and roads almost as soon as the first pilgrims embarked from the Mayflower. Roads and trails were about as fundamentally important to settlement as churches and schools. In any era it is a no brainer. And yet the creation of the Nobles Road was fraught with controversy and anger - all politically motivated.

Why was this so? To get an answer we need to look no further than the Dakota Land Company of St. Paul. It was one of the companies that sought out town sites along the Big Sioux River in the region that became Dakota Territory.

The creation of the Dakota Land Company in May of 1857, followed by its highly publicized town site expedition, caused it to loom large in the public mind and in the Minnesota press. Controversial from the outset of its operations, the company became a magnet for criticism and its leaders were suspected of deception and greed. They were speculators in a time of great and outrageous speculation, but their plans were huge by comparison to others of similar ambition. Key members promoted their company stressing its benevolent aspect.

But in the eyes of its detractors, it was far less important, and it was a St. Paul company, the city that was synonymous with wasteful speculation. As such the Dakota Land Company drew the fire of rival politicians and their newspaper allies both inside and outside of St. Paul. The company could have founded the Mayo Clinic and it would still have been reviled, hated and severely criticized. And yes, William H. Nobles, founder of the Nobles Road, was a member of the company and therefore the recipient of criticism and abuse.

The loudest, angriest and most persistent voice of dissent came from the *Minnesota Free Press* of St. Peter. The newspaper's Republican editor, W. C. Dodge, attacked the Democratic dominant Dakota Land Company, focusing on its questionable political maneuvering and speculative bent. Dodge's primary point of attack was on William H. Nobles and the Fort Ridgely and South Pass wagon road. Dodge loudly

proclaimed it to be a fraud, a "humbug" and a hoax, a made up enterprise designed solely to soak up public funds and benefit - if there was any good to it at all - the Dakota Land Company.

But newspaper publicity wasn't entirely bad and Nobles had some support from the members of the press. Among the supporters, the *Henderson Democrat* was operated by Nobles' friend and colleague, Joseph R. Brown. It praised the efforts of the road maker. During the long and cold winter of 1856-57, the *Democrat* reported that Nobles was "working like a badger" toward getting congressional approval for the extension of the road from Fort Ridgely to Missouri River and beyond. The *Democrat* emphasized that roads were fundamental and beneficial, even if the benefits were not evenly distributed. They were needed to open the frontier to settlement, and men like Nobles - whose interests were devoted toward progress - were anything but selfish. Only a nay-saying crank would deny the usefulness, practicality and inevitability of roads.

The 1850's were a time of great westward road building activity, and congress and the secretary of the interior were busy trying to decide which roads to support for the sake of immigrant transportation. One such road started from Independence, Missouri on its way to California, by way of a more central route. A northern route was proposed after gold was discovered in the Fraizer River in western Canada in 1858. These trunk routes would compliment the Nobles road, with all roads getting a share of the traffic. The creation of wagon roads coincided with talk about building a trans-continental railroad - a subject that had great public support.

William H. Nobles was known as an explorer "who had spent much time and money in his travels and researches among the Rocky Mountains." He was a "true son of the prairies and the wilderness," bold and energetic and yet a real gentleman and a leader with a dominant personality, ideally suited to direct a frontier enterprise. His cherished goal was to create an immigrant wagon road through the Rocky Mountains to the west coast.

Nobles was born in New York state in 1816. A machinist by trade, he went west in 1841, stopping at St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin. Two years later he was in Stillwater, Minnesota Territory, making him one the early arrivals in the territory. In 1848, he moved to St. Paul and commenced business as a wagon maker and blacksmith. He made the first wagon in the territory, out of wood and steel, doing all the labor himself.

In 1849 Nobles went to Shasta County, California, to look for gold and stayed in that country until 1852. While in the far West, he discovered the South Pass through the Sierra Nevada Mountains that shortened the route to the Pacific by 500 miles. For his efforts, a group of grateful California people presented Nobles with \$10,000.00 in cash.

Nobles spent the \$10,000.00 to explore the route for his road out of Fort Ridgely. He drafted the wagon road bill that eventually passed both houses of congress, after he provided the push needed to get passage, no thanks to the "old fogies" from "down east." It was a matter of great personal pride, and Nobles said of his accomplishment, "No one can imagine the amount of good feeling that I entertained toward all mankind..." Nobles' western star was shining brightly, just then. He had discovered his true calling - exploring and path finding, and came back to Minnesota to live and to promote and build roads.

After his California experience, he settled at St. Paul and served two terms in the territorial legislature. Nobles the legislator, along with congressional delegate, Henry Rice, became a determined lobbyist in favor of road building. He firmly believed that a trans-Mississippi road, beginning in Minnesota, would benefit the people and settlements of his territory on the verge of statehood. He argued to congress that his northern route was shorter, the climate more favorable and the supply of wood much greater than a central route. Nobles' arguments gained supporters throughout Minnesota Territory, and for the years 1854 through 1856, the territorial legislature topped all other lawmaking bodies in the promotion of road building.

The friendly *Pioneer and Democrat* of St. Paul called Nobles a "highwayman," for having been involved in founding the "first highway from Stillwater to St. Paul. It was a title he wore with pride, despite the negative connotation. Nobles declared his respect and affection for the common man who made an "honest living by the sweat of his brow." Always a hard worker, he bore up well under the hardships of frontier life.

How could such a hard working and stable man become the target of editorial wrath? By associating with the Dakota Land Company, according to Editor Dodge, and engaging in activities that on the surface may have seemed to be practical and in the public good but were in fact, self-serving. Dodge warned people not be fooled by this man's outgoing and friendly exterior. Then, while Dodge was busy dogging and nagging Nobles, a series of ugly events on the frontier caused the road builder's name and reputation to be damaged.

Things got off to a favorable start in the spring of 1857. The secretary of the interior authorized Nobles to commence creating his road. Congress dedicated \$50,000.00 to the Pacific Road project and Nobles began spending it on supplies and equipment. He opened up an office in St. Paul, and went about forming his company, consisting of 75 men and a number of officers. Then, heavily armed with Sharp's rifles and revolvers against a possible Indian attack, the party went west by way of New Ulm, to find a road. Their train consisted of twenty-five mule drawn wagons, heavily loaded.

The wagon train followed the Cottonwood River for several days and the crew built bridges over sloughs and marshes, using "long rank grass." The road builders met with a party of adventurers headed by Congressman William Grow of Pennsylvania, out hunting buffalo on the prairie, near the Big Sioux River. The two groups joined forces and celebrated the Fourth of July in fine style. They were joined by a number of Dakota Land Company men from the town site of Medary and another group bound for Sioux Falls City. Grow gave a speech to the gathering at Hole-In-The-Mountain, a Dakota Land Company town site.

Not long after, Nobles and his men learned that a hundred lodges of Yankton Sioux Indians were waiting for them on the Big Sioux River, with a view of halting their westward progress. While this seemed to have no effect on the men, a detail was sent back to Fort Ridgely to fetch a howitzer and 150 rounds of shot, just in case.

On July 15th, the Nobles party arrived at a point 25 miles west of the Big Sioux River and were met by a large party of Yankton's who ordered them go no further. A determined Nobles engaged in numerous councils with the Indians but could not convince them to allow his party to continue working westward. The chiefs would not permit the intrusion on to their hunting grounds because "they would frighten away the buffalo, their sole means of sustenance." Nobles was greatly outnumbered and his supply of ammunition was low, so the road-building party retreated back to the Big Woods on the Cottonwood River and went into camp.

While his crew was engaged in building a bridge over the Cottonwood River, Nobles made a trip back to St. Paul. It was there that he may have learned about a newspaper attack from Washington, D.C. An editorial in the *Evening Star* took the position that the Yankton Sioux incident would be used by Nobles as an excuse to stop the progress on the western road. The editor was of the firm belief that Nobles had already spent the \$50,000.00, and would soon show up in Washington, asking for more money. The matter had become a minor scandal, drawing in many leading newspapers.

Despite the growing controversy and exchanges of accusations, Nobles went west again and met with the Yankton chiefs in mid-August on the Big Sioux River, and emerged with permission to continue the project over unceded land. It was said that a domineering and forceful Nobles convinced his foes that resistance would be futile and the Indians were, therefore, pacified.

The Indians were not the only obstacle for the tough-minded Nobles. He feuded with the secretary of the interior and fended off criticism from suspicious Minnesotans. His status as the superintendent of a historic undertaking caused him to take on feelings of excessive self-importance. Once, during the heat of

an argument with ex-governor Willis Gorman, Nobles could take no more. He struck Gorman, knocked him down and gave him a public thrashing in a St. Paul street. It was Nobles' way of saying beware of my wrath when you stand in the way of my ambition, the great object of my life.

Despite the feuding and fighting, work on the road continued throughout the summer, partially completing it to a point on the east side of the Missouri River opposite Fort Lookout. The road extended a distance of approximately 240 miles on an "airline" from Fort Ridgely to the Missouri River. The road followed the Cottonwood River from Fort Ridgely in a southwesterly direction, then turned westward until it came upon Lake Benton. There it passed through the nature-made gap called "Hole-in-the-Mountain," in the Prairie hills and then crossed the Big Sioux River about two miles below the town site of Medary (also owned by the Dakota Land Company). After that it proceeded almost due west until it met and crossed the James River, a few miles north of landmark called Sandy Hill. From that point it went straight west to the Missouri River, where it branched off in two directions, both of which ended at the east bank of that great river.

Nobles bragged that water was good and plentiful all along the road all the way to the Missouri River. "A horse cannot travel two hours without finding water" from among the many lakes, streams and springs. But he warned that it would be dangerous to stray too far to the north or south of the road because water was scarce and of poor quality.

It was also an easy ride for heavily loaded wagons as the grades were not too high, and it would be necessary to build just two bridges along the way, both over the Cottonwood River in Minnesota. Crossing the Big Sioux and James Rivers was easily accomplished by fording the streams over the rocks placed in the riverbed to pave the way. Swamps and lowlands were avoided. In general the land was described as good, rolling prairie and its potential for grazing cattle in the James River valley was favorable. But for the most part the land was without trees for shade or landmarks, or to break up the monotony of the slow miles, until the traveler reached Missouri River.

The road was about 30 feet wide. While there was, of course, no actual paving or grading done, mounds 3 to 5 feet high were constructed at the road's edge for the entire distance of the road, at intervals of a quarter or a half a mile, or closer if it was considered necessary. This was the most labor-intensive part of the work as almost 2500 mounds were piled up between Fort Ridgely and the Missouri River.

The road builder of the 1850's was not expected to create an actual road, but rather to find and mark a trail of least resistance that would eventually become a road. Having done this, Nobles was proud of his

effort and that of his trailblazing crew. They reached their goal for the season, which was to complete the road to the Missouri River.

For Nobles, the best way to prove his good intentions and silence his critics was to do the work he pledged himself to do. By doing so, he stripped the project of all political innuendo. The result was a road: a simple fact of life. A public road created with public funds was a road that anyone could use. What could be more disarming to critics like Editor Dodge?

Dodge seemed to be satisfied. He published an article acknowledging the completion of the "Pacific Road to the Missouri River," a passable artery of transportation available to the public through a fine stretch of prairie.

As fall approached, everything seemed to be working well for Nobles. Then one Tuesday in October, a man named John A. Jacques walked into the office of the *Minnesota Free Press*, and when he left, Dodge changed his tune; Nobles was once again a bad man. Dodge had a sensational scoop and with it, another chance to fire away at Nobles, the Dakota Land Company and the Democratic Party.

Jacques claimed to have been the subject of mob-bullying at his claim on the Cottonwood River, about seven miles from New Ulm, where he lived with his wife, a small child, a brother and his father. He had a run-in with a quarrelsome neighbor, A. Tuttle, whom "the Democrats recently nominated for legislature." (Dodge never missed an opportunity to bash Democrats). The Jacques family had been engaged in a long-running feud with Tuttle who had threatened to run them off their land. Tuttle warned them that if they did not leave voluntarily, he would "raise a crowd and hang them." And according to Jacques, Tuttle knew exactly where to find his "crowd."

Sure enough a "mob of about forty men, consisting principally of Noble's company," armed with Sharp's rifles was seen riding up to the Jacques residence. Jacques was unloading potatoes when he saw the riders approach. After he sent his father to find his brother who was at work about a mile away, Jacques went inside the house, fearing violence.

The riders stopped at his door and demanded that he come out. Shots were fired through the window, one of which passed through Jacques' shirt but did not hit him. Another bullet struck the wall of the cabin where Mrs. Jacques had been standing only moments earlier. Some of the men shouted, "burn the house!"

At this point, Jacques stepped out to confront the mob in hopes of securing the safety of his family inside. "If you wish to kill me, here I am, but spare my family."

One of the riders revealed a rope, and Jacques felt his time had come, thinking they would take him into the timber, find a tree and string him up. After some further discussion, about 20 of the riders started off in the direction of Jacques' brother's claim. John Jacques was taken along with them.

Not far down the rode, they met Jacques' father driving an ox-team. When asked about the brother, the old man simply said he was gone. This brought an angry response of "shoot him!" But once again, it was just a threat. Instead, ten of the men took John Jacques over to Tuttle's residence. When he saw his hated enemy, Tuttle shouted, "That is one of the dammed villains! Shoot him! Shoot him!" Two riders aimed their guns at Jacques who, once again, feared for his life. And once again, they did not shoot.

They took him to the Nobles camp where he was advised in no uncertain terms, that he and his family and neighbors had until Wednesday to leave the country. Feeling a great reluctance to leave their improved claims, they went to Fort Ridgely for protection but were told by an officer that he had no authority in the matter.

It is interesting that Jacques would next stop at a newspaper office instead of going to see the Brown County sheriff, but he went to see Dodge instead. Besides, Dodge insisted, it would do no good to go to the Brown County authorities, hinting that they would be sympathetic to Tuttle and Nobles' gang of ruffians.

Dodge published his article on October 28, 1857, under the caption: "Lynch Law in Brown County – Daring outrage by a Gang of Villains!" The article rages with anger and indignation; he restrained nothing and was careful to point out that only Nobles' men had Sharp's rifles so it must have been them who fired the shots into Jacques' cabin. Jacques claimed he could identify the men if he saw them again as they were frequently in the area.

Dodge said that just before the recent election, Nobles men were encamped on the Cottonwood River, seemingly hanging around with nothing constructive to do. However, Dodge said, they had a reason for being there; they were needed to add votes to the Democratic column in Nicollet County, where the vote was expected to be close and a Republican had a real chance at winning an office. So they stayed, got drunk and voted and helped to elect a Democrat. Because of the illegal voting and the bullying of the Jacques, Dodge's anger at Nobles, his men and his fellow Democratic speculators had reached a new level.

Dodge promised more scathing editorials and lethal articles exposing the crime and corruption of the Minnesota Democratic Party, an organization desperate enough to intimidate, cheat and lie in order to stay in power. Nobles' party of thugs might escape official punishment, and avoid criticism from St. Paul newspapers, but the vigilant Dodge would give them no cover or rest. He said, "A bigger humbug than his

[Nobles] Pacific Road expedition, and the Dakota [sic] Land Company's operations, has never been before the public of Minnesota." His purpose was to show that Nobles' government crew was no better than a gang of outlaws.

Nobles fired back. In a hard-hitting letter dated December 4, 1857, printed in the *St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat*, he explained his position relative to the Jacques-Tuttle feud. Nobles claimed Jacques was a bad man, and was exceedingly unpopular and greatly feared by his neighbors. And it was the neighbors, not his men, who wanted to lynch the Jacques, noting also, that it was a fate they richly deserved.

Nobles said Tuttle was the victim of threats, bullying and a terrible beating at the hands of John Jacques's brother. Nobles said that his men simply went to Jacques house to order him out of the country, not to burn him out or string him up. He said the fire that destroyed the Jacques residence, was set by Jacques' father and Nobles' men actually tried to extinguish the blaze.

He closed his letter by addressing his supposed association with the Dakota Land Company and handled the question by saying flatly, "I have nothing to do with the Dakota Land Company." After all he had selected his route "long before the Dakota Land Company was dreamed of." But if the company created cities along his route, so much the better, for he would be complimented. So with several bold strokes of his pen, William H. Nobles slammed his newspaper and political critics with a vigor and vituperation equal to the abuse they heaped upon him.

Dodge returned the volley in an attempt to entrap Nobles in a web of deception and crime. Dodge said he never intended to take the position that Nobles participated in the acts of violence directed at Jacques, but rather that the road builder, plainly condoned such acts and by failing to take corrective action, ratified them. Nobles, Dodge wrote, "is not fit to be a government mule-driver." He was certainly not qualified to build a road, which of course, he didn't do despite his claims and all the surrounding publicity. The road - the "humbug" - was a "nice fat job" for Nobles and done primarily to "benefit the Dacotah Land Co.!

Dodge was clearly out of control and on a vendetta, but there is evidence that the Dakota Land Company and allies had more than a passing interest in Nobles' road. In the spring and summer of 1857, Nobles was accused by the department of the interior of over spending and unauthorized spending. He was hammered for buying provisions from an unapproved source that turned out to be a member of the Dakota Land Company. Since that organization was out on the frontier planting towns, it was only logical that the success of the road would enhance their chance to profit from real estate speculation. At any rate the connections looked too cozy and gave Dodge more editorial barbs to toss at Nobles.

But things got quiet, as if both sides were tired of fighting or running out of steam. The holidays came and went and as was typical on the northern frontier, the harsh winter weather imposed itself on friend and enemy alike. The flow and energy of news reporting slowed to the point of freezing. At any rate, Dodge seemed to relent. Maybe he was satisfied that he had made his point; perhaps he had no fresh information, or decided that nothing he could say or write would result in punishment for Nobles' bad boys. Dodge believed that corruption from the enemy (meaning Democrats) was so widespread and powerful, that only a thorough and convincing political victory by the Republicans would save the state.

Nobles was equally determined to finish what he started. But in February of 1858, he was removed from his road superintending duties, without notice, and replaced by another man. Nobles was charged with "unnecessary delays" and "useless expenditure of public money" by someone in the interior department. Upon investigation, however, he was restored to his superintendent position by the secretary of the interior, and cleared of all charges. It was evidence of his strong support in Washington.

Nobles was free to resume his duties on the frontier where a newspaperman from St. Peter lacked the power to do much more than aggravate. Nobles saw the bigger picture, the grander West, and its potential for adventure and personal gain. He understood that he and his colleagues were in a fight to hold their edge in the Minnesota legislature, and at the same time, hope that the Democrats held the White House and congress. For without that source of strength, their town site plans would be greatly weakened, if not destroyed altogether.

Sources do tie the road project to the Dakota Land Company speculators. When the Dakota Land Company was chartered, Nobles and another man were granted 20 year charters to operate ferries on the Big Sioux, James and Missouri Rivers. The ferries were, naturally, located along the Nobles road where a ferry operator might make some money in times of high water. In his book *Wagon Roads West*, Professor Turrentine W. Jackson concludes that from the outset the road was a front for plans cooked up by certain congressmen who were looking to make money from land speculation.

Dodge must have suspected some kind of a sweetheart deal, but he was probably motivated more by his desire to bring down a sworn enemy. Dodge kept insisting that Nobles was a fraud and that he, "has not build a mile of road, except in a few places, where the *Dakota Land Company wanted it fixed for their benefit!*"

But the heated remark was just another in a series of Quixotic uppercuts, and just as ineffective. Some people objected to Dodge's stubbornness and grew tired of his rant, but no one complained about a free

press. Dodge had done his part in support of his party. He had taken the fight to the Dakota Land Company, the Democratic Party and several newspapers that he didn't like.

The incident involving John Jacques was soon forgotten. After all, it was primarily one angry man's word against that of another angry man. The authorities and other newspapers ignored it and the people forgot about it. Jacques and Tuttle went somewhere and got lost and remain a footnote in history. They were, after all, just fodder in a newspaper fight over politics, power and money, and quickly became irrelevant.

What mattered in the long run to Nobles and his friends was the commitment to the town site enterprise, to keep working and continue in the belief that something good would emerge from the hard, dirty struggle. Wagon roads, railroads and enduring town sites - names on maps of the West that would remain long after all evidence of the Nobles' road was gone---would be the best proof of the Dakota Land Company's sincerity, vision and long-term commitment toward developing both Minnesota and Dakota.

Although it never went further than the east bank of the Missouri River, Nobles sincerely believed in his South Path road. No amount of criticism could sway him from his belief. And when the smoke cleared from the commotion caused by accusations, lawsuits, investigations and angry newspaper articles, Nobles emerged a winner. A fighter to the end, he didn't leave the ring empty handed and he undoubtedly felt vindicated.

I want to conclude with a Nobles quote in the *St. Paul Daily Times* that sums up his views and ambitions in terms that his fellow speculators and other believers could understand. "The West is becoming so powerful already that it matters but very little whether the older States assist much or not. From this great framework of navigation, railroads will be built, and telegraphic lines will be established, ..and these lines will be extended to the Pacific." Just like his road--all the way to the Pacific Ocean. It was a dream worth dreaming and an ambition worthy of a man who loved the West and embraced its challenges.

A MISSIONARY AND HIS DAUGHTER

Elizabeth R. Gutch

On page 135 of "Sunset to Sunset" the autobiography of my Grandfather, Thomas L. Riggs, we read in the fall of 1885 he was re-locating the mission buildings across from Lindsay on the Cheyenne, hauling the lumber and materials from Pierre. He came home for a few days with one eye bandaged and paining him severely. However he thought he did not have time to stay at home and care for it, so went off again to hurry up the work before cold weather set in. By the time he reached Lindsay, the other eye had become infected and he could hardly see at all and was in much pain. He did not want to delay the work by having anyone leave to go with him, so he rode horseback all the way from the Cheyenne to the Missouri across from Oahe, a distance of thirty-five miles, with his eyes bandaged, not seeing a foot of the road. Although not his regular mount, he could tell when the horse was off the road.

He came down a steep hill opposite Oahe, hoping some of the family might see him and go over in a rowboat, but as they were not expecting him, they were not on the lookout. Fortunately some cowboys were in camp there, and they helped him care for his horse, and started on his way the next morning to Ft. Pierre to get a livery team to bring him the rest of the way home. As they went along, he could tell just where he was just by the 'feel' of the road, naming accurately the landmarks that he knew so well.

On reaching home, he went into a dark room which he did not leave for thee months. The trouble with his eyes was a very aggravated case of trachoma ¹ contacted from the Indians, which markedly impaired the sight of both eyes.

His missionary work was curtailed. In the March issue of the Word Carrier, a newspaper published at the Santee Normal School, it is found that the whole family went to the Annual Conference of the Dakota Association, which met at Rosebud (Reservation).

No mention is found that he received any treatment until 1900 when his son Theodore stayed home from his medical studies for a year, so his father could seek treatment in Chicago.

Thomas had four children, Theodore, whose mother Nina Foster, had died when he was four, and Louisa's three – Robert, Lawrence, and Muriel who was eight years old that year. During his absence from home, Thomas wrote 9 letters to his daughter Muriel. The first letter had the letterhead of "Howard and Wilson, Publishing Co. 710 Masonic Temple, Chicago." C. H. Howard was the brother of Thomas' first wife, Nina. The letters are copied here:

Letter number one – Thursday, Jany 25, 1900

Dear Muriel:

That was very nice letter you wrote me Jany 20 and you sent me a picture of a water barrel too. Thank you. And you have a two story play house out by the woodpile, that must be fine. Yesterday I went down and saw Martha Bain and Alice Conger. They were glad to see me. It was lunch time. Alice was there and Miss Bain came in very soon. I had a nice little visit with them. I send many kisses to you – and I love you very much. (Martha Bain and Alice Conger were two Indian girls who were at the Armour Institute in Chicago at a dress making course).

Your Father

Letter number 2 – dated Feb 1st, 1900

Dear Muriel:

This is the first day of a new month and so I begin at the little one – I mean you - to write letters to. I thank you for this nice paper sent me to use when I write you. Yes, I kiss the most of your kisses – send me some more. That was a funny sort of a letter you sent me last. I unwrapped and unwrapped, and found no words, only pictures. You must have thought to play a joke on me. They were nice pictures though – did you draw them? There are five kisses for five people *****.

Lovingly, your father T. L. R.

Letter number 3 – dated Feb 7th. 1900

Dear Muriel:

I have such a nice jacket and I am wearing it in the house and (it) is very soft, softer than Merry's hair and is a brownish grey mixed with black in squares like plaid.

(I write this for tomorrow's letter to you)

I sent your mother a flower that was at my plate at dinner last night. I wore it in my button hole at dinner and then when I came to my room, I put it in some water to keep it fresh.

No signature

Letter number 4 – Feb 12, 1900

Dear Muriel:

This is Monday again and just as one goes to the telephone and rings the bell and then says "Hello" so I am going to say hello! to you and for my message I'll say "I love you" and you'll say something and then I'll say "Good Bye"

Letter number 5 - Feb 22nd, 1900
from Glencoe, Home of General C. Howard.

This morning I saw a funny sight. Togo is a great big black dog you know – and he is old and stiff too. Well this morning he walked out past the window and stretched himself out

on the white snow, it was odd to see his black body against the white all around. Here are some more star kisses from your Father *****

From the March 1900 edition of the Word Carrier: Mr. T. L. Riggs, who had been in Chicago for some weeks for treatment of his eyes, has now gone to Florida for awhile. His eyes are much benefited.

Letter number 6 - March 12, 1900
Green Cove Springs, Florida

Dear Muriel:

Saturday I saw a very curious thing – there was a hole in the ground about large enough for a good sized boy to get inside, and it was full of muddy water that bubbled and tossed around just as if it were boiling over a fire. The water was quite warm and steam came from it. It is a spring that does that way every once in a while. There are a good many springs here but they are not at all like this.

The programs (that) the boys sent came today – but no letters from any of our little folks. Your Mother must be the only one that remembers me. I love you very much.

Your Father, T. L. Riggs

Letter number 7 – Green Cove Springs
March 15, 1900

They have the queerest little streetcar here – only one car I think - drawn by a mule with a negro driver! The track runs from the Ry station up by the hotels and along the river and then back to the other side of town. The car only runs to the trains and there are no busses here. He drew a picture showing the Ry station, the hotel where I am and the four other hotels, the sulphur spring and the St. John's River. With lots of love and kisses.

Your father, T. L. Riggs

Letter number 8 – postmarked Washington, D.C.
No explanation about why he stopped here.

I saw a great many Easter Lily flowers yesterday and today I went to see the egg-rolling at the White House grounds. There were ever so many people there and nearly all the children carried little baskets full of eggs. Then there were boys who had picked out the hardest shelled eggs and these they used to fight the eggs of the other boys – the strongest egg would break a hole in the other. There were ever so many eggs – people eating eggs – little children rolling eggs and playing ball with them and there were broken eggs all over the grass and some bad eggs that did not smell nicely. And every body left their paper boxes and wrapping on the grass – such a mess and such a sight. White children and colored children, men and women – a great crowd and all seemed to be having a good time. And out on the street there was a man with a hand-organ and a dancing monkey. The monkey would dance around and when any one gave him a penny

he would take off cap and bow. When they gave him food things or peanuts, he would eat them. It was very funny.

Good night, lovingly your father T. L. Riggs

Letter number 9 – no address, but from the reference to the Longley family
he probably was visiting his Mother's family in Hawley, Mass
May 10. 1900

Dear Muriel:

Today I went to see a very old clock, over 100 years old we know and very likely nearly 200. When your grandmother was a little wee baby girl, this clock was ticking away in the house where she was born. It is about nine feet high and stands on the floor. It is made of Great-Grand-father Longley had it and I think, but do not know, that his father bought it when he, your great-grand-father Longley was a little boy.

Goodby, Your loving father, T. L. Riggs

This is the last letter to Muriel.

From the Word Carrier of Dec 1900 page 11: "Mr T. L. Riggs has delighted us all by the return of his health. He is much more like his own self. His eyes are weak, but do not trouble him under ordinary circumstances."

Sad news came from the Word Carrier for May-June 1901: "For weeks the friends near and far have waited for news from the Mission home at Oahe where the only daughter, Muriel, lay sick. As hope of recovery failed, our hearts went out towards the hearts that would soon ache in sorrowful parting. The incident of her death and burial are touchingly told in the letter given below." Muriel died June 16, 1901 of rheumatic fever. ²

"The end of Muriel's illness came Sunday morning about 8 o'clock. As she lay sleeping and without any struggle or sign the sweet spirit left the worn little body. She suffered so during the 7 weeks of her illness that we cannot but be glad that the suffering is over. But we miss her so – the sweet, bright loving ways, the happy little voice, the dear presence. You know how lonely we are. She was just pure joy and comfort.

We laid the little body away Monday afternoon in the little Enclosure (a family burial ground at the west end of the house). Mr. Lyman from Pierre conducted the service, and many friends from Pierre were here. There was nothing somber about the service. The little body lay in a coffin of our own fashioning, covered and lined with white; and over her we strewed the wild roses she loved so well.

We sang the songs she loved: "To hear a sweet voice calling me", "Jesus loves the little children" and the Evening Prayer "Now the light has gone away." We know it is only the body that lies there. Her sweet spirit is with Him who loved the little children.

It was a comfort to have Theodore here. He was a great help in the last days and nights of watching. I am glad we were all here together and the end

did not come while Thomas was away.

Louisa Irvine Riggs

I was born 18 years after Muriel died. The Stone House was built in 1901-1904 with Muriel's room at the end of the east hall. We were allowed to play with her dolls occasionally, which included two with china heads and eyes that opened and closed. When the Oahe Dam flooded Peoria Bottom, the dolls were sent to my brother Donald, who with his wife Margaret were starting a school in Media, PA. My brother Tom's children attended the school and the two oldest, Larry and Lynne adopted the two large dolls. We do not remember what Muriel called her dolls, but they became Mary and Laura, after the girls in the "Little House on the Prairie." When Larry and Lynne grew up and the school closed, Lynne asked that the dolls be stored for her at the home of their brother Roger Riggs and his wife Cathy in Burlington, Mass. Later Cathy had one of the dolls, Laura, repaired and dressed in period clothes and sent to Lynne in Tokyo, where she now lives in a special cabinet in a place of honor. One day perhaps her sister, Mary, will join her.

¹ Information on Trachoma and Rheumatic fever was requested from The Wegner Health Information Center Library.
From the Mayo Clinic dated 2-5-2010 – "Trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide.... The bacterium that causes trachoma spreads through direct contact with the eye, nose or throat secretions...it is very contagious
From "The Journal of American Medical Association – dated 2-5-2010 - Infection with 'Chlamydia causes inflammation of the conjunctiva of the upper eyelid. Repeated infections lead to scarring and contraction of the conjunctiva, which pulls the eyelashes against the surface of the eye. ...surgical treatment may be necessary to correct the inversion of eyelashes. Since 1938 treatment with antibiotics in oral form or in eye ointment can be used.

T.L.R.'s infection in 1885 was not treated until 1900, so we presume the surgical treatment was necessary

² Rheumatic fever: An Editorial by Edward F. Bland, MD in 1897 - By the 1920's rheumatic fever was the leading cause of death in individuals between 5 and 10. The only treatment was pain medicine and bed rest, usually at home... Boston and St. Paul had hospitals devoted just to these patients. By the 1930's the role of Streptococcus had been established as the initiating agent of the disease - the advent of sulfonamides were found to be an acceptable treatment.

"We wonder what would have changed for the Missionary and his daughter had sulfa and antibiotics been available in 1900. He would have been spared great discomfort and the threat of blindness. She would probably have lived a normal life span."

THE FIRST STEPS FOR MAN'S JOURNEY TO THE MOON - 238,857 MILES

Robert E. "Bob" Hayes

If a person decides to walk to New York City it is always necessary to take the first step. If you decide to go to the moon, the same principle applies. This paper is about the initial steps to the moon.

I have been thinking about this paper for quite sometime. I have been mulling this over in my head and convinced myself that I am probably the only writer that has been associated with this subject for the longest period of time in history. I decided to write about what a little six year old boy saw and what went through his mind starting on July 28, 1934 and up to the present as a senior citizen. Most of the items are facts and some of the information reported may be open to scrutiny because of lack of memory.

A lot of this paper appears to be disjointed. I quite often interject what I recall and remember as a little boy and also report the actual facts as reported by numerous writers and from the research material I accumulated over the years. I started out as a youngster and I was an eye witness to the launching of both Explorer I and Explorer II and the aborted flight between the two flights. Since I returned to Keystone, I have been quite vocal about preserving the Stratobowl as a national treasure. I belong to an informal group we call the Stratobowl Committee. I have about half a dozen loose-leaf binders on the history of the stratosphere flights and the Stratobowl. I have one thick binder on the late Ed Yost, the inventor of the modern hot-air balloon. Yost was one of the founders of Raven Industries in Sioux Falls and the owner of Skypower of Tea, South Dakota, which manufactured balloons. Yost had a dream of a park at the rim of the Stratobowl, and he spent over \$100,000 for four monuments at the rim which are not accessible to the public.

I was involved in promoting Ed Yost into the South Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame in Spearfish. I firmly believe Yost should be inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame in Chamberlain.

Numerous papers covering the Stratobowl have been presented at history conferences in both Sioux Falls and the Black Hills. Tom Walsh of Rapid City presented a paper on the flights from the Stratobowl at the 10th Annual Dakota History Conference at Madison on April 8, 1978.

Explorer I

It is very difficult to recall one's memory which is soon approaching almost 80 years as what exactly happened on July 28, 1934. I was six years of age and approaching seven in three months. I grew up in the same house in Keystone where I live today. My parents were Edwald and Gladys Hayes and I was the only child at this time. I had completed the first grade and my teacher was Miss Helen Salisbury from

Presho. She continued teaching in Keystone for a total of 11 years, so Miss Salisbury continued to be my teacher in the second and third grades. I pictured Miss Salisbury as an older and mature lady, but she may have been a mature young lady and perhaps she had been a beautiful young lady a short time ago when she finished school. This is difficult for a six-year old little boy to comprehend.

I really can't recall where my father was working at the time. I guess he may have been working at Mount Rushmore that summer as a laborer. Mount Rushmore was seasonal work, which went from April 1 to October 31. Some seasons were shorter because of a lack of funds. As a laborer he filled-in at a lot of spots. He operated the aerial tramway and worked as a blacksmith helper. He often ran errands by driving to Rapid City in a dilapidated pickup truck. I remember on one occasion he took some harnesses (bosun chairs) to Duhamel's for repairs. He took me with him. When he was running errands to Rapid City, Gale Wilcox usually filled in as the hoist operator. I understand Gutzon Borglum designed the bosun chairs and they were made by the Duhamel Company in Rapid City.

This time frame was in the time of the Great Depression. When Dad was not working at Mount Rushmore, he worked at various jobs in the area. Even though this was the time of the depression, Dad was usually quite fortunate to find work during the off season. One time he worked for the South Dakota Dept. of Transportation as an "oiler" on a power shovel when they constructed the highway in Custer State Park just southeast of Elk Haven. We called these shovels steam shovels. Actually sometime before my time these shovels were powered by steam engines and later were replaced by diesel engines; however, they were still referred to as steam engines.

One winter Dad worked at the Hugo Mine for the Consolidated Feldspar Corporation and two different winters he worked at the Golden Slipper Mine for Empire Gold Mines, Inc., which was located north of the highway between Keystone and Hill City.

To be honest, I did not know anything about the Great Depression because I did not know anything about a depression. I did not suffer. We always had food on the table and plenty to eat. I remember heating water on the wood and coal stove in the kitchen, mother doing the laundry on a washboard, and hanging the laundry out to dry on the clotheslines. Mother thought she was in "Seventh Heaven" when she was able to have an agitating washer with a power ringer. Thinking back, there were a couple of times when Dad was out of work and we made trips to Ridge, Montana to visit Dad's Uncle Joe and Aunt Kate for a few days. I recall when a photographer from O'Neill, Nebraska or Rapid City took group photos at school. I recall asking Mother for 15 cents to purchase a copy of the photo and she told me that I didn't need the picture. I guess this was an indicator we were experiencing the Great Depression.

I recall very clearly being on the north rim of the Stratobowl. I do not remember when we drove to the area and I only assume it was in Dad's 1930 maroon Chevrolet. The name of the color does not register with me but I remember seeing the car in my mind because he drove the car for about five years and it was eventually replaced by a black 1935 Chevrolet. I can still see this beautiful maroon automobile in my mind. I don't recall if it was called the Stratobowl at the time. I remember very vividly being there on the rim. In addition to my parents, my grandfather John Hayes and Aunt Ellen Hayes were with us as well as Uncle Bake. I called him Uncle Bake. He was Basil "Bake" Canfield and perhaps his parents, Del and Anna Canfield, were also together with all of us. Aunt Ellen and Uncle Bake dated for approximately 20 years and were eventually married in 1942.

We arrived at the Stratobowl before dark which I learned much later was July 27, 1934. It was probably the largest crowd that I experienced in my short lifetime. Looking behind us was a sea of cars parked on what I learned later was called Butterfield Flat because the only family living in the area was the Butterfield family and they owned the property and apparently charged a fee for parking.

We established a space near the edge of the rim. We were loaded with pillows and blankets. I don't recall sleeping because I believe I was afraid of missing the activity below. We were all busy watching all the prep work in the bottom of the bowl. The bowl was well lit with the electricity being supplied by portable generators. They pulled a cover, what appeared to be a large circular tarp, to the center of the bowl. It was put in place on the ground by many men.

I had no idea what and why this activity was taking place. Eventually the canvas began to puff up in the middle. I learned very quickly they were filling this canvas like pumping up an inner tube in a tire or like blowing into a toy balloon like the one we used to get on our birthday. I must have made this association because I learned everyone was calling this monstrosity a balloon. As the night progressed this mushroom-shaped balloon took a different shape and became a lot higher. Ropes were tied around the circumference near the top of the balloon and the ropes were stretched to the ground. I don't think I ever comprehended exactly what was happening. The shape of the balloon was conical with the large diameter at the top and tapered down almost to a point at the bottom. About daylight they rolled out a big cart which appeared to contain a round white ball and they attached this ball to the bottom of the balloon. I eventually learned they called this ball the gondola. I really can't describe the large number of men working around this balloon. All of the spectators, including me, were quite interested in all the activity that was taking place in the bottom of the bowl. I don't think anyone wanted to sleep.

I recall many years later I belonged to the Toastmasters Club in Kellogg, Idaho. Our club was visiting the Coeur d'Alene club. The Toastmasters would give you an impromptu subject and you were required to stand up and talk for two minutes. I jumped up and described the balloon flights from the Stratobowl and compared the conveyance similar in shape to an ice cream cone with a ball about the size of a pea attached to the bottom.

Early in the morning of July 28, 1934, the ropes were detached and the balloon started to rise from the bottom, rose to the top of the rim and went out of sight. I cannot recall if any of the men were on top of the ball or were inside. This was almost like a miracle. I didn't know where the balloon was going and why. This was a complete mystery to a six-year old boy. I do recall the traffic moved very slowly as we left the area.

What the Six Year Old Boy Learned Later

Wednesday July 28, 1934, was a day of remembrance. Major William E. Kepner, an experienced balloonist, Captain Albert Stevens, and First Lieutenant Orvil Anderson lifted off from the Stratosphere Bowl (Stratobowl for short) at 5:45 a.m. Major William Kepner selected the sight after examining other locations in the United States. The natural bowl, near Rockerville, is obviously an ancient meander of Spring Creek which eroded the soft limestone back in geologic time and left a wall of limestone on three sides 300 to 400 feet high. When Kepner and his cowboy guide, Ben Rush, reached the edge of the rim, Kepner said, "God made this site from which to launch balloons."

Ben Rush was a fixture around Rockerville for a good many years. I understand that Ben Rush worked as a young boy for the mining company that operated the water flume that traversed 17 miles from just below Three Forks on Hwy 385A to Rockerville. There were numerous trestles along the flume and there were many leaks in the system. Rush was hired to plug these leaks with horse manure. The water for the flume came out of Spring Creek. Obviously, the miners had water to wash the gold-bearing gravel in their rockers. I am sure the women had water to do their laundry. I can understand the residents might not want to drink the water which was contaminated by horse manure.

If my memory is correct, Ben Rush served as a county commissioner of Pennington County. I had a personal association with Ben Rush. When I was a senior at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in the fall of 1950, I made a personal contact with Ben Rush. I don't recall why I was prompted to contact Rush. Someone must have given me a clue. I approached Rush and borrowed an original rocker from the hey days of Rockerville. Normally miners mined gold along streams. The gravel was

washed by the flow of water along sluice boxes and riffles which concentrated the gold. Because of the shortage of water the separation of gold from the gravel took place in the rocker.

I took the rocker into Rapid City and our mining department prepared a float for the homecoming parade for the South Dakota School of Mines. We utilized a flat-bed truck loaded with rocks and gravel. Tom Beckers and I road the float, dressed as early day miners and we simulated that we were using the rocker to separate the gold from the gravel. I believe there is a photo image of this float in the School Annual of 1951

I quite often think about Ben Rush letting me take this historic relic off of his property. I don't know what happened to this rocker. I do know it should be in a museum somewhere.

The proposed flight was announced in the April 1934 issue of the National Geographic Magazine as follows, "To increase scientific knowledge of the upper air, the National Geographic Society is cooperating with the US Army Air Corps and a group of other donors in sponsoring a balloon ascent into the stratosphere in the summer of 1934. The balloon to be used in the flight, with a capacity of 3,000,000 cubic feet, is the largest free balloon ever designed." The first Explorer flight used hydrogen as the lifting gas. Explorer I reached an altitude 60,613 feet. At the 60,000-foot level, the crew discovered several tears in the lower portion of the balloon which induced them to initiate a descent. Extensive damage occurred at lower altitudes and the crew exited by parachute below the 5,000-foot level. At about the 3,000-foot level, the hydrogen gas had combined with sufficient air to form an explosive mixture which was detonated by static electricity from flapping fabric.

Although not all of the goals of the flight were achieved, the crew was uninjured and enough of the scientific instruments and experiments were salvaged to encourage the National Geographic Society and the US Army Corps to sponsor another stratosphere flight. The landing occurred near Holredge, Nebraska which is south of the North Platte River and southwest of Kearney. The parachute, specially designed by Major Hoffman, brought the instrument capsule to earth with instruments and collected data intact. The gondola broke on impact and only the films were salvaged from its cargo. The scientific instruments were all destroyed. This was the beginning of the space industry and the first step to put a man on the moon.

Explorer II

The sponsors were intent on reaching greater heights. They immediately began planning a second flight from the same place early the following summer.

Explorer II was ordered from the Goodyear-Zeppelin Company. The envelope was larger than Explorer I with a volume of 3,700,000 cubic feet – 700,000 cubic feet larger to compensate for the use of helium, an

inert gas with slightly less lift. The balloon had a larger gondola with a 9-foot diameter. The launch was scheduled for July 11, 1935. The little boy was now past 7 years of age.

The excursion to the Stratobowl this time was a male affair. Mother did not go for the launching. She was sick and could not make the trip and I cannot recall as to what her sickness might be. I cannot recall making the trip but again I remember the maroon 1930 Chevrolet. I do remember that we went through the same scenario. We were on the north rim of the Stratobowl. We came early and we were prepared to spend the night. I don't recall who was with us in our group. I do recall the beginning of the inflation and the balloon appearing like a toad stool. I do recall the crowd making an unusual noise like there was air of disappointment or disbelief. My father and I were apparently at one of the food stands and I recall very vividly rushing to the edge of the bowl and watching the partially filled balloon gradually settling to the ground. This was the end of the show and there was a mass exit. When we got to the highway the traffic that was exiting was bumper to bumper and there was no way we could get into the line of traffic. This was the first time I actually recall the people in our group. John Twining got out of the car and temporarily stopped the flow of both lanes of traffic, the one going south and the one going north. When we got on the other side of the highway we took some back roads which took us to what is now called South Rockerville Road and we returned to Keystone without any delays. At this time I recall my grandfather, John Hayes being with us. Jerry Spriggs may have also been with us. Of course there is no one living to confirm the passengers that were in our car. Twining and Spriggs were two single old-timers who spent a lot of time in grandpa's store. The store was a gathering place to sit around the tall coal and wood stove and tell stories. I vividly remember the white streaks on the stove made by the men striking matches on the stove to light their smokes.

Now I will relate the facts which I learned much later. On July 11, 1935, inflation had not progressed far when a seventeen-foot tear appeared in the balloon. This naturally caused much concern. Inflation came to a halt and a decision was made to try to repair it – Andy and Steve (Anderson and Stevens) were not about to give up. The patch was completed and the long wait for favorable conditions began. The summer of 1935 proved to be very frustrating to the crew and all their associates. It was windy, rainy, and, of course, cloudy. Hourly reports from the weather bureau were discouraging day by day. The atmosphere in the bowl could be perfect but winds aloft in an area 700 miles west to 500 miles east was a different story. This was the estimated distance necessary to insure the time needed to complete the flight.

For years I was always under the impression that after the flight was aborted on July 11 that it took several months to prepare for another flight and that they decided and chose November 11, as the launch

day because it was Armistice Day, a national holiday. This had to have been a coincidence. About noon on November 9, 1935, all weather reports came together so orders to inflate were given. The patched balloon was spread and the crowd began to gather around the rim of the bowl.

After work the night of November 10, our family took off for the bowl with the car packed with food and thermos bottles with hot coffee. I was eight years of age. It was below freezing so we took plenty of blankets and prepared to spend the night. Our group consisted of my mother and father, Edwald and Gladys Hayes, Aunt Ellen Hayes and her boy friend of about ten years, Basil Canfield, (they were married in 1941 but I always called him Uncle Bake), and my grandfather, John Hayes. I remember this night very vividly because it was so cold. How could I forget this experience?

At this time in my young life I did not understand the scientific principle of balloons, what made the balloon rise, and was there a purpose for all this fanfare.

There were large bonfires burning several hundred feet away from the rim which minimizes the damage of sparks landing on the balloon. Were they taking chances? The crowd was very large, perhaps large enough to fill Yankee Stadium. There were numerous temporary stands selling hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, souvenirs, etc. It was definitely a carnival atmosphere. Butterfield Flat, where the Conoco station is now located, was loaded with automobiles and other modes of transportation. The Butterfield family must have taken in more money that night than they had in the Denver Mint. The people parked in this area and walked to the rim of the Stratobowl. We arrived very early and parked very close to the rim. I recall it being a very cold night. I can't remember if I got any sleep and perhaps it was too cold to sleep. The Homestake Mine of Lead, South Dakota, had furnished flood lights which encircled the area of activity so our view of the night was almost perfect. All power was generated on sight with portable generators. We watched and shivered as the giant grew to several stories high and the gondola with a ton of instruments was attached to the balloon.

On November 11, 1935, at 7:01 a.m., Captain Orvil A. Anderson and Captain Albert W. Stevens launched from the Stratobowl in Explore II. The high altitude flight took them to a new record of 72,395 feet, lasted 8 hours and 13 minutes, and ended in a gentle landing near White Lake, South Dakota. The ascent was extremely slow. There were some anxious moments as the balloon began to drift toward the southwest rim of the bowl. Ballast was hurriedly dumped spewing lead shot over everyone below. But the gondola left the bowl, just barely clearing the trees and the hundreds of people on the rim across from us. I remember this incident very vividly. Captains Anderson and Stevens were riding on the outside of the gondola. I remember the crew dropping the ballast which was attached to the rim of the gondola. Mother

kept telling me, "They are dropping ballast." I was too young to understand the principle of ballooning. Mom being a school teacher must have understood the principles of ballooning.

The hatch was closed at 17,000 feet above sea level. Temperatures inside the gondola were 5 degrees below zero and the outside temperature was 78 degrees below zero. Inside the gondola soon became more comfortable at 32 degrees. The gondola was pressurized, so with heated flying suits and a supply of oxygen on board the crew was in a livable atmosphere.

The flight was slowed several times to check instrument recordings, take photographs, and compare the hostile atmosphere with that inside the gondola. They spent an hour and a half at ceiling – 72,395 feet above sea level – the highest ever for a manned flight and a record that held for twenty-one years. During the time they were aloft they were in contact via short wave radio with people on the ground at the bowl, as well as people in various parts of North America, London, and aboard the China Clipper.

Gradually the gas was released for their return trip to earth. The hatch was opened at about 13,000 feet and a safe landing was made near White Lake, South Dakota, slightly more than eight hours after take-off, with everything intact. The distance traveled was approximately 200 miles, somewhat less than had been expected. They had allowed for 500 miles, depending on wind currents aloft. Maybe they waited for everything to be perfect.

Many things were proven by the flight, and the data obtained on pressurized cabins, heated flying suits, cosmic rays, and the atmosphere, was invaluable in research and development of stratosphere flights of the future.

25th Anniversary Explorer II

I appreciate, as many others, the drive, dedication, determination, resilience and stamina of Colonel Joe W. Kittinger for his efforts to promote the history of the Stratobowl in the Black Hills of South Dakota and the race to space and the moon. A lot has been written about Kittinger. I recommend "The Pre-Astronauts – Manned Ballooning on the Threshold of Space," by Craig Ryan, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1995. I am not going to attempt to list all of the accomplishments of Kittinger. Joe was the first man in space at 96,000 feet; highest parachute jump at 102,800 feet, world's record distance in a balloon at 2,001 miles, later beat his own world's record at 3,543 miles, and the first to solo the Atlantic in a balloon.

Col. Joe Kittinger wrote an article for the Rapid City Daily Journal covering the program to honor the 25th Anniversary of Explorer II which took place on the rim of the Stratobowl on November 11, 1960.

Many of the group met in Washington, D.C. four days before the dedication ceremony which included Major Dave Simons, who was the pilot of the numerous Manhigh and Excelsior flights, who represented the USAF; Dr. McKnew, the Chief Scientist for the Explorer projects, Lt. General William E. Kepner, USAF (Retired), Co-pilot of Explorer I flight; Major General Orvil Anderson, USAF (Retired), Co-pilot of the Explorer I flight and pilot of the Explorer II flight, Malcom Ross, U.S. Navy high altitude balloonist; and other members of the Board of Directors of the National Geographic Society. General LeMay was supposed to be on the trip but at the last minute he canceled out. Kittinger said he was the only Captain on the trip and was not used to the V.I.P. treatment and he continued and said, "I did learn to appreciate the attention and to accept it."

The group made overnight stops in Omaha and Colorado Springs before reaching Rapid City. They were transported to Mount Rushmore National Memorial where they were met by the Ranger in Charge and were given a VIP tour of the facility.

A dinner was attended by all the dignitaries, including the Mayor of Rapid City. I assume the dinner was at the Alex Johnson Hotel. There were many people at the dinner that had attended the Explorer I and Explorer II flights. I would have loved to have been at the dinner; however, I was working in New York City at the time.

Kittinger said he will never forget the story told by a witness at the aborted flight during the summer of 1935. He was up on the rim of the Stratobowl watching the balloon being inflated. It was a cold evening and to fortify himself he was sipping from a bottle of moonshine as he watched the inflation of the balloon over the outline of the liquor bottle. Suddenly the balloon ripped and fell to the ground. He thought the bottle had broken. Joe thought it was quite funny the way he described the incident. Prohibition had been repealed in 1933, but perhaps there was still some moonshine around. It was a grand evening of nostalgia and funny stories about the goings on at the various Explorer flights.

The next day, the eleventh of November, it was quite cold but it was a beautiful clear day with blue skies, when the group arrived at the rim of the Stratobowl. Ed Yost was at the bottom of the Stratobowl inflating a scientific balloon for the occasion. Overhead, a U-2 aircraft called the group on VHF radio and addressed the assembly from a very high perch over the site. Speeches were made by Dr. McKnew, Generals Kepner and Anderson, and others. The ceremony lasted about an hour and was quite an historic event.

Following is a quote from Captain Joe W. Kittinger which appeared in the Rapid City Daily Journal on Saturday, November 12, 1960, "Little did we know that in a few years man would fly in space and after another few years man would walk on the moon. But, it all started right here in the Stratobowl."

Col. Joe W. Kittinger, you were so right. You were right on top of it, to predict it would only be a few more years that a man would step on the moon. In a little less than ten years, Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon on July 20, 1969 and said. "That's one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind."

Neil finally made it with the help of so many and was only about 238, 857 miles from the Stratobowl, Rapid City, and Keystone. This was a job well done.

We watched this almost unbelievable news on television at our next door neighbors Ed and Annie Lou Pinnick while we lived in Uravan, Colorado.

Conclusions

I was an eyewitness observer of the flights of Explorer I and Explorer II as well as the aborted flight on July 8, 1935. I am proud I observed history in the making which was the forerunner to our space program that eventually sent a man to the moon.

I am pleased to be an historian and be involved in any programs to preserve the Stratobowl and its history. I would like the Stratobowl to be as visible as Mount Rushmore. I feel honored to have had a personal relationship with space heroes like Ed Yost and Col. Joe Kittinger

I am proud to have had a personal relationship with and receive input from such balloon pioneers as the late Ed Yost, Col. Joe W. Kittinger, Rev. Arley Fadness of Custer, and former members of the Balloon Historical Society.

I want to thank the late Tom Walsh for his valuable research of the Explorer flights.

I want to thank Reid Riner, Director of Minnilusa Pioneer Association for all his help and input to the Stratobowl Committee.

I have some final thoughts. Wouldn't it be a blessing and wonderful to wake up and read more human interest stories like the space rather reading about all of the mass shootings and other homicides?

Why isn't Ed Yost in the South Dakota Hall of Fame? Why isn't there a park at the Stratobowl?

It is amazing that all of this preliminary work during the Great Depression and we have to thank the National Geographic Society for their technical support as well as their financial help. We have to thank Fort Meade for furnishing many man hours of work as well as transportation facilities for transporting supplies and the large quantities of gas for the balloons. Also thanks to all of the help from the CCC program (Civilian Conservation Corps).

It is interesting to note how high the military personnel advance in rank over a 25 year period, perhaps World War II contributed to this rapid advancement. Orvil Anderson advanced from Lieutenant to Major General.

OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS SERVED: THE JOURNEY OF THE RIGGS FAMILY

Amanda Jensen

Families have their characteristic points as well as individuals. The family of Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, D.D. is no exception to this. Their characteristics all point in one direction. It is notably a missionary family. It began on missionary ground forty-two years ago at Lac qui Parle, Minnesota. From that time until the present the name of the family head has always appeared in the list of missionaries of the American Board. One after another the names of the children have been added to the list, until now we find Alfred, Isabella, Martha, Thomas, Henry, attached to the mission; and doing genuine missionary work.¹

The Riggs family continues to be a well-known name in missionary history. They, like most missionaries, moved to a mission where they lived for a majority of their lives. Unique to the Riggs family is the longevity of their mission work. Not only did Stephen and Mary give their lives to mission work, but five out of their eight children did as well.

The impact of the Riggs family can still be witnessed today. Stephen Riggs and his wife Mary made the decision to move and dedicate their lives to the mission as newlyweds in 1837. They moved to the Lac qui Parle Mission where Stephen began leaving his impact on Dakota history. While at the mission, Stephen, with the help of other missionaries, created the *Dakota Grammar and Dictionary*; he also translated the Bible into Dakota.²

While not a surprise, Stephen and Mary's children grew up speaking Dakota since their playmates consisted of the surrounding Indian children. After receiving their education, it felt natural for the children to return to the missionary lifestyle. This is exactly what Stephen's second son, Thomas, did. Thomas returned to missionary work and began his own legacy, this time at Oahe. Growing up on the mission greatly helped Thomas as he worked to set up his own mission. He already knew the language, putting him a step ahead of the missionaries who had to learn it so they could begin their work. Additionally, he knew the lifestyle of a missionary and knew what it took to become a successful missionary not to mention the lifestyle of the Dakota. This knowledge contributed to his development of schools on missions.

¹ Observation made by missionary Reverend Joseph Ward. Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 417.

² Mary Gay Humphreys, ed., *Missionary Explorers Among the American Indians*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913) pg. 197

Unfortunately, life on missions was not always easy. The Indians could be hostile and the Sioux Uprising of 1862 proved this. This situation challenged the entire Riggs family. Stephen found himself trapped between his work for the Indians and his loyalty to his country. He offered his interpreting services to Governor Alexander Ramsey in the aftermath of the uprising. However, this offer meant that he would turn his back on the Indians he had been closely working with on the mission.

Years later, Thomas struggled with some of the same issues. Fortunately for Thomas, no event such as the Sioux Uprising took place while he established and ran missions. Thomas' relationship with the Indians differed significantly from his father's. Thomas "lived and worked among the Dakota, not alone and apart from them. As a result, many members of the tribes respected him and turned to him in times of trouble."³ This shift in Indian respect came with the passing of time. Because their lives stretched over one hundred years of nineteenth century missionary activity and because they spent their careers among the Dakotas, Stephen and Thomas Riggs are considered foundational missionaries.

Born along the Ohio frontier on March 23, 1812, Stephen Riggs first school-house was nothing more than a log cabin with a "drunken Irishman for a teacher."⁴ Schools did not teach religion, so the children learned it at home. This teaching of Christian doctrine helped Stephen as he began his missionary work and would become an effective tool for teaching the Indians about Jesus Christ.

Stephen knew early in his life that he wanted to "work among the unevangelized."⁵ He began his formal education at Latin School in Ripley, Ohio in 1833 at the age of twenty-one.⁶ He attended Jefferson College graduating in 1834 and attended Western Theological Seminary where he graduated in 1836. He became an ordained Presbyterian Minister one year later. The year 1837 was an eventful year in Stephen's life. In addition to being ordained, he married Mary Ann Clark Longley.

After gathering the proper credentials, Stephen and Mary accepted positions as missionaries for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Founded in 1810, the ABCFM became the first organized missionary society in the United States. It began as an "inter-denominational society, including Presbyterian and Reformed churches, besides its core of Congregationalists. It was left as a

³ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. xxiii.

⁴ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 25.

⁵ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 27.

⁶ Beloit College Archives, "Indian Education in the 19th Century", http://www.beloit.edu/archives/documents/archival_documents/masteringthesecret/partone.

Congregationalist body after 1870.”⁷ The ABCFM, which could have sent the newlyweds anywhere, decided to send them to the newly settled Minnesota Territory.⁸

Stephen and Mary set out to join Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, also of Ripley, Ohio. Dr. Williamson founded the mission at Lac qui Parle in Minnesota; he brought the earliest medical care to the Dakotas. Dr. Williamson made the needs of the West known and Stephen felt attracted to those needs. The Riggs arrived in Minnesota on June 1, 1837, three months after departing from Ripley. They initially stayed at the Lake Harriet mission station that Reverend Jedediah D. Stevens erected.⁹ Here, they had their first interactions with the Dakota people. Soon they began having daily contact with the Dakota and learning how to speak the language. Their first interactions prove frustrating since they took place through a translator. At this moment, they realized how difficult it would be to learn the Dakota language.¹⁰

Reverend Stevens helped Stephen and Mary learn the Dakota language, saying the success of a missionary “depended much on our acquiring a free use of the language.”¹¹ Reverend Stevens acquired a vocabulary of almost six hundred words when he began working with the Indians. This became the basis for the Dakota Grammar and Dictionary that Stephen would later publish. They also learned from Reverend Stevens about his struggles with the Indians. He confided that the Dakotas did not care to hear the gospel and only a few missionaries had succeeded in teaching Indians to read and write. After having untrustworthy relations with traders, the Indians became wary of the white man and their missions.¹²

In September 1837, the Board moved Stephen and Mary to Lac qui Parle. It is located two hundred miles beyond Fort Snelling in the Minnesota Territory. Arriving at the station, both Stephen and Mary felt like they found a true home.¹³ They lived with Doctor Williamson and his wife, Margaret, who helped establish the Lac qui Parle mission in 1835. The Riggs lived with the Williamson’s for five years. Their first three children were born in that home. Throughout these years, the Riggs worked with the Williamson’s, continuing to learn Dakota.

⁷ Harvard University Archives, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions”
<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/-/hou01467> (Accessed November 12, 2009).

⁸ Keith Norman, *Great People of the Great Plains Volume I: 25 Biographies of People Who Shaped the Dakotas*, (McCleery & Sons Publishing, 2004) pg. 81.

⁹ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 40.

¹⁰ Maida Riggs, *A Small Bit of Bread and Butter: Letters from the Dakota Territory 1832-1869*, (South Deerfield: Ash Grove Press, 1996) pg. 39.

¹¹ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 41.

¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 41.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pg. 51.

Soon, Stephen began picking up on the fundamental basics of the Dakota language. Some of these basics included that there are only five pure vowel sounds and which letters of the English alphabet could be dropped completely because they are not used in Dakota. Letters such as x, v, r, g, j, f, and c are not used as they are in the English language.¹⁴ Learning the Dakotan language proved to be a tedious task.

While getting settled in their new home on the mission station, the Riggs' began slowly looking for more missionary work. They quickly learned that it was easier to communicate with the Indian women than the Indian men. Indian men were proud of their culture and unwilling to change. They were also hesitant and suspicious of white missionaries because of their relationships with their agents, who generally swindled them out of money and goods. Indian women were more willing to listen and were gentler by nature. Their willingness to listen opened them up to experience new things such as attending church services.

Their first few Sabbath days after the Riggs arrival approximately twenty women and a handful of men gathered to worship. This was a sizable group, much more than they expected. The Dakota who attended church were members of Joseph Renville's family who gathered to hear Renville preach. Renville taught Stephen more of the Dakota language. He had lived in Lac qui Parle since 1827.¹⁵ Half-Dakota by birth, and involved in the fur trade, Renville "acquired an unbounded influence over many of the Dakota. They were willing to follow his leading."¹⁶ Together, Renville and Stephen created a church consisting of eight full-blooded Dakota women and eight half-blood Dakota women the winter after Stephen's arrival.¹⁷ Renville had already translated a few hymns in Dakota so the women could participate in the service. However, much work still remained to be done in learning and translating the language.

Once Stephen and the other men of the mission felt like they had a basic understanding of Dakota, they began teaching the Indians how to read and write their own language. They did this by putting words on old newspapers and then hanging the newspapers around the school-room. The Dakota responded well to this type of education because the words had meaning to them. They understood the importance of the words and the meaning that surrounded them. Stephen wanted the words of the Bible to have the same meaning as being able to read and write their own words.

Stephen felt that if he made the Bible available to the Indians in Dakota they would be more open to converting to Christianity. This translation became important because it would allow the "words of Christ to

¹⁴ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 59.

¹⁵ Minnesota Historical Society. "Lac qui Parle Mission" <http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/lpm/> (Accessed October 12, 2009).

¹⁶ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 54.

¹⁷ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 55.

enter into their living thoughts, so that they might grow into his spirit more and more."¹⁸ Translating the Bible proved to be a long process. The Bible was completed in 1879, shortly before the death of Thomas Williamson.¹⁹ The process took almost forty years to finish.²⁰ With the completion of the Bible came the satisfaction that the Dakota could now worship in their own language. In addition, the pair wrote many textbooks in Dakota that were used in mission schools.

Along with the translation of the Bible, Stephen created *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language*. Stephen began the process of writing the dictionary when he first arrived at Lac qui Parle mission. Although the work and arrangement of the dictionary took a great deal of labor, it gave Riggs "better insight" about "the Dakota's forms of thought and expression."²¹ Fortunately for Stephen, he did not start compiling the dictionary with no former knowledge of the language. Both Stevens and Williamson obtained a basic knowledge of the language before Stephen arrived at Lac qui Parle.

In all, Stephen began the creation of his dictionary with a knowledge base of three thousand words gathered from a variety of sources including Stevens, Williamson, and some of the army officers at Fort Snelling. From the time he reached Lac qui Parle onward, the dictionary continued to increase rapidly by both translation and learning new words. Before publication, Stephen "had reason to believe that we had gathered pretty much the whole language, and our definitions were measurably correct."²² In 1851, the Smithsonian Institute published the dictionary.²³

Stephen's knowledge of the Dakota language allowed him to assist the United States government in different ways. The same year his dictionary appeared in print, Stephen translated the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux for a Dakota delegation. On July 23, 1851, Indians were called down to Traverse des Sioux to meet commissioners of the government. Governor Alexander Ramsey, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea, General Sibley, many fur-traders and members of the Wahpeton and Sisseton Sioux tribes all attended.

Stephen translated and read the treaty to the Sioux. The government chose Stephen because the Indians thought of him as a proven friend. The treaty conveyed a vast piece of land to the United States

¹⁸ Ibid., pg. 60

¹⁹ Keith Norman, *Great People of the Great Plains Volume I: 25 Biographies of People Who Shaped the Dakotas*, (McCleery & Sons Publishing, 2004) pg. 82.

²⁰ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 389.

²¹ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 141.

²² Ibid., pg. 142.

²³ Keith Norman, *Great People of the Great Plains Volume I: 25 Biographies of People Who Shaped the Dakotas*, (McCleery & Sons Publishing, 2004) pg. 84.

government. It "involved fully one-half, and the best half at that, of the great state of Minnesota."²⁴ The Sioux received the Yellow Medicine Reservation, \$275,000 in cash, and \$1,665,000 to remain in a trust with the United States government with five percent interest to be paid for fifty years.

Approximately ten years later, in 1862, Stephen found himself in a similar situation. The annuities promised to the Sioux failed to arrive in time and when they did, they were not nearly as large as expected. When coupled with the hard winter of 1861-62, the Sioux faced hunger and hardship. Though many Americans refused to view this as the cause of the war that erupted, Stephen considered this to be the primary cause for the Sioux Uprising of 1862.²⁵

As the war escalated, Stephen found himself torn between his Dakota friends and his allegiance to his country. He assessed how he could use his language skills and familiarity with Dakota culture most effectively. He went to St. Paul, Minnesota and offered his services to Governor Ramsay. Governor Ramsay commissioned him as chaplain to General Sibley's expedition at Fort Ridgely. Stephen marched with General Sibley's army as they attempted to disband the Indian armies. The Indians attacked General Sibley's army in Yellow Medicine on September 23, 1862. Stephen recalled that at the end of the battle "there were sixteen *dead and scalped* Indians, and four of our own men."²⁶ General Sibley's victory helped defeat the uprising. As the fighting ended, Stephen's role became more important. In December 1862, General Sibley asked Stephen to be the Army's translator. His first assignment concerned questioning white women about their war time experiences. General Sibley hoped to discover how many acts of cruelty or wrongs those women suffered from the Dakota men. Stephen's work resulted in the arrest of several Dakota males. After Sibley arrested these men, Stephen found himself acting as their interrogator.

As Stephen moved from interviewing Dakota women to the men, the tone and goal of Sibley and those in charge changed. Military officials were no longer trying to find Indians who had harmed settlers; military officers wanted all Indians found guilty. Stephen wrote to Mary, "it was an unpleasant business to me to have anything to do with the punishment of these men. I am glad that I have not to witness against them. I simply gather the information for the Adjutant to prepare charges."²⁷ Though Stephen was uncomfortable with the change in attitude, he worked to maintain the trust of the Indians he translated for. Unfortunately for Stephen, things continually worsened.

²⁴ Doane Robinson, *A Brief History of South Dakota*, (New York: American Book Company, 1905) pg. 213.

²⁵ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*. (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 172.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 192.

²⁷ Stephen Riggs to Mary Riggs, 17 Oct. 1862, Oahe Mission Collection, Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

The military's plan for charging individual Indians with crimes became a plan to charge them collectively. Individual Dakota now had to prove their innocence, or be charged for general war crimes. Many of the Indians could not prove their innocence. Of the "nearly four hundred cases which came before the commission, only about fifty were cleared, twenty were sentenced to imprisonment, and more than three hundred were condemned to be hanged. The greater part of these were condemned on general principles, without any specific charges proved."²⁸ The only charge against them was eventually narrowed down to the color of their skin and that they belonged to the Sioux tribe.

General Sibley dismissed Stephen from military service after he finished translating the Indians responses. He returned home to his wife and eight children. In December 1862, Stephen returned to Mankato to witness the execution. This made Stephen incredibly unhappy since he was determined to never witness a hanging. Seeing men that he knew being executed made the experience even worse. Nevertheless, he watched the executions. He believed that if he could be of any service to Indian or white man, "in preventing mistakes and furthering the ends of justice and righteousness" he would do so.²⁹ However, the hangings Stephen and the others at Mankato expected to witness never took place and the reason was found in Washington D.C.

President Lincoln received the military commission papers and promptly asked some of his assistants to review each case individually and decide which Indians could be convicted of acts of cruelty and should be hanged. Eventually, those men decided that thirty-nine men should be executed. This is the largest single mass execution in American history. Even though they took extreme care in ensuring the right Indians were hanged, two mistakes occurred.³⁰ Though thirty-nine were condemned to death, Stephen faced a personal dilemma. The United States government requested he serve an interpreter for the Indians as they awaited execution. What Stephen wanted was not to interpret, but had hoped to be there for the Indians through their troubled time.

Stephen accepted the governments offer and served as interpreter. Unfortunately because of this, he could not be used as a spiritual counsel for the Indians. As the time of their death approached, the condemned Indians displayed a desire to say some things to their Dakota friends and also to the white people. Stephen accepted this request and spent the entire day writing down the things that they wished to say. Many of the Indians affirmed their innocence of the charges against them. They admitted that too

²⁸ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 208.

²⁹ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 210.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 211.

many white people had been killed by the Dakotas, therefore justice required the death of some Indians in return.

Stephen was most proud of his accomplishments at home. Stephen and Mary were blessed with eight children, all of whom were raised on a mission. Five out of those eight children followed in their father's footsteps and became missionaries. Thomas, Stephen's second son, was the most successful of the next generation of missionaries; he accomplished many great things.

On June 3, 1847 Mary gave birth to Thomas Lawrence Riggs, their fifth child. He lived in a "home of high and holy ideas that unfortunately exposed him to dangers and was handicapped by the lack of opportunities common even to boys of his day."³¹ Thomas did not have what most children of the time would consider a normal childhood. He grew up on the Lac qui Parle mission speaking Dakota and playing with Indian children. He did not play with a white child until he was about thirteen.³²

Thomas attended Beloit College, graduating in 1868. Upon the completion of his college education, Thomas spent a year in Aberdeen, Mississippi working among the "colored people". It was there that he first "attempted the role of teacher, in which I soon learned that was not likely to be a success."³³ After his time in Mississippi, Thomas enrolled in the Theological Seminary in Chicago. He had not experienced a call to ministry as his father had; rather it was a step to prepare for an education in architecture. It was only in the last half of his Seminary course that he changed his educational purpose. He embraced his childhood experiences and accepted that work with the Indians offered him a great opportunity. He graduated from Seminary in 1872.

That same year, Thomas met Nina Margaret Foster. He met Nina while he attending the Seminary in Chicago. They were married on Christmas day in 1872. Thomas and Nina moved to Hope Station in May 1873, where Nina began to instruct Lakota women in household arts.³⁴ Thomas and Nina's relationship was a full partnership relationship. Thomas did nothing without consulting Nina first, the same applied to Nina. Unlike most wives of the time, Nina had a lot of responsibility and worked independently of Thomas.

Thomas followed in the footsteps of his father into the missionary field among the Dakota Indians. He entered a new station among the Teton near Fort Sully in the Dakota Territory. He was stationed on the

³¹ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. x.

³² Thomas Riggs Correspondence to Stephen Riggs. Oahe Mission Collection, Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

³³ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. 38.

³⁴ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. xix.

Upper Missouri with the Standing Rock and Rosebud Reservations also in his field.³⁵ Even though his area was quite large, Thomas drew support from his older brother Alfred, who was also a missionary at the Santee Normal Training School on the Santee Agency.

Thomas named his new mission Hope Station. With the help of his younger brother, Henry, and an Indian, David, Thomas began building his mission. As Thomas built his mission, one idea presented itself insistently in his mind. He wanted to “make use of the Christian Indians in the work of the mission. The Indian was a great deal more effective as a preacher and teacher among his own people than any white man could be.”³⁶ Thomas’s problem became selecting the best Indians from those available. Thomas hired native teachers to “educate those interested in the work and began building ‘outstations’ in all directions from the central mission.”³⁷ These outstations became Thomas’ lifelong work.

Unfortunately for Thomas, “beginning a mission among the Teton Sioux involved much hard work and real danger.”³⁸ No white man would volunteer to work unprotected among the Indians.³⁹ Thomas and Henry slept on the ground with their rifles next to them covered by a blanket. Many mornings the sound of a rifle being shot in their direction woke them. Another gun salute usually occurred part way through the day as well.

As the mission continued to grow, Thomas relocated his family from Hope Station to Oahe in 1874.⁴⁰ This station became the mission headquarters. Oahe was located on the eastern side of the river, sixteen miles north of present-day Pierre. Thomas was now leaving the familiar mission life and “traveling to the edge of his own civilization.” In this sense, Thomas took after his father Stephen. Both traveled to unsettled regions, where Indians were considered “wild” and not likely to respond to the Christian message.⁴¹

Winter came early that year; therefore the new family was forced to build a home quickly. The house they built stood by itself some distance from the either Indian village, but in sight of both. The next structure that Thomas built was the church naming it “Mother Church”. This church served as the main church for the surrounding missions. In addition to establishing churches, Thomas created many schools throughout the missions. Women and men alike wanted to learn from the textbooks that had been written

³⁵ Ibid., pg. 44.

³⁶ Ibid., pg. 90.

³⁷ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. xvi.

³⁸ Ibid., pg. 14.

³⁹ Ibid., pg. 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pg. 62.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg. xvi.

by Stephen. It soon “became popular to be able to read and we had to teach many other things as well – the women to wash and iron and the men to work.”⁴²

The school at Oahe quickly became a boarding school, with students that came from out-stations. The main aim of the school was not secular, but religious. Naturally, the children were “taught that they must kneel down and say their prayers before they got into bed.”⁴³ They also enjoyed daily Bible studies. The students could speak English in the home and schoolroom, but “much religious and moral instruction was given through the mother tongue.”⁴⁴

Thomas firmly resisted the federal government’s announcements to teach and speak only English on the mission schools. He emphasized “the importance of native teachers and missionaries, who could speak to their own.”⁴⁵ Thomas continued to be respectful of traditional Dakota culture and did not force himself or his culture on the people. He provided the “opportunity and means of conversion to a new life and a new religion. Individual Dakota had to choose whether or not to accept the invitation.”⁴⁶

At this same time, Thomas suffered the devastating loss of his wife, Nina. She died on August 5, 1878 from eclampsia, a complication of childbirth. Thomas soon married Margaret Louisa Irvine, known as Louisa. Thomas met Louisa in 1872 when he arrived in the Dakota Territory to build his mission. Even at her young age, “Louisa was deeply impressed with Thomas.”⁴⁷ In October 1878, Louisa joined the Dakota Mission. She quickly fit into the mission life. Her first task was to learn Dakota, which she accomplished quickly. She then found herself working as a teacher in the Indian village. She returned to the Dakotas in 1885 as Thomas’ wife.⁴⁸

Louisa enjoyed life as a missionary and as a wife. While Thomas was gone observing the many stations in his mission, Louisa took care of the children and served as the principle of the Oahe School. She also wrote articles for *The Word Carrier*, a Dakota Mission newspaper published at Santee, traveled east to make fundraising speeches and acted as postmistress of the Oahe post office.⁴⁹ After Thomas’ death in 1940, Louisa continued the mission work until shortly before her own death in 1951.

⁴² Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. 79.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pg. 105.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 105.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. xviii.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. xix.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. xx.

⁴⁸ Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. xxi.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. xxi.

While the mission served as the main focus in Thomas' life, he also had many other endeavors. He farmed and raised purebred cattle. He also helped to organize the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre serving as the president of that society from 1902 to 1906. Thomas Riggs died on July 6, 1940 in Oahe. Thomas requested his family to "lay his unembalmed body in a wicker basket and bury him in the family cemetery at Oahe."⁵⁰

Stephen and Thomas served as missionaries during radically different times in American history. While Stephen served as an active missionary, the country fought a civil war. Additionally, the Sioux made their own needs known in the Sioux Uprising of 1862. When Stephen arrived on the mission, there were few other missionaries. He walked into unsettled and more importantly uncivilized territory. Stephen quickly found much to do in translating the Bible into Dakota and compiling the Dakota dictionary.

Stephen had fewer converts than Thomas did. The Indians did not want to convert until they found that their own ways would no longer work in the rapidly changing society. Thomas could convert more Indians to Christianity because of the work that his father had already accomplished. He was able to speak to the Indians in their Native language. Additionally, by the time Thomas began working on the mission, Indians were more receptive of the Christian church.⁵¹

One could say that Thomas had an easier time serving as a missionary because he already knew the Dakota language. However, Thomas, like his father, made his way into uncivilized territory on the far west side of the Dakota Territory. By this time, the Indians had been pushed onto established reservations. The work that Thomas did for the Indians was just as foundational as the work his father did. Thomas created schools and churches throughout the missions that he established.

Both men maintained missions through the rapid expansion of the white population, through on-going treaty processes that significantly reduced the tribes' land, and rapid deterioration of the Indian culture as dependence on the government replaced vanishing buffalo.⁵² Stephen and Thomas both believed that their presence among the Indians would make the transition process into a new world easier.

Shortly before his death, Stephen Riggs reflected on his life among the Sioux. Commenting on his life and his work he stated, "The Forty Years are completed. It has been marvelous in our eyes. At the beginning, we were surrounded by the whole Sioux nation. At the close we are surrounded by churches with native pastors. The entire Bible has been translated into the language of the Dakotas. The work of

⁵⁰ Ibid., pg. xxii.

⁵¹ Elizabeth Riggs Gutch. Personal Interview. October 9, 2009.

⁵² Thomas Riggs, *Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas*, (Pierre, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997) pg. xvii.

education has been rapidly progressing. Thus God has been showing us, by his providence and his grace, that the red men too may come into the Kingdom."⁵³

They have not been assigned to a prominent place in the work of the world, but rather to the most hidden and hopeless part. Their persistence of purpose has led them to a total of one hundred and fifty-eight years of missionary work. This is not the end of their work.⁵⁴

⁵³ Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 341.

⁵⁴ Written by Reverend Joseph Ward a fellow missionary. Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1969) pg. 419.

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SHE CHOSE HER OWN PATH!
NELLIE Z. WILLHITE, SOUTH DAKOTA'S FIRST FEMALE PILOT

Lillian Johnsson

Nellie was quite a gal. She was South Dakota's first female pilot. She was a member of the elite "99" Club. She was inducted into the South Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame. And – she was deaf – possibly the first deaf pilot in America.

It was the deaf part that caught my attention. It raised a lot of questions. As a person with a severe hearing impairment, who depends on lip-reading, and a woman, I was curious to know more about Nellie Zabel Willhite. She was not born into an era of equal rights for women, especially deaf women.

Nellie was born on November 22, 1892, to Charles and Lillian Zabel, on the family ranch near Box Elder, South Dakota. At the age of two years she contracted measles and became hearing impaired.

Notice that I did not use the word "deaf". In the late 1800's and even today that word is used to cover any level of hearing impairment.

Nellie's mother died while they were in California meeting her father. He was returning from the 1898 Spanish American War. Because Charles had his hands full with the family, he enrolled Nellie in the South Dakota School for the Deaf.

Like most schools for the deaf at the turn of the century, South Dakota's school taught what was called "Deaf Culture," or, living with your handicap and learning to speak. Most of the schools for the deaf did not believe in the use of "gestures", their name for sign language. In fact, students were punished if caught using it.

Alexander Graham Bell, whose wife, Mabel, was deaf, led the crusade against sign language. He held strong beliefs about the deaf. They should not be allowed to marry each other. They should not have special schools. They should only be taught to speak and speech read. It was an idea which kept the debate going over speech and signing for a long while.

At the age of ten years, Nellie came to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Leonard C. Mead in Yankton as a summer foster child. It was there that Mrs. Mead taught Nellie to speak and lip read.

We all know that people who have completely lost their hearing can be taught to speak. I talked to my audiologist about this. Back when Nellie was two, many people lost their hearing in varying degrees, due to measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, meningitis, or any other type of high fever. It was also possible that the hearing loss could happen immediately. It could also happen a day, a week, or longer after they

were well. At the age of two years, Nellie would not yet have had all the sounds and words we know as adults. That makes it difficult, but not impossible, to teach that person to speak.

It turned out that my audiologist had met Nellie in her office and knew that she did have a very, very, limited hearing. At the time she met Nellie, Nellie was in her 80's and would have been designated as legally deaf. But because her speech was so clear, it was the guess of my audiologist that Nellie had had enough hearing at age ten to have a very slightly easier time learning to speak and lip read. I've read in several places that people who did not know Nellie was hearing impaired spoke to her and never realized her impairment. And I can vouch for her clear voice. In a DVD I received from Norma Kraemer of an interview she conducted with Nellie in 1985, I had no problem at all understanding Nellie.

Let me give you a sample of both the difficulty and the humor of teaching speech to hearing impaired people. As an example, the prefix D-I-S.

A teacher was attempting to explain the meaning of the "dis" prefix by giving examples such as: disable – meaning not able; dishonest – not honest; disobey – not obey; and so on down a list of words. He thought he had made the meaning clear.

The next day he received a note about football practice being cancelled which read: "Yesterday we display football."

So much for humor, now the difficulty. For example, the numbers 3-1-6 and 3-6-0, 316 and 360. If you want to try lip reading, here is what you do. Find yourself a partner. Have them "mouth" one of the numbers for you. See how often you can guess which one they are saying. Yes, guess, because you have a 50% chance of getting it right.

But back to Nellie. As a young woman, she met and married Dr. Willhite and moved to Boston. There Nellie studied piano. The marriage didn't work out. Nellie returned to South Dakota. She lived in Pierre and worked as a typist for the South Dakota Secretary of State, Gladys Pyle.

When this job ended, she moved to Sioux Falls. One day she happened to visit Renner Airport to watch the airplanes. She met Harold Tennant, the flying instructor, there. He said she should learn to fly and become South Dakota's first woman pilot. It was tempting enough for Nellie to write to her father, now a postman in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

On November 17, 1927, Nellie spent the \$100 check her father sent along with his encouragement, to pay for part of the \$200, ten-hour course in flying. It was days before her 35th birthday.

She must have been very determined to succeed. Ground instruction would have been no problem for her with face to face instruction. But instruction while at the controls of an airplane would have been

difficult even if persons were sitting side by side. Early planes were open cockpits with one person sitting behind the pilot. Engine noise would make any conversation next to impossible. But Nellie needed to see her instructor's face. The motor? She judged it by its vibration!

After 13 hours of instruction and 283 landings, Nellie soloed in an Alexander Eaglerock biplane on Friday the 13th, January 13, 1928. She received the 13th diploma from the Dakota Airline School.

Nellie's father bought her a \$2,750 airplane. It was an Eaglerock like the plane in which she soloed. She bought it from Clyde Ice. However, she purchased the motor separately. It was an OX-5 war surplus engine manufactured in a factory in Colorado Springs, CO. It was the engine most of the early barnstormers used.

When the plane was delivered to Rapid City, Nellie's father came out from Wisconsin. Nellie flew him home following the route of an old Fort Pierre to Deadwood ox trail. As a young man during the Gold Rush, Charles Zabel served as an early-day teamster for the Home Stake Mine and followed this trail.

In 1929, the "99" Club was formed by Mrs. George Palmer Putnam, better known as Amelia Earhart. While the name of the organization came from the number of women pilots who joined, there were at the time between 114 and 125 licensed women pilots.

Nellie was a charter member of the national group. She also started a South Dakota chapter in 1941 and was a charter member and chairman of that chapter.

Nellie did not hold a positive view of Amelia Earhart. She thought Ms. Earhart was a publicity machine. Earhart's contract stipulated if she appeared at an aviation event, no other woman pilot could be mentioned. No wonder Nellie kicked Amelia at the Cleveland Air Race - under the table and by accident, of course.

Most of Nellie's flying was either barnstorming or cross country. According to her Log book, she practiced and performed wing-overs, vertical banks, spirals, figure 8's, Precision 8's, 360° spot landings, stahls, and races. She participated in comedy stunts where she acted as a person stealing a plane but didn't know how to fly it. She was outstanding in the tight, fast maneuvering necessary in balloon target racing in which pilots would fly at balloons to burst them. Like most pilots of that era, she sold rides at many events to help pay for her flying expenses.

Now think about this barnstorming business for a minute. Most landing fields were grass or more usually a farmer's field. Sometimes there were low stumps, ditches, barbed wire, and animals with which they had to deal. But what about the wind direction? There is no better wind sock than the tail end of a cow. The stronger the wind the more likely you were to see cow rump wind indicators. Nearly all

barnstormers did stahls in the air shows. According to Air and Space Smithsonian Magazine, September, 2009, "In the early days of aviation, stahls were a major cause of accidents." What they didn't add was "and deaths."

Barnstorming along with Nellie somewhere in this country where Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, and Joe Foss, all names we recognize.

Nellie sold her plane in 1932, because as she said, "flying was a pretty expensive game." After that April she rented planes.

While Nellie's flying experience holds many stories, some really scary and death defying, the rest of her life was also interesting. For example, her working career.

Remember she worked for Gladys Pyle, she was a steno-typist at the Sioux Falls airport and office manager at Renner Field.

During World War I she spent months at Hill Field, Utah, as Ground School instructor and inspector of propellers for B19s. In 1933, she taught a WPA class in Ground Aviation at Washington High School in Sioux Falls. With a 1941 commercial license she flew airmail. She worked at the Sioux Falls post office during World War II.

Nellie was a deputized member of the AERO Policewoman's Association, the South Dakota Pilots' Association, and the Sioux Falls Chapter of Experimental Aircraft Association.

In 1942, she filled out an application to join the British Air Transport Auxiliary in Canada. She would have been flying military airplanes to Europe and back for the Royal Air Force. To qualify, you needed 300 flying hours, a flight test, and an interview. While Nellie was interested, she decided she was too old and would be disqualified because she wore glasses. She didn't seem to think her hearing would be a problem.

Nellie's pilot's license says she was 5'4", weighed 145 lbs. and had hazel eyes. Under conditions it said "wears a special hearing device."

A friend asked Nellie about wearing a hearing device to which she replied that she never wore one because she didn't use an air radio. Well, that was one reason. There are several others she didn't mention. Nellie did have an early hearing aid. It consisted of an ear plug connected by a wire to a typical paperback book-size amplifier which hung on a cord around your neck. It made every sound around you louder! Therefore, the airplane engine would still have made enough noise to drown out anyone speaking. Unfortunately even today's small hearing aids can do the same thing, crowds of people can make it impossible to hear the person next to you.

When Nellie was in her early 90's, she was visited by actress Marlee Matlin who was thinking of doing a movie of Nellie's life. It never came about but Marlee did buy Nellie a new digital hearing aid...which she never wore! She said her old one worked better and anyway she would rather depend on lip reading because that allowed her to hear only what she wanted to hear. What she didn't say, but I will, is you get used to the quiet and what you don't hear.

For a time after World War II, Nellie bred and sold Pekinese dogs and choice canaries. As she grew older she kept a few lap dogs as her warning that someone was at her door. She lived alone with them until she was 93. She spent the last five years of her life in a Sioux Falls nursing home. She died September 2, 1991, at the age of 98.

The highlights of Nellie's life include awards such as the South Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame and a marker at the International Forest of Friendship in Atcheson, Kansas which honors aviation notables.

Many newspaper articles and magazine stories were written about her. She was included in several books, especially *Deaf Heritage* written by Jack Cannon and published by Gallaudit College and the National Association of the Deaf.

Nellie's last flight was July, 1979 at the age of 86. The Sioux Falls Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association flew her to New York to attend the 50th anniversary of the "99" Club.

She had personal letters or notes from presidents FDR, JFK, and LBJ, as well as from Joe Foss.

Author Charles Planck in 1941 asked Nellie her view of the future. This was her reply:

"While at the present there are a few, I believe many more women will train as meteorologists, radio operators, dispatchers, aeronautical engineers, draftsmen, inspectors, and flight instructors. Women will also serve as freight and ambulance pilots, eventually as airline pilots and executives."

Then she paused, and said, "Oh, where then will our men be?"

This woman who lived from the Wright Brothers to the moon and space was right! I wonder if anyone ever asked her how she felt about all of it. I didn't find anything that said they did.

Once when Nellie was ill she received a get well card which was addressed:

"To The Great Illustrious Celebrated Aviatrix Extraordinaire, Nellie Z. Willhite."

I couldn't have said it better myself. Nellie was quite a gal!

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TRACES IN THE GRASS

Tom Kilian

Everything has a beginning. That is true of roads as with everything else. This account is a reflection on the evolution of roads here in South Dakota and on the Great Plains. Most of them began as traces in the grass. In relation to roads, the word "trace" itself has undergone something of an evolution.

One is reminded of that 440 mile trail in the southeastern United States called the "Natchez Trace", which runs from the salt licks in central Tennessee southwest to the Mississippi River. The Natchez Traces began in antiquity as a game trail and was adopted by the area Indians. The first white man to use it was probably Hernando De Soto in the early 1540's.

In that early time, "trace" was used interchangeably with "trail" but today, most people would not understand trace as meaning trail. I would like to make a finer distinction for our purposes now. I prefer trace being defined as "...a perceptible sign that something has passed..." That is, any line or mark or discernible effect. Thus a trace in the grass can be understood as those foot or wheel prints which have pushed down or broken down or rearranged the grass so it is clear that "something has passed by". The trace could have been made by man or beast.

If we have defined a trace, what is a "track"? Webster says it is a "...continuous line that can be followed..." — a path made by repeated foot prints (or the turn of wheels). It is a course along which something moves.

How does a track differ from a "path"? Webster again: "a trodden way...a track especially constructed for a particular use...a course or route..."

How or when does a trace or track or path become a "trail"? We hear much about trails here in the West. Webster says: "a marked or established route or path, especially through a wilderness..." and "a track made by passage, as, through a deserted area".

Almost every school child learns of the great Western Trails. The Oregon Trail and the Santa Fe Trail are perhaps the best known and remembered. They certainly were established routes through the wilderness. They were marked by thousands of footprints of men and animals and countless wheel tracks of the wagons west. They were used over many years and were material factors in the settlement of the West. They were used and worn to the degree that the trails became as much as half a mile wide. Successive trains of wagons had moved over the original trail until the ruts became too deep and the trail pock-marked with mud holes. So, gradually, the trains moved over a notch, until that new trail also became

worn and so it was moved again...and again. Finally the original trail became only a marker for direction rather than ground to move over.

So, when does a trail become a road? A road, Webster says, "...is an open way for vehicles, persons or animals, especially lying outside an urban district." Thus a road is a trail that has graduated to a higher status, by virtue of the traffic over it. A road is a well established route to somewhere.

Over time, a road also becomes worn, too and the low spots can become mud wallows in wet weather, all of which leads to "improved" roads. We take measures to improve on nature: fords and tiles and culverts are installed in the low spots to drain off surface waters. In time, ditches are graded along each side to drain away water. The surface of the road itself will be built up and raised and sloped away from the center, to more quickly drain away water.

Impatient with wet weather mud, the surface is covered with gravel and sand, which packs into a harder surface and drains water more easily. Finally, still plagued with dust and water, despite the gravel surface, we cover the surface with asphalt or even Portland cement. At this point our road may be called a "highway" — literally, a "higher way" — a way raised up from a formerly lower level. A highway, Webster says, is "...a public way...a main or direct road...." And, as populations and activity grow, the road is made wider, new lanes may be added and our old trace in the grass has evolved into what is called an Interstate highway or autobahn, with restricted points of access and which permit very high speeds. Such roads run across several states or an entire nation and thus are "interstates".

Most people understand that when the first white men came into this region three — four hundred years ago, there was nothing plainly visible but grass — the area has been called an ocean of grass — no trees — only grass and sky. Yet, if one were to look carefully, even then, there were traces in the grass. Other men had been here earlier, along with a variety of large animals, for thousands of years. We know that even in those ages past, men had learned to follow the traces of animals, in search of food and water and simply out of curiosity. These early men made traces and even tracks — lines that were continuous and could be followed, leading to places like the renown Pipestone Quarries and establish meeting and trading grounds like the annual rendezvous sites. Early white travelers soon learned to follow the Indians' Traces in the Grass.

Many of the animals that lived on the prairie made traces, tracks and even paths. They all led somewhere — they were purposeful. They led to water or to a den or lair, a sleeping place, to food or something desirable to those who made them. I am reminded of the deer trails through the forest around

our family cabin in the Black Hills. Over a season, these become so worn; they can only be called paths. They lead to watering places along the creek and to aspen thickets where the deer spend the night.

The purposefulness of such paths was impressed on me as a young soldier in the Infantry. I was enrolled in Officers Training at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Having completed the months of training, it was now time to appear before a review board of old, gray, crusty and much be-ribboned senior officers — colonels, and generals. They were met to examine the young candidates to see if, in their judgment, they were fit to lead troops in combat. My turn came. I sat in the lonely chair in front of this semicircle of big brass. I was asked a number of questions relating to equipment, tactics and such. Finally, one of the oldest, most dour of the group spoke up and asked, "Young man, imagine that you are now in the middle of a wide prairie — nothing in sight in any direction, and you come upon a path in the grass. What would you do?" I said, "I'd follow it, Sir". "Why?" he asked. "Because it would lead to water, Sir". The old man smiled and leaned back in his chair. The meeting was over, and I had passed muster. I had learned as a young boy hunting gophers on the South Dakota prairie, where cow paths lead. Water was important to me, too.

So it has always been — paths lead to some place that matters to the maker. Here, in this region, with vast prairies made up of grasses like Big Blue Stem, Switch or Indian Grass, it would be hard to move through without leaving a trace. These grasses grow from three to six feet or more. Any man or animal of size moving through would bend and break the stems of the tall grasses and leave evidence of passage. Here, in eastern South Dakota, we live near the border between the tall and short grass prairies. The short grasses like Blue Grama and Side Oats Grama and other similar grasses tend to dry out in late summer and become curly, like a huge shag carpet. Walking or riding on such grasses makes for easy, pleasant moving along, but will also betray one's passage. The short, curly buff-brown grass would be crisp and brittle, would crush down easily and leave a faint foot or wheel print that would stand out quite sharply.

Early parties of explorers would carry with them one or more seasoned scouts or trackers — people who could read the signs and marks and traces in the grass. From the information learned from the study of the trace or tracks, much could be learned about who or what made the traces. One would study foot or wheel prints, the length of stride, the width of wheel rims (whether a buggy, a wagon, a freight wagon, or military wheel). One would examine the footprints and droppings of animals as well as the camp sites, sleeping spots, or other stopping places. Estimates could be made as to how long ago the passage was made and whether in wet or dry weather. Such information could be of critical importance. It was important to be able to interpret traces in the grass.

Here, nearby in South Dakota, there is an example which includes the entire evolutionary process of roads. It is called State Highway #34. It runs from Pipestone on the western Minnesota border, in a beeline west through Egan and Madison, Howard and Vilas, on to Forestburg and to Wessington Springs and on again to the Crow Creek Reservation and Fort Thompson. From there, it follows the east bank of the Missouri to Pierre and on across the West River Prairie to Sturgis and Spearfish, past the most northern peaks of the Black Hills and on into Wyoming. It is one of South Dakota's longest roads. Highway #34 has been called "the old Indian trail" by historians because that is exactly what much of it was. While it is conjecture, there is reason to believe the first road was created by native people moving between the Pipestone Quarries on the east to the site of the Three Rivers Rendezvous, on the east bank of the Missouri. Historian John Ewers, in his fascinating review of the prehistoric rendezvous site on the Northern Plains, makes reference to this site.

When the first roads of the white man were built in South Dakota, this route was followed, in part. Major Nobles' well known wagon road, in 1857, intended to run from Fort Ridgely in Minnesota to South Pass in Colorado, followed a portion of this trail. In 1865, W. W. Brookings contracted to build a road out of Minnesota, across South Dakota and up into Montana's gold fields, Brookings followed much of the eastern section of this trail. Following the movement of the Santee Sioux from Minnesota after the War of the Outbreak, which left the Indians starving at Crow Creek, the military organized a relief mission which came to be called the Mission to Moscow. The military wagons and their escort went over some elements of this trail. When the earliest immigrants and settlers began to appear in the area, they used the road as did the wagons and stagecoaches that brought them mail and supplies. When the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific railroad and the town builders and land boomers showed up in the early 1880's, they used the old Indian Trail.

My own father who, as a small boy, lived along that road in Miner County, on Rock Creek, told me of standing near the road, watching bands of Indians with horses, buggies and on foot going back and forth on this trail between Crow Creek and the Santee settlement at Flandreau and at the Pipestone Quarries. The Indian people were still using that road early in the last century.

Until the 1930's, Highway #34 remained a gravel road when the first asphalt blacktop appeared. For anyone wishing to become acquainted with the real South Dakota a trip down Highway #34 from east to west would be most instructive. One would cross most of the major rivers — the Sioux, the Vermillion, the Jim, the Missouri, the Cheyenne and the Red Water, not to mention endless creeks. One would pass by a great many gray, abandoned ruins of the 160 acre homesteads of a century ago. One would pass

through the Crow Creek Reservation, perhaps of all our reservations, the one most in need of help — and hope — and then, follow the wild Missouri to the state capitol at Pierre and on into the vast, west river grasslands. One would pass the legendary Bear Butte, the town of Sturgis and Belle Fourche (beautiful fork) the geographic center of the United States and on, into Wyoming.

Highway #34 is a splendid example of what sometimes happened to early “Traces in the Grass”!

HOW THE OREGON TRAIL ENABLED THE PONY EXPRESS TO BECOME THE "GREATEST ENTERPRISE OF MODERN TIMES"

Ronald Laycock

On April 3rd, 1860, a young rider left St. Joseph, MO on a little bay mare with mail destined for Sacramento, CA. Carried in a mochila were 49 letters, five telegrams and copies of eastern newspapers. The mochila would travel almost two thousand miles in ten days and would be carried by twenty five riders on one hundred and ninety horses. The Pony Express had begun! It was the beginning of an American Epic.

Much has been written about the Pony Express, numerous magazine articles, many books, and at least one movie have kept the story alive. Unfortunately much of what has been written isn't accurate. For example, the April 2010 Smithsonian Magazine¹ says twenty riders, riding seventy five horses, made the 1800 mile trip in eleven days. The Time-Life Book "The Expressmen" said it was thirty riders.² Joseph Di Certo in his book said it was forty riders.³

The reasons the Pony Express was started are perhaps as interesting as the actual horse powered relay system itself. The political, geographic, and economic factors that inspired the Pony Express are stories themselves.

First, California was a growing state. San Francisco itself had twenty five thousand people. The gold rush of 1848 and 1849 brought forty five thousand more people, mostly to the northern part. California was also a state, one of only two, west of the Missouri River, the other was Texas. California was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1850. It felt, and was, isolated from the rest of the United States.

Second, the only communication between California and the rest of the United States was by mail. There was no rail service west of Missouri, in fact there were no bridges across the Missouri River. Telegraph wires didn't yet link California with the east. Mail from Washington, D.C. and the eastern states was taken to a sea port like New York, Boston, or Philadelphia and put on a sea going ship bound for Panama. It would get to Panama, be carried across the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific side, then put on a ship going north to a California port. Mail took weeks. There were also three overland routes, one heavily subsidized. It was the Butterfield Stage route that went from Missouri to Sacramento, but via El Paso, TX to avoid the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It took three to four weeks at best. It had a \$600,000 government mail contract! John Hockaday ran a freight line from Missouri to Salt Lake City; he too had a mail contract but it took his freight line six weeks to get there. George Chorpenning had a similar freight

line from Placerville, CA to Salt Lake City, coming from the west. It too took many weeks, and didn't operate in the winter because of the mountains.

Two other mail attempts should be mentioned. In 1855 the government tried using camels to get mail from Texas across the southern desert country by camel. It failed. In 1856 a Norwegian immigrant, John Thompson, who had settled in the Sacramento Valley, was hired to take mail across the Sierra Nevada Mountains on skis. He skied from Placerville, CA to Carson City NV.⁴ He was successful and carried the mail until he was replaced by the Pony Express in 1860.

Politically, California was unstable. While primarily a free Union state, many of its early settlers were from the southern states and were pro slavery.⁵ There was serious talk of seceding from the Union! Keep in mind that California had a large population, rich farm land, timber, furs, and now gold. Plus it had miles of Pacific Ocean shore line and several seaports that gave it ready access to the world trade markets. Forty six of the state's fifty three newspapers were anti-Lincoln during the Presidential campaign.⁶ At least one pastor was advocating, from the pulpit, leaving the Union and forming a "Pacific Republic".⁷ A fast and reliable method of communication was desperately needed to make California feel a part of the United States.

Russell, Majors, and Waddell in Leavenworth, MO was a large and respected freighting business. They had held several large government contracts, including contracts to deliver supplies to the numerous army posts along the Oregon Trail, going as far as Salt Lake City to supply the U.S. Army during the Mormon Wars. The Oregon Trail had become a well traveled road both for freight wagons and stage coaches. Russell, Majors, and Waddell knew it well.

Russell, Majors, and Waddell suffered serious financial troubles when three of their large shipments to Salt Lake City during the Mormon Wars were destroyed when their freight wagons were attacked and burned. In addition, the War Department said it was out of money and couldn't pay them. Besides, they said, there was never a "formal" agreement. The loss, in 1860 dollars, was \$493,000!⁸

Russell, Majors, and Waddell were perhaps an odd combination of personalities to be partners. Majors and Waddell were cautious and conservative. Majors was a devout Christian and gave each of their employees a bible and had them all sign an Oath of Conduct. Russell, on the other hand, was a risk taker, an entrepreneur, and one who did not always make sound financial decisions. He once served three days in jail for fraudulent dealings with the government. When gold was discovered in Colorado, he started a stage line from Leavenworth, MO to Denver against his partners' advice. The gold mining didn't work out and the stage line folded. Russell had also purchased land there, it is now known as the city of Denver.

Russell, Majors, and Waddell had purchased the Hockaday freight line than ran from Missouri to Salt Lake City and then were also able to purchase George Chorprenning's freight line from Placerville, CA to Salt Lake City. They now owned a freight line that ran from Missouri to California! And both of the lines had government mail contracts!

Russell was in Washington, D.C. when he realized a lucrative mail contract between Missouri and California might be what was needed to turn their business around. On Jan. 27th, 1860, he sent the following telegram to his son in Leavenworth MO:

Have determined to establish a Pony Express to Sacramento, CA commencing 3rd of April. Time 10 days.

Major and Waddell, his partners, were not aware of his decision. Sixty nine days to establish an express mail route almost two thousand miles long. They did it.

In sixty nine days they purchased four hundred horses in California, Salt Lake City, and St. Joseph/Leavenworth, MO, and had them distributed to one hundred and ninety different relay stations across one thousand nine hundred and sixty six miles. Four hundred men were hired to man the stations and eighty riders were hired to carry the mail. They, too, were sent to the different stations on the trail. Of the one hundred and ninety stations, twenty five were "home stations" where riders could pass the mochila on to a new rider and then rest until a mochila came from the opposite direction. One hundred and sixty five stations were relay or switch stations where a rider would simply transfer the mochila from one horse to another and then be off. Stations were about ten miles apart, about as far as a horse could go at a lope. The home stations were about eighty to one hundred miles apart, thus each rider rode from eighty to one hundred miles on eight or ten different horses. Since the Pony Express ran not only from St. Joseph to Sacramento it also delivered mail from Sacramento to St. Joseph, thus there were two relays going simultaneously. Each route, from one end to the other, required twenty five riders, one from each "home" station, and one hundred ninety horses, one from each station.

Existing forts, communities, and stage stops were used as stations whenever possible. If there were no stations where they were needed, they would build one, though often crudely constructed. The stations had to be supplied with food and water for both the men and the horses, even though it had to be hauled in.

How this could all be accomplished in sixty nine days with no reliable communication is unbelievable!

The Pony Express ran for eighteen months, until a telegraph line was completed in October of 1861. When the Pony Express began it was hailed as "The Greatest Enterprise of Modern Times." Mail delivery from Missouri to California was ten days. It ran weekly, then twice a week. When it was over, replaced by the telegraph, the California Pacific newspaper wrote "Goodbye Pony. You have served us well."

Was it a success or failure? A letter by Pony Express to Salt Lake City took less than six days. By freight wagon it took six weeks. The Pony Express proved a central route on the Oregon Trail and over the Sierra Nevada Mountain was possible year around. Financially it was a failure. It cost \$16.00 per letter, yet postage was only \$5.00, later reduced to \$1.00. But it was still "the Greatest Enterprise" of it's time.

The feats of some of the Pony Express riders have made their way into America's history. Bob Haslen once rode three hundred eighty miles in thirty six hours, catching only a short nap. Jack Keetly one rode three hundred and forty miles in twenty four hours without rest. He was asleep on his pony when he reached the last station.

And it happened on the old Oregon Trail.

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- ⁵ Di Certo. Page 15.
- ⁶ Ibid. Page 16.
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HOW THE LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITION INFLUENCED AMERICA'S ROAD SYSTEM

Shebby Lee

The sorry state of America's roadways was a source of concern for many civic-minded Americans long before the late 19th century when an association of bicycle enthusiasts instigated the Good Roads Movement, and the almost coincidental invention of the automobile.¹

In a young and mobile country, road-building was deemed as important as the establishment of newspapers, schools, churches and institutions of local government in "civilizing" the wilderness, but funding was rarely available.²

This dearth of passable roads in Colonial America created enormous problems for travelers and merchants alike. Boat traffic was not only the fastest route between two points, it was often the only route. Early settlements in the colonies were understandably all located along the Atlantic seaboard or adjacent to navigable waterways.

British policy-makers for the colonies recognized the administrative problems of governing a scattered population and discouraged westward emigration, suggesting Nova Scotia or Georgia as targets for the seemingly inbred American wanderlust. In a 1721 report to King George I, the Council of Trade and Plantations cited the difficulties of transporting bulky commodities overland as the rationale for such policy. But a more convincing motive was revealed by Lord Edgemont, Secretary of State in 1765, when he recommended forbidding westward emigration because settlers in the "Heart of America [would be] out of reach of Government."³

Nevertheless, as the nation developed growing pains emigrants moved inland, and as Britain had feared, colonists acquired an independence born of the expansion of population beyond easy reach of the seacoast.⁴

One consequence of the resulting isolation was the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Farmers in remote

¹ John A. Jakle. *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America*. (Lincoln & London, 1985). P. 121.
Philip P. Mason. *The League of American Wheelmen and the Good Roads Movement*. (U. Of Michigan Press, 1958). pp. 42-51.

² *An Outline of American History*. Chapter 4: Westward Expansion and Regional Differences. Literature and the Frontier. (1995) <http://grid.let.rug.nl/~welling/usa/c4-.p2.html>. p.2.

³ Henry Nash Smith. *Virgin Land: The American West As Symbol and Myth*. (n.p. @1978) <http://darwin.clas.virginia.edu/~tsawyer/HNS>. p.2.

⁴ *An Outline of American History*. p.1. Smith. p. 2.

western Pennsylvania, faced with the insurmountable task of transporting their corn to market over virtually trackless roads had solved the problem by converting their crops to more portable corn whiskey, only to have it taxed beyond profitability. The resulting tax rebellion was a wake-up call to politicians at all levels of government.⁵

In a rare show of political harmony, founding fathers Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson and later, Clay and Calhoun viewed transportation and communication (terms which they used interchangeably) as essential to the unification and very survival of the fledgling nation.⁶ As early as 1803 President Thomas Jefferson called for improvements to the already established Natchez Trace to secure communication with new territories.

Even before the deal was finalized for the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson had asked Congress for \$2,500 to fund the charting of a route from Mississippi to the Pacific. In explicit instructions, he directed the expedition's eventual leader, Meriwether Lewis,

"to explore the Missouri River and such principal stream of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct and practical water communication across the continent, for the purposes of commerce."⁷

Jefferson's knowledge of the West, like that of all Americans at the time, was limited. He would not know until the return of Lewis & Clark that

"Beyond the Missouri there was no natural equivalent for the network of navigable rivers that had so magnificently furthered the agricultural occupation of the eastern half of the Mississippi Valley. The Far Western farmer would evidently have to depend on railroads [still decades in the future] to get his crops to market."⁸

In addition to sponsoring exploratory expeditions, the President and his Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, had developed a ten-year plan of internal improvements for the new country which included turnpikes, canals and waterways at a cost to the new congress of \$2 million a year - a sum then equal to 15% of the federal budget. The plan called for a great north-south turnpike running from Maine to Georgia and connected to the western waterways with four perpendicular turnpikes branching off at various intervals. Jefferson wanted to prevent the country from becoming too dependent on what he perceived to be the centralized powers of maritime trade and manufacturers concentrated in eastern cities. His plan

⁵ Phil Patton. *Open Road*. (Simon & Schuster, NY, 1986). p. 28.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 25-26.

⁷ Thomas Jefferson. Letter to Meriwether Lewis. (1803) *The American West*. American Westward Expansion [Online]

Available HTTP: <http://www.American West.com/pages.wexpansi.htm>.

⁸ Smith. pp. 29-30.

was designed to counteract this centralization by facilitating westward expansion.⁹

Jefferson took advantage of every opportunity to promote the plan. In his sixth annual message to "the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled" on December 2, 1806, he recounted the successes of the just returned Lewis & Clark Expedition and proposed that an anticipated treasury surplus be applied

"...to the great purposes of the public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of federal powers. By these operations new channels of communication will be opened between the states; the lines of separation will disappear, their interest will be identified, and their union cemented by new and indissoluble ties."¹⁰

The growing trend toward centralized federal powers was hotly contested among the former independent colonies and Jefferson conceded that his proposal might be "an extension of the federal trusts" which might even need a constitutional amendment.¹¹ But he was also very sensitive to the sectional differences which were only reinforced by poor roads, and felt his ten- year plan could help eliminate the conflicts that were already developing among the newly created states.

Jefferson was still campaigning for his ambitious program of internal improvements in his eighth and last message to Congress in November of 1808. In nearly identical phrases, he put forth his final appeal to appropriate funds for

"...the improvements of roads, canals, rivers, education, and other great foundations of prosperity and union."¹²

But despite his efforts and those of Secretary Gallatin, who had submitted his "Report on Roads and Canals" in 1808, the plan never materialized.

"After Gallatin, no unified plan for a national system of highways was seriously proposed until after World War I, and not until the mid-twenties did the roads built with federal aid receive systematic designation."¹³

It was not for a lack of support. Throughout the 19th century, voices were raised in support of the unifying nature of communication/transportation. Jessup W. Scott, the outspoken editor of the Toledo (OH) Blade, felt that the Mississippi Valley offered the potential to become a "community of ideas and interests which must soon mold [it] into homogeneousness of character and make us one country in heart as in

⁹ Patton. p.28.

¹⁰ Thomas Jefferson. (nd) "Works of Thomas Jefferson" in " A Chronology of US Historical Documents [Online]. Available Gopher: <gopher://gopher.vt.edu:10010/2/106/1>

¹¹ Ibid.p.24.

¹² Op. Cit.

¹³ Patton. p. 36.

government".¹⁴

More than half a century after Jefferson's ten-year plan, another president trying desperately to hold the country together, endorsed Jefferson's faith in internal improvements as a catalyst for unification. Invoking the concept of a geographical unity confirmed by technology, Abraham Lincoln spoke to citizens of the former Northwest Territory: "Steam, telegraphs, and intelligence have brought these to be an advantageous combination for one united people."¹⁵

Unfortunately for American history, Jefferson's successors in the White House agreed that the federal government lacked the constitutional powers to create internal improvements. The Cumberland (or National) Road, running from the Potomac River near Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling, VA, was allowed to deteriorate. But from 1807 to 1822 it had been by far the best improved "artificial" road in the country, providing a vital link to the new Northwest Territories.¹⁶

In the meantime, the responsibility for building and maintaining roadways fell to individual cities and states.

On his much-publicized visit to the United States in 1842, Charles Dickens used the smooth waterways whenever possible. On those occasions when he was reduced to stagecoach travel, his dissatisfaction was clear, if entertaining: "At one time we were all flung together in a heap at the bottom of the coach, and at another we were crushing our heads against the roof"¹⁷

Dickens did find at least one road to his liking:

[Columbus] "is distant about a hundred and twenty miles from Cincinnati, but there is a macadamised road (rare blessing!) the whole way, and the rate of travelling upon it is six miles an hour."¹⁸

Far more common however were the corduroy roads he encountered later in the journey:

"...the corduroy road...is made by throwing trunks of trees into a marsh, and leaving them to settle there... The very slightest of the jolts with which the ponderous carriage fell from log to log was enough, it seemed, to have dislocated all the bones in the human body."¹⁹

Jefferson's hopes for the road Lewis & Clark had mapped out never materialized. But although the

¹⁴ Smith. p. 161

¹⁵ Smith. p. 163.

¹⁶ Patton. pp. 29, 35.

¹⁷ Charles Dickens. American Notes (1874). In Electronic Text Center. University of Virginia Library . <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/browse-mixed-new?id=DicAmer&tag=public&images=images/modeng&date=/texts/english/modern/parsed>

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 219.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.226.

route was never widely used, the expedition itself lit a spark in the American psyche which wasn't extinguished until well into the 20th century. Jefferson valued a democracy peopled by yeoman farmers, and his road philosophy was designed to create just that: "Americans were to pursue happiness down roads that led to inexpensive land in the west."²⁰

Fur traders and explorers had blazed the pathways that would eventually become the emigrant trails. These wagon roads heading west over the prairie were well marked and documented, but rarely "improved". Settlers and gold seekers were in too much of a hurry to waste precious time road-building. Then too, virtually the entire length of these "roads" were outside the United States, and sometimes even outside of territorial jurisdiction. While Senators from western states harangued Congress for military protection for the emigrants, they rarely complained about road conditions through the Great American Desert. The most any travelers could hope for were the many ferries and bridges that were obligingly thrown up for the temporary enrichment of their owners. Likewise a few enterprising early arrivals managed to capitalize on a geographic advantage by putting up a strategically placed toll gate, but these hastily created stretches could hardly be considered the "internal improvements" Jefferson so desired.²¹

For decades after the invention of the steam engine, the feasibility and even the necessity of building a cross-continental railroad was seriously debated. Emigrants crossing the continent were doing just that - not settling in the interior where advocates such as Stephen Douglas argued that in order to justify a cross-continental railroad there must first be

"...a hardy and industrious population [which] would soon have a surplus produce, without the means of getting it to market, and require for their own consumption, immense quantities of goods and merchandize (sic), which they could not obtain at reasonable rates, for want of proper facilities of transportation."²²

Industrialist Asa Whitney agreed that "the settler in the trans-Mississippi had no way of getting produce to market"²³ but, unlike Webster, insisted that the railway must precede western settlement.

Thomas Hart Benton, champion of westward expansion for over thirty years, was also a great promoter of a cross-continental railroad, but with a twist. The outspoken Missouri Senator had avidly promoted some of the earliest exploration and mapping of the West (which he made sure was coincidentally conducted by his son-in-law, John C. Fremont). He now proposed the building of a

²⁰ Patton, p. 30.

²¹ Shebby Lee. *The Good Roads Movement in South Dakota*. 1989. p.1.

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²² Smith, p. 33-34

²³ Ibid.

"plain old English road [parallel to the railroad], such as we have been accustomed to all our lives - a road in which the farmer in his wagon or carriage, on horse or on foot, may travel without fear, and without tax - with none to run over him, or make him jump out of the way."²⁴

He was apparently alone. By the time the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads completed their transcontinental route in 1869, both sides had concluded that the railroad was the only means by which the wilderness could be developed. For the rest of the 19th century and more than two decades into the 20th, the railroads preempted any other attempts to create internal improvements.

The script for "The Iron Road" on PBS's American Experience program echoes Jefferson's vision for the country but transposes it to the railroads, proclaiming that they would "develop the vast interior of the nation, encourage settlement, promote trade and fuel industry."²⁵

Many of the western trails survive today as Interstate Highways, but the majority disappeared beneath the tall prairie grass. For the most part, they followed the rivers west, as Jefferson's original plan proposed, and settlement eventually followed this same pattern. But it was not until interior roads materialized, connecting non-railroad, non-waterway communities, that Jefferson's hope for a unified nation (though no longer a rural one) materialized.

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**AN IRISH MISSIONARY'S JOURNEY TO THE PRAIRIE:
MOTHER RAPHAEL MCCARTHY**

Margaret Preston

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the United States opened its arms to millions of immigrants and of the European nations from which they came, one small island sent a disproportionately large number of its own, the result of economic hardship and natural disaster. As they fled the Great Famine of the 1840s, the Irish first settled in the urban northeast, but throughout the nineteenth century they steadily moved westward; and as a result, by 1880, the Irish were the third largest group in almost all western states.¹ There, they could be found working on railroads, in mining camps or on farms. By the late nineteenth century, almost equal numbers of Irish women as men were departing the island for other shores. Among all these immigrants could also be found Catholic clergy and women religious who came to help establish North America's much needed social services.²

In recent years, historians have begun to look more closely at the women religious who made this arduous journey and what we find is that despite being hidden by the cloak of the habit, these women were integral to ensuring that the Catholic Church had a role in the *business* of education and healthcare. For example, by the early twentieth century, in addition to countless schools, the Catholic Church was running, "581 Catholic acute and specialty hospitals in the United States, mainly under the auspices of nuns," while into the 21st century, Catholic hospitals remain the "largest single group of the nation's not-for-profit hospitals..."³ Of the women I will discuss today, all were members of Ireland's Union of Sister's of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVM) who settled in North and South Dakota; but this paper will

¹Patrick J. Blessing "Irish emigration to the United States, 1800-1920: An Overview" *The Irish in America: Emigration, Assimilation and Impact* ed. P.J. Drudy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 21.

²For example, in the year 1883 alone, 81,000 Irish emigrated to America. David M. Emmons *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town: 1875-1925* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. 2.

³Barbra Wall, *Unlikely Entrepreneurs: Catholic Sisters and the Hospital Marketplace* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), pp. 3, 22; 33-34. See also John J. Fialka *Sisters* (New York: St. Martin's Giffin, 2003); Sioban Nelson, *"Say Little, Do Much": Nurses, Nuns and Hospitals in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Margaret Susan Thompson, "To Serve the People of God: Nineteenth-Century Sisters and the Creation of American Religious Life" *Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism* (Univ. of Notre Dame) *Working Paper Series 18*, No. 2 (1987) pp. 1-44 and James J. Kenneally, *The History of American Catholic Women* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1990).

narrow its focus to Raphael McCarthy—the woman who brought the Order through the Great Depression and WWII and left it in a financially stronger position.⁴

Honoria “Nano” Nagle established the Presentation Order in Cork, Ireland in 1791. Nagle, born in 1718, and sent to France as a young woman to be educated by the Ursulines and returned to Ireland to spend the rest of her life as a teacher to the poor children of Cork.⁵ By the time of her death in 1784, Nagle had established a number of schools and laid the foundation for what would become the Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. By the late nineteenth century, there were Presentation convents throughout Ireland and beyond.⁶

Ireland’s Presentation nuns first arrived in the United States in 1854, with five women establishing a convent in San Francisco, these were followed by another four who settled in Dubuque, Iowa in 1875. Five years later in January of 1880, Sister Bridget Carroll, Mother Superior of the Presentation Convent in Dublin, wrote to that city’s Roman Catholic Archbishop, that, “Our missioner seems in great spirits and hopes to be able to start for America with several companions early in March!”⁷

That missioner was Mother Mary John Hughes, a hearty and adventurous woman. Christened Anna Marie, Hughes was born in County Armagh, Ireland in 1831. The daughter of a lawyer, she grew up in relatively privileged circumstances. In 1856, at the age of 25, Hughes entered the Presentation convent in Dublin, took the name Mary John, and began work with the convent’s orphanage. In 1871, Sr. Mary John became Mother John as she took the reigns of a convent she helped to found in County Longford, Ireland. Hence, in March of 1880, Mother John, now approaching the age of fifty, led Sisters Mary Agnes Hughes*, Teresa Challoner and two choir postulants across the Atlantic to the United States.⁸

Mother John helped to establish St. Joseph’s Convent and Academy for the children of Fargo in July of 1882.⁹ Then, just a few years later in 1886, Mother John, Sister Aloysius Chriswell and a novice, Sister

⁴Susan C. Peterson, “A Widening Horizon: Catholic Sisterhoods on the Northern Plains, 1874-1910” *Great Plains Quarterly* 5 Spring (1985), pp. 130-131. Nuns had long showed their business abilities. See Barbara Walsh, “Lifting the Veil on Entrepreneurial Irishwomen: Running Convents in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales” *History Ireland* 11, 4 (Winter, 2003), 23-28.

⁵Mary Pius O’Farrell, *Nano Nagle: Woman of the Gospel* (County Kildare: Presentation Generalate Monasterevin, 1996), pp. 61-62.

⁶Presentation ties to their Irish roots were strong. For example, in Aberdeen, up until the 1950s, only native-born Irish women were elected as the convent’s mother superior.

⁷McCabe Papers Ref. No 346 1-4 Shelf 331 II (1880). Papers located in Dublin Diocesan Archives.

*Biological sister of Mother Mary John Hughes.

⁸Annals of the Presentation Convent George’s Hill (1880). Records located in Presentation Convent George’s Hill, Dublin. Sister M. Eleanor Joyce, PBVM “Dakota Foundresses: Sisters M. John Hughes and Joseph Butler” paper submitted to Midwest Women’s Studies Association, University of South Dakota, April 1993), p. 1.

⁹Galvin, *From Acorn to Oak*, p. 63 and Mooney, *Doing What Needs to be Done*, p. 23.

Joseph Butler, all returned south and opened the doors of a second Presentation convent and school in Aberdeen, South Dakota.¹⁰

Among the many things that Mother John accomplished during her time as Mother Superior can be included a number of successful return trips to Ireland to recruit women for the Dakota convents. In 1885, on one such trip, Mother John met a young woman named Mary Ellen Butler. Upon this encounter, Hughes spoke to Butler of coming to the Dakotas as a missionary and offered her "...no salary, no recompense, no holidays, no pension but much hard work, a poor dwelling, few consolations, many disappointments, frequent sickness [and] a violent or lonely death."¹¹ Enticed by such an attractive offer, Butler, who had been born in Bandon, County Cork in 1859, packed to depart. Butler traveled to the Dakotas where she took the name Mary Joseph and became the first Dakota Presentation sister to take her final vows.¹² Sr. Joseph Butler would herself assume the position of Mother Superior of the Aberdeen convent at the age of 35 and under her leadership, the work of the Presentation Order in South Dakota expanded both in Aberdeen and beyond.¹³ It was she who opened all four of the Presentation Hospitals—the first St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen in 1901 after a diphtheria epidemic; the second, St. Joseph's Hospital in Mitchell, S.D. in 1906; the third, in 1910, in Miles City, Montana (Holy Rosary) and McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls in 1911.

Into the early 20th century, as the Presentation hospitals steadily strengthened their standing, the Order's records offer us a glimpse of the woman I want to talk about today; a woman whose management savvy allowed her to successfully lead the Order through the Great Depression and World War II. On May 1, 1888, Margaret McCarthy was born in Bandon, County Cork. When she was 19, she met Mother Joseph Butler who had traveled to Ireland on a recruiting trip. Taking the name Raphael, McCarthy immigrated to Aberdeen where she entered the novitiate in 1908. Within a few years, Sr. Raphael would train as a nurse working in Aberdeen at St. Luke's Hospital. McCarthy immediately showed talent in administration and from 1913 to 1921, she worked in St. Luke's Superintendent's office. In 1921, at the age of 33, McCarthy took the position of superior-administrator of St. Joseph's Hospital in Mitchell South Dakota.¹⁴

¹⁰ Peterson and Vaughn-Roberson, *Women With Vision*, p. 65.

¹¹ Sr. Pauline Quinn, "Mother John Hughes 1886-1892," *Biographies of Mother Superiors*," unpublished, p. 3.

¹² Peterson and Vaughn-Roberson, *Women with Vision*, pp. 88-89 and typescript from Box 10.3, Folder 1 Aberdeen Archives and "Nun's Good Deeds Made State Smarter, Healthier" *Argus Leader*, May 1, 1988, p. 5; Joyce, "Dakota Foundressess" p. 15 and Butler, Mother Joseph, *Annals 1880-1915* Box 10.3, Folder 2.

¹³ Peterson and Vaughn-Roberson, *Women With Vision*, p. 90.

¹⁴Sr Pauline, "Mother Raphael McCarthy 1932-1946," *Biographies of Mother Superiors*," unpublished.

McCarthy's financial acumen soon became apparent. For example, in 1925 she suggested the Presentation Order seek a loan for their Sioux Falls hospital from Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, which she learned was offering money at a lower interest rate. There was, however, a catch. Mass Mutual stated that it would only offer the loan if the Presentation Order took full control of the hospital and accepted the loan's risk. The Sioux Falls hospital, McKennan Hospital, was unlike the other three Presentation facilities. McKennan had actually been under the administration of a lay board because it had been established by the bequest of Helen McKennan. McKennan, who died in 1906, had left \$25,000 in the care of three trustees who had asked the Presentation Order to help build and run the hospital (the bequest was only ¼ of what it actually cost to build the hospital). By 1925, the Presentation Order, like many Catholic Convents throughout the United States, had a solid financial track record. Thus, on May 5, 1925, Presentation Sisters Incorporated took full responsibility of McKennan Hospital and promptly negotiated a loan for \$235,000.¹⁵

In 1927, Sr. Raphael was made superior-administrator of McKennan Hospital, the Presentation's largest, but by 1932, the order had elected the 44 year old to be Mother Superior and now she had a convent, all of its schools and four hospitals to run. As Mother Superior she was, in effect, CEO of a company that had, at that time, 192 nuns (who were full time dependents) and employed many more lay persons in their schools and hospitals. By this time, the Presentation Order of Aberdeen ran approximately 17 schools throughout eastern South Dakota, not including the kindergarten Mother Raphael established on the convent grounds in 1934 or the schools in Minnesota into which the Presentation Order expanded during her tenure. One of Mother Raphael's first acts after assuming her leadership role, was to establish a uniform bookkeeping system for the convent and hospitals and thus immediately improve the Order's financial position.¹⁶

In looking at some of McCarthy's extant letters we see a woman who understood the financial complexity of the businesses she ran. In 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression, Mother McCarthy wrote to the Vice President of Massachusetts Mutual stating that she was sending \$10,000 toward McKennan hospital's loan and this despite "the drought and the grasshoppers...and the inability of so many of our customers to pay their obligations to us...[these] have caused us to be in...financial difficulties." Nevertheless, Mother Raphael spoke proudly of being able to continue to meet her financial obligations and

¹⁵ Harrington, *A Woman's Will...A Sister's Way*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ Peterson and Robertson, "Women with Vision" p. 102.

thanked him for reducing the interest rate on the loan.¹⁷ Two years later, and clearly on top of things, Raphael wrote to the Cashier of Mass Mutual on April 23, regarding the loan stating: "I notice you have charged me for accrued interest...this is entirely contrary to our agreement with your home office...according to their figures we were to pay \$2,700 per month until July 1st 1936, at which time all the interest due...would be fully paid up." Mother Raphael goes on to state that "we have complied with the arrangement in every way and are amazed" that Massachusetts Mutual would imply that there was an unpaid balance of \$236.32.¹⁸ That same year Mother Raphael asks again to have the interest rate on her loan maintained at 4.5 and not raised to 5.5%. "Our situation in South Dakota the present year is the worst in our history. There is absolutely no feed of any kind left...I can see little hope of any income during the coming year." Mother Raphael noted in the letter that she was very grateful for all of Mass Mutual's support and "as proof of our good faith we hope to be able to pay in the neighborhood of \$15,000..." toward the loan's principal.¹⁹ As the 1930s come to an end and the world again faced war, Mother Raphael regularly sent Mass Mutual money.

Mother Raphael continued to show audacious business instincts. In 1940, she recognized that Aberdeen's St. Luke's Hospital needed another building. Despite much advice to the contrary, Raphael was confident that she could find a company to safely move the vacated four-story Lincoln Hospital building ten blocks. After much research, Mother Raphael found The Crowe Brother's Company of Chicago and contracted them to move the five thousand ton building. Over the next five months, the building slowly made its way through Aberdeen without damage, and in November of 1940 it became part of St. Luke's Hospital.²⁰

Next, as the U.S. entered World War II, Mother Raphael pursued membership in a program sponsored by the US government that sought to fund nursing schools in order to increase the number of nurses. Called the Cadet Nurse Corps, the federal government appropriated \$45 million dollars toward the Bolton

¹⁷ Letter Mother Raphael McCarthy to Mr. W. A. Rawlings, Vice President, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, July 1, 1934.

¹⁸ Letter Mother Raphael McCarthy to Mr. William C. Olson, Cashier, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, April 23, 1936.

¹⁹ Letter Mother Raphael McCarthy to Mr. W. A. Rawlings, Vice President, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, July 7, 1936.

²⁰ Quinn, "Biographies of Mother Superiors," p. 3. That same year, and eight years after Bishop Bernard Mahoney asked Mother McCarthy to take over the operation of the diocesan children's home that had been destroyed by fire, the Presentation Children's Home of Sioux Falls opened and would, over the years, house up to ninety children of all denominations. Peterson and Robertson, "Women with Vision" p. 104-105; However, as federal demands and increased understanding of the psychology of childrearing encroached, "...by 1965 the Presentations decided that they had ventured out of their area of professional speciality..." and closed the home.

Nurse Training Act. The act sought “to attract candidates to nursing and to give them recognition as national war workers.”²¹ In order to be accepted into the Nursing Corps, a student needed to have a high school diploma, be admitted to a school that was part of the program and “Agree to make her services available for military, or other Federal hospitals, or essential civilian nursing services for the duration of the present war....”²² In order to join the program, Mother Raphael rushed some of her sisters to Washington. The obstacle: none of the Presentation nursing programs, one at each hospital, met the attendance requirement the government expected. As such, they needed to combine the schools. Doing so within days of the deadline, in 1942, the newly established Presentation Central School of Nursing was the fourth school in the nation approved by the U.S. Cadet Nursing Corps.²³

Mother Raphael's next move was to seek to negotiate a new loan for her various businesses; this time with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company. In 1942, Neil Gleason, who represented the convent's interests, expressed his support for her application despite some missing documentation and said “that if it were not for my faith in the Presentation Sisters, their excellent institutions and your leadership, I would be rather reluctant to pass upon these statements as submitted.”²⁴ Mother Raphael responded with an apology for the missing documentation stating that she thought only information for the hospitals, and not for the motherhouse and schools, was needed. Within the letter she argued for her case noting that they were a good risk despite the bills receivable for the hospitals being larger than they might have been in other places. She noted “we live in a farming country and these bills are paid depending upon crop condition...” and while the hospitals make every effort to collect, “...so much drought and poor crops” have challenged people's ability to pay. On December 15, 1942, Gleason wrote to confirm the positive outcome of the application and requested that she, “as *president* of the respective corporations,” sign the papers for the three loans at 3.25% interest rate: these loans were \$190,000 on Presentation Academy of Aberdeen, \$98,000 on St. Joseph's Hospital in Mitchell, and \$180,000 on Presentation Sisters Incorporated for

²¹ Letter to Directors of Hospitals from Thomas Parran, U.S. Surgeon General, July 20, 1943. Presentation Archives Cadet Nursing Program Correspondence.

²² “Federal Security Agency U.S. Public Health Service Division of Nurse Education” Form 40 ---July 1943 Presentation Archives Cadet Nursing Program Correspondence and “Uniforms and Insignia of U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Chosen” *Aberdeen American News* September, n.d., 1943. Among other things, the students were provided with monthly stipends, three uniforms and scholarships to cover all tuition and fees in exchange for service, either at home or abroad, during the war.

²³Peterson and Vaughn-Roberson, *Women With Vision*, p. 208; Harrington, *A Woman's Will*, pp. 35-37 and “S.F. Nurses Observe Anniversary” *Argus Leader*, November 14, 1948. “Four Nursing Schools to Be Combined Here” *Aberdeen American News* (nd, 1945).

²⁴ Letter Mr. Neil J. Gleason, President Neil J. Gleason & Co to Mother Raphael McCarthy, December 8, 1942.

McKenna Hospital in Sioux Falls; a total of \$468,000, which, if negotiated today, is the equivalent of borrowing over 17 million dollars.²⁵

As was her habit, Mother Raphael began immediate repayment on the loans and over the next two years, she was able to make “substantial” installments—particularly, it appears, on the largest—that being the loan on the Academy in Aberdeen. So substantial were her payments that in 1944, Mr. Gleason wrote to inform Mother Raphael that Northwestern was challenged by her plan to significantly reduce the principle on the Aberdeen loan. Gleason suggested that, instead, Northwestern Mutual “might be more favorably impressed if some portion of the sum could be applied on the Mitchell and Sioux Falls loans” since reducing the Aberdeen loan would result in a considerable loss to the company. Gleason noted that Northwestern had provided this low interest rate to many Catholic hospitals and these same organizations were paying back greater sums than Northwestern had counted on; as a result, Northwestern Mutual could not continue to accept such large repayment without penalty. As Gleason wrote, “the situation has become acute and they cannot ignore the interests of policyholders....” Gleason revealed that while Northwestern took responsibility for not anticipating borrowers’ substantially increased incomes, at the same time, “they cannot ignore their responsibilities.” As a result, Northwestern would begin to administer a 2% service charge on excess payments.²⁶ This does not seem to have deterred Mother Raphael and in a letter from Gleason in June of 1945, he confirmed that she would make payments of \$13,000 on the Aberdeen loan, \$18,000 on McKenna’s, and \$1,000 on St. Joseph’s—all with a “premium of 2%.” Nevertheless, Gleason expressed happiness at the reduction in indebtedness because this would make it “possible to undertake some of the other projects which you have been planning.”²⁷

In 1945, as the war came to an end, Mother Raphael made her most significant decision for the economic health of the Presentation Order itself; she purchased 100 acres in Aberdeen to eventually house a new convent. The next year, Raphael’s term as Mother Superior ended and by this time the religious order now numbered 221 sisters, owned over \$2.3 million in land and property, ran four hospitals, 16 schools, one orphanage, a junior college and had sisters teaching in schools throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.²⁸ Far from retiring, Mother Raphael now spearheaded the task of fund-raising for and construction of the \$2 million dollar structure to house both the convent as well as

²⁵ Letters Mr. Neil J. Gleason, President Neil J. Gleason & Co to Mother Raphael McCarthy, December 8 and 15, \ 1942, my emphasis. \$17,810,887.59 using the nominal GDP per capita; see www.measuringworth.com/.

²⁶ Letter Mr. Neil J. Gleason, President Neil J. Gleason & Co to Mother Raphael McCarthy, March 20, 1944. Thanks to Rick Lundberg for clarification of accounting terminology.

²⁷ Letter Mr. Neil J. Gleason, President Neil J. Gleason & Co to Mother Raphael McCarthy, June 20, 1945.

²⁸ This information is based on a 1946 tally by Peterson and Robertson, “Women with Vision” p. 108

Presentation Junior College (completed 1954); all the while she was also acting as general treasurer of the Presentation Order. In 1958, at the age of 70, Mother Raphael was put in charge of raising money to shore up the financially challenged Holy Rosary Hospital in Montana and once she had completed this task, she would spend her final years as an administrator at Mother Joseph Manor, the Presentation run retirement home in Aberdeen.

Mother Raphael McCarthy died on July 3, 1966, but 6 years prior to her death, South Dakota Senator Karl Mundt recognized Mother Raphael by recognizing her in the Congressional record on her golden jubilee of August 11, 1960. Included was a review of McCarthy's life which acknowledged both her "keen business sense" as well as her "moral efforts" to care for others in greater need.²⁹ Finally, and just to further add to Mother Raphael's story, until a corneal transplant in 1961, she was effectively legally blind. In an oral interview in 2008, Sr. SaBina Joyce recalled that local architect, Howard Spitznagel, who when told that Mother Raphael's corneal transplant had been successful stated, "We could never put anything over on her when she couldn't see." This was put more graciously by Sioux Falls Bishop Brady when in 1951 upon the 50th anniversary of St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen he noted: "God has not blessed her with much sight in her eyes, but has given her the vision of a prophetess in her soul."³⁰

Mothers Mary John Hughes, Joseph Butler and Raphael McCarthy, emigrants from Ireland, were three of many capable women who contributed to the establishment of America's much needed social service network. As historians increasingly look at the role of nuns in America, it becomes important to acknowledge that entering the convent could lead to positions of power that society would have never offered to lay women. How did they do it? In addition to society presuming that teaching, social work and particularly nursing was woman's sphere, in many ways we must understand that the women of Ireland's Presentation Order (and this is not exclusive to them) saw their work, then as they do now, as their mission. Each woman receives her mission and each takes up the call believing that with God's help and guidance, they can successfully complete the task they have accepted. Thus, unlike a career that will end or a job that might change, these women are missionaries to the end and while missionaries might fail at a task, they never give up. Certainly, this is not to say that they were not pragmatic. These women recognized that, for any missionary endeavor to succeed, the financial demands of a business must be met. Nor

²⁹ "Congressional Record Proceedings and Debates of the 86th Congress, Second Session" Vol. 106, No. 30, Washington, D.C., Thursday, August 11, 1960.

³⁰ Sister Pauline Quinn, "Biographies of Mother Superiors: Mother Raphael McCarthy 1932-1946", p. 7. Oral Interview with Sisters Colman Coakley, Anrita Johnson, SaBina Joyce, Suzanne Cotter, Bernadette Farrell and Mary Thomas May 13, 2008.

should we presume these women to be infallible. The records clearly show us their humanity; they could be strict, unbending and very demanding. Yet, this is also a story about dedicated women who, despite bad weather, interfering prelates and financial crises, expanded and continue to successfully administer a multi-million dollar, non-for profit-corporation on the Northern Great Plains of America.

**FOLLOWING THE GRID:
Pioneering the Meridian Road, 1911-1916**

L. Robert Puschendorf

Roads connect people and places. Today's highways connect people and places in ways probably never envisioned by road boosters at the turn-of-the-twentieth century.

"...(S)tretching north almost as straight as the wild geese fly, from the sunny waters of the Gulf of Mexico two thousand miles across the magnificent Western prairies to the broad wheat lands of Manitoba..."¹ - Joseph Mills Hanson, 1912

Like the lines of longitude running north and south and from pole to pole on a globe, the Meridian Road was envisioned as a "white ribbon" across the eastern Great Plains of the United States from Canada to Mexico.

The road would take its name from the Sixth Principal Meridian. And, more than symbolically, this road would largely follow the linear grid of section line roads that were established under the surveys of land that used the base line of latitude and guide meridians to define the patterns of rectangles and right angles on the landscape of the Great Plains.

FROM GOOD ROADS...

"For hundreds of years the people of this country have been content to plod along through the slush and the mud."² - Hebron(Nebraska) Champion, 1912

The subject of good roads had been long debated. At the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, the "Good Roads" movement was founded in response to the poor condition of roads. Early road development was largely assigned to local governments. Especially in the western states public funds were spread thin when considering the hundreds of miles of rural, unimproved roads in a typical rural county. The county, township or precinct and road district were the local units of government responsible for financing, overseeing and improving roads. A road tax was one means of financing road work. Local citizens, mainly farmers, could work off their tax by contributing labor or supplying teams of horses or equipment to accomplish road work. County roadwork was done under the direction of the district road overseer, or road "boss." State or federal government provided little or no centralized support.

¹ Joseph Mills Hanson, "The Meridian Road," Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 16, 1912, page 2.

² Hebron (Nebraska) Champion, January 19, 1912, page 1.

Roads connect people and places, and roads would become the common ground for people of diverse interests and professions. "Good Roads" clubs, automobile associations, and local commercial clubs were some of the organizations that took up the issue.

Perhaps the most significant of local organizations that took up the issue of good roads were the "commercial clubs." Local commercial clubs promoted events and community improvement projects, as well as the general up building of local business and industry. The local commercial club often drew together the most diverse coalition of people under the name of "good roads:" farmers, merchants, doctors, lawyers, newspapermen, and automobile owners. Farmers supported good roads to accommodate farm-to-market access to rail service and local markets. And city folk supported good roads as a means to maintain and expand their trade areas.

Local commercial clubs established "good roads committees" and set to work on local roads, demonstrating the techniques and use of the road drag, improving the roads approaching town, and fundraising to purchase road equipment or procure local farmers to periodically drag the roads. In cooperation with townsfolk, farmers brought donations of both funds and labor to supplement county appropriations and improve roads in their locale. Events such as "Good Roads Day" and road building "bees" brought volunteers, teams of workhorses and equipment to improve sections of rural roads.

...TO AUTOMOBILE TRAILS

*"Since the advent of the automobile upon the arena the subject of good roads has been a much mooted one. It has been left to this machine to advance the idea that the country in general will be benefited by this move."*³ - Hebron (Nebraska) Champion, 1912

It was the coming of the automobile, however, that gave impetus to the issue of good roads. While "Good Roads" efforts had largely focused on the condition of local roads, the rising dominance of the automobile opened avenues of long distance travel. During this period, "automobile trails," the forerunners to today's highway systems were initiated by private interests composed of local, state, and regional associations that cooperated in the promotion and improvement of cross-country roads.

These new road associations would take up the "goods roads" issue with increasing arguments for centralized support for the development and maintenance of highway systems. Until that time, however, the improvement of roads on the new "automobile trails" would remain in local hands.

³ Hebron (Nebraska) Champion, January 19, 1912.

THE MERIDIAN ROAD: The White Ribbon of Road

"(Cities) are bound together in spirit and mutual interest as well as materially by the white ribbon of the Meridian road..."⁴ - Joseph Mills Hanson, 1912

The Meridian Road was one of the earliest of the "automobile trail" associations organized in the United States. Its founding is credited to John C. Nicholson of Newton, Kansas, a lawyer and a tireless booster of his community. Nicholson recognized that along with the automobile would be the road network that would be necessary to connect local communities as well as distant places. In January 1910, became active in the development of the New Santa Fe Trail, an east-west road across western Kansas. Newton became the eastern terminus. Seeing the potential to connect east-west transportation by a north-south "trunk" highway, Nicholson pitched the idea to the Kansas State Good Roads Association at its meeting in Wichita in January 1911. "His idea was received with instant enthusiasm and the result was the organization of the Meridian Road Association..."⁵

A meeting in Salina, Kansas was called for June 1, 1911 to establish a Kansas association. County commissioners of each county along with towns on the proposed route were asked to send delegates, and representatives of the "Commercial Club or Good Roads Association...and all county engineers were invited."⁶ One delegate, newspaper publisher A.Q. Miller of Belleville, Kansas recalled that the condition of the rural roads was such that the Belleville delegation traveled to Salina by railroad. "To travel by automobile would have been inviting disaster," he later recalled.⁷

During the course of the meeting an organization was perfected, constitution adopted and officers elected. W.S. Gearhart, State Engineer, was authorized to draw up a map of Kansas, using a heavy line to connect all county seats along the proposed road.

But the most significant outcome of the Salina meeting was that the road would be projected not just in Kansas but north and south across the United States from Winnipeg, Canada to Galveston, Texas on the Gulf of Mexico. And Nicholson, now elected as secretary of the association, was instructed to promote interest by the states south through Oklahoma and Texas, and north through Nebraska, the Dakotas and Canada.

⁴ Hanson, Yankton Press and Dakotan.

⁵ Hanson, Yankton Press and Dakotan.

⁶"Meridian Highway History," MacNaughton's Printery, August 1920. Copy in collections of the Republic County Historical Society, Belleville, Kansas.

⁷ James D. Callahan, Jayhawk Editor: A Biography of A.Q. Miller, Sr. Los Angeles: Sterling Press, 1955, page 76.

A 'PAPER' ROAD

*"As this is an age of great undertakings in every line, so it is in road building. The most stupendous tasks in building highways are planned, and it is gratifying to know they are not only laid on paper, but on the land."*⁸ - *Texas Commercial Secretaries and Business Men's Association, 1912*

The Meridian Road was nothing more than a penciled mark on a map – a "paper" road – following an imaginary line established on a terrestrial globe. But the originators *had* given it a name that evoked the place and experience of the road itself.

The Sixth Principal Meridian has significant association with the system of surveying public lands. Following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, one of the first orders of business was a land survey of the vast public domain now opened for settlement. A base line was surveyed east-west on the 40th degree of latitude, which became the boundary of Kansas and Nebraska. At a point west of the Missouri River along this base line, a north-south line was established, the Sixth Principal Meridian. Together, these lines establish the township and range system of land surveys that define all lands in what is today the states of Kansas and Nebraska and parts of Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota.⁹ The surveys made possible the orderly transfer of lands and the rapid settlement of the West and are the legal basis for all land ownership to this day. Fields, fencerows, shelterbelts and networks of section line roads follow this rectangular system of land division. The rural landscape of the Meridian Road was characterized by this familiar pattern of squares, rectangles and right angles. And as its course progressed from "paper" to the rural landscape itself, the Meridian Road would largely follow the zigzag of section line roads established under this very system of land survey.

Symbolically too, the name "Meridian" helped conjure public imagination. The new association established in Salina gave their road a personality, associating it with direct and long distance travel to remote reaches. And the communities that were to be located on the Meridian Road would be linked, at least in perception, in a line north and south beyond the limits of town and township.

In an amazing show of organization, within the next six months divisions of the Meridian Road representing the six states and Canada were organized. Now, the road itself had to be addressed.

⁸ Hebron (Nebraska) Champion, February 16, 1912.

⁹ "Nebraska-Kansas Public Land Survey Thematic Group," National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, Nebraska State Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 1987.

A DIRT HIGHWAY

*“The Meridian Road...was promoted to provide a well logged, well mapped, well constructed, and well maintained dirt highway that would take care of this inter-county seat travel, inter-state travel and international travel and to form a cross-over road for the several east and west, local, state, and ocean to ocean highways.”*¹⁰ - John C. Nicholson, 1912

John C. Nicholson made his case for what was already envisioned as an international highway. On January 17-18, 1912 the states now represented by the Meridian Road were called to the annual convention of the Kansas State Good Roads Association held at Emporia, Kansas. The divisions from the six states and Canada were represented in person or proxy. Here the “International Meridian Road Association” was formed. A charter was adopted and officers were elected. The organizational structure was simple and direct. State divisions would make up the association. The association was to look after advertising and improvement of the road. The officers of the state divisions would be assigned the responsibility of routing, sign posting and maintaining the road.

Within a month a map of the Meridian Road was released to local newspapers. And the press announcement pronounced even greater things to come:

The present plans of the Meridian road call for a continuous highway from Winnipeg, Canada, to Galveston, Texas. When this is completed, it will in all probability be extended southward to the city of Mexico.¹¹

PEOPLE and PLACE

*“The short roads between trading centers have been extended and grown together, county seat has been joined to county seat, city to city, metropolis to metropolis, until we have laid out and in common use transcontinental highways...”*¹² - John C. Nicholson, 1912

As predicted, during the spring and summer of 1912, real roads began to take the place of “paper” along the route chosen for the Meridian Road. As early as the fall of 1911, local committeemen had even conducted reconnaissance field trips of logical roadways to be designated. But people and place would define its course. As John Nicholson had rationalized, the international road would be guided by the state organizations. But it was the county committeemen who would have to build the road, both in terms of local support and physical improvements.

¹⁰ John C. Nicholson, “Gulf to Winnipeg, or Benefits of Cross State Highways.” Report of Proceedings of the 10th Annual Convention of the Kansas State Good Roads Association, Emporia, Kansas, January 17-18, 1912.

¹¹ Norfolk (Nebraska) Daily News, February 14, 1912.

¹² Nicholson, Report of Proceedings of the 10th Annual Convention.

County committeemen would have to grapple with the roads that would be designated and the means to improve them. The challenge was to take “fragments” of existing roads, link county seats and other towns, and build local support – all within the parameters of maintaining the most direct north-south route. While towns might rally for their location on a cross-country road, not everyone was convinced that motor vehicles would assume any major role compared to passenger and freight service already provided by railroads.

Then, too, the roads themselves would have to be improved. By connecting county seats, the location of county government and most often the trade centers for rural counties, support from the counties could be assured. But a road of this distance would require improvements that went beyond the boundaries of town or township. Until more centralized support was available from the state and national government, cooperation modeled by “good roads” advocates would be the strategy for enlisting public and private support to build the Meridian Road.

Again, section line roads of the public land survey were largely the focus of the new road network, with particular attention to the more improved “farm-to-market” roads. If the ‘shortest distance between two points is a straight line,’ the straight section line roads did not necessarily accommodate the shortest distance. To promote support for the Meridian Road, towns would have to be connected by a zigzag of section line roads, resulting in right angle turns and perpetual confusion for the motorist.

The routes through towns could be even more confusing. Usually the scheme was to have the route pass through the central business district and maximize exposure to the town’s commercial and civic offerings. This resulted in maze made up of the grid work of city blocks, railroad crossings and intersecting streets.

Provisions were made for telephone poles to be striped with paint to indicate instruction to motorists. With the growth of local telephone exchanges, telephone posts were common across the rural landscape, conveniently strung along the right-of-way and paralleling roadways. Telephone markings were the standard practice of highway associations until the system of highway numbering was adopted.

Many of the rural roads that would be assumed into the route of the Meridian Road were obvious candidates, such as main traveled roads between towns or improved roads that were already maintained as parts of rural postal routes. Since there were no particular funds for new roadbeds, existing roads would have to suffice.

In some cases, sandy soil or lowlands prone to frequent washes made a road difficult to build or maintain, diverting the road from the most direct route. Natural features, such as rivers, streams and

terrain would be in contention as well. Existing bridges were incorporated into the early route. Where bridge improvements were identified, the county would have to be lobbied to replace deficient bridges. Sometimes the route would later be adjusted to avoid the dilemma of multiple stream crossings and the need for redundant bridge crossings. And at the Missouri River on the Nebraska-South Dakota state line and the South Canadian River in Oklahoma no bridges yet existed.

Sometimes the topography or soil conditions would determine the route. Rough terrain, wetlands or waterways made it impractical to construct roads on the section lines and the route of the road would zigzag for some distances or be adjusted to avoid the natural obstacle altogether. In the Couteau Hills of South Dakota, the road had been diverted from the section lines to follow the grade contour, which resulted in lighter climbs.¹³

After the routes were established, the most eager of local Meridian Road “boosters” set to work on road improvements. Some towns established “territories,” with sections of road that would be the responsibility of a particular community. In some locations, road crews were organized and local forces were motivated with almost patriotic fervor. Near Arlington, S.D. a road building “bee” improved a stretch of the Meridian Road in July 1912.¹⁴ And in Codington County, South Dakota, a crew of farmers and Watertown citizens, organized under the Watertown Commercial Club, improved some 18 miles of road during a nonstop, two-day road-building marathon in June 1912. Volunteers worked by moonlight to complete the work.¹⁵ “Good Roads” days were named, encouraging farmers and townsfolk to gather for one or two days of non-stop road building activities.

Sometimes when a town was bypassed, the local citizenry lobbied to be included in the route. When the citizens of Bruning and Belvidere, Nebraska heard that the Meridian Road would be laid out through the county, they sent petitions asking that the road be routed through their towns. A more indirect route was selected to connect the towns.

Bits and pieces of road were now stitched into the “white ribbon” of road envisioned by these promoters. They again turned their attention to a “paper” road, but this time in the form of paper with real value. Credibility came with “official” endorsement by publication in automobile road guides. And the foremost road guide of its day was the Automobile Blue Book.

¹³ Lea, Samuel H., “Inspection Trip Over the Meridian Road,” The Road-Maker, Des Moines, Iowa, December 1912.

¹⁴ Lea, The Road-Maker.

¹⁵ Yankton Press and Dakotan, June 27, 1912.

PATHFINDING...

"We found public opinion along the entire route practically unanimous for road improvement in general and especially favorable toward the Meridian Road."¹⁶ - Samuel H. Lea, President Meridian Road Association, 1912

In July of 1912, Samuel H. Lea, South Dakota State Engineer and president of the Meridian Road Association announced a most ambitious endeavor. A party of Meridian Road officers, press and "good roads" advocates arranged to tour the route from Winnipeg south to Texas. The purpose of the trip was "to make an official log of the road and to prepare the data for making a map of the road, showing in detail the exact condition thereof."¹⁷ The officials would observe the actual conditions along the road, noting improvements that had been accomplished and estimating how much was needed to make a "first class highway the entire distance."¹⁸ The trip would also provide an opportunity to rally communities along the route and plans were made to include a "good roads orator" to make "speeches and addresses where occasion required something more than a plain, ordinary talk."¹⁹ An itinerary was prepared and released to the press, complete with instructions to local communities and expectations for automobiles, hotels and garage facilities, which would be furnished "free of charge."²⁰ The trip was an ambitious one. It would start at Winnipeg on September 10th for a 10-days trip covering the length of the Meridian Road to as far south as the road conditions would permit. They expected to travel about 100 miles per day and make at least three good road talks daily. One state delegate participating in the event would call it the "pathfinder tour."

The official party consisted of Samuel H. Lea and John C. Nicholson, the officers representing the International Meridian Road Association. Joe L. Long of Des Moines, Iowa, publisher of The Road-Maker, a monthly journal, and J.P. Ahrens of Chicago, representing the Automobile Blue Book, rounded out the official party. Long provided lively and humorous speeches at local stops. Ahrens would make a detailed log for publication in the Blue Book.

From Winnipeg, the group spent the next four days through the Dakotas. "Night control," or overnight stops, had been arranged in four towns. At stops, they reported on improvements that had been made to sections of the road through both states and their enthusiast receptions by towns and local road boosters.

¹⁶ Lea, The Road-Maker.

¹⁷ The Belleville (Kansas) Telescope, August 20, 1912.

¹⁸ Lea, The Road-Maker.

¹⁹ Lea, The Road-Maker.

²⁰ Yankton Press and Dakotan, August 17, 1912.

Their schedule was maintained over the 547 miles from Winnipeg to Bridgewater, South Dakota where the party left for Yankton and the South Dakota/Nebraska state line.

The group arrived at Yankton, South Dakota promptly at noon as guests of the "Noon-day Club" for a luncheon at the Portland Hotel. Lea, Nicholson and Long addressed the group, exchanging compliments and reporting progress and observations from their trip from Canada and through the Dakotas. The construction of a permanent bridge over the Missouri River at Yankton became one of the major challenges to the Meridian Road. Nicholson used the opportunity to press the group of businessmen about the building of a bridge:

Mr. Nicholson begged leave to call attention to the Missouri River crossing at this point and a promise he had received from this point that it would always be practicable, a promise that (the) Toastmaster...reiterated.²¹

After this polite exchange, the Yankton delegation must have crossed their fingers for luck when they turned the party over to representatives from Nebraska. The temporary pontoon bridge was still being readied for service for the fall season.²² Two cars from Norfolk, Nebraska sporting the banner, "Meridian Road Official Car, North Nebraska Division" escorted the men out of town over the pontoon bridge where they landed on a sandbar described by Lea as "over a quarter of a mile across:"

This was a hard proposition and we suggested employing a team to pull us across the same. Mr. Daum (the driver of one of the cars from Norfolk) said that was not necessary and plowed through without assistance in his new Michigan Forty, landing us safely on the Nebraska shore.²³

The party also happened to cross Nebraska during a continuous rain spell. The condition of the roads caused a change in the itinerary, which up to this point had been meticulously maintained. The evening was spent in Norfolk and on to Columbus, Nebraska on Sunday. The party was not scheduled to travel on Sundays, but reports about continuing rain forced a decision to advance their schedule.

It was on to the southernmost Nebraska towns before being turned over to a Kansas driver. Pennants, which had been attached to the official cars throughout the trip, were transferred to the six-cylinder Winton automobile. As local newspapers described:

A pretty feature of the trip is the collection of pennants from each town through which the party passed. The many gay colors waving from the car gives a vivid impression of the distance covered.²⁴

²¹ Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 14, 1912.

²² Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 17, 1912.

²³ Lea, The Road-Maker.

²⁴ Hebron (Nebraska) Journal, September 20, 1912.

The party was southbound to Kansas, "with the pennants of every town...flying in the breeze, away to the gulf, well pleased with the treatment received..."²⁵

At the Kansas state line the party was met by seven cars from Belleville, Kansas to officially greet them at the state line. In the party were State Engineer W.S. Gearhart and A.Q. Miller of Belleville, two of the founders of the Meridian Road at the Salina meeting. Just the year before Gearhart had drawn the "paper" map of what was then an imaginary road.

The party continued south according to their itinerary, which included overnight stops at Salina and Wichita. The party left Wichita for Perry, Oklahoma. Arriving at Perry for night control, the party was informed that the roads to the south were impassible or "practically no road...with little promise of one being made for a long time."²⁶ The party traveled instead by railroad for scheduled meetings in Guthrie and Oklahoma City. At both locations they were assured that road improvements would be "forthcoming." The party disbanded at Oklahoma City, "(refusing) to log and advertise that route until a half way decent road was constructed or to have it signposted with the (Meridian Road) signs."²⁷ Later that year, Nicholson would travel to Galveston, delivering a letter from the mayor of Winnipeg that had been carried by the party along the trek.

Despite the disappointments they had found along the route, the party had accomplished its goals for the "pathfinder" trip. First and foremost, they had made a complete log of the route. The Meridian Road would now be included in the Automobile Blue Book as a recognized highway, a real road. The fragments of road had been assembled.

Second, the trip had energized the communities along the Meridian Road. They were, indeed, linked in an endeavor that connected them one-to-one with their neighboring towns and towns along the breadth of the United States. The party reinforced the many groups and individuals that had rallied under the name of the Meridian Road: local committeemen, commercial clubs, road crews, and officers of the state divisions. The party had scheduled 80 stops on their itinerary where they were welcomed by cheering crowds, headlines, automobile escorts, school children, banners, brass bands, and hosts of dignitaries.

Finally, it had made actual observations of the conditions along the route and noted the amount of improvements that would be necessary to build the "white ribbon" of road. There was still much more to do, but the trip had been an opportunity to celebrate what had been done. In a period of just over a year, an organization had been founded and a road had been established.

²⁵ Hebron (Nebraska) Champion, September 20, 1912.

²⁶ "Meridian Highway History."

²⁷ "Meridian Highway History."

...AND PATHFINDERS

The cover of the Association's new Meridian Road Monthly Magazine for August, 1913 gave every indication of the aspirations to now guide the organization: federal recognition and an extension of the road to Mexico. The cover was dominated by a map of the United States overlaid with a map of the Meridian Road through the great central plains, proudly proclaiming, "Our National Monument. The Next Great National Movement."²⁸

The year 1913 also saw leadership change in the International Meridian Highway Association. In December, the association held its annual meeting at Lawton, Oklahoma and elected John C. Nicholson as president, D.E. Colp of San Antonio, Texas as vice-president, and Robert Campbell of Andarko, Oklahoma as secretary-treasurer.

The ticket of Nicholson and Colp was a strong one - sometimes contemptuous - and one that would have a lasting impact on the short- and long-term leadership of the Meridian Road. Nicholson was an obvious choice for president. The Meridian Road was his dream child. And he had shown remarkable organization skills and accomplishment in a period of only a few years. Colp could be proven to address the condition of the Meridian Road in Texas. And he could establish the branch to Austin and San Antonio. Under Colp it was onward to the Rio Grande and Mexico.

Nicholson had been absent from his work on the Meridian Road for several long periods, travelling twice to Europe. During this last absence, Colp made arrangements for another official tour of the road. It was going to put the Meridian Road on the nation's map. And it would enlist "The Pathfinder" himself, Colonel A.L. Westgard, of New York City.

Westgard had a national reputation as a pioneer automotive map-maker and trail-blazer of early cross-country roads, earning him the name "The Pathfinder." Working for the American Automobile Association, in 1912 alone he mapped three transcontinental routes, including the Platte valley automobile trail through Nebraska that would soon become part of the Lincoln Highway.²⁹ Now, A.L. Westgard was vice-president of the National Highways Association.

The National Highways Association was among the most active of advocates for a nationwide road network, urging that the federal government to assume responsibility for a national system of roads. This

²⁸ Meridian Road Monthly Magazine, August 1913. Collections of the Harvey County Historical Society Library and Museum, Newton, Kansas.

²⁹ Hokanson, Drake, The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999, page 8.

Association produced a map in May 1914, showing a 50,000-mile system of national highways, complete with justifications of why such a system should be the responsibility of the federal government.³⁰

A. L. Westgard would accompany a grand party from San Antonio to Canada, complete with Texas businessmen and a filmmaker to take motion pictures of the event. And hopefully, Westgard would endorse the Meridian Road as part of that system of national highways being promoted by the National Highways Association.

The Westgard-Colp trip resulted in a new map of the Meridian Road, published in 1915 under the name of the National Highways Association. The next year the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 would begin to place government in a leadership role for developing the Nation's highways.

FROM NAME TO NUMBER

*"Perhaps it is hardly accurate to say that the Meridian Road has no history behind it or that it is all still to be made."*³¹ - Joseph Mills Hanson, 1912

With federal and state government assuming more of a role in the growing network of roads after 1916, the "automobile trails" were passing into the phase of "pioneering" trails. The Meridian Road would later be renamed the "Meridian Highway" in 1919 as it passed from its "pioneering" stage to the age of highway building. It was already posed to connect to Laredo, Texas on the Mexican border.

Many of the same founders of the Meridian Road would lobby for the Meridian Highway to be designated as part of the national "Federal-Aid" system of highways in 1921. In 1926, the federal government renamed it under the impersonal, but uniform system of numbers, "U.S. Route 81." Even later, the organization itself would rename itself by coining it the Nation's connection in the Pan American Highway system. The Pan American Highway Association still exists today, tracing its founding to the Salina meeting in 1911; its goals are not far astray from its roots as a direct, cross-country highway. Its motto, "The Longest and Fastest Trans-American Highway."³² One contemporary writer has even called it the "NAFTA superhighway" of its day.³³ Another calls it the "American Artery: pumping the lifeblood of America's heartland."³⁴

The evolution of the road brought efficiency, safety, speed, standards. Over the years, the highway has been rerouted around the towns and cities it once connected, bypassing, too, the personalities of the

³⁰ Omaha Sunday Bee, July 19, 1914.

³¹ Hanson, Yankton Press and Dakotan.

³² Newsletter, Pan American Highway Association, Inc., 2002.

³³ Bud Kennedy, "Commentary, Two Historic Roads Lead to Fort Worth," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, April 2, 2002.

³⁴ Jerry Wilson, American Artery: A Pan American Journey. Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Pine Hill Press, 2000.

people it once energized. The zigzag of section lines has now been replaced by a true “white ribbon” made of concrete that crosses *over* the landscape, rather than as part of the landscape itself. But where old sections of the road are still found, history is retraced in the communities, the patterns of fields and fences and shelterbelts that defined the land and the landscape of the Meridian Road.

**A WHITE MAN'S LETTER FROM AN EPISCOPAL INDIAN MISSION,
DEC. 18, 1873**

Kate Schleusener

Rev. Henry Swift wrote the following letter to his superior, Bishop William H. Hare. It was written on December 18, 1863 from the Cheyenne River Indian Agency, where Smith was living as an Episcopal Reverend at a Mission. The Cheyenne River Agency would eventually involve several different denominations working together for the "civilization" of the local Indian tribes. In the first few years, however, it was a very small Episcopal branch.

William H. Hare was consecrated as Bishop on January 9, 1873. His special charge would become the Missionary Jurisdiction to be known as Niobrara, which included the Sioux Indians living in what was then Dakota Territory south. In the first six months, Bishop Hare visited all the stations of the diocese twice — Santee, Yankton, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Cheyenne. He met his mere thirteen workers already in the field, which numbered only 5 clergy among them, including Rev. Henry Swift. (Stark 5) Hare's ultimate goal was to win the 30,000 Dakotas of the prairie to the Church, and he would continue his work with the Indians until his death on October 23, 1909. (Stark 19)

To achieve this goal, Hare laid out a three-part plan to bring the Indian tribes to Jesus. His first step: "Mapping out the field." Bishop Hare realized during his first circuit of visiting all the stations that his duty was not to personally interact with the Indians, but to be a "general superintendent...to reach the people through their pastors." Therefore, Bishop Hare divided the territory into separate sections, each governed by a separate experienced clergy member grouped with the Indian ministers and others "engaged in evangelistic work." (Life and Labors 50)

The second step was the establishment of boarding schools. Bishop Hare was the driving force behind the great expansion of the Indian Missions in the late 19th and early 20th century. Grant's Peace Policy of 1869 mandated schooling for Indian children, so the Missions were naturally the most convenient place for the white community to connect to and teach the children. In Hare's first annual report as Bishop of the diocese, he concludes that the agency schools were not sufficient in converting the Indian children to an entirely Christian way of life. (First Annual Report) The children were not being completely removed from their tribal environment; boarding schools were the only answer to totally immerse the Indian children in the Christian American culture. Eventually, St. John's boarding school would be established at Cheyenne River Agency, and would teach around 14 children at a time until the government ended funding in 1902.

(Alexander 27-31) And finally, Hare's third step was to realize his own "limitations." He eliminated from his plan those things that he did not consider absolutely necessary for himself to do. (Life and Labors 52)

In an untitled document found in the Henry Swift Papers at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College, Swift's handwriting lists several events in his life and the dates, from 1872 through 1879. Although they are most certainly vague and incomplete, they are the most thorough and reliable source of information about Swift's life available at present. A summary of the untitled two-page document is as follows.

Henry Swift's service began in 1871, and on August 20, 1872 he moved first to the Santee Agency. There was great unrest in the region, and no boarding schools. Swift learned a bit of the Indian language at Santee, and on October 20, he moved again and began services at the Cheyenne River Agency. In November he went to live with a tribe of Indians for a while, but later in the month returned to the agency. There he began building a log house with the help of a Santee Indian named George Quinn.

On January 1, 1873 Swift moved into his new house at the Agency and began services again at Sully and Cheyenne missions. In May he abandoned the missions and went back to running services at the agency and operating the day school. In October he built a new log house, and in November the boarding school of St. John's at Cheyenne River Agency was nearly finished and school began.

In 1874, Swift moved between different missions and the Agency, and in October he noted that there were several boys attending St. John's school. On October 4, Swift married a Miss Hays. From there the record of his travels becomes more vague as he travels "East" and "North". However, he did keep documentation in his record book of each birth, death, and marriage he oversaw during those years. On September 28, 1876, Mrs. Swift gave birth to a son, named Henry Thomas at the Cheyenne River Agency. On January 26, 1879, Mrs. Swift had a daughter, named Francis Joseph, at St. John's. (Swift Papers)

Swift's ministry consisted of much travel to the various tribes of Sioux who were connected with the agency. At times he would travel with Bishop Hare, and they would meet with the Chiefs and explain their mission and purpose. (Life and Labors 191-197) Often Indian guides assisted them in their travel. In 1911, Swift looked back on his time at the Cheyenne River Agency, where "the element of danger was constantly present." Bishop Hare accompanied him every year on his annual visit, where there was the constant presence of "hostiles" threatening their lives. (Life and Labors 133) Bishop Hare praised Rev. Swift's work at the Cheyenne River Agency. Once he expressed the sentiment that a new mission at Oak Creek would hopefully reproduce the work at the Cheyenne River Agency. (Life and Labors 206)

The Dakota Conflict of 1862 had caused great public criticism of the missionary's methods. Some claimed the missionaries had not used stern enough methods to subdue the "savages." Many believed the Indians were incapable of being civilized, and thought the missions' work was in vain. (Alexander 29) Henry Swift arrived at the Cheyenne River Agency in the midst of this political climate. The church services were conducted separately, with two for the Indians and one at Fort Bennet for the white people. (Life and Labors 196) However, in his letter, after relaying several faults in the Indian's manners, it is apparent that he has some faith in his "integrity."

Bishop Hare's first annual report articulates this judgment of the Indians. He tells of tribes who "love and glory in lawlessness and violence," but also that "they are to be merged in our more numerous race...by intermarriage." (First Annual Report) Bishop Hare was truly passionate about what he saw as the duty of the missionaries to prepare the Indians for "their departure," that is the departure of their culture. He was not alone in his opinion of the Indians.

A pamphlet written in 1886 about the Dakota Mission is an excellent summary and example of the discrimination against the Indian people by the white missionaries and government. The Dakotas were "found...in the lowest stages of heathenism" and in "perpetual warfare." The missionaries viewed themselves and were seen by the white public not as invading conquerors of the Indians, but as a peaceful eradicator of the Indians' "evil passions," and by extension, their culture. The steps to this are as follows: lay the foundation by gaining their confidence, then learn their language, sow seeds, and finally, educate the young. (Williamson 4-5) The pamphlet cites the Sioux conflict of 1862 as a "massacre like a barbarian cyclone...over Minnesota's peaceful homes." (Williamson 6)

The author of the pamphlet was most likely related to one of the first Reverends of the area, Rev. T. S. Williamson. Accordingly, he had a very serious stake in the outcome of the mission work. Above all, John Williamson wished to educate the reader as to the history of the conflict and the "true nature" of the Indian so that they could be better convinced to change their ways.

The Indian names referred to in the final paragraph of the letter, not the postscript, most likely refer to local chiefs. Translated from the Dakota language, Pehansanmani means "Walking Crane," Mato najin means "Standing Bear," and Waanatan means "Charge Upon." The final name, "Ltkala akinyan," is most likely Cheyenne in origin, but I was not able to locate a translation of the name.

After Swift's withdrawal from the Church in 1887, (Lane 300) he eventually became a chaplain in the United States Army. The Connecticut State Library received Swift's records from his time both at the Agency and with the army (1903-1911) on September 14, 1928 from Mrs. Henry Swift. Swift was a

Chaplain in the 13th U.S. Infantry, and was stationed in both the Philippine Islands and at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. (Swift Papers)

The following transcription is a faithful reproduction of the original letter, found in the William H. Hare collection in the archives of Center for Western Studies, Augustana College. In almost all cases, Henry Swift's handwriting connected the pronoun "I" with the word following it, which I have left out for coherence's sake. Additionally, I have replaced Swift's use of the symbol " " with the word "and." Finally, Swift's shorthand utilized the letters "yt" to replace the word "that." A few errors in spelling and punctuation have not been corrected, and the few editorial additions or changes are indicated in brackets.

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Cheyenne River Indian Agency, D.T.
Dec 18 1873

Dear Bishop,

I feel it my duty to acquaint you with all my experience of George [Quinn?] during this his second stay with me that you may be the better acquainted with him.

Expecting to have no one (man) with me thru the winter I engaged George to come back here. But after my arrival meeting Allison and h[ea]ring how useful he might be. I engaged him. I had been waiting for Georges return for over two week, and almost four passed before he arrived. so I had about given him up. But however he finally came and I hoped to make some good use of him. I had a great deal of work to do and myself worked with my own hands almost every day being up at 6 and working till sunset, and I thot if it were no denigration to me to work, it was non for my catechist and so I set him at work too. George said nothing to me ag[ai]nst such arrangment but I heard that he expressed himself to the Indians to the effect that it was not the understanding at all that he was to do such work but that he was to teach, exhort [e]tc.

And I cd [could] plainly see in the dragging way he worked that he did it vary_wathly. well after I got big house finished and in it. I had to crowd him all the time to get anything done. and in fact the sum of his work might be put at chopping enough every day to keep our fires going. I set him to digging privy one day and stood watching for abt [about] half an hour and left him there. I had hardly gone into house before he had thrown down shovel and started into his own house. Et opus finitum This is a specimen of how hard it was to get any thing out of him. As a teacher I think I can impart or Allison can more information in a day than he could in a month. I made very little use of him as catechist for I do not think him fitted for it. What I had wanted in principally was for having him for outside work. As to manner of living. His appearance is sufficient to tell the tale. and yet I have probably given him more clothing than I have used myself during the time he was with me this last and the former time when he came up this time I gave him bedding and clothing towels dishes etc besides lending him bedstead (a homemade one) chair table stove [e]tc. telling him at the same time not to throw any thing away to Indians or dispose of you in any way a thing he promised to do. (and a couple weeks before he left I gave him a nice new flannel shirt I mention this by the way) The bed he never used: he and his wife slept on the ground and it was a long time before he cd [could] get up energy enough to riz ~~the bed up~~ ^a sort of bed for himself^. The table chairs and dishes he evidently considered as ornaments for he and his wife wd [would] put their mess in a big pan and squatting on the ground wd [would] eat in regular [eat in regular] Indian fashion. This is a specimen of his life: and I leave it to you whether they wd [would] be fit to send to take charge of an independent station. At any rate I did not consider him in any one way fit for the position. Finally I had become sick of getting ^trying to get^

anything out of him and gladly took the opportunity to send him below with his wife. But up to the last I had trusted in one thing his integrity and so did not express myself to you [to you] in any severe way concerning him but since he left some things have come to light which I must mention. An Indian here Red Tomahawk says he gave George last summer \$35.00 to buy him a gun below[?]. and when George came back he brot him neither the money nor the gun. I met him the afternoon Ger [George] ~~had~~ left He asked me where George had gone. I told him, he asked me whither he was coming back I said no. he then said George was a liar and told me the story of the money. He said that the day before he had pressed him to pay him and finally Ger [George] had given him \$20.00, a coat and a shirt. and pulling up his saddle blanket he showed me a black coat, which I recognized as one of mine and the flannel shirt which I had just given to George. I must say it shocked me to see it. The coat was one which George had borrowed one very cold morning or rather helped himself to out of my room here, saying he wished to wear it up to Striped Cloud's [village] as he was half frozen. It had been only four days before and I had forgotten about it, and forgotten to see that he gave it back to me. He cd [could] have labored under no impression that I gave it to him for he expressly borrowed it of me. Since then after his learning I had examined my stores to which none have access but Allison myself and the family. As I live with A of course all the stores he uses I use so I know all abtym [about them]: but on examining I found several things gone like canned stuff. and syrup and I suspect butter and wal[e] oil. At any rate I have come to regard him with suspicion. I always sold him whatever he wanted, but he bought very little. I have or rather I rent him a buffalo rifle which he promised to leave at Mr Cooks. I think you may have a chance to see whether he does it or not. It grieves me to write such a record of one whom I had trusted and h[el]ped notwithstanding his many faults but I feel it to be my duty to tell you these facts and let you draw your own inferences. George said he wd [would] tell you that the Indians up here do not care for a missionary: but he looks thru jaundiced eyes. Mato najin [Standing Bear] was to see me last night. He says he had heard wt [what] George was going to say and he wished me to let you plainly know that it was not truth and above all that you might trust in the constancy of these four Pehansamani [Walking Crane] Waanatan [Charge Upon] Mato najin Ltkala akinyan. He was very anxious that you wd [would] hear this from him and that your counsils might not be tarnished by the words of George. I am sorry to write a letter like this but feeling it my duty I have done so. Love to all

Believe me with greatest love and respect

yr obt [obedient] son in Christ

Henry Swift

Mr Kitchen sends me but \$125.00 for all now for three months Oct Nov on I have rcd [received] but \$125. when I asked for \$175.00. My expenses for each of these months have footed[?] up to \$175. I cannot get along with less and I must have the extra \$50 for the three months of I can not be able to make my way. Be it you have this matter settled for me and at once for you can hardly imagine how his silence uncommodes me. H.S.

MARGARET "WYLIE" MELLETTE
"SOUTH DAKOTA'S FIRST, FIRST LADY"

John Timm

"I cannot explain the strong emotions I felt when I first saw Dakota. It was so entirely different from anyplace I had ever seen. There was such a feeling of freedom, as though I had come from a strange place and was having my first glimpse of a world straight from the hands of God!

Perhaps it was the grand expanse of land meeting the endless sky on the distant horizon - or it might have been the pure and bracing cold air that filled my lungs with new life. The heavens above hung like a great blue canopy. The stars were brighter and bigger than ever before. They seemed so near you could touch them.

I had a second thrill when I stepped into a marvelously red world created by the Aurora Borealis or the Northern lights. The entire sky moved and the color shifted like a great kaleidoscope. The many red shapes covered the heavens like an immense curtain that was swayed by the wind into magnificent folds. The rosy glow was all around turning trees, people and earth into exquisite shades of rosy red".

These were the thoughts and descriptions of Margaret Wylie Mellette as she penned them into an unpublished paper she entitled, "*Personal Recollections of a Wild Life*".¹

Margaret was the wife of Arthur Calvin Mellette. Arthur was the last governor of Dakota Territory and first governor of South Dakota. Together they had four sons and became South Dakota's first, First Family. Their relatives and friends called them Cal and Maggie and throughout the rest of this paper so shall I.

They came to Dakota Territory in 1879, eighteen years after Dakota had become a territory. Their primary reason was to find a better suited climate for Maggie's failing health. There was not a doctor to be found in the state of Indiana who believed Maggie was going to live much longer. Her affliction began when she was very young, an apparent consequence from either a case of scarlet fever or while nursing a tubercular relative. Her family had hopes that she would out grow her periodic exacerbations. But the respiratory and body wasting symptoms, only intensified as time passed. By the time she was thirty-three years old the doctors unanimously agreed that she was dying. She could not continue to live in the heavy humidity of Indiana.² The decision to leave Muncie, Indiana was easy. It was the only way to save Maggie's life. Leaving the life they had made there for themselves, well, that was the difficult part.

Both of their extended families were there. Maggie's father, Theophilus Wylie, was a long time professor at Indiana University in Bloomington. At one time or another he had performed many duties at the institution. He was a versatile professor, who taught all subjects offered in the curriculum, had served as librarian, superintendent of grounds, and was even drafted as interim president for six months.

His second cousin Andrew Wylie was first president of the University. Andrew had no difficulty getting Maggie's father appointed to the office of Mixed Mathematics. So, at age 27 Theophilus came to Bloomington, Indiana to teach natural philosophy and chemistry.

Andrew had a House built in 1835 to accommodate his wife Margaret and their twelve children. It was elegant, comfortable and represented the cross breeding of established Eastern culture with the aspirations of a young frontier state. They lived in the house until 1859. Then cousin Theophilus bought the house and his family lived there until 1913. Altogether, the Wylie House was inhabited by Wylies for nearly 80 years.³ Today, the Wylie House is owned and operated by Indiana University as a historic house and museum recreating the Wylie home of the 1840's. The Wylie legacy is deeply rooted in the university's history and the family name is still revered on that campus to this very day.⁴

The Wylie family tree has always grown a fine harvest of well educated and prosperous kin, including the women in the family. Maggie was educated at Monroe County Female Seminary, Bloomington Academy and at Glendale, Ohio Female College. She was particularly talented in writing, music and art. Natural history was a favorite topic of hers, and well, Maggie seemed to have knowledge about almost everything.⁵ Being raised in an academic environment afforded her a lot of opportunities, but to whom much is given, much is expected. She learned to be very adept at hosting formal occasions and entertaining dignitaries. She commanded self confidence and polished social skills.

In contrast, Cal was raised on a small family farm in central Indiana. The Mellette family scratched a living out of whatever the earth and God would provide. They worked hard, but they always managed to get by. Cal's ma and pa, Charles and Mary, were determined that all their five children would receive college educations and they did.

Cal and his older brother, James, both attended Indiana University and rented room and board at the Wylie residence during the school year. Brother James fell in love with Maggie. However, Maggie and Cal fell in love. This did create some tension! But, eventually and awkwardly, the situation did get resolved. When romance was finally free to blossom, Maggie and Cal began talking of marriage. They had high hopes for the future, but Civil War was ripping the nation apart and no one could be sure the United States even had a future.⁶

After graduation, Cal joined the Union Army, serving in the final year of the war. During that time Cal and Maggie decided to write diaries. They were aware of the misfortunes war could bring. They felt writing diaries would serve to keep them close and make great treasures to exchange when the war ended. The diaries present a first hand account of a very dramatic time in American history. They describe the shock of

a nation when its President is assassinated and how communication sources of the spoken word, newspapers and telegraph could be terribly unreliable! The diaries reveal the intimacies of routine home life in the northern states, as well as the struggle of a foot soldier. ⁷

When Cal returned from the war, he acquired a law degree from Indiana University. Cal and Maggie married and moved to Muncie, Indiana. The next thirteen years were filled with success. Other than Maggie's occasional periods of poor health, their lives couldn't have been better. Maggie's supporting role proved to be key in Cal's business and political success. She was a leader in church and community projects. Together they became pillars of the community.

They bought a beautiful home on the eastside of town. Builders of the day had developed this area into a fashionable district by constructing pretentious houses, garnished with ornate gingerbread ornamentation. Maggie enjoyed entertaining, frequently they hosted social events and dinner parties. Their guest list often included prominent business and political names from all over the state. Maggie's grace and elegance in concert with the Wylie name recognition from Indiana University made her a real asset.

Cal began a law practice partnership with an acquaintance from the Civil War, General Thomas Brady. The practice prospered which enabled them to purchase the Muncie Times newspaper. Cal took full control of the newspaper when President Ulysses S. Grant appointed General Brady as Consul to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Cal grew the newspaper and expanded its facilities to include publishing. Before long handling both the law office and the news paper was too overwhelming. Cal decided to close the law office.

Cal's high standards and inspiring editorials made the newspaper one of the most influential republican papers east of Indianapolis. He was elected to several local public offices such as District Attorney, County Examiner for Prospective Teachers and Superintendent of County Schools. He founded the Educational Association Society, serving as the initial president. The result of his business and political acumen lead to a prominent role in the state Republican Party. ⁸

He was elected to a seat in the Indiana state, House of Representatives. He represented Delaware County, serving from 1872 until 1874. He devoted himself to creating a sound permanent school funding and township school system. Its success resulted in several other states adopting the system. ⁹

1876 marked the 100th anniversary of American independence. The Mellettes decided to mark the occasion by taking a vacation. Celebrations were to be held all over the country. But, the grandest of them would be on the East coast. Beginning in Philadelphia on the Fourth of July, a speech by President Ulysses S. Grant would signal the beginning of the festivities.¹⁰ The Mellettes planned a six week train tour

to the east coast. Little did they know by the time they returned to Muncie, Maggie would be ill. Sicker than she had ever been!

A suitable, healthy location had to be chosen for Maggie's recuperation. After investigating many western states, Colorado was chosen. It was the highest state in the Union, offering clean, pure air with a wide choice of environments from which to choose.

It was an emotionally charged day when Cal and Maggie left from the Muncie train depot. Maggie was not only saying good-bye to her children, but also to the beloved members of the Wylie and Mellette families. Realizing the likelihood of not seeing Maggie alive again, they all shared in the agony of the sad farewell. Her sickly, frail body housed the spirit of a woman of unusual dignity, refinement, and irrepressible courage. But, as serene as she appeared and as brave as she was, Maggie faced the long trip to Colorado with a distinct sinking in her heart.

During Maggie's recuperation, the Mellettes pondered their uncertain future. Cal spent a lot of time reading newspapers. He was astonished, as was the rest of the world, at the events taking place in Dakota Territory. Once referred to as the Great American Desert, it was considered a huge, worthless, and unpleasant obstacle to pass through or go around on the trek west. Suddenly it was the destination! Initially there was the "Gold Rush" to the Black Hills in 1876 and now this "Land Rush" which would last from 1878 to 1886. It was one of the greatest boom periods in our nation's history!

The bonanza came as a result of several years of abundant moisture and sun leading to bumper crops of wheat, and a lot of publicity. The great "Bonanza Farms" of northern Dakota stood unique in history. They produced the largest scale of agricultural production units the world had ever recorded! The success stories were so stunning that President Rutherford Hayes personally made a trip to the Red River Valley to see for himself.

The Dakota prairies became an attraction for the agricultural immigrants of Europe in unprecedented numbers. As settlers began streaming into Dakota Territory, towns sprung up, and investment opportunities soared. In 1861 Dakota Territory was chartered at a population of approximately 5,000. By 1880, the population had increased to 135,177 and to 640,823 by 1885!

In September of 1878, Maggie's health was beginning to show signs of improvement. Hopes for her survival were becoming a possibility. Then came the dreadful telegram informing Cal that his newspaper and publishing house had burned to the ground. He immediately made arrangements for Maggie's care and left for Muncie. His heart sank as he viewed the charred ruins of years of hard work and dreams. His financial empire and family's well-being was in seriously jeopardy.¹¹

Cal's friends and business associates rallied around him and some ideas began to develop involving the "Dakota Land Rush". Through his close friendship with Indiana's U.S. Senator Benjamin Harrison, Cal was appointed Land Officer to the Springfield, Dakota Territory land office by President Rutherford Hayes. Cal's appointment would enable him to provide useful information for profitable speculation to his investor associates.¹²

The Mellette fortunes had turned again! Cal was able to salvage some equipment from the fire, sold the newspaper, liquidated personal assets, sold their home, had investors lined-up and had a nice federal government job.

Yankton was a busy, noisy, 24 hour a day beehive of activity and confusion. The streets were interesting and exciting, often filled with a wide variety of characters, Indians wrapped in blankets, colorful half-breeds, gamblers, rough and tumble sailors, miners, Civil War veterans, profane bullwhackers, homesteaders and western greenhorns.¹³

But, that wasn't the Yankton that the Mellettes saw on the day they arrived in January of 1879. Their train arrived crawling slowly along the track, finally stopping in front of the depot. A strong, icy wind drove sleet horizontally across the snow covered ground, then blowing it into great swirls. Visibility was at best 100 yards. The roads and boardwalks were buried with snow drifts of differing depths. The temperature was 35 degrees below zero and the wind was blowing at a stiff 30 miles per hour. On that day, the streets were empty! Cal had chartered a freight car that was being pulled by another train arriving two days later. It was accompanied by a hired man and carried their household goods and a team of horses.

Two weeks would pass before the 30 miles of trails and roads were open enough to complete the journey to Springfield. The temperature was still 20 degrees below zero the day they left Yankton. Fortunately, it was also a sunny, cloudless, and calm day. Cal, Maggie and the two youngest sons, Anton and Dickie left in the morning with their team of horses and a wagon full of personal belongings. Although Maggie was still in a weakened condition, her health was improving. Later, in the early afternoon, a hired man and older sons Wylie and Charles started out with a rented team and wagon. They were hauling a load of furniture. The tracks left by their earlier wagon was easy to follow.¹⁴

Pulling the first wagon, that Cal drove, was difficult for the horses. They were getting noticeably tired as they struggled through the recent snow fall. Cal spotted some smoke coming from a chimney of a sod house. They were all chilled to the bone and the thought of warming up was indeed inviting. Cal reined the horses toward the sod house. Maggie and the boys were about to get their first real look at the inside of a soddy.¹⁵

The soddys were so cold that many homesteaders froze their feet on the cold dirt floor. Buckets of water easily froze while only a short distance from the stove or fireplace, the only source of heat. The meager furniture consisted of a wooden box used as a table, a trunk or chest served as a wardrobe, rude benches served as chairs. A bed was made of rough boards threaded with cords or ropes and covered with a mattress stuffed with prairie hay, proverbially called prairie feathers. Quilts and aprons served as doors and windows. An open box served as a cupboard. Clothes were often kept in a covered wagon to shelter them from water, which continually dripped through the roof after rains. Wet snow was worrisome as it might collect too deeply on the roof causing it to collapse.¹⁶

The residing homesteaders were as hospitable as their meager means would permit. The cold was as penetrating in the sod house as it was on the wagon seat. The sun would be setting soon. Traveling in the dark would only add to the risk of getting lost and to the misery of a dropping temperature. The Mellettes kept their visit short. They hoped to make Springfield before dark.

Springfield was a pretty town located on the bluffs of the Missouri River. Its population of 500 lived in about 100 houses. On the opposite side of the river was a rich bottom flood plain stretching inland for about a mile, then there were more bluffs. That was the Nebraska side and location of the Santee Indian Reservation. Cal and Maggie befriended many of the Indians which enabled them to start a fine collection of Indian artifacts and relics. Some of that collection can still be seen at the Mellette House in Watertown.

The Mellettes enjoyed those days in Springfield. Maggie's love and knowledge of nature made her a wonderful teacher to her sons. Maggie packed big picnic lunches and they went on long carriage rides exploring the vast prairie and banks of the Missouri. The beautiful grasses, flowers, butterflies, and birds quickly caught Maggie's artistic eye. She loved painting them. It was a wonderland of play, adventure and learning for the boys. Maggie so enjoyed being a full time mother again. Her lungs healed, her body grew stronger, her dark hollowed eyes cleared and her face regained its color. She was getting well.¹⁷

For Cal it was a busy time. Long days filled with paperwork, settling arguments, filing claims, and explaining laws. Thousands of European immigrants arrived to settle the land. His gift for speaking several languages served him well. Occasionally, he took time to hunt prairie chickens with his sons.¹⁸

A year and a half after arriving in Springfield, Cal received orders from Washington D.C. to open a new land office. This one was to be located in Watertown in the east-central part of Dakota Territory.¹⁹ On May 1, 1880, the Mellettes moved to Watertown. It was only two years old, but had experienced such rapid growth that its population had already reached 2000. Not a single house was available for sale or rent.

Three miles to the northeast of Watertown is beautiful Lake Kampeska. It covers an area three by seven miles and is fed by springs. Finding no place to live, Cal bought forty acres of shoreline and the Mellettes spent their first summer in tents. The whole summer was an adventurous campout! This was probably their happiest and most memorable times together as a family. Maggie took advantage of the fresh air, wonderful summer sun, and enjoyed teaching and bonding with her sons.

The heavy workload and long hours at the land office forced Cal to hire extra clerks. At the close of the summer of 1880, before winter arrived, Cal bought a large building in town that had four good sized rooms. The front room served as the land office and those to the rear were used for living quarters.

Maggie was an articulate writer. She wrote several extraordinary papers giving first hand accounts of their experiences in Dakota Territory. Oddly, her papers were never published. In fact many women of the west have been overlooked for the wonderful and creative ways they've kept history: writing diaries, recording family trees in the front of bibles, keeping letters, telling stories, even sewing family history into the quilts they made.

Some of Maggie's unpublished papers were entitled: *Personal Recollections of a Wild Life, My Own Love Story, Old Furniture and Furnishings, A Biographical Sketch of Arthur Calvin Mellette*. This first selection by her is about the severe winter of 1880-1881.

"Four months of complete isolation from the rest of the world tested the wits and stamina of everyone. Wheat was ground with a coffee mill for food. Parched beans were ground up for coffee. Syrup was substituted for sugar, but the most serious problem was obtaining fuel. An old railroad bridge was sawed down to the level of the ice and burned. The few trees available were chopped down. The snow was so deep that when spring came it was discovered that many of the trees had only been topped! The trunks that remained had been 6 or 8 feet under the snow. In some instances two families moved into one house, dismantled and burned the unoccupied house and its contents as fuel.

All business activity was at a stand still. Having nothing to do in the land office, Cal spent his time and energy helping those who were unable to help themselves. A Mr. Wells, who had followed us from Indiana also seeking better health, was in the last stages of consumption and needed to be looked after daily. We gave him all of our coal, and bought lumber to burn for ourselves. The sick man watched and waited each day for Cal's visit. Finally, two weeks before supply trains could break through, he died. His burial was the first in the town cemetery.

A widow with little children needed flour, so I divided what we had with them. A man with a large appetite for drink, had to be protected from his appetite. The minister's family ran out of fuel and moved in with us until more wood could be located. To keep men employed, lecture courses were organized. Toward the end of the long snowbound captivity, the tobacco gave out. Several of the men immediately donned snow shoes and went to Milbank. Just before the men left, the laundry delivery man came in for the laundry. I noticed he was acting in a very peculiar manner. He was sniffing the air in every direction.

While turning about, he noticed I was staring at him. He said, in a most plaintive voice,

"I thought I smelled tobacco. I'm nearly dead for a chew of tobacco". When the men returned from Milbank, they had a wagon load of flour, sugar, and of course tobacco!

One man said he had some barrels of apples. Upon looking, they discovered the apples were frozen as solid as bullets. Absolutely no meat was available—it was not to be had for love or money. Someone killed and butchered a cow, there was such a rush for it that many went without."

Being that Watertown was situated on the edge of the Sisseton Reservation, Indians often came to town. Maggie's papers also told of some Indian stories.

"One day a chief came to town with his squaw and some of her friends. Cal and I quickly summoned a photographer. Friends and relatives back east would be thrilled to see just such a picture. The photographer agonized over arranging the Indians for the picture. But, the second he pointed the camera at them, they ran! I got the idea to show them a photograph of Cal. When the old chief saw the resemblance, he agreed to keep the squaws still if he could keep the picture of Cal. This being agreed to the old chief pulled out a red bandana handkerchief and from it pulled out a paper from the Government stating that he was a good Indian. He had not been involved in the Minnesota massacre. He placed the photograph of Cal with his certificate, carefully replacing them in his handkerchief. The photographer had no more trouble with taking the picture.

The next spring the old chief returned, after a few grunts, he sat down and took out the handkerchief. Once again he showed me the Government paper and the photograph of Cal. He was trying to tell me something, but I did not understand. He bent over, plucked a blade of grass which he measured with his fingers, put his hands together and laid his head on his hands. I was still puzzled and called for an interpreter. I then learned that when the grass was so high, his wife had died, and he came to get her picture. My heart was touched by the news. My eyes filled with tears and I gave him the picture. He carefully studied the picture and walked away satisfied."

On another occasion Maggie wrote:

"Ten Indians abruptly entered our house one day. They sat in a circle in the parlor and started smoking their pipes. This all happened without a word being spoken. At first I was startled and unnerved, but I quickly regained my composure when I found out what they wanted. They heard that we had a box that played music and they had come to hear it I sat down and played for them. They were indeed impressed! Afterwards I served them coffee with generous amounts of sugar, a treat they truly enjoyed.

When they were leaving, one young girl lingered and said, "ise hungly." I gave her a loaf of bread. She quickly placed it under her arm and ripped off the paper I had wrapped around it. She hastily tore out great hunks of bread and devoured half of the loaf. Rewrapping what remained, she heaved a heavy sigh of satisfaction. Finally she gave me a long stare of curiosity, placed her shawl over her head and departed. I discovered later that the young girl had been educated at Carlisle, Pennsylvania at the government Indian college."

Maggie wrote many more stories, too many to relate in this paper. But the point is made that women have always been important historians, even if they have not always been published or given the credit they have deserved.

The Melletes entered heartily into the social life of the community. Maggie took the lead in starting the Watertown Literary Circle as well as the Shakespeare Club. Cal maintained an interest in the activities of Civil War veterans and became a member of the Watertown Grand Army post in 1885. Later he served as Post Commander.

They attended the Congregational Church. Maggie was very active in church affairs. Her leadership was apparent when the ladies were called on for decorating, cooking, bringing dishes and silver from her home. Maggie was just generally the motivator, mover and shaker when something needed to be done.

She was active in the Eastern Star organization, also serving as state president of the Woman's Relief Corp. Maggie enjoyed sleighing parties in winter. She took great delight in receiving New Year's callers at home on January first, as was the custom then. She organized picnic parties in summertime, which were very popular and well attended.

In the spring of 1883, the new administration of President Chester A. Arthur made a series of new appointments throughout the nation. Even though Arthur was a Republican President, Cal was informed that he was not being reappointed as registrar of the land office in Watertown. A man named Charles G. Williams would succeed him.

Cal's focus then changed gears from federal employee to entrepreneur. The ever increasing growth of Watertown made for a health business climate. He had a good eye for business investment and surrounded himself with loyal, trustworthy friends just as he had done in Indiana.

Cal's business ventures included: a law practice, a lucrative brick manufacturing company, president of a local bank and railroad, a real estate and land development company, and kept over 1,000 head of cattle on Scotty Phillip's ranch.

Cal and William McIntyre, a business partner, purchased 80 acres of tract land northwest of Watertown. It was surveyed and platted into nine blocks of lots and became the town's finest housing development. On block seven, the Melletes built their red brick, majestic, Italianate, Victorian house on "Mellette Hill."

It was a fashionable show place that reflected the style of the period, a three story house, with 10 rooms, a block tower and encircling porch. Inside the tower was a spiral staircase which rose to a crowning cupola. The house was accompanied by a carriage house and barn. The entire estate commanded a spectacular view.

Cal once again entered into politics. As the last Governor of Dakota Territory and first Governor of South Dakota, he played a pivotal role at the end of one era and beginning of the next. He was territorial

Governor during a dramatic period of rapid growth and optimism. As state Governor in the initial years of statehood he was confronted by all the ordinary difficulties of a fledging governmental organization with meager resources and tormented by an unusual variety of adverse economic and political problems. His troubles were complicated by the high expectations of migrant pioneers, confounded by persistent problems and unanticipated challenges, and continuous instability. Of course wild changes in weather was an underlying factor, but man-made political and social influences, and technological developments, were also significant. Cal earned a place in its history as a leader for the remarkable way he met crisis after crisis with honesty and integrity. He did the best that could be done with the resources available.

Three catastrophic events would change the lives of the Mellettes. First, Cal was badly injured in a horse accident while alone on the prairie one winter day. This marked the beginning of a gradual decline in Cal's health that eventually ended in his death. Second, oldest son Theophilus Wylie's alleged suicide. Thirdly, State Treasurer William W. Taylor absconded with the state treasury. Although several had signed on as bondsmen for Taylor's appointment to the State Treasurer position, only Cal assumed his promised responsibility.

Penniless, the impoverished Cal borrowed \$5,500 and with his devoted Maggie at his side left the state. They moved to Pittsburg, Kansas in 1895 to live with their son Anton. There, Cal's talents were quickly recognized and his prospects for a time seemed good. He was selected as part of a delegation to Washington, D.C. Then his health took another turn for the worse.

On May 14th, eleven days before his death he wrote:

"My life has been a checkered one. I have had more pleasure than befalls most mortals and I know most of the trials of life. I have hope that the latter has been sent to do me good. I am by nature all sin and worldly and it is necessary to hold me in check if I can only feel it is done with a father's loving hand. I have suffered much from my disease. More than most people know. I am thankful that the near future, promises relief".²⁰

Maggie wrote:

"The afternoon before he died, he asked a family lady friend who had entered his room to play "Last Hope" on a harpsichord. When the last notes of the piece had silenced, Cal said, "One must be near heaven to fully appreciate that piece. I never felt it like I did while you played today'."

"As evening came his eyes followed my movements, and he told me not to grieve. He told me, "I have at all times done what I thought was right, and now I am satisfied to go. I will rest'."

Cal died at three o'clock Monday morning, May 25, 1896. He was 53 years, 11 months of age. He was buried beside his son Wylie in Mt. Hope cemetery under the beautiful rites of the Masonic order. It was witnessed by one of the largest assemblages of people ever seen within the confines of the cemetery.

The cause of death seems uncertain. Possibilities include: Bright's disease, heart disease, and gall bladder infection. ²¹

Maggie died in Pittsburg, Kansas at the home she shared with her third oldest son, Anton. She had been ill with influenza, finally succumbing at 6:20, Tuesday evening on the 29th of November in 1938. She was 95 years, 2 months and 23 days old. She survived Cal by 42 years. Funeral services were held in Pittsburg and her body was brought back to Watertown where services were also held. She was buried beside Cal, oldest son Wylie, and youngest son Joshua Richard. ²²

Arthur Anton died in 1954 and was buried in Pittsburg, Kansas at his request.

Charles Edmund Mellette, was the only son to marry. He died in 1972, leaving his daughter Laura Margaret Ide, and three grandchildren. The Ide family now resides in Redlands, California.

END NOTES

- ¹ *Personal Recollections of a Wild Life*, Margaret Mellette, South Dakota Historical Resource Center.
- ² *Maggie: The Civil War Diary of Margaret Wylie Mellette, revised edition*, edited by Joanita Kant.
- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ <http://www.indiana.edu/~libwylie/house.html>. Wylie House Museum, University of Indiana.
- ⁵ *"Maggie: The Civil War Diary of Margaret Wylie Mellette"*, revised edition, edited by Joanita Kant
- ⁶ Unpublished manuscript, *"One's Own Love Story"*, by Margaret Wylie Mellette, Mellette House Archives, Watertown, SD.
- ⁷ *"Maggie: The Civil War Diary of Margaret Wylie Mellette"*, revised edition, edited by Joanita Kant and *"The Civil War Diary of Arthur Calvin Mellette"*, revised edition, edited by Gerald W. Wolff and Joanita Kant.
- ⁸ "Arthur Calvin Mellette", Wright Tarbell, South Dakota Governors.
- ⁹ Transcripts of biographical sketch of Arthur Mellette, by Margaret Mellette in 1908. The sketch is found in the Arthur C. Mellette papers at the South Dakota State Historical archives, Pierre, South Dakota.
- ¹⁰ The Smithsonian Institute gained recognition and esteem through its organizing efforts and contributions. Every state and most nations were represented in more than 30,000 displays, at least a quarter of them belonged to the United States. Two acres of the Smithsonian was covered by the centennial facility alone.
- ¹¹ "Twenty Million Acres", Barrett Lowe, pp. 400
- ¹² "Dakota Territory 1861-1889", by Howard Roberts Lamar pp 209.
- ¹³ "Dakota Panorama", *The Capital is a Rivertown*, by Sister M. Claudia Duratschek, O.S.B. Third printing by Brevet Press, pp. 209
- ¹⁴ "Personal Experiences at Springfield, Dakota", by Charles Mellette, son of Arthur C. Mellette, unpublished paper, South Dakota Historical Resource Center.
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ There were several types of soddy structures. Some made by setting two rows of poles, bringing them together at the top and thatching the sides with prairie hay. The house was all roof and gable; the windows and doors were constructed entirely of sod. These varied in size, but were generally 16 by 20 feet. Sod bricks were made by turning over furrows on about half an acre of ground where the sod was thickest and strongest. The furrows were cut of even width and depth so the walls would rise with regularity and evenness. "The Sod House Frontier", by Everett Dick, pp. 58-59, 113, 250.
- ¹⁷ "Personal Recollections of a Wild Life", unpublished paper by Margaret Mellette. South Dakota Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

- ¹⁸ "Personal Experiences at Springfield", Unpublished paper by Charles Mellette, South Dakota Historical Resource Center.
- ¹⁹ Between 1877 and 1887 four and a half million more people came west. Almost half of whom settled on the western plains. They created new towns in a region thought to be too harsh for human habitation. Some came seeking freedom, land of their own, and opportunity they couldn't find in the east. Others were looking for a place to change themselves, become someone else, or to start over. The population of Dakota Territory had spiraled from 5,000 in 1860 to 14,181 in 1870, and had advanced by 12,000 per year or more during the seventies, so that by 1880 the official count was 135,177. There was every indication that the rate of growth would continue.
- ²⁰ The Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Archives, Pierre, South Dakota.
- ²¹ Archives (Public Opinion newspaper) Mellette House and Museum, Watertown, South Dakota.
- ²² "The Watertown Public Opinion", November 30, 1938
- ²³ Archives, Mellette House and Museum, Watertown, South Dakota.

A JOURNEY THROUGH NATIVE AMERICAN MEMORY AND HISTORY FROM SAND CREEK

Greg White

On November 28, 1864, Sand Creek was dry creek bed near Fort Lyon in Colorado with a village of about five hundred Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians led by Chief Black Kettle. The next day it was drenched with blood. In Early November 29th, Colonel John M. Chivington led the troops from Fort Lyon and the Colorado Third Cavalry, commonly known as the "Bloodless Third," on an attack against the surprised and peaceful Indians. The Indians fought back, but many fled. Others dug trenches and foxholes to give themselves a fighting chance against the overwhelming cavalry. The Army eventually dislodged them with howitzers. At the end of the day, over one hundred and fifty Indians lay dead, most of them elderly or women and children (Green, and Scott 4).

Since that day, scholars and historians have debated the historical details surrounding the Massacre. One thing is sure: this massacre would go down as one of the worst "mistakes" in American history. But this was no mistake. As Green and Scott have convincingly shown in their study *Finding Sand Creek*, this was a premeditated genocidal move on the part of Colonel Chivington and his bloodthirsty, fear-laden troops (Green, and Scott 21). Many consider the event to be a microcosm of the broken relationship between the U.S. government and Native Americans during the period of white settlement. According to Green and Scott, "Sand Creek and its aftermath produced an atmosphere of pervasive and nervous distrust between the U.S. government...and the plains tribes that complicated their associations and compounded negotiations on virtually every matter" (23).

In *from Sand Creek*, Simon J. Ortiz uses the event as a symbol of U.S. relations with Native Americans. He feels that U. S. history has forgotten Native Americans, in the same way that U. S. history has forgotten Sand Creek. Ortiz uses Sand Creek as a starting point for his journey into the history of problems between Native Americans and the U. S. In his essay "Toward a National Indian Literature," Ortiz notes that Native Americans have to use art and literature to give "expression to the experience of Indian people in the Americas" (Ortiz 9). He also argues that in order to express themselves, Native Americans took the "languages of the colonialists and used them for their own purposes...it is entirely possible for a people to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language" (Ortiz 10). Ortiz expresses the experience of Indians by using the colonially-introduced language English in *from Sand Creek*. This is liberating, and therefore energizing. His purpose is to move his specifically Native American audience toward nationalism and self-sovereignty.

In order to propel his message of nationalism in *from Sand Creek*, Ortiz employs a diverse array of distinctively Native American rhetorical strategies: adaptation of Anglo-European rhetorical devices, tricksterism, irony, and gaze reversal. Ortiz also draws on the strong rhetorical tradition of poetry shared by Anglos and Native Americans. He employs these strategies to motivate his Native American audience to question their place in U.S. history and in modern western society, and to move them in the direction of nationalism. His preface is an essay on the role of Native Americans in U.S. history. He wrote about how the United States does not like to remember the atrocities it committed during the Indian Wars, but instead “insulates itself within an amnesia that doesn’t acknowledge that kind of history” (Ortiz preface). The notion of historical amnesia pervades the poetry cycle. The words “memory” and “remember” are ubiquitous in the poems, example: Remember Sand Creek (15), a few remembered / Andrew Jackson, (17). Also, one poem in particular addresses the notion of amnesia very directly:

Memory
is shriven
clean
as Kansas stateline.
We approached winter.

Memory
is stone, very quiet,
like this,
a moment clenched tightly
as knuckles around gunstock
around steering wheel. (23)

These stanzas deal with “official” account of U.S. history and the memory of Native Americans. The stanzas move between the two freely. The first stanza talks about memory as “shriven,” which is absolved of guilt. This absolution is the same idea as the remission of sin. It is no longer counted. This means that the U.S. no longer feels the guilt for its actions at Sand Creek. If I assert that Ortiz is addressing a Native American audience, then the “we” in the poem would represent Native America entering a winter of consciousness. This image of cold, barren landscape by the Kansas state line is a metaphor for the desolate, cold history between Native America and the U.S. In the second stanza, Ortiz speaks of memory as “stone.” This means that it is locked in place, or etched into stone: unchangeable. He also speaks of it as quiet, meaning it has no voice. The second line refers to two different memories. The stone memory is both that of U.S. history of oppression, as Manifest Destiny, in contrast to Native understanding, and the quiet but lasting memory of Native Americans. His ability to say both things, which is a technique contrary to the “rules” of rhetoric, reflects his tricksterism, or his “ability to live interstitially” (Ballinger 30).

Ortiz uses ambiguity to argue that the memories are interwoven, and that they guide actions and attitudes, like a steering wheel. Ortiz is saying that the U.S. attitude toward history affects the Native American attitude toward history, clenching it tightly, making it quiet, and directing the future. The moment that Ortiz speaks of is the moment of Sand Creek. The image of the gunstock is that of Native Resistance, the hand around the gunstock has not let go, and can not let go because they must assert themselves. The gunstock could also be the gazing fear of the Colorado soldiers (used as a microcosm for all whites). However, the image of the steering wheel is a guiding image saying that the moment of Sand Creek has been a guiding moment for the history and relationship between whites and Native Americans. This rhetoric is meant to evoke questions in the Native American psyche. Ortiz wants them to realize that they are quiet and repressed, and do something about it. Ortiz wants them to remember who they are. He wants them to seize the steering wheel and change the course of their journey through history.

The poems are powerful, subtle, and respectful of audience intelligence. Ortiz refuses to impose meaning, but rather hints and suggests. Ortiz creates a dense piece of rhetoric, which leaves plenty of space on the page for the reader to revel in his ambiguities, and to gain meaning from the words. Poetry doesn't always allow for bluntness. An example:

In 1969
XXXX Coloradoans
were killed in Vietnam.

In 1978
XXXX Coloradoans
were killed on the highways.

In 1864
there were no Indians killed.

Remember My Lai (15).

There is a certain connection between the first three stanzas and the last one, but the connection is certainly not explained in any detail. There is room for the reader to draw conclusions about what the author is saying in this poem.

In one poem in particular, Ortiz uses the Native American rhetorical device of gaze reversal to further his people's nationalism. The gaze is the stare of fixation, awe, curiosity, and authority directed toward Native Americans. Gaze reversal occurs in Native American rhetoric when the rhetor stares back at the gazer and shows the gazer that he is a human and not *something* to be stared at. It is a means of reclaiming and redirecting power. Ortiz talks about a Texan who is his vice-president (probably at the VA

hospital, which is a common location in the poetry cycle), and the Texan doesn't understand why Ortiz loves derelicts that come to the hospital. Ortiz writes:

He bludgeons me with his stare.

But I look into his exile eyes,
Flaunt my authority,
Which he understands,
And I give them what they beg
And apologize for (63).

The Texan has the gaze. He beats, hammers, and hurts Ortiz with his eyes. But Ortiz cleverly reverses his gaze by doing what he has authority to do: give the beggars what they want. The Texan stares at Ortiz because he thinks Ortiz is a novelty, but Ortiz reverses the gaze by looking back at the Texan, recognizing him as an exile and beggar, putting him in an apologetic stance—he, not the Native is embarrassed by the encounter, therefore asserting himself. This reversal rhetorically gives Ortiz voice to say to his Native American brothers and sister, “don't be a novelty any longer, don't let anthropologists and missionaries define who you are, be who you are, and assert yourself. If we never assert ourselves, the world will never believe that we can.”

Historical and religious irony and humor are distinctively Native American rhetorical strategy that Ortiz deploys in his poems. By cleverly rewriting, or reinterpreting history, Ortiz uses humor and irony to break down old notions of Native American place in culture. In one poem in particular, he compares European immigrants to Native Americans:

They were simple enough.
Swedes, Germans,
Mennonites, Dutch,
Irish, escaping
Europe.

Running.
They shouldn't have stopped
and listened to Puritans.
and learned
that mountains were chains
to be crossed like breaking
something.

They shouldn't have understood
Those biblical words that way
And become simple as death.
And, finally, complex liars.
And thieves (51).

Notice how he says “escaping” Europe, like it was some kind of prison. He calls the people simple and lists them like tribes. And then he turns history and religion on their heads by saying that listening to the Puritans and the Bible corrupted the “simple” people. Ortiz’s reinterpretations of history put a distinctively Native American spin on the preconceived views of history, therefore giving Native Americans a voice and the authority with which to present their own view of history.

Throughout *from Sand Creek*, Ortiz discounts Anglo-European versions of American history America. He reinterprets this history through Native American eyes, which makes it seem alien and even horrible to whites. He calls U.S. history “something atrocious” (Ortiz preface). He wants Native Americans to reject their current place in American culture, to assert themselves and to enjoy the “value and integrity of their own human cultural existence” (Ortiz preface). In one poem he says that Andrew Jackson was just bloodthirsty for Indians (Ortiz 17). In the introduction to the poetry cycle he says:

This America
Has been a burden
Of steel and mad
Death (Ortiz introduction).

He casts the U.S. as a burden to Native Americans, and its history as a repressive machine. However, in the end of the poetry cycle, Ortiz switches this image completely. He says, “I have always loved America; it is something precious in the memory in blood and cells which insists on story, poetry, song, life, life” (Ortiz 92). In the poem that follows, Ortiz speaks of an Oklahoma Boy, who metaphorically represents Native Americans. He has been paralyzed in war, like Native Americans have been paralyzed by war and policy. And he is stuck on a couch, which represents America: his prison. But Ortiz says, “there is beauty / in his American face,” (Ortiz 93). And the only disturbance the boy ever really feels is the janitor’s broom on his shoe, like the termination of services to Native Americans. Then Ortiz says that “a dream needing a name / he has become the American,” (Ortiz 93). The last poem follows:

That dream
shall have a name
After all,
and it will not be vengeful
but wealthy with love and compassion
and knowledge.
And it will rise
in this heart
which is our America.

This image of America suggests Ortiz's hope in the potential of Native American nationalism and self-sovereignty because a united America can have a name or an identity, something to rally around, which can bring about new realities.

Ortiz's switch from negative perceptions of the U.S. to positive is a form of tricksterism. As Franchot Ballinger has said, "the source of (the trickster's) power is his wandering through paradoxical-vagrant reality" (30). Ortiz wanders between the paradox of the violent, oppressive history of the U.S. and the hope that America (the land, and its people, not the government) provides for Native American self-sovereignty.

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INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Jim Wilson

The Interstate Highway System is a significant historic artifact that substantially altered the physical and perceptual landscape in South Dakota. This is the third of the three great man made mapping revolutions imposed on the land in the Midwest of which South Dakota is a part.

GRID

For hundreds of years both Native Americans and the occasional European visitor had relied on rivers and natural landmarks such as Spirit Mound, the Black Hills and Bear Butte as the organizing principal and visual cues for travel and settlement. With increased population after European settlement began in earnest, government was faced with the need to impose some ordering principal on the landscape. For South Dakota this was the grid system of section lines which provided an organizing principle for settlement, roads and homesteads. This was the first of the three revolutions.

South Dakota was significantly easier to organize than states and regions with more complex topography. South Dakota is essentially flat and featureless and does not present the topographic difficulties of a state like West Virginia where the ruggedness of the terrain severely limits the options to travel and settlement and causes new systems to be directly overlaid over historic systems out of necessity.

It should be noted that the section line grid was imposed arbitrarily and from afar with no attention paid to actual conditions on the ground. On a smaller scale this was often true of town plans also. It was useful as a determining organizing principle primarily east of the Missouri River which is often characterized as the western edge of the Midwest. Given the nature of the landscape the grid, for the most part, worked well. The grid provided a framework for local government, generally determined where roads were placed and continued a settlement pattern that had occurred throughout the Midwest of towns often placed at the intersections of roads or roads with streams, individual farms located at regular distances from each other and the establishment of a fairly regular pattern of shelterbelts and plantings. In flying over the state it is immediately evident that the same pattern did not occur west river. Major roads did connect the downtown areas of population centers and provided immediate access to those commercial areas.

RAILROADS

The second of the revolutions was the arrival of the railroads which established a new organizing principal overlaid on the grid system that significantly ignored the grid in favor of ease of construction based

on topography and the necessity to connect existing population centers. The railroad was also goal oriented, aiming at particular geographic locations. The railroad also caused towns to be relocated and new towns to be started based on serving the markets that the railroad ran through. It is certainly worth noting that in the major population centers such as Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Huron, Watertown, and Rapid City the railroad was an integral and essential part of the downtown and certainly influenced then types of commercial enterprises that developed. Hotels, warehouses and retail establishments were dependent on the railroad and located as closely as possible to it. The railroads also helped determine settlement patterns by actively recruiting settlers to South Dakota. It is worth noting that in 1932 there were three railroad crossings of the Missouri River and the primary orientation of traffic helped to emphasize the division of the state between east and west river. Rapid City and the Black Hills were Denver oriented while areas east of the river looked to Minneapolis or Omaha. Until 1975 the trip from Sioux Falls to Rapid City was a day long affair that required the traveler to negotiate downtown stop signs, stoplights and in a multitude of small towns. This was certainly not unique to South Dakota as everyone of a certain age can remember the day long trips that required endless stops and starts and the recognition of specific landmarks and stopping places that defined any often repeated trip. Two lane highways limited speed and provided what seemed to be an endless variety of distractions and obstacles. Blue Highways: A Journey into America written by William Least-Heat Moon (William Trogdon) and published in 1982 was the result of a four year journey taken by the author on the blue highways on the map and is an appreciation of the good things found on the blue highways. Based on a multi-year journey around the country the book celebrates the virtues of the small towns and ordinary people encountered by the author. He is not, however, concerned with either speed or efficiency. It should be noted that one of his more practical pieces of advice concerns the food in small town cafes. In any small town with more than one café, the best food will be found in the café that has the most calendars hanging on the wall. In my travels around the state, which have taken me to every location with a post office this has proven to be accurate.

INTERSTATE

The third revolution was the construction of the Interstate Highway System. The Interstate Highway System was authorized by Congress in 1956. It was designed and authorized to facilitate private and commercial transportation and provide key ground transport routes for military supplies and troops. Given the vast open spaces in South Dakota the highway builders could avoid the inconvenience of following existing routes and going through existing towns and cities. In contrast, a state like West Virginia has topographic constraints that insure that new construction follows the existing corridors. This has had a

significant impact on towns that are no longer directly on major transportation corridors and has certainly reoriented those towns adjacent to the interstate. In 1979 there was little or no development south of 41st Street in Sioux Falls and certainly nothing south of the Empire Mall and I-229 just as there was little of significance west of I-29. I-90 on the south side of Mitchell was in the country and it took a significant effort to get downtown from the Interstate. Historic downtowns have become less relevant as major commercial centers as much of that significant activity has moved to the areas adjacent to the interstates. This has occurred in Rapid City, Mitchell, and Sioux Falls and to some extent Spearfish and Brookings. In Rapid City, Mitchell, and Sioux Falls this has provided impetus for the reinvention of the historic downtown. The convenience of immediate access on and off the interstate has been a determining factor in which businesses in small towns adjacent to the interstate will thrive and which will not. The speeds which the interstate promotes allow individuals a far greater range of choices when shopping or traveling. It is possible for an individual to ignore or neglect local commercial and service organizations in favor of larger commercial centers with more options. A local hospital may be less attractive than a larger hospital in a large urban area and with the Interstate equally accessible. There has been a marginalization of many of the small towns in South Dakota. Certainly the completion of I-90 in 1976 and I-29 in 1983 contributed to this marginalization. In 1987 Frank and Deborah Popper published "The Buffalo Commons as Regional Metaphor and Geographic Method" which caused much controversy but merely presented an interesting hypothesis regarding rural depopulation which has continued in the upper Midwest.

There has been a corresponding change in the perceptual landscape. Rapid City and Sioux Falls are no longer a day apart but five hours. I-90 is simply a bridge from one end of the state to another. There is no need to visit, pay attention to or traverse, Kimball, Kennebec, Presho, Reliance, Kadoka, Draper, or Wall. These are merely exit signs that indicate how far a traveler has gone. No one looks for history on I-90. John Miller is [Looking for History on Highway 14](#) and others have looked for history on Highway 14 or 18. Just as South Dakota is part of flyover country, the center of the state is flyover territory. The ease of travel on I-90 has brought the two halves of the state closer together and has provided a greater appreciation of South Dakota as a single entity.

Listing of the Interstate Highway System in South Dakota on the National Register of Historic Places should happen. In order to be listed the property must meet one of the four criteria.

Criterion A: The property must make a contribution to the broad patterns of American History.

Criterion B: Must be associated with significant people in American history.

Criterion C: Design/ Construction concerns distinctive characteristics of construction or architecture

Criterion D: Information potential, this is usually associated with archaeological sites.

The Interstate System certainly falls under Criterion A. The system is technically a structure as defined by the National Register. It is a functional construction meant to be used for purposes other than sheltering human activity.

A reasonable argument can be made that the Interstate Highway System can be and should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

THE ARCHIVAL EXPERIENCE

Kadyn Wittman

My experience with the Augustana Archives began in January of 2010, at the Center for Western Studies when I received the Mildred White internship.

I began working with the Richard William's collection, and at first it was a bit intimidating. For those of you who don't know what happens in the mysterious world of archiving, you usually begin with "processing" a collection.

An important part of processing is how we store our collections. The boxes and folders are all acid-free, which helps to preserve the collection and discourage the deterioration of papers. Along with moving all of these papers into acid-free folders, we also have to look through them and make sure there are no paper clips, as those rust. Unfortunately staples cause the same damage; however, we simply do not have the time take out the thousands of staples that can be within a single collection. It helps that the area of damage received from a staple is significantly smaller than that of a paper clip. We replace any paper clips with Plastklips. We do not use pens, only pencils, as the ink contains acid as well. To take care of photos and scrapbooks, we interleave acid-free paper, which means we layer acid-free paper between photos or scrapbook pages. Otherwise, if possible, we deconstruct the current scrapbooks in order to try and preserve the information within.

Processing means you go through every piece of newspaper, every photo, and every letter and, once you have done that, you need to begin to separate all of these items into similar groups. For instance, I grouped all of the correspondence together and then split them between incoming and outgoing letters. Once I had established these two categories I began to sort them into the years they were written or received, then I arranged them chronologically.

All the other separation of items comes from what are major themes within a collection. One of the major themes within the Richard Williams collection was his involvement with establishing Bear Butte as a National Park. In the end, 1/7 of his donated materials was made up of information about Bear Butte.

Past Perfect is software for museum collections and we employ it not only for use in our archives, but also to catalog our art collection and artifacts. It is especially helpful when we have researchers inquiring after a specific subject, as everything within a collection is recorded with Past Perfect. We can enter complete information about each new accession our archive makes, and add it alongside the already existing collections. You might ask; with all this information stored on our computer, what would happen if

our computer crashed? Well, in terms of archiving that would be catastrophic. We would lose years of work and countless amounts of information. Luckily, however, we retain all of our information on a removable hard drive, so even in the case of a catastrophic computer crash, we would still maintain all of our hard work. Past Perfect has everything we need to catalog, organize, manage, and research our collection.

Speaking of research, I should probably talk about our researchers. Anyone can come to our archives with an appointment, and for that all they have to do is call ahead. We are more than happy help a researcher find whatever they may need. Due to Past Perfect, which I have already mentioned a bit, it is very easy to try and find anything that a researcher may need. There is a small fee involved with finding information and relaying it. Those fees go into our general upkeep fund. We also charge if a researcher needs copies of any of the information they requested, or if we have to scan the image/information for an email. In short, if you feel like we have something in our collection that may help you with any sort of research project feel free to call and set up an appointment and we will help to the best of our abilities.

Some important collections that are housed within our archives are the John Milton collection, the Herb Krause collection, Fred Manfred, the Boe family, The United Church of Christ, the Episcopal records, and, of course, my recently finished Richard Williams collection. All of these are important for different reasons, but they all share one thing in common; they are relatively large collections. The John Milton collection alone contained 52 boxes of files and papers. It took my fellow archivist Rachel almost six months to sort through all of the information. My collection began with nine boxes and it took me almost two months. This is an indication of how much time and work goes into processing each collection.

I began my collection in the middle of January, and it was daunting at first, but gradually I became more comfortable with the process of sorting through papers and began to enjoy reading the information and finding out new things about Richard Williams. For one; he was a very persistent man. I can't tell you how many letters I sorted through regarding his campaign to establish Bear Butte as a state park. It took him nearly two years to establish it as a reserve, and the countless letters and forms I sorted through filled up nearly one and a half boxes out of the final seven, to give you an estimate of how much information he still had on it. Some of his other accomplishments include the expansion of the Fort Meade museum, corresponded with many others on a variety of topics, and campaigned for the freedom of the Cheyenne to use Bear Butte for their religious ceremonies. His collection contained a large amount of photographs, not only of Bear Butte, but ranging from rodeo contests to family portraits. Looking through these pictures and trying to find out where and when they were taken was a fun part of my job. I really enjoyed seeing the kind

of life he lived through looking at his photos. I got to experience his trials and rewards throughout not only his career, but also his life by sorting through all of his papers and memorabilia.

In short, working in the archives is both a rewarding and frustrating job. Spending weeks, and even months sorting through a single person's documents can be very difficult. We sort, organize and record hundreds of documents within each collection. But the feeling you get after you enter the final item into the database makes it all worth it. Then you turn around and see another collection that needs processing, you sigh, and start all over again.

WATER IN THE WILDERNESS - JED SMITH'S TRAILS AND TRIALS

Professor Aaron Robert Woodard, MA Ph.D.

When one considers the vast distances traversed by settlers, Indians and explorers in the American West, one topic that seldom garners significant attention is the issue of water. Water was a critical element in wilderness survival. The absence of it, even for a short time in some situations, was a sure ticket to becoming a pile of bleaching bones on the side of a trail.

Most travelers planned their travels carefully with due regard to the availability of watering holes, for people and animals. Lack of planning could be fatal, as many unfortunate travelers discovered. Many of the waterholes relied on by the settlers and immigrants were discovered and mapped by mountain men. Mountain men were often the first white men to enter into many areas of western America. Thus, it is interesting to examine the issue of water and finding water and how this became a focal point of life for these grizzled wilderness dwellers. One individual's life in particular is intimately tied to the issue of water, Jedediah Smith. Smith's life can almost be sectioned into segments related to his efforts to locate water in the wilderness. In fact, his life was taken from him in just such an effort. Thus this paper will examine the interplay between Smith's life in the wild and his never-ending quest for water.

Smith was born in New York, 6 January 1799. The Smith family relocated to Pennsylvania and young Jedediah made the acquaintance of an old frontier physician, Dr. Titus Gordon Simons. The old doctor "took a shine" to the eager and inquisitive twelve-year old and supposedly presented him with a new book (published in 1814) describing the recently completed journey of the Lewis and Clark expedition.¹ Jedediah managed to obtain a minor clerical position aboard a freight boat on the Great Lakes, his first brush with water. In his new position, he encountered fur traders and trappers from Canada and the American wilderness.² Undoubtedly, these experiences shaped an already adventurous mind and spirit. Smith arrived in St. Louis in the spring of 1822 -- let him tell it:

In the spring I came down to St. Louis and hearing of an expedition that was fitting out for the prosecution of the fur trade on the head of the Missouri, by Gen. W.H. Ashley and Major Henry, I called on Gen. Ashley to make an engagement to go with him as a hunter. I found no difficulty in making a bargain on as good terms as I had reason to

¹ Dale Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1953), pp.24-25.

² Robert Glass Cleland, *This Reckless Breed of Men* (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1963), p.55.

expect. On the 8th of May I left St. Louis on board *The Enterprise* under the direction of Daniel S.D. More.³

Thus Smith followed the first boat of the expedition, led by Henry. Smith's journal is a fascinating glimpse into the virgin wilderness of South Dakota. The Missouri River was and is one of the most dangerous rivers in North America to navigate. It lived up to its reputation in the case of Smith's voyage on *The Enterprise*:

Leaving St. Louis our boat proceeded on without any material occurrence for the first three hundred miles. The strong current of the Missouri made the voyage slow, laborious and dangerous. Arrived at a place within the state of Missouri and near the mouth of the Sni Eber Creek on a windy day and turning a point full of sawyers the boat by an unexpected turn brought the top of her mast against a tree that hung over the water and wheeling with the side to the powerful current was swept under in a moment. The boat and its valuable cargo worth (\$10,000) Dollars was lost with the exception of a few articles that floated and were saved by the exertion of two or three active men.⁴

Something of Ashley's character and nerve can be gleaned from his reaction to this setback on his maiden outing in the fur business:

After the loss of the boat Mr. More immediately started for St. Louis, leaving the party and myself among the rest, at or near the place where it was lost. About the 4th of June Mr. More arrived in St. Louis and gave Gen. Ashley intelligence of the loss of his boat. Not discouraged by this unfortunate occurrence, Gen. Ashley immediately commenced fitting out another boat and in Eighteen days was prepared to leave with another boat and cargo and 46 men. He then took charge of the expedition himself and proceeded up to the place where we were encamped without any very material occurrence.⁵

Jedediah had been hired as a hunter and hunt he did. According to his journal the land near the river was filled with a variety of game,

a few men who were good and active hunters were out on the bank hunting for such game as the country afforded, which consisted of Black Bear, Deer, Elk, Raccoon and Turkeys in abundance. And as the country was well stocked with Bees we frequently had a plentiful supply of honey. For some distance up the Missouri the country is very fine, and as the General kept me constantly hunting, to which I was by no means averse, I was enabled to enjoy the full novelty of the scene in which I was placed⁶

Thus Smith's first experiences in western life revolved around water-the Missouri River. Later, after an apprenticeship under the tutelage of Ashley, Jed was entrusted with more and more responsible jobs.

³ Maurice Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1934), p.1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

Ashley outfitted a company of men commanded by Jedediah Smith to head to the Black Hills of South Dakota, and then make their way to the trapping grounds in the Rockies.⁷ After equipping themselves at Fort Kiowa, a fur post of The Missouri Fur Company, Mountain man James Clyman, a member of the company, records that the band of eleven trappers left towards the end of September 1823.⁸ Water would again play a crucial role in this endeavor.

Clyman notes that the group included several famous names among the mountain men: Smith himself, Thomas Fitzpatrick, William Sublette as well as Clyman.⁹ The group travelled through the dry and desolate plains of western South Dakota and were cruelly afflicted with thirst, "our guide informed us to take what water we could as we would not reach water until about noon the next day." The group arrived at the next water hole, but found it dry. The party split up desperately seeking water. Clyman eventually found a water hole and fired his gun to signal his location to the others. Eventually all the company arrived except two. These unfortunate laggards had completely given out due to thirst and had been buried in the sand up to their heads in an attempt to keep them cool. Smith went back after these two stragglers because he was "the last who was able to walk."¹⁰

The party, thus refreshed by water, continued on their way and encountered a band of Bois Brule Sioux, with whom they were able to trade and acquire 27 or 28 horses --enough for two per man.¹¹ The group then continued, crossing along the southern fork of the Cheyenne River. They were nearing the Black Hills now and they were relieved to leave the hot and dusty plains behind them: "At length we arrived at the foot of the Black Hills which rises in very slight elevation about the common plain. We entered a pleasant undulating region cool and refreshing, so different from the hot dusty plains we have been so long passing over and here we found hazelnuts and ripe plums, a luxury not expected."¹² But as the group proceeded on their way, following along a stream into a canyon, they soon found that the canyons were extremely narrow, "the rest of the company remained in the canyon without room to lie down."¹³ Thus, Jedediah Smith became the first white man in recorded history to enter and explore the Black Hills of South Dakota.

⁷ Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, p.81.

⁸ James Clyman, *Journal of a Mountain Man* (Mountain Press Publishing, Missoula MT, 1984), p.19.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Disaster was not far off. As the party made their way through the hills in an attempt to come into contact with the Crow Indians, a large grizzly bear came on the men as they negotiated a valley.

We being in single file men on foot leading pack horses he struck us about the center turning ran parallel to our line. Captain Smith being in the advance he ran to the open ground and as he emerged from the thicket he and the bear met face to face. Grizzly did not hesitate a moment but sprung on the captain taking him by the head first, pitching, sprawling on the earth he gave a grab by the middle fortunately catching by the ball pouch and butcher knife which he broke but breaking several of his ribs and cutting his head badly. None of us having any surgical knowledge what was to be done, one said come and take hold and he would say why not you, so it went around. I asked captain what was best. He said one or two go for water and if you have a needle and thread get it out and sew up my wounds around my head which was bleeding freely. I got a pair of scissors and cut off his hair and then began my job of dressing wounds. Upon examination I found the bear had taken nearly all his head in his capacious mouth close to the left eye on one side and close to the right ear on the other and laid the skull bare to near the crown of the head leaving a white streak where his teeth passed. One of his ears was torn from his head out to the outer rim. After stitching all the other wounds in the best way I was capable and according to the captain's directions the ear being the last I told him I could do nothing for his ear. O you must try to stitch up some way or other said he. Then I put in my needle stitching it through and through and over and over laying the lacerated parts together as nice as I could with my hands. Water was found in about a mile when we all moved and encamped the captain being able to mount his horse and ride to camp where we pitched a tent and made him as comfortable as circumstances would permit. This gave us a lesson on the character of the grizzly bear which we did not forget.¹⁴

Smith recovered from these frightening and disfiguring injuries without the benefit of any other medicine than thread and the ever present water. Ever after this incident he wore his hair long to hide the scars which he bore to his dying day.

Smith later purchased Ashley's business with David Jackson and William Sublette as partners in 1826 at the summer rendezvous held near Cove Utah.¹⁵ Smith was given the task of seeking new areas to trap for beaver and so left in August of 1826 for unknown western regions. After several adventures, Smith's party ended up in California at the Mission San Gabriel in November.¹⁶ Smith traveled to San Diego to meet with the Spanish Governor, who believed he was a spy, and later exited California leaving most of his men behind near the Stanislaus River. Smith and two men from his original force, Silas Gobel and Robert

¹⁴ Ibid., p.22.

¹⁵ Sullivan, p.14. The exact site of the 1826 rendezvous is unknown. This "educated guess" comes from Fred Gowans, *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous* (Gibbs-Smith, Layton Utah, 2005), pp.24-27.

¹⁶ Sullivan, p.15-16.

Evans, crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains to head back to the summer rendezvous site in what is now Utah for more supplies.¹⁷

Smith's journey took him into some of the most inhospitable territory in North America, Skull Valley Utah. Historian Charles Kelly believes that Smith's route "ran some twenty miles from Goshute Springs (on the western edge of Utah's great salt plain) to Granite Mountain; thirty miles farther on to the southern end of Skull Valley; and then an additional twenty miles to the spring that saved the trappers' lives."¹⁸

Smith's own journal picks up the story as the little group neared what is now the Utah-Nevada state line¹⁹ searching for water:

North 25 miles. My course was nearly parallel with a chain of hills in the west, on the tops of which was some snow and from which ran a creek to the northeast. On this creek I encamped. The country in the vicinity so much resembled that on the south side of the Salt Lake that for a while I was induced to believe that I was near that place....
June 23 NE 35 Miles. Moving on in the morning I kept down the creek on which we had encamped until it was lost in a small lake. We then filled our horns and continued on our course, passing some brackish as well as some verry [sic] salt springs, and leaving on the north of the latter part of the days travel a considerable salt plain. Just before night I found water that was drinkable, but continued on in hopes of finding better and was obliged to encamp without any. June 24th NE 40 Miles. I started verry [sic] early in hopes of soon finding water. But ascending a high point of a hill I could discover nothing but sandy plains or dry Rocky hills with the exception of a snowy mountain off to the NE at the distance of 50 or 60 miles. When I came down I durst not tell my men of the desolate prospect ahead, but framed my story so as to discourage them as little as possible. I told them I saw something black at a distance, near which we would no doubt find water....with our best exertion we pushed forward, walking as we had been for a long time, over the soft sand. That kind of traveling is verry [sic] tiresome to men in good health who can eat when and what they choose, and drink as often as they desire, and to us, worn down with hunger and fatigue and burning with thirst increased by the blazing sands, it was almost insupportable. At about 4 O Clock we were obliged to stop on the side of a sand hill under the shade of a small Cedar. We dug holes in the sand and laid down in them for the purpose of cooling our heated bodies. After resting about an hour we resumed our wearisome journey, and traveled until 10 O Clock at night, when we laid down to take a little repose. Previous to this and a short time after sundown, I saw several turtle doves, and as I did not recollect of ever having seen them more than 2 or 3 miles from water I spent more than an hour looking for water but it was in vain. Our sleep was not repose, for tormented nature made us dream of things we had not and for the want of which it seemed possible and even probable that we might perish in the desert unheard of and unpitied. In those moments how trifling were all those things that hold such an absolute sway over the busy and prosperous world. My dreams were not of Gold or ambitious honors but of my distant quiet home, of

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 16-17.

¹⁸ Cleland, p.83.

¹⁹ Sullivan, p.17.

murmuring brooks, of Cooling Cascades. June 25th...When morning came it saw us in the same unhappy situation, pursuing our journey over the desolate waste, now gleaming [sic] in the sun and more insupportably tormenting than it had been during the night. [About] at 10 O Clock Robert Evans laid down in the plain under the shade of a small cedar, being able to proceed no further.... The Mountain of which I have spoken was apparently not far off, and we left him and proceeded onward in the hope of finding water in time to return with some in season to save his life. After traveling about three Miles [sic] we came to the foot of the Mt and there, to our inexpressible joy we found water. Goble [sic] plunged into it at once, and I could hardly wait to bath [sic] my burning forehead before I was pouring it down regardless of the consequences.... I took a small kettle of water and some meat and going back found him safe.... He was indeed far gone, being scarcely able to speak. When I came [within hearing but was not yet in sight] the first question he asked me was have you any water? I told him I had plenty and handed him the kettle which would hold 6 or 7 quarts in which there was some meat mixed with the water. O says he, why did you bring the meat and putting the kettle to his mouth he did not take it away until he had drank all the water, of which there was at least 4 or 5 quarts and then asked why I had not brought more. This however revived him so much that he was able to go on to the spring.²⁰ Smith's group was able to stumble back to the Great Salt Lake, site of the rendezvous. Again, Smith's connection with water in the wild shows through. He spoke of the Great Salt Lake thusly, "...the sight of this lake surrounded by a wilderness of more than 2000 Miles diameter excited in me those feelings known to the traveler, who, after long and perilous journeying, comes again in view of his home. But so it was with me for I had traveled so much in the vicinity of the Salt Lake that it had become my home of the wilderness."²¹ The party had been given up for dead and when they arrived according to Smith, "My arrival caused a considerable bustle in camp, for myself and party had been given up as lost. A small Cannon brought up from St. Louis was loaded and fired for a salute."²²

Smith's last brush with water was fatal. Jed had sold his fur company at the 1830 rendezvous and appeared to be exiting from the fur trade. He used some of the profits from the sale to set up two of his brothers in the wagon trade to Sante Fe. Jed decided to accompany the group. The party had poor luck and chanced on a dry stretch of trail with no water for 3 or 4 days. Jed took out alone, no doubt relying on his immense wilderness skills to locate a water hole. Apparently thus engaged (some, like historian Robert Cleland, say that he was digging a hole in the sand and watching to see if it filled with water and failed to see the Indians²³), he was ambushed by a group of Commanche Indians who frightened his horse with mirrors and blankets. After failing to convince them to return with him to the caravan to trade, Smith shot

²⁰ Sullivan, pp.19-22.

²¹ Ibid., p.23.

²² Ibid., p.26.

²³ Cleland, p.119.

two of the attackers, one of whom according to a letter from his brother was the chief, but he was overcome at the last.²⁴

Thus Smith's life in the wild ended as it had begun, in the search for adventure and water. Smith's trailblazing efforts led to new overland trails for immigrants and travelers. Mountain Men, such as Smith, also helped extend the American rule of law over this vast unsettled area so that the future of settlers would be more secure. As Smith himself noted in a letter to the Secretary of War, he felt obligated "to do all in my power to promote so desirable an object as that of developing the resources of our extended Western Territory."²⁵

Perhaps the best epitaph for Jed was contained in a letter from his brother discussing Jed's death, "But let us not grieve too much, for he confided in a wise and in a powerful Being."²⁶

²⁴ Sullivan, pp.153-156.

²⁵ James Smith, "Jed's Last Letter-a Point of View" quoting from letter from Jedediah Smith, David Jackson and William Sublette to Secretary of War, 29 October 1830 *Castor Canadensis* -- Newsletter of the Jedediah Smith Society, (Stockton California, University of the Pacific, Fall 2008), p.3.

²⁶ Sullivan, p.154.