

Papers of the Forty-first Annual  
**DAKOTA CONFERENCE**

A National Conference on the Northern Plains

**“Abraham Lincoln Looks West”**

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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.

The Dakota Conference received two important national recognitions recently. The first is the endorsement by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, Washington, DC, of the Forty-first Annual Dakota Conference. The second is the citation by the National Endowment for the Humanities of the conference's tradition of encouraging both academic and lay scholars in the NEH's awarding of a \$300,000 Challenge Grant to the Center for Western Studies for its endowment.

Titled "Abraham Lincoln Looks West," the Forty-first Annual Dakota Conference considered the impact on the Northern Plains region of President Lincoln's administration: appointing two Dakota Territory governors; encouraging settlement through the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862; pardoning (and executing) Dakota Sioux following the Dakota Conflict of 1862; and authorizing the transcontinental railroad in 1864. Each of these developments resulted in controversy and repercussions that affect both indigenous peoples and immigrant descendants to this day.

Thirty of the sixty presentations at this year's conference related to the Lincoln Bicentennial theme. Presenters came from fifteen states—California to Maryland and Oklahoma to North Dakota—as well as from each of the contiguous states around South Dakota. This year's autograph party was attended by over twenty authors. Again this year, several students presented papers and/or chaired sessions.

Although most presenters offered positive assessments of Lincoln's presidency, some pointed out the negative effects of the Lincoln Administration's policy toward Native Americans, notably Dr. Gary Clayton Anderson, University of Oklahoma, author of books about the Minnesota Dakota War of 1862, and Dr. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, who has written about Lincoln's Indian policy. Again, this year, the conference became a forum for the exchange of ideas among academic and non-academic scholars.

Ed Bradley, an editor with *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, sponsored by the Illinois Preservation Agency and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, provided examples of the many kinds of writings by and to Lincoln. Timothy Good, representing the National Park Service, spoke about the Lincoln-Douglas Debates and their impact on Lincoln's presidential policies.

Thanks to each presenter and session chair, whose dedication to research and writing makes this conference possible. Please note that not all papers presented at the conference were submitted for inclusion here.

Harry F. Thompson, Ph.D.  
Dakota Conference Director  
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## JOHN DILLINGER AND THE SIOUX FALLS BANK ROBBERY OF 1934

Emma Abbott

Tuesday March 6, 1934, began as a typical day for the citizens of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A chill filled the air as they awoke, but this was not unusual. However, this would not be a usual morning. While the citizens headed to work and school, one of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 'most wanted' criminals, John Dillinger, and his gang were making their way to Sioux Falls.

This historic day began a little after ten o'clock in the morning. A Packard rolled into Sioux Falls and stopped at the corner of Ninth and Main.<sup>1</sup> A few moments later, shots rang out from within the bank and brought a crowd to the corner. According to the *Argus Leader*, a reported one thousand residents came to see what the shots meant.

Surprisingly, Dillinger's visit to Sioux Falls rarely appears in John Dillinger's narrative. To date, what has been written about Dillinger focuses primarily on his other rampages across the country. The robberies that receive a lot of focus occurred in Indianapolis, Indiana and other big cities in the Midwest. However, according to the Minnehaha County Historical Society, in 2004, the robbery of the Security National Bank in 1934, ranked as one of the top ten events in Sioux Falls' first one hundred years.<sup>2</sup> As a result, our understanding of Dillinger is incomplete for it does not contain all the facts. One reason for this omission could rest within the FBI file on Dillinger; for nowhere does it mention the Sioux Falls robbery.<sup>3</sup> The robberies that Dillinger conducted in the last few months of his life were more violent and disorganized than those in 1933. This includes the robbery of the Security National Bank. Sioux Falls may not have heard of Dillinger if things had turned out differently eleven years earlier.

In 1923, Dillinger enlisted in the Navy to try to get away from his father. This did not last long, for even in the Navy he got in trouble. So, when the USS Utah docked in Boston he deserted.<sup>4</sup> Then in 1924, Dillinger married Beryl Hovius, a sixteen year old from Mooresville, Indiana. Whether Dillinger planned to stay in Mooresville and settle down was unclear. What is known is that Dillinger met Ed Singleton. Ed

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<sup>1</sup> Gary D. Olson and Erik L. Olson, *Sioux Falls, South Dakota: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1985), 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Minnehaha County Historical Society Newsletter* (Sioux Falls, SD). March 2004.

<sup>3</sup> US Bureau of Investigation Department of Justice, John Dillinger, file number 62-29777-1.

<sup>4</sup> The Gangsters Chronicles, part 1, Narrated and hosted by Patrick O'Neill (Newark, NJ: A Lou Reda Production, 1989), videocassette.

Singleton was the town pool shark and always looked for ways to get money, even if it did not belong to him. Dillinger and Singleton became friends and in 1925, they attempted to rob a grocer. They botched the robbery and were quickly apprehended. After the arrest, Dillinger confessed, while Singleton, on the other hand, did not admit to doing anything.<sup>5</sup> The court sentenced Dillinger to prison. During his time in prison, Dillinger became a bitter and tortured man.<sup>6</sup> During this time, Hovius divorced him. Also, he was now a convicted felon with few avenues of advancement.

On May 10, 1933, in the midst of the Great Depression, Dillinger received parole from prison after serving eight and half years. Thus began his life of infamy. With jobs few and far between, Dillinger started robbing banks. Scholars believe that that first bank he robbed was one in Bluffton, Ohio. Then on September 22 of that same year, Dayton police arrested Dillinger for this act of robbery and put him in the county jail in Lima, Ohio. Days later, Dillinger's friends escaped from the Indiana State Prison and came with the intent to break him out. The friends that helped him escape are unknown. When the friends arrived at the Lima County Jail, they told the sheriff that they were there to escort Dillinger back to the Indiana State Prison for violating his parole. Suspicious, the sheriff asked to see some identification, whereupon, the men shot and beat him unconscious. The sheriff later died of his wounds. Sprung from Lima, Dillinger was now a robber and a fugitive on the run from the authorities.<sup>7</sup> The Lima episode marked Dillinger's first escape from a jail or prison. In the months that followed he would escape from other jails and prison, while the authorities insisted that they were 'escape proof.'

Following one of his escapes, Dillinger and his gang made their way to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. By that time, each member had an established role to play within the gang. The men accompanying Dillinger were said to be: Harry Pierpont, Homer Van Meter, Lester "Baby Face Nelson" Gillis, Eddie Green, and Tommy Carroll. Harry Pierpont, known as 'the professional,' believed that robbing banks was not a crime, just a way of life.<sup>8</sup> Homer Van Meter, considered the all-around outlaw looking for a good time

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<sup>5</sup> Jay Robert Nash, *Dillinger: Dead or Alive?* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1970), 8.

<sup>6</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Famous Cases: John Dillinger," n.d., <http://www.fbi.org> (accessed 17 April 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Famous Cases: John Dillinger," n.d., <http://www.fbi.org> (accessed 17 April 2007).

<sup>8</sup> How Dillinger and Harry Pierpont met in jail helps one to see some of the people that would make up the gang that would appear in Sioux Falls. In the resources it is unclear what jail the two were in together, but from the beginning they hit it off. Pierpont then got transferred to the Michigan City Prison. Eventually, Dillinger asked to be transferred to the same prison. While in the Michigan City Prison, Dillinger met the rest of Pierpont's gang,

and someone else's money to spend. During the mid-1930s, "Baby Face Nelson" was the most vicious killer of the day and only feared John Dillinger. By this time, Dillinger was known by the FBI and the nation as 'public enemy number one.' As for Dillinger, the FBI wanted to take him down as soon and as fast as possible. Perhaps since he had not traveled in South Dakota, Dillinger probably thought that it would be a great way to get the FBI off his tail, at least for awhile. The reason the FBI considered Dillinger, 'public enemy number one' was because he was able to avoid capture a long time.

Compared to other criminals of the day, Dillinger's life of infamy lasted little over a year, where other criminals' careers may have lasted years or even a couple of decades. Pretty Boy Floyd, is one example, who at the time was known as 'the Robin Hood of the Cookson Hills' and a legend of his own time.<sup>9</sup> The number of bank robberies between 1933 and 1934 is what made Dillinger famous. During that time, the gang robbed twenty banks, killed ten men, and wounded seven others, including Hale Keith of Sioux Falls on that fateful March morning.<sup>10</sup> What allowed an Indiana criminal to tramp across the country was the automobile. The automobile made it possible for criminals to commit a crime in one state on one day and one in another state the next day.<sup>11</sup>

Indian attacks had been the city of Sioux Falls' only major threat since 1856. By the 1930s the threat of an Indian attack no longer existed. Throughout 1933 and 1934, citizens read about the robberies of John Dillinger and his gang taking place throughout other Midwestern states, but they did not expect it could happen to them. They did not expect it because most of the cities that the gang had robbed were much bigger than Sioux Falls.

On Tuesday, March 6, 1934, at 10:00 A.M. a big Packard containing Dillinger and his gang pulled up to the Security National Bank at the southwest corner of Ninth and Main.<sup>12</sup> A stenographer, unsure of what the gang was up to, pushed the security button as the gangsters entered the bank; which set off a

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including Homer Van Meter. Upon his release, Dillinger began planning to help Pierpont and his gang members escape from the Michigan City Prison. Those who were around during the time of Dillinger felt that Pierpont, not Dillinger, should have received credit for the different robberies that they conducted together.

<sup>9</sup> *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), 6 March 1934.

<sup>10</sup> G. Russell Girardin and William J. Helmer, *Dillinger: the Untold Story* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 115.

<sup>11</sup> The Gangster Chronicles, part 1, Narrated and hosted by Patrick O'Neill (Newark, NJ: A Lou Reda Production, 1989), videocassette.

<sup>12</sup> Gary D. Olson and Erik L. Olson, *Sioux Falls, South Dakota: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1985), 117.

screeching burglar alarm. Immediately pandemonium broke out within the bank.<sup>13</sup> During the robbery, Eddie Green and Tommy Carroll remained outside the bank. Eddie Green remained at the car and directed motorists to keep moving in the right direction in order to keep people from stopping. This was necessary because of the screeching alarm. Tommy Carroll walked up and down the sidewalk with a loaded machine gun to wave away any intruders. According to the *New York Times*, two policemen who were walking the streets were told to put up their hands; while one of the thugs, either Green or Carroll said, "Get back or I'll blow the daylights out of you." Inside the bank, a gangster beat a policeman into submission. R.J. Dargen, a teller, emptied the vault of \$49,500 and placed the money in sacks as the gangsters indicated.<sup>14</sup>

While Green directed traffic, the gang had a problem with the people on foot. Before Dargen had finished emptying the vault, a crowd of about one thousand citizens had gathered around the bank. Gunshots rang out. Hearing the shots, motorcycle policeman Hale Keith went to investigate. He then found himself in a dangerous situation.<sup>15</sup> Baby Face Nelson saw Keith and believing that Keith would go for a gun; Nelson jumped onto a bank desk and started shooting through the plate-glass windows. Keith fell, and Nelson shouted, "I got one of them." Author John Toland says that after shooting Keith, Nelson's eyes were wild.<sup>16</sup>

Mildred Linahan, in 1934, worked at the First National Bank.<sup>17</sup> When the alarms sounded and crowds began to gather around the Security National Bank, Mildred called her sister Laura, who worked at the Security National Bank to see what was happening. Laura told her sister that the bank was being robbed. In 1990, Bruce Conley of the *Argus Leader*, interviewed Mildred Linahan to get her take on the robbery. Linahan said that they could hear gunshots, but could not see anything. She believes that the robbery was well planned because it went so smoothly. According to Linahan, "when they shot him, (Keith) had the presence of mind to roll over in the gutter and lay there. The gangsters thought he was dead."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ardyce Samp, *The Dillinger Robbery of the Security National Bank and Trust Company of Sioux Falls*. (Sioux Falls, SD: Rushmore House Publishing, 1992), 5.

<sup>14</sup> *New York Times* (New York, NY), 7 March 1934.

<sup>15</sup> G. Russell Girardin and William J. Helmer, *Dillinger: The Untold Story* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 115.

<sup>16</sup> John Toland, *The Dillinger Days* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1963), 221.

<sup>17</sup> In 1934, the First National Bank was just a couple of blocks away from the Security National Bank.

<sup>18</sup> *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), 15 March 1990.



Having shot Keith and finished with the vault, the gang took five Security National Bank employees hostage. Those employees were Leo Olson, the only male hostage, Mildred Bostwick, Alice Blegen, Emma Knobach, and Mary Lucas.<sup>19</sup> The hostages were told to stand on the running boards of the car to protect the gang against police fire. Once settled, the gangsters were said to have rolled down the car windows and held onto the hostages, who created a human shield; and said that they were not going to hurt them.<sup>20</sup> The car headed south on Main Avenue; then turned south down Minnesota Avenue. Around Forty-Sixth street the first hostage released was Leo Olson.<sup>21</sup> After releasing Olson, the gang allowed the women to enter the car and sit on the laps of three of the gangsters. This was done because the weather outside had grown a bit colder. As the gang went down the road, they placed nails to try and slow the police down. At some point the radiator started to cause problems, so the gang came to the conclusion that they needed a new car. The robbers flagged down a farmer and stole his Dodge. At a remote location they released the four remaining hostages. Authorities continued to pursue the Dillinger gang, but lost them in Luverne, Minnesota. Sioux Falls Police Chief M.W. Parson was quoted to have said, "They plum got away."<sup>22</sup>

By the end of the day, only one person was wounded, Hale Keith, a policeman. Baby Face Nelson had shot him in the abdomen, one leg and both arms.<sup>23</sup> Rushed to Sioux Valley Hospital, Keith's wounds placed him in critical condition. After being examined and treated by five physicians, his condition improved.<sup>24</sup> Hale Keith did indeed survive his injuries. Given the fact that Nelson shot Keith with a machine gun and that nearly one thousand people were gathered at the bank robbery, it seemed a miracle that only one person ended up wounded. What is even more surprising is how Dillinger's hostages were released unharmed. Not only did the gang have the opportunity to harm them, the police could have accidentally shot them as they were shooting at the escaping criminals.

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<sup>19</sup> *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), 6 March 1934.

<sup>20</sup> Dary Matera, *John Dillinger: The Life and Death of America's First Celebrity Criminal* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2004), 220.

<sup>21</sup> Gary D. Olson and Erik L. Olson, *Sioux Falls, South Dakota: A Pictorial History*, 117.

<sup>22</sup> *Argus Leader*, 6 March 1934.

<sup>23</sup> Girardin and Helmer, *Dillinger*, 115.

<sup>24</sup> *Argus Leader*, 6 March 1934.

Following the robbery, reporters and photographers from the *Argus Leader* were busy writing and examining what happened. Ted Ramsey one such photographer for the *Argus Leader*, took pictures from the steps down the street, pointing his camera in the direction of the Security National Bank.<sup>25</sup> Seventy years after the robbery, Mary Lucas, at age ninety-five, in March of 2004, did not need Ted Ramsey's picture to remember the day that the Dillinger gang came to Sioux Falls. On March 6, 1934, Mary Lucas was an eighteen year old receptionist at the Security National Bank and Trust. She, and the other people of Sioux Falls, did not know that the bank would be robbed or that she would be taken hostage. During the March 2004 meeting of the Minnehaha County Historical Society, Lucas recalled how she felt while Dillinger's gang held her. "I was scared for my life," Lucas said, "I did not know if I was going to live through it. Especially, when the police were shooting the car that we were holding onto."<sup>26</sup> Luckily, Lucas and the other hostages were freed with no injuries. When she gave this 2004 interview Mary Lucas was the sole surviving hostage of the Dillinger robbery. Minnehaha County Historical Society honored her at this March meeting, calling her a heroine during one of Sioux Falls' most important events.<sup>27</sup> Before this time, Lucas was an untapped resource when it comes to the Dillinger robbery of the Security National Bank. Unlike some people, Lucas actually witnessed the robbery and was taken hostage. Lucas filled in some details of the robbery that those that write about the robbery do not know about. Meeting someone that witnessed the robbery first hand brings to life the events.

Ardyce Samp is one of the people to examine Dillinger's Sioux Falls robbery in any detail. Samp's writing brings to light some issues that others had not mentioned before. One reason for this is that Samp, a long time Sioux Falls resident, interviewed those people who had firsthand accounts of the robbery and what transpired that day. G. Oliver Nordby was one such person. Nordby was a loan officer at the bank at the time of the robbery. In the interview, Nordby told Samp that the gangsters were wearing long trench coats and some were carrying machine guns. This is similar to what gangsters and criminals were wearing in the movies at this time; it would not be a surprise if the gang got their ideas of what to wear from the movies. However, Samp interviewed Nordby years after the event and what he thought he saw could have

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<sup>25</sup> Dary Matera, *John Dillinger: the Life and Death of America's First Celebrity Criminal* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2004), 219.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Lucas. Interview by Society Members. 18 March 2004. Minnehaha County Historical Society, Old Court House Museum, Sioux Falls, SD.

<sup>27</sup> Souvenir Program Booklet, Dedication of the Historical Marker "Cherry Rock Bridge" (Sioux Falls, SD: Minnehaha County Historical Society, 2004), 5.

been influenced by the movies he had seen that are set in the 1930s. Samp quotes Nordby as saying: "It all happened so fast that we did not have time to be scared." Also, Nordby remembered that during the robbery the employees and customers within the bank were ordered to stand facing the wall with their hands extended.<sup>28</sup>

Samp's booklet challenges those writers who question whether Dillinger robbed the Security National Bank. This is important for China R. Clarke, the president of the bank during the robbery who states "that Dillinger was not in the party."

The citizens never doubted that the Dillinger gang came. The primary sources all point Dillinger robbing the bank in 1934. They felt that Dillinger did rob the bank. The questions posed are ones that will be hard to answer because everyone has a different idea of how the events unfolded. It was believed that a few days before the robbery, one of the gangsters, Homer Van Meter, was the scout. He visited the robbery site to get the area's layout. In the Sioux Falls case, Van Meter took note of the vault, alarm buttons, gongs, and how close the nearest police station was. Besides scoping out the police station, Van Meter recorded the strength of the police force. One important item that Van Meter did not notice was a second alarm button under the desk of the stenographer.<sup>29</sup>

Local tradition says Dillinger and his gang stayed at the historic St. Vincent Hotel in Flandreau, South Dakota on the eve of the bank robbery. This speculation comes from FBI agents who found sketched plans of the robbery in the wastebasket of a hotel room.<sup>30</sup> However, definitive proof of the Dillinger gang staying in Flandreau did not appear until after the gang had left the state. This evidence, however, is not found in the FBI's file on Dillinger. Robberies Dillinger and his gang committed right up until the end of his life were unique in that after the robberies the gang had a clean get-away. Other robbers of the 1930s were not as lucky, for they often robbed a place and shortly afterward were apprehended. The Dillinger gang though had a leg up on the others because the gang consisted of more experienced robbers. Since Van Meter would scout the area out ahead of time, he was also able to find the quickest route of escape.

About a month after Dillinger robbed the Security National Bank, Dillinger and his gang were in Little Bohemia, a resort in Wisconsin. Federal agents felt that they were closing in on Dillinger. Once the

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<sup>28</sup> Ardyce Samp, *The Dillinger Robbery of the Security National Bank and Trust Company in Sioux Falls*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Girardin and Helmer, *Dillinger*, 117.

<sup>30</sup> Ardyce Samp, *The Dillinger Robbery of the Security National Bank and Trust Company in Sioux Falls*, 2.

agents reached the Little Bohemian a gun battle occurred. Unlike a month earlier, where only one person was injured, this shot left one agent and a bystander dead.<sup>31</sup> These deaths reinvigorated the FBI's hunt for Dillinger and it was only a matter of time before they caught him.

For Dillinger, that day was July 22, 1934. Dillinger's life of crime came to an end. It was reported that Anna Sage, who feared being deported, tipped the FBI agent Melvin Purvis of Dillinger's whereabouts. Anna Sage told agent Purvis that Dillinger would be taking her and a woman in red (Polly Hamilton) to the Biograph Theatre in Chicago on the evening of July 22. Agent Purvis assembled a large group of federal agents and Chicago policemen outside the theater so that when Dillinger emerged they would be ready. As soon as Dillinger stepped out of the theater he received a shot in the head and the left side.<sup>32</sup> Police reports said that Dillinger died at 10:55 p.m. at a Chicago hospital.<sup>33</sup> Upon shooting Dillinger, Purvis became 'public hero number one.'<sup>34</sup> When Harry Pierpont was captured he told a reporter, "my conscience doesn't hurt me. I stole from the bankers. They stole from the people. All we did was help raise the insurance rates."<sup>35</sup> Woody Guthrie seemed to agree, one of his 1934 songs made Dillinger the hero and the bankers the crooks.

Today, seventy-four years have passed since Dillinger's robbery and no one is writing songs of support for him. Locals say that they can see the bullet holes in the concrete, placed there all those many years ago. It is important today that historians record the recollections of the Dillinger robbery. Some witnesses still alive have had strokes that affect their memories, others pass their story on to their children; and still others have never been asked. Sioux Falls is losing its historical memory of the Dillinger robbery.

While researching the robbery, it is interesting to note that the Dillinger robbery of the Security National Bank in Sioux Falls began the FBI's involvement in capturing the criminals and establishing a reputable United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.<sup>36</sup> This brought the way of

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<sup>31</sup> Claitor, Diana, *Outlaws, Mobsters, and Murderers: the Villains...the Deeds* (New York, NY: M&M Books, 1991), 8.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Block, ed., *Gangsters, Swindlers, Killers, and Thieves* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 74.

<sup>33</sup> Ardyce Samp, *The Dillinger Robbery of the Security National Bank and Trust Company in Sioux Falls* (Sioux Falls, SD: Rushmore House Publishing, 1992), 11.

<sup>34</sup> Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991), 251.

<sup>35</sup> Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: the Man and the Secrets* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991), 167.

<sup>36</sup> Ardyce Samp, *The Dillinger Robbery of the Security National Bank and Trust Company in Sioux Falls* (Sioux Falls, SD: Rushmore House Publishing, 1992), 13.

crime investigation into the modern age. Dillinger and his gang brought the real world into Sioux Falls, and changed the way Sioux Falls looked at crime. Before the gang came to Sioux Falls no robberies of that magnitude had occurred in the city. Also, this robbery brought color and mystery in the quiet city of Sioux Falls.

The events that transpired on March 6, 1934, will be remembered for a long time to come, as long as the events are preserved for future generations. Hopefully in the next fifty to one hundred years the Dillinger bank robbery will be at the top of the top ten list of events that occurred in the history of the city.

March 6, 1934, can be summed up in three words: cops, robbers, hostages. The Dillinger gang's robbery of the Security National Bank in Sioux Falls would make a good movie. Nobody would guess that "public enemy number one," John Dillinger, would come to Sioux Falls, South Dakota to rob a bank, if that is what he did, and his visit is still remembered. Even today, Sioux Falls banks do not expect to be robbed. Today people can visit the Security National Bank building, and in one of the offices there is a sign posted above a gun, which reads: "This gun is only to be used when the Dillinger Gang returns."

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## **COLTON: THE TOWN**

Loren H. Amundson

### **Homesteading in 1878**

Colton's storied history in northwestern Minnehaha County, Dakota Territory, was entwined with earlier happenings in Taopi and Buffalo Townships. J. B. Goddard and his family came from Mower County in south central Minnesota and homesteaded three miles west of future Colton in 1878, where Goddard and Son Store and a post office in his name was established in 1879, followed by a school, church, and nearby cemetery in the area. Goddard named the hamlet and the township "Taopi" to commemorate a Christian chief of the Farmer band of Santee Sioux because of his loyalty during the Minnesota Uprising of 1862. John and Christine Hartman, who had first settled in Goodhue County, Minnesota, homesteaded in 1878 four miles west and a mile south of Taopi, and had created a hamlet with several businesses and a busy Hartman Hall for social events by 1899 in Buffalo Township. Early settlers had named the township "Buffalo" because of the shocking number of buffalo bones that they found scattered across the prairie when they first arrived. Also in 1878, J. E. Colton came from Rock County in south central Wisconsin and homesteaded three miles east of Taopi, returned to Wisconsin and married Paulina, returned to Dakota in 1879 and set about creating a Colton community there. A school was started in 1879 with the first classes held in a sod hut the following year. A seminal event was the creation of the Taopi Creamery there in 1897 by J. E. Colton and several area farmers. A year later the post office opened under J. E. Colton's name, followed by Colton becoming a legal entity on January 25, 1899. By year-end there were two businesses and a blacksmith shop near the creamery. Colton's first physician started practice there in 1900 and in 1901 a newspaper was operational. By 1902 the population had grown to about 100, there was agitation to entice a railroad, and Colton's second addition was platted. Colton was on its way!

### **Education**

The first school, to become District No.62, was organized in 1879 by Mr. J. E. Colton. School was first taught in the summer of 1880 in an old sod house with Mrs. Ellen Colton as teacher. The sod house belonged to Andrew Nelson, and was located almost exactly where the Colton brick school would be built. By 1884 a frame school building provided schooling for over 60 students during the year. Some high school subjects were taught in 1904-05, and a new frame building was erected in 1905-06 on this block of



land given to the district by the Colton Land and Investment Co. A two year high school was established in 1907 but was discontinued in 1909 due to small classes. The early teen years of the century saw the beginning of a formal four year high school with a staff of six teachers, three in high school and three in elementary. In 1917 Colton High School proudly graduated its first class when seven young women were honored. On Armistice Day in 1924 Colton pupils moved into the new brick building, which replaced the former wooden structure on the southeast corner of the block, and was dedicated December 11, 1924.

On May 24, 1966 a special election created Tri-Valley Independent School District No. 153. In May of 1967 the last class graduated from CHS, capping a 50 year history of the community of Colton providing quality education for some 825 of its youth. On July 1, 1967 the new district went into effect, combining Colton, Lyons, Crooks, and other small common school districts. Kindergarten, which had begun with six weeks yearly in the 1960s, located in the First Lutheran Church Parish Hall in Colton, began its first full year in 1968-69.

In commemoration of these 50 years of Colton High School, "All School Reunions" were held in 1989 and 1997 at Taopi Hall in Colton, organized by Donald Eugene Boen of Sioux Falls, a native of Colton and 1951 graduate of the school. Graduates came from near and far to visit with old classmates, whiff some nostalgia and one more time sing the school rouser, ever remembering their years as a Panther and the power of orange and black. "Colton High School, Hats Off To Thee!" Tri-Valley High School, located four miles south and one half mile east of Colton, constructed other additions to the school and in the fall of 1999 all formal education in the district was held at one site for the first time since 1967, thereby silencing the hallowed halls of Colton High School forever. This venerable building yielded to the wrecking ball during the early fall of 2008.

### **Communications**

Post Office: During the summer of 1897 J. E. Colton, the "Founder of Colton," was assured by then U.S. Senator R. F. Pettigrew that he would look into the establishment of a post office for the budding community. The post office was named for Mr. Colton, through the efforts of Pettigrew, and opened July 16, 1898 on the Colton homestead south of the creamery. Mail was delivered from Sioux Falls until Harry Lovald was appointed postmaster when he built the first store in the original village and operated the post office out of his business.

Phone Company: A phone company was incorporated in 1901 with officers and directors. Capital stock of 10,000 shares at \$1.00 per share was declared. The first central [switchboard] cost \$350 and was located in the George Lowry Drugstore. Telephone lines strung from Humboldt reached the village of Hartman in 1904. By 1909 Hartman had its own telephone exchange as the old Humboldt switchboard was operated in the Hartman Store. Hartman went out of existence by 1916 and in 1922 the Hartman telephone exchange was purchased by the Colton phone company. Throughout its 60 years the Colton phone company grew from 17 customers to 450 patrons, and never missed paying a dividend. In need of extensive modernizing the company was sold in 1961 to Sioux Valley Telephone Company which continues to serve Colton citizens.

Newspaper: A local newspaper was started in 1901. Three different people operated the paper until 1908 when Amund ["A. P."] Amundson assumed ownership and became editor and publisher. Amund, the oldest child of Peder and Marken Magnus Amundson, was born in Winneshiek Co., Iowa in 1874, grew up east of Colton and was the boss in school. He took to learning like a duck to water, and distinguished himself in Dist. 75, the Hamre School, in declamation, debating and spell downs. Whenever farm and community issues were debated, Amund, barely in his teens, was right among them. Later his oratory went down in the memory and history of old-timers when they dubbed him "The Boy Orator of Skunk Creek."

A. P. married neighboring farm girl, Eveline Hamre, and they settled in the new town of Colton where eight children were born and he was one of the founders of Zion Lutheran Church. Following Eveline's death in 1925 he married Sylvia Kohl and three additional children were born. It had been his destiny to become a newspaper man and the *Colton Courier* was practically forced onto him. He served Colton and other communities over time [*Chester Tribune, Badger Tribune, Baltic-Crooks Booster*] with weekly news and happenings until sale of the paper and retirement in 1949. During his newspaper years he was active in the Old Settlers Association and was a South Dakota democratic state senator 1933-1935. His endless stamina, perseverance and personality served him well as he played roles in both "old town" [Original] and "new town" Colton, being remembered as one of Colton's "Pioneer Contributors."

### **Transportation**

The Colton "Western Flyer" Automobile: The Western Auto Company was incorporated by local businessmen about 1910. Only a few [11-13, depending on whose story is believed] autos were produced during its short history. Jake Gronsdahl and Gotfred Aga were the incorporators and mechanical wizards,

the Anderberg brothers, John and August, were the painters, and Jim Reed and Robert Lodmell did the woodworking and handled other production needs. Local bankers C. N. and C. H. Peterson provided financial backing for the venture. Colton historian Don Whealy believes that Dr. P. D. Bliss, respected local physician, purchased the first auto off the production line.

South Dakota Central Railway [SDC]: Following the establishment of the Taopi Creamery in 1897 at the future town site of Colton, discussions began about the need for a farm-to-market railroad. By 1902 Paul Sherman of Sioux Falls and J. E. Colton, village founder, spearheaded a movement to build a new railroad from Sioux Falls to Colton and on to Madison. Surveys were completed from Sioux Falls to the county line; however, the new company neither graded rights-of-way nor laid ties and steel rails. Two years later in April 1904, a third company was formed, stockholders purchased shares of stock, and the South Dakota Central Land Company began laying track in May 1904. Investors intended to build the new SDC and hoped to sell the line to a major railroad company for a handsome profit. Track ran from Sioux Falls to the newly formed villages of Crooks and Lyons, Skunk Creek was bridged on its way to Colton, arriving there before snow fell that November. A two story depot was built in Colton in early 1905 and early that summer an excursion train, filled with Sioux Falls dignitaries, steamed into Colton on its maiden trip. All train traffic originated from a spot just west of the Illinois Central Railroad on Eighth Street in Sioux Falls. Competition from the giant Milwaukee Road, announced in late 1904 when owners learned that surveying was being laid out from Madison to Sioux Falls, dashed hopes for a quick, profitable sale of the young railroad, and spurred an alternate route. The railway track was extended to Chester, Wentworth, Rutland, and Nunda and reached Watertown in 1907. The Milwaukee Road also came through Colton on its way south to Sioux Falls in 1907. Undercapitalized and heavily in debt the SDC struggled financially until it entered receivership in 1916, was eventually acquired by the Great Northern, freight and passenger service from Watertown to Wentworth were discontinued in 1950, and in 1970 the original SDC short line became part of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe. The competing Milwaukee line also eventually suffered the same fate as the SDC, began abandoning track in 1935, and in 1942 the Milwaukee Road from Madison to Sioux Falls ceased to exist. In 1980 the BNSF took over the Milwaukee Road from Madison to Wentworth and the South Dakota Central line from Wentworth south through Colton to Sioux Falls. New elevator facilities were constructed along core lines to offer unit train loading of grains and other crops. These included Madison, Wentworth, and Colton, further demonstrating the faith of shippers and the rail industry

in the future of Dakota. Also included is the Dakota Ethanol Plant south of Wentworth which is currently the prime supporter of the BNSF from Madison, Wentworth and Colton to Sioux Falls.

From then till now, over 100 years after the South Dakota Central began its trek from Colton north to Watertown, the present line now owned by BNSF does as the original "Sioux Falls to Madison Railway Corporation" had planned, moving farm products to market from Madison to Sioux Falls. It is alive and well today thanks to the fortitude of these railroad pioneers and their successors.

### **Churches**

Three churches were built in Colton during the early years: Methodist 1906 and Baptist and Zion Lutheran in 1907. The Methodist congregation had its roots near Taopi, three miles west of Colton. Zion Lutheran, along with existing Minnehaha, St. Ansgar, and Bethania congregations, created First Lutheran Church in Colton during the 1920s. Two Dutch reformed churches were soon formed in Colton, while the Baptist congregation closed its doors. First Reformed Church took over and continues to flourish in the former Zion Church where the original church bell beckons parishioners to services. The Christian Reformed congregation's original church was razed and replaced by a new facility by the early 2000s.

### **Health Care**

Colton's health care was provided over much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by a small number of qualified and caring physicians and their efficient office staffs. Dr. Peter Donald "P. D." Bliss, born in Wisconsin and raised in Renner where his family homesteaded in 1880, opened his medical practice in 1900 and served the community with distinction during the first 30 years of the new century. P. D. was instantly successful in practice, in part because he could speak Norwegian which he had picked up as a youth on the prairie. Dr. Bliss had three partners for short periods of time during his Colton tenure. He died of complications of diabetes in 1930. His first wife, Rena Huntimer, was a daughter of early settlers in the county, and they adopted two girls as infants. Rena died in 1920 and P. D. and his second wife, Molly Berg, who was his office nurse, raised two sons.

Dr. Vincent Sherwood practiced in Colton 1930-1933, and delivered this writer in 1931 in Sioux Falls. After a short career in Colton he relocated and Dr. Herbert M. Dehli, a native of Harpers Ferry, Iowa, chose Colton in the early 1930s for his livelihood. Herb married a local girl, Alma Devick, and three children were born. In 1951 he was joined by his brother-in-law, Dr. Stanley Devick, and they practiced together until 1958 when Dr. Dehli was killed in a tragic auto accident while on a night-time rural house call

in the county. Dr. Devick and family moved to Sioux Falls in 1960, however Stan continued practice in Colton until retirement in 1989 when he died of cancer. The intervening years have found the community served by physicians from the Dell Rapids Clinic, members of Avera McKennan Health.

## **Sports**

Baseball: Like most small communities, Colton had its "Boys of Summer" over the years. Dr. P. D. Bliss started the first baseball team by 1902 in "Original Colton." The sport provided young [and some not so young] men the opportunity to represent the community "on the town team" while taking a break from their weekday work. Roy Benson and LeRoy Pederson were well respected managers during the 1930s to the 1960s, including a state tourney appearance at Aberdeen in 1941.

Some players had grown up playing Junior and Legion Baseball under seasoned managers Bill Jones and Don Steinborn. Jones, a rural mail carrier, had moved to Colton in 1930, started the legion program and won the state tourney in 1932. The team reached the finals of the regional tourney in Superior, Wisconsin, losing to a Twin Cities team in the final. Many of the players on these teams remained in the area, married, and raised families who helped create the heritage that Colton celebrates today.

Noted among the many legends of local baseball were brothers, Roy and Steve Acheson, from the Buffalo Trading Post area west of Colton. Both are enshrined in the South Dakota Baseball Hall of Fame in Lake Norden. In 2008 Jan Davis, a stalwart athletic from Colton, was taken into the Hall of Fame and others likewise may be honored as the years roll on.

Other Sports: Colton offered both boys' and girls' basketball by the time the school was ready to graduate its charter class in 1917. Girls' teams later were discontinued until resurgence of the sport by the late 1960s. Boys' teams continued over the span of time and participated in the state Class B tourney at Aberdeen in 1947. Many girls' and boys' teams participated in state tourneys since the merger creating Tri-Valley High School in 1967. Girls' basketball and boys' football teams claimed state championships in later years.

## **Old and New Town, Business, Main Street**

In 1904 Colton's Third Addition was platted. After selling all the lots they wished to, the South Dakota Central Land Company deeded the remainder of the Third Addition back to J. E. and Paulina

Colton. The Colton family later deeded the remainder to the Colton Land and Investment Company, composed of J. E. and W. O. Colton and David Crooks and their wives. 1904 also marked the beginning of other profound changes with the moving of the original old town to a new location a few blocks to the south, and the coming of the South Dakota Central Railroad [SDC RR]. New names began to appear to join the pioneer businessmen from old town.

Herbert Coxe erected a mill in 1905. Located southeast of the new railroad station; the mill building would later become the home of Colton's automobile factory. Coxe was the third interim newspaper operator in 1907. Coxe was followed to Colton at the same time by Isaac Brown who purchased the old school building [across from the creamery in old town]. He soon opened a harness shop in new town, one of several buildings that later burned. Growth years continued until 1910 and were ushered in by organization of the Farmers Elevator in 1906 when construction began on an elevator building. About the same time both Ross Lumber and Tuthill Lumber companies located on the SDC RR. Eurby Lifo, this writer's other grandfather, started the first livery business on the railroad right of way in 1906-07 and then operated the Standard Oil bulk business until his death in 1929. C. N. Peterson established the Colton Savings Bank. His career probably had more effect on the community than any other but J. E. Colton. C. N. Peterson's son, Clarence, who married Ruth Colton, joined his father in banking.

Other businesses that located by 1907 were: Nelson and Sisson "Palace" meat market, Mork and Hagen shoe shop [where Opland later operated his shoe shop], Ole Stamm hardware, Langness and Johnson pharmacists, H. D. Seastrand watches, clocks and jewelry, Charles Erbe flour and seed, Colton Planing mill [Robert Lodmell], and the C. S. Juve city dray line. By 1910 Berdahl Implement was open as was the elevator on the Milwaukee Road east of the new downtown.

The population of Colton had grown to about 700 citizens by 1910. Supplied by power from a small plant on the railroad right of way, owned by Gotfred Aga and Clifford Hall, electric lights came to Colton with the first bulb lit in the post office just before Christmas that year.

But it would be the school that altered the last years of life for J. E. Colton. In 1909 the Colton school discontinued the two year high school. That fall John and Paulina, staunch supporters of education, rented a home in Mitchell and enrolled all of their daughters in Dakota Wesleyan. Mr. Colton would die there on December 17, 1910 at the age of 53 years. The J. E. Colton Family had come full circle in the community that they founded, loved, and served throughout most of their lifetimes.

[Ed. Historic markers are found at former site of Hartman 2002, at former site of Taopi 2003, and the John Edmund Colton, Founder of Colton marker 2004 & South Dakota Central RR marker 2005, both in Colton. Previous Dakota Conference presentations include SD Central RR presentation at 2007 DC and John Edmund Colton, Founder of Colton presentation at 2008 DC.]

## THE YANKEES ARE COMING! THE YANKEES ARE COMING!

Grant K. Anderson

Major league baseball players of the 1920's did not command salaries on par with contemporary players of today. Those of the earlier era worked during the off season to supplement their incomes. Barnstorming tours were popular endeavors for earning extra money since the 1860's. The term came from old vaudeville days when shows traveled around the country willing to play anywhere — including a barn. Major leaguers joined local teams, or all star squads, to play each other when the regular season had been completed. Compensation came from a percentage of the gate receipts.

American and National League teams all played regular seasons in cities east of the Mississippi River. It was a barnstorming tour that brought the first major league baseball players to South Dakota. In October, 1922, New York Yankee stars Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel performed in two exhibition games at opposite ends of the state. Sioux Falls and Deadwood provided opportunities for South Dakota residents to watch "The Bambino," or "The Sultan of Swat," as George Herman "Babe" Ruth was nicknamed. Ruth was the undisputed American sports hero of the 1920's. "He was a circus, a play, and a movie all rolled into one," according to teammate Lefty Gomez.<sup>1</sup>

Following the 1921 World Series, Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel embarked on a barnstorming tour. Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis reminded the American League stars that major league rules prohibited World Series participants from such activities. Landis ordered Ruth and Meusel to abandon their tour, but they defied the Commissioner and played out their schedule.

For their insubordination the two stars paid dearly. Commissioner Landis withheld World Series checks from Ruth and Meusel, levied a fine, and suspended them from playing until May 20, 1922. The Yankee pair lost 39 days of pay due to this suspension.

The Yankees won the American League pennant again in 1922. They lost the World Series four games to zero to their cross town rivals the New York Giants. "The Yankees were pre-series favorites in the world championship contest," announced the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, "...and came out about like some of the pre-election favorites in various political contests of the past year," concluded the daily.<sup>2</sup> The World Series ended October 8, 1922. About a week later Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel embarked on

<sup>1</sup> <http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/baberuth24.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> [Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader](#), 10 October, 1922, 4.



another barnstorming tour. They would start exhibition games in Nebraska and "...continue throughout October and November as long as the weather holds."<sup>3</sup> Ruth informed reporters they had the "...unqualified sanction for the trip from baseball's highest official."<sup>4</sup> A "...new rule regarding barnstorming by world series players allowed exhibitions providing" "...no more than 3 members of a championship team play together" as a team.<sup>5</sup> "Last year's affair had nothing to do with his [Landis'] decision granting us sanction for the tour this fall," according to Ruth.<sup>6</sup>

A last minute scheduled game at Perry, Iowa, launched the tour Friday October 13, 1922. Games at Omaha, Nebraska, followed on Saturday and Sunday. From there the Bronx bombers traveled to Mankato, Minnesota.

Only a *Free Press* reporter greeted them on their arrival in Mankato. No one from Sleepy Eye, next stop on the barnstorming tour, arrived for an hour and a half. The local journalist described Bob Meusel as "...a quiet sort of chap," and Babe Ruth as "no gab fester himself."<sup>7</sup> The fact "both seemed to want to discuss everything but baseball," diminished the *Free Press* scribe's one on one interviews.<sup>8</sup>

Al Allison, in charge of the barnstorming tour, was more cooperative. He was informed that it was unlikely either Yankee would hit a home run over the fence at Sleepy Eye "as the ball park was at the fair grounds." He replied, "they told us that at Perry, Iowa, too but Babe clouted one over the race track fence." Both Meusel and Ruth also got home runs at Omaha yesterday Allison told the *Free Press* man.<sup>10</sup>

Promoters of the Sleepy Eye contest considered cancelling the event due to a cold, sleety rain that came down all afternoon. "But when five hundred baseball hungry fans stormed the gate with tickets, it was necessary to play the game regardless of weather conditions," announced a *Free Press* column.<sup>11</sup>

The main attractions were asleep in their hotel beds certain the exhibition would not take place. "When told that a large crowd was at the field, they gladly donned their uniforms and went to the ball park," according to a daily media. "Many stars would not have considered playing in the conditions Ruth and

<sup>3</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October 1922, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 11 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October, 1922, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 11 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Mankato Free Press, 16 October, 1922, 8.

<sup>8</sup> IBID.

<sup>9</sup> IBID.

<sup>10</sup> Allison said he had had no problems with the temperamental Ruth on the tour, Mankato Free Press, 16 October, 1922, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Mankato Free Press, 17 October, 1922, 10.

Meusel did," concluded the reporter.<sup>12</sup>

The steady sleet storm affected the stars differently. Meusel's hands got so cold he had to leave the contest. Babe Ruth wore a pair of kid gloves and did not seem affected by the elements as he hit a pair of home runs.<sup>13</sup>

A banquet, hosted by the Knights of Columbus, followed the exhibition. The stars returned to Mankato about 8 P.M. to catch a train to Sioux Falls. "It would be impossible to get a berth for the trip," so the party "had to settle for three crowded seats in the smoker of the Northwestern..." train.<sup>14</sup> Ruth later would explain "...he was not very enthusiastic over the barnstorming trip," because "...the daily jumps did not agree with his sleeping hours."<sup>15</sup> He had been unable to sleep on the Omaha to Mankato train ride and faced another restless night on the way to Sioux Falls.

It was "rotten train service" that got the major leaguers to their destination about midnight, Ruth carpentered to a local reporter. The journalist's hastily penned column gave rise to the folk tale that the Yankee stars survived "...a game played in a snowstorm at Sleepy Eye the day before."<sup>16</sup> Sources near that game site reported a steady sleet storm, but no snow fell on the south central Minnesota exhibition. Flurries, barely noticeable, had fallen in Sioux Falls for about five minutes the day before the scheduled contest there.

Looking ahead to the Sioux Falls game, "The day will mark a high point in the history of Sioux Falls festivals," predicted the *Daily Press*.<sup>17</sup> It would be sponsored by the newly formed Harold Mason American Legion Post 15 as a fundraiser under the direction of Paul Bronson. A proclamation by Sioux Falls Mayor George W. Burnside declared, "...the hours between 2 P.M. and 5 P.M. October 17, 1922, as hours of recreation, and do earnestly request all places of business to close between said hours, so as to give to their help, as well as the management, an opportunity to see the baseball game which exhibits two of our foremost national baseball players, Babe Ruth homerun king, and Bob Meusel, star Yankee outfielder..." playing on the top two teams from the city's amateur league.<sup>18</sup> Bob Meusel would play for the champion Congos, while Babe Ruth would lend his talents to the runner up Kaysees. "These two clubs are as evenly

<sup>12</sup> IBID., 4.

<sup>13</sup> Mankato Free Press, 17 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>14</sup> IBID., 4.

<sup>15</sup> Mankato Free Press, 16 October, 1922, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 12 October, 1922, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 17 October, 1922, 1.

matched as teams could be," according to a local reporter, adding "...both have played exceptionally close games the past season and a friendly rivalry exists between the two teams which alone makes every meeting interesting for their followers."<sup>19</sup> Game time was set for 2:30 P.M. at the East Side Park.

A parade through downtown Sioux Falls preceded the contest. Units formed at the corner of Sixth Street and Phillips Avenue. They proceeded up Phillips Avenue to Tenth Street, crossed it, and continued to the ballpark. Captain Eric Elefson had charge of the official parade lineup. The color guard and drum and bugle corps formed the vanguard. A closed car followed carrying Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel. Next came a car of American Legion dignitaries including Commander James C. Parlman, Dr. G. G. Cottam, and Dr. S. A. Donahue, head of the day's general committee. Members of the American Legion, fully 500 strong, marched behind, as did Battery D of the South Dakota National Guard "in light marching order" with full equipment including guns and caissons.<sup>20</sup> The marchers "formed one of the first military parades seen for some time," boasted the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*.<sup>21</sup> The full rosters of both competing baseball teams came next while the Sioux Falls City band brought up the rear.

Crowds lined the parade route long before the announced 1:30 P.M. start. "All available sightseeing space on Phillips Avenue from Sixth Street to Tenth was taken," noted an observer.<sup>22</sup> "The turnout of the Legion men, Battery D and the opposing ball teams was the cause of favorable comment as the parade passed," in the words of one present.<sup>23</sup> "Of course the chief interest for the thousands lay in the chance for a glimpse of the Sultan of Swat and his teammate," concluded one spectator.<sup>24</sup> "Many remarks were passed on the appearance of the two, and not the least of these came from men and women past the middle part of their lives," noted the same source.<sup>25</sup>

Prior to leaving his double room at the Cataract Hotel, Babe Ruth granted an interview to a *Sioux Falls Daily Press* reporter. The resourceful journalist had "sneaked in along with the breakfast things." The scribe began, "Now Mr. Ruth, the people of Sioux Falls would like the real lowdown on this: After three years of your high salary, your fines and the alternative boos and praises of New York fans, don't you think that ought to be pretty well satisfied in the appreciative Dakota League?" "Dakota League," the Bambino

<sup>19</sup> IBID., 8.

<sup>20</sup> IBID., 1.

<sup>21</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 3.

<sup>25</sup> IBID.

exclaimed. "Tell 'em that if they can go through what I have for a year they ought to stand most anything."<sup>26</sup> He was then asked if "it was true that you were fined \$10,000 for breaking training rules early in the summer?" to which he replied, "Naw, nothing to that." Backing out of the door the reporter asked Babe if he was going to hit a homerun in Sioux Falls. "The big fellow grinned" and snapped, "Ask my manager," as he broke off the interview.<sup>27</sup>

A pre-parade incident may "throw a sidelight in Ruth's opinion of Sioux Falls. He entered the Western Drug and Chemical Company in search of a particular first baseman's mitt. To his pleasant surprise, he found one." "It was a great pleasure to be able to purchase a George Sisler model first base mitt in Sioux Falls," the Bambino told a reporter.<sup>28</sup>

"Although a steady run of cold weather had somewhat dampened the baseball ardor of many customary fans," Paul Bronson, event organizer for the American Legion, stated, "There can't a thing stop this man's celebration but a cloud burst or a blizzard."<sup>29</sup> October 17, 1922, was a "clear, cold day...not conducive to baseball interests."<sup>30</sup> Undaunted, 1300 to 1500 fans passed through the gates of East Side Park to witness the first major leaguers to play in South Dakota.<sup>31</sup>

Their teams were reportedly "in the pink for the big battle".<sup>32</sup> Both had been working out several days in advance of the exhibition. Managers Fred Schultz of the Congos and Lawrence Green of the Kaysees, "will use all the strategy they are capable of displaying to win the game," assured a *Sioux Falls Daily Press* article.<sup>33</sup>

Batting practice yielded an offensive explosion as both Yankees hit balls over the outfield fence. Asked earlier in the day if he thought this was possible, Bob Meusel replied, "...somebody hit the fence once. Well, if they can knock it that far, there ought to be a pretty good chance to put it over."<sup>34</sup> Fans anxiously awaited the 2:30 P.M. starting time to see if their feats could be duplicated under game conditions.

<sup>26</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 7.

<sup>27</sup> IBID.

<sup>28</sup> IBID., 3.

<sup>29</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 17 October, 1922, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Advanced tickets were available at the Queen City and United cigar stores, Fleming Drug Company, Cataract book store, and the Legion headquarters. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October, 1922, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 17 October, 1922, 8.

<sup>33</sup> IBID.

<sup>34</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 7.

Meusel started in right field for the Congos while Babe Ruth was at first base for the Kaysees.<sup>35</sup> The latter team jumped ahead with six runs in the third inning, four of which were the result of Babe Ruth's grand slam homerun. The ball cleared the right field fence and rolled to the adjacent tennis court.<sup>36</sup>

For the first time on their barnstorming tour, the Yankee duo each took the mound. Ruth, who first entered the major leagues as a left handed pitcher, worked three innings for the Kaysees. He struck out three and gave up four hits. Much to the crowd's delight one of these was a two run homerun by fellow Yankee Bob Meusel. He drove a Ruth curveball "...at least 20 feet over the scoreboard...and some think the ball landed in the Sioux [River]."<sup>37</sup> That day's official scorekeeper, J. J. Lally, proclaimed it "...the longest hit at East Side Park in many a year."<sup>38</sup> Meusel also demonstrated his pitching talent by allowing a single hit in two innings of work.

However, his team, the Congos, fell to Babe Ruth and the Kaysees by a 10-7 tally in a two hour game.<sup>39</sup> This "...battle was marked by a number of errors due mostly to the chilly atmosphere." Seven miscues doomed the Congos while the Kaysees committed four.<sup>40</sup>

Newspaper accounts indicate the day was a success. "Yankee Stars Satisfy Crowd by Hitting Ball Over the Fence," blared a story line in the *Sioux Falls Daily Press*. The article declared Ruth and Meusel "...sent everyone home talking about the way they can hit."<sup>41</sup> The Bambino finished the game going four for five and hitting for the cycle. He scored three runs and drove in four. Meusel was 2 for 4 and scored twice.

That evening Babe Ruth delivered a short baseball speech over radio station WFAT, "the broadcasting station of the *Argus Leader*."<sup>42</sup> The Sioux Falls station reached 15 states and was among

<sup>35</sup> Tommy Collins, of Watertown, a premier umpire in the Dakota League, was behind the plate. Sioux Falls Daily Press, 10 October, 1922, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>37</sup> IBID.

<sup>38</sup> IBID. The American Legion post pronounced the fundraiser financially satisfactory. Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 3.

<sup>39</sup> The lineups for the game were: Congos---Anderson, CF; Dreher, 2B,C; Tebrick, 3B; Meusel, 3B,P; Baker, 1B; Berg, SS; Schultz, C, 2B; Collins, P; Reeves, P; Berry, LF; Tucker, LF; Holmes, LF; Kaysees---Leahy, CF; Green, 3B; Knewell, RF, 1B; Ruth, 1B, P; Burns, LF; Zimmerman, 2B; Colleran, SS; Hanley, C; L Green, P; Honkomp, P; Lally, P; Mitchell, 3B; Egan, CF; Donelan, RF. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 October, 1922, 9.

<sup>40</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Press, 18 October, 1922, 10.

<sup>41</sup> IBID.

<sup>42</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1922, 2.

only 30 radio stations in the country in 1922.

Next morning Ruth and Meusel boarded a Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul train bound for Sioux City, Iowa, site of their next exhibition. They arrived at 10 A.M. and were greeted by a Knights of Columbus delegation. The celebrities went sight-seeing, inspected the stock yards, and spoke to local grade school students.<sup>43</sup>

A 2 P.M. exhibition game in Sioux City's Missou Park followed. 600 to 700 fans watched the Yankee stars "...play very ordinary baseball," in the *Sioux City Journal's* words.<sup>44</sup> Neither hit a homerun. Meusel went one for five with three strike outs. Ruth had three hits in five at bats. Monogrammed baseballs were distributed to fans desiring them after the exhibition. There is no record of the number given out.

Western South Dakota was the next stop on the barnstorming tour. Deadwood's baseball team would host the exhibition Thursday, October 19. "The entire Black Hills section, especially Deadwood and Lead, is keyed to a high state of excitement and enthusiasm," in the words of a daily.<sup>45</sup> Another predicted, "...the largest crowd that has ever assembled at the Amusement Park..." would witness the contest.<sup>46</sup> Advanced sales indicated the contest would be a complete sellout.

Mayor W. E. Adams requested Deadwood businesses to close between 2 P.M. and 4 P.M. October 19 "...so that not only the clerks but also the proprietors could attend the big event."<sup>47</sup> Deadwood schools would dismiss at noon that day. Neighboring Spearfish Normal School would also be on a half day schedule. Unsubstantiated rumors placed Lead schools on the same timetable. The communities of Alladin and Belle Fourche declared a complete holiday so fans could attend the exhibition.

Amusement Park, site of the spectacle, was expected to be "in better shape than at any time during the past season following work done on the diamond and outfield." Snow was scraped from the field the day before the exhibition and sunshine dried the playing surface.<sup>48</sup>

Arrangements were made for the ample parking of several hundred automobiles. A limited number of reserved parking spaces were sold for \$1 each. The grounds would be well patrolled "...to discourage

<sup>43</sup> Sioux City Daily Journal, 18 October, 1922, 4.

<sup>44</sup> IBID. 19 October, 1922, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 17 October, 1922, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Deadwood Daily Press Times, 18 October, 1922, 1.

<sup>47</sup> IBID. 15 October, 1922, 1.

<sup>48</sup> IBID. 18 October, 1922, 1.

small ones (and others) from attempting entrance other than thru the toll gate," as well as keeping everything in order.<sup>49</sup>

Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel left Sioux City by car at 4 P.M. bound for Omaha. There they caught a Northwestern train to Norfolk, Nebraska. From there they rode the Omaha rails to the Black Hills. A stop was made at Rapid City where Babe Ruth was observed "...standing at the rear of the sleeper [car] taking a squint at the local natives who in turn responded to the greetings."<sup>50</sup> The Sultan of Swat chatted at length with a *Black Hills Weekly Journal* reporter. The scribe described Ruth as "by no means an infant." "...The average fan might wonder as to his ability to sprint," the Journal man concluded.<sup>51</sup>

A little farther up the tracks brought the major leaguers to Sturgis where they disembarked and were greeted by a delegation of Deadwood businessmen. They went by automobile over the new Boulder Park road and arrived in Deadwood at 1:00 P. M. — an hour before the scheduled exhibition.

Many fans had already paid their \$1.10 admission to the park and an additional 55 cents admission to the grandstand. For a nominal fee fans could obtain a 16 page booklet that contained a biography of each of the Deadwood players from the previous season. The crowd was entertained by the Deadwood Municipal band as they waited. Music was also played between innings of the game.<sup>52</sup>

The matchup pitted Babe Ruth and the league champion Deadwood nine against Bob Meusel's all star squad from the other five Black Hills League teams (Rapid City, Lead, Aladdin, Sturgis, and Springfield).<sup>53</sup>

As the grandstand filled there was much conjecture and bantering over whether or not the stars would homer over the centerfield fence that day. If either of them did, it would "constitute the longest hit that either of them has made," argued the *Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times, 19 October, 1922, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Black Hills Weekly Journal (Rapid City) 27 October, 1922, 2.



<sup>51</sup> Rapid City Daily Journal, 20 October, 1922, 1.

<sup>52</sup> A large number of Newcastle, Wyoming residents arrived in Deadwood the day before the game. They made hotel reservations for those who would not arrive until game day. Deadwood Daily Telegram, 19 October, 1922, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Lineups for the exhibition were: ALL STARS---Gordon, SS; Remschell, RF; Gronert, LF; Meusel, 1B, P; Cole, CF; Yenzick, 3B; Townsend, 2B; Hale, C; Hejde, P; Meade, P; DEADWOOD---Arsers, RF; J Ellers, RF; Ellers, C; F Morford; Ruth, 1B, P; Gorum, P, LF; Rakestraw, SS; Ewing, CF; Nussrallah, LF; Gill, P, 1B; L Morford, 2B; Elward, 2B. Deadwood Daily Press Times, 20 October, 1922, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times, 15 October, 1922, 1.

The 954 paid admissions were "...ready to go wild with applause at the first possible provocation," as the exhibition began.<sup>55</sup> But both Meusel and Ruth struck out in their first at bat. All Star pitcher "Chester Meade, of Lead, struck out Ruth in three pitches, although the Babe tried hard to kill the ball and the strike out was no fluke," in the opinion of the *Lead Daily Call*.<sup>56</sup>

The "greatest potential increment of thrills," came in the last of the seventh inning.<sup>57</sup> Ruth grabbed his 48 ounce bat and stepped into the batter's box. With the count 2-0 he proceeded to foul off the next eight offerings, driving several over the outfield fence. The next pitch resulted in a Texas League single.

As happened in Sioux Falls, both Yankees also pitched in the Deadwood game. Meusel took the mound in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> and completed the game. Ruth worked two innings and surrendered the only runs that the All Stars scored. His team was a 4-2 winner.

"Neither of the stars performed in a sensational manner," moaned a reporter.<sup>58</sup> Ruth went 2 for 3 in Deadwood while Meusel limped to a one for four effort. Neither Yankee hit a home run. A local newspaper column suggested "the league players must have had an off day, for they certainly tried hard to live up to the reputations" that preceded them.<sup>59</sup> Or were the local pitchers "...not as back woods in their ball playing as might be supposed by two star home run hitters," mused the *Deadwood Daily Pioneer Press*.<sup>60</sup> Its reporter penned "...those who saw yesterday's contest saw nothing that should cause thirty five thousand New York fans to stand in line from daylight in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon to secure a ticket permitting them to see these fellows perform."<sup>61</sup> The Deadwood exhibition was a financial success, but fans left Amusement Park grumbling they did not get what they paid for.<sup>62</sup>

The victorious Deadwood baseball team also sponsored a dance that evening at the Auditorium. The Galaxy Orchestra provided the entertainment for one of the largest dance crowds that ever attended a dance in that building.

55 IBID., 19 October, 1922, 4.

56 Rapid City Daily Journal, 22 October, 1922, 2.

57 Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times, 19 October, 1922, 4.

58 Lead Daily Call, reprinted in the Rapid City Daily Journal, 22 October, 1922, 2.

59 IBID.,

60 Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times, 19 October, 1922, 4.

61 IBID., 20 October, 1922, 4.

62 850 adult and 104 children's tickets were sold. Receipts from the grandstand and auto parking amounted to \$1282. Deadwood Daily Telegram, 21 October, 1922, 4.

The barnstormers left after the game on Northwestern rails for their next contest in Scottsdale, Nebraska. In all, their tour consisted of seventeen games. All told Babe Ruth hit twenty home runs and Bob Meusel eleven.

In a post tour interview the Bambino noted, "we played in Oklahoma, Iowa, Colorado, Minnesota and Nebraska and the crowds were generally large."<sup>63</sup> Although Babe failed to mention South Dakota, the Yankee pair made a lasting impression — good in Sioux Falls and not so good in Deadwood — on state residents fortunate enough to witness the first major leaguers perform in their state.

### MY ILLINOIS GRANDMOTHER SPEAKS

Barbara Aspaas

My Grandmother, Sela Dell Markeson Varland, born on January 4, 1891, was the oldest daughter of Norwegian immigrants Ami Manuel Markeson and Johannah Metia Ahre Markeson. Her two younger sisters were Lillian Fern Randall and Bernice Leona Mighell. I knew them as Aunt Lil and Aunt Babe. My Grandmother came to be known as SeDell.

SeDell married Orville LeRoy Varland (b. December 1, 1886) on June 11, 1915. She was 24 years old and he was 28. Their four children were my uncles Orville LeRoy, Jr., Markeson T., my mother Joan Magdalene, and my aunt Sela Dell. Grandpa died in 1958 at the age of 71. Grandmother died in 1980 at the age of 89.

Still living in Rockford, Illinois, my 85-year-old Aunt Sela remembers her mother as clever and playful, yet thoughtful. She loved themes and used them to plan dinner parties for friends and family. Aunt Sela also describes her mother as very intelligent and one who did anything she was asked to do. When tagging along to church meetings because she was the youngest, she recalls spirited discussions that usually ended with all heads turning to SeDell who would provide a profound and in depth summary of the discussion and a suggestion for a solution upon which all could agree.

We grandchildren, six boys and ten girls, have memories of a very proper lady, dressed impeccably, groomed meticulously and proudly wearing an American flag pin. She had a serene smile and a subtle sense of humor. We knew that invitations to her home would be written in poetry and that there would be theme centered place cards at the dining room table awaiting our arrival. Grandmother offered financial support to us struggling college students or newly weds, just as her parents and in-laws had done for neighbors and family in the 1920's and 30's. Never having had a driver's license, Grandmother SeDell

maintained her independence and a positive attitude using taxis and public transportation during her 22 years of widowhood.

As an adult, a wife, mother and grandmother, how I wish that I could sit down now and visit with my Grandmother. I wish that I could hear her voice, that I could hear her speak. I have gotten my wish, but not exactly in the way I imagined.

I have in my possession an amazing box of papers. Even more miraculous is how I came to have this box. The cardboard box would have begun its existence in the 1930's on 2112 Second Avenue in Rockford, an Illinois home of my grandparents. It moved to East State Street, the grandparent home I remember, to North Rockford Avenue, my parent's home, after both grandparents were deceased, to County Road #6, Maple Plain, Minnesota, where my parents moved in 1968, to Furuby Road, Taylors Falls, Minnesota, where my father moved after mother died, to Pin Oak Ct., Sioux Falls, South Dakota, after Dad died, waited for a U-Haul transport to Chauncy Street in Tampa, Florida, my brother Mark's house, and finally, back to my home on Pin Oak Ct.

Seventy-seven years later the contents were spread out on my dining room table. I found invitations, thank you notes and poetry. There were newspaper and magazine clippings. There were essays on motherhood, parenthood, and instilling moral and social values in our children. There were passionate talks and devotions presented to the Women's Missionary Society at Grandmother's church and to WMS gatherings statewide. And there were intensely patriotic speeches delivered in her community on Armistice Day, later known as Veteran's Day, on Flag Day and also on Memorial Day. As I sat down to begin reading, I realized that my Illinois Grandmother could speak to me today, not through my ears, but through my eyes.

Who was this woman who, while speaking to the Fox River Women's Harmony Auxiliary in 1940 on Flag Day, said these words?

"...the five pointed star. This star always points upward. A lesson to us always. point upward." (Underlining is found in Grandmother's original handwritten text.)

"Tonight I wish to pay special tribute to our mothers and grandmothers who severed their ties in dear old Norway for this land of opportunity, U.S. of America."

"Here we are tonight, each woman a representative of those pioneers. Let us ask ourselves. Are we truly upholding their aims, ideals and goals? Or are we slack in our living and morals?"

"They were God fearing! It is safe to say this country never saw and never will see more hardy, pushing, plucky and successful pioneers than the sons and daughters of old Norway!"

"...the sadness of the people in Norway, because of war, reaches across the waters to this group here tonight."

"Can we mere mothers help in this confusion and strife everywhere about us? Oh, yes, and quite simply so by our daily upright living and devotion."

"If I were a preacher I would quote to you from the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Proverbs."

And a final excerpt: "Friends, our President of the U.S. [Franklin D. Roosevelt] gives this advice to people who try to make speeches – #1, be sincere. #2, be brief and #3, be seated. I have tried to make a speech. I have tried to be sincere. I have tried to be brief. But before I'm seated, I will quote some lines..." And on she went.

My grandmother was a preacher. She was passionately religious, fiercely patriotic and fervently devoted to her family. In all that I have read, she was indeed sincere, but not so brief. In her papers, the essays are long and the prayers even longer. How did Grandmother come to have these values? Although I never felt preached to, I knew what was important to my grandparents. Imagine my relief when I could announce to Grandmother that the young man I intended to marry was Norwegian, Lutheran, and Republican!

In my pursuit to put Grandmother's upbringing and writings into context, I have read and will quote from two other sources. One is a diary kept by my paternal great-grandfather, Tobias Varland, written in Norwegian, translated into English and spanning the years from 1911 to 1931. My great-grandparents, the Markesons and the Varlands, were immigrants from Norway and settled on neighboring farms near Ottawa, Illinois. Therefore, the daily life of the Varlands must have been somewhat similar to that of the Markesons, my grandmother SeDell's family.

The second source is from a letter written by Torfinn Hovda following a Varland family reunion at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, in July 2000. He recalls life on the island of Fogn for those relatives that stayed behind in Norway. Torfinn's grandmother was Elen Varland, a sister of Tobias Varland.

I have chosen to highlight four themes from Grandmother's papers. They are grandmother's poetry and her unique way of correspondence, the importance of her faith, the values of family, and her dedication to her country.

### **Poetry -**

Samples of Grandmother's poetry survived because, even though the poetic messages were sent on, she wrote rough copies first and saved them. Her thought processes are evident by the original deletions and insertions.

From a correspondence in March one year she wrote:

"This greeting to you is sent,  
In the sorrowful season of Lent.  
But, soon Easter morning will be here,  
The most Joyous Day of the year."

A thank you note to a friend reads:

"To you my friend,  
This note I send.  
For inviting doors so open wide,  
And nature's beauty on riverside,  
That welcomed "American" me,  
Amidst much mirth and glee,  
On Thursday afternoon.  
With fork and spoon,  
                  (and a little snow  
                  to add glow)  
Lunch was fun, too,  
With talk as women do.

Your gracious hospitality,  
Was a superb reality.  
Yes, Ollie, my friend  
A "Thank You" I send.  
                  These lines with apology,  
                  But sincerely, from Se Dell V."

As Grandmother got older and entertained us less in her home, she hosted the family at Bishop's cafeteria in Rockford. We children loved going there because we could customize the meal on our tray, choosing our favorite foods, with the approval, of course, of Mom and Dad.

"To you all,  
This is a breakfast call,  
On Sunday to meet,  
At Bishop's to eat,  
                  With me.  
                  Let's see,  
At the stroke of eight,  
Is that too late?  
                  Grandmother V.,  
                  That's me.  
P.S. Hope this is fine,  
For a table of nine."

Another example of Grandmother's use of poetry was in this invitation to celebrate the May birthdays of my father Daniel, my uncle Orville and my Aunt Sela. The May 17<sup>th</sup> date is Norwegian Constitution Day and the place is another of her favorite restaurants, the Rockford Y.M.C.A. Notice that she again apologizes for her attempts at rhyme.

"On the Syttende of Mai  
Can you comply  
With this request  
To be my guest  
For a supper at half after five?  
I will strive  
To honor my children's three,  
Dan, Orv, and Sela C.,  
Each with a birthday in May,  
At the Y.M.C.A.  
What do you say?  
    These lines with apology,  
    But sincerely, Mother V."

## **Faith -**

At family reunions I had heard about the piety of great-grandpa Tobias. Numerous diary entries support this. There are records of family devotions with the adult children taking turns leading them. When Tobias and others from the family visited relatives and neighbors who were sick and homebound, they read from the Bible, sang and prayed for them. It was even acknowledged that Stavanger, Norway, and the nearby islands from which my immigrant ancestry came, were the most pious regions of Norway. For the people of the Norwegian settlements in Illinois, the church was a focal point in their lives. Diary entries tell of attendance at worship, at prayer services, Ladies Aid, Luther League and revival meetings. From Tobias on Christmas observances:

December 23, 1911 – "We sang and I read Luke 2 and talked about Jesus who was born. Then the little ones had some pieces they gave. Then we sang 'Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways'. Then we all got presents and we were all happy."

December 24, 1915 – "Orville and SeDell came to [hic]. Had our Christmas tree tonight. I read Luke 2 and talked about Jesus' birth. We received many fine presents. Everyone was happy and we sang songs."

Such Christmas traditions were part of my upbringing. At my grandparents' home, the Christmas story was always read, we grandchildren were always expected to offer readings and we always sang Christmas hymns.

I was taught to pray on my knees at night beside my bed. Little did I know that the practice went back three generations in my family. From Grandpa Tobias' diary:

January 1, 1916 – "Then I went down to the furnace room, got down on my knees and prayed to God."

November 19, 1919 – "Today I was on my knees in the furnace room for myself, my wife and my children."

September 21, 1925 – "We all prayed on our knees before bed."

September 22, 1925 – "All 4 prayed on our knees and read the 73<sup>rd</sup> Psalm."

Even though we know that the children of my grandparents' generation were "schooled in religious beliefs" (Tobias, January 3, 1918) and that they studied the catechism and were confirmed in the Lutheran Church, there is also mention of adults being "born again." Making public confession of one's faith must have been important.

January 1, 1925 - "I read the Psalm 118:19 and prayed. I was born again the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1877, (That was before he was married to Malinda.) in my former home north of Seneca and God has taken me under his wings until today for which I thank him from my heart."

December 19, 1926 – "I talked with H. Boe in the telephone. He told me they had a revival in Belmond (Iowa, where Grandpa Orville and Grandma SeDell were living with their young family.) and I got glad that Orville was renewed. Quite a number had come over to the Lord's side."

February 18, 1926 – "Tonight was the last meeting of the revival. Rev. Lawrence is going to Joliet from here. I believe there must be 40-50 conversions."

Grandmother SeDell spent many years as an active member of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), serving as an officer and giving devotions and talks at local and state meetings. This passion for missionary service had its beginnings in her in-law's family. In the letter from Torfinn Hovda to his American relatives, he comments on church meetings in Norway on the island of Fogn,

"There was a meeting in the morning and another in the afternoon with a break in between. During the meetings there were speeches held by missionaries and lay preachers. Time was also allowed for personal testimonies. In addition to the all-song by the congregation, there would be solo-singers and choirs, accompanied by guitars, mandolins, and sometimes violins and even a table-harp."



From the Tobias diaries I learned more about the family's support of missions. Tobias was one of ten children and five of his siblings married a Hovda. The Hovda family also lived on the island of Fogn near Stavanger, Norway.

April 1, 1912 – "Had a letter from Sina (SeDell's sister-in-law) in Minneapolis. She was installed in Solberg's congregation on Palm Sunday as a missionary for Bethlehem congregation."

June 2, 1918 – "The mission offering was \$48.00."

September 24, 1925 – "After supper Carl and Sina took us to Mrs. Larance where we met Kristoffer Hovda girl on way to China."

February 14, 1929 – "Ella Hovda is on the way to China."

February 16, 1929 – "Sent \$55.00 for China to Kristoffer Hovda for the starving."

March 9, 1929 – "I wrote a letter to Fostervold in China."

May 25, 1929 – "Missionary Karrstad from Africa is here for meetings."

September 27, 1929 – "I got a letter from K. Hovda in China, all well."

From this environment I can relate more closely to the writings of SeDell Varland. Speaking to the women of the WMS at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rockford, Illinois, Grandmother says,

" Jesus said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'" After talking about prayer and offering support she continues. "The results of our efforts are felt in inner missions, in Africa by the Bible women of Africa, in China by the Chinese orphans we have adopted and are supporting, in India, in Puerto Rico, even the Jew in Jerusalem feels this ray of light coming from Emmanuel and yes, even so does the outcast, the leper. Is missionary work worthwhile? My answer is the words of Jesus in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28: 19-20. 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' Amen."

At the age of 41 in February of 1932 during an evening missionary church service SeDell said this after the missionary's talk and before the offering.

"Friends, don't you think, all unknown to herself, Dr. Betty had placed us home folks in the homeland on a high pedestal in the minds of the people over there in India? Are we going to disappoint them in the material means of promoting mission work amongst them? Let us rally to the mission cause by giving our free will offering as liberally as we can."

From her prayer that evening –

"Dear Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast made it possible for we women of

Emmanuel to work for Thy cause thru missions. Tonight we are especially thinking of our field in faraway India. Tonight we are pleading for India's release from heathen darkness. We thank Thee that Thou hast made it possible for our Dr. Betty to be of service to Thee in India. Be with her in days to come, give her continued grace and strength to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the women of India."

And in a prayer the first Sunday in Advent –

"Oh! What a voice of fervent prayer uplifted to God today. Surely our prayers of pleas and thanks will reach God's ear. Today it is my privilege to bring before the Throne of God in prayer the spiritual and material needs of Africa and our workers over there."

And another prayer in February 1941 –

"Our dear Heavenly Father, we fervently thank Thee for again permitting us to gather in this our parsonage for the cause of missions, for the millions, in Jesus' name. May there be kindled in our hearts today a deeper desire to be earnest human witnesses of the Eternal Divine Love. Oh, Heavenly Father, that there might be more brotherly love in the nations today. The world is in such turmoil. There is so much hatred. At times the mission cause and work of our missionaries seem such a tragic effort."

On March 15, 1944, SeDell was speaking to members of the Trinity Lutheran Church Ladies Aid and opened her remarks with these words.

"A few days ago when one of you contacted me asking me to be your speaker for this afternoon, I answered, 'I'm no speech-maker. I'm merely a homemaker and mother.'"

She then went on to write twenty pages in an eight and a half inch by seven inch composition notebook. Two more excerpts from that day and one from an eleven-page speech found in the same notebook illustrate Grandmother in preacher mode and as a student of Bible history.

Speaking of Jesus and his mother Mary -

"Yes, they were very close as a mother and son and with home problems. Let us look a little into their home life. It is thought Joseph died when Jesus was a little past 12. Jesus had been taught the carpenter trade by his father and being a dutiful son, He helped His mother support the family by doing this type of work during the day and that He also helped his mother with a small plot of ground as a garden with vegetables, fruit and flowers. He probably did this for 15 or 16 years until He was 30 years old. Because of this it is a question whether Jesus had much of an education as far as schools were concerned. They had the Old Testament writings, but due to his outdoor work we do know He was an ardent student of nature all those years and that

during his ministry his sermons are always in reference to nature. ...When Jesus chose his disciples He chose, for the most part, outdoor men."

Speaking about Good Friday and Easter – "The day that Jesus died there was no bright and shining star. ...No, it became a dark night and the earth trembled. ...We like to think of Easter with sun shining, a glorious morning when we can cast off the winter and put on new things. Wouldn't our lives, daily living, be dull and drab if nature always were as it is in the winter? ...How dull and drab our spiritual lives would be if Jesus had not died for our sins, for us, if Jesus had not arisen from the dead, for us, if we had no other home but our earthly home to look forward to."

"If I were a preacher I could preach a sermon on the scripture passage found in II Kings, 20<sup>th</sup> chapter, 1<sup>st</sup> verse where it says 'Set thine house in order.' Not only does it say, 'Set thine house in order', it says 'Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order.' As I said if I were a preacher I would go into detail – that this house may not mean our physical house but our spiritual house and oh, that we women of the household would be so concerned about our spiritual house as we are about our material house so that it could be said of us as in the scripture passage found in the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Proverbs, the 30<sup>th</sup> verse, 'But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'"

## Family -

When writing about family roles and responsibilities, Grandmother SeDell neither minced her words nor passed the role of accountability to others. To a group of women she said, "The time to start to train a child is 100 years before he is born in the generations that came before." Referring to the Bible, "Train up a child in the way he should walk and he will not depart there from." Concluding thoughts from that scrap of paper, "All our local problems, all our civic problems and all our national problems would be greatly solved by the high standard of womanhood." Not a lot of wiggle room was left for women, whether wives, mothers or daughters.

In a devotional talk about the Biblical Hannah and her husband Elkanah, Grandmother made parallels for modern parenthood. Hannah grieved because she had no children. She prayed to her Lord in private and was thankful when her prayers were answered. Hannah kept her promise to dedicate her son Samuel to the Lord and to have him be supervised in holy service by the priest Eli. Finally, Hannah prayed songs of praise as found in I Samuel, Chapter 2: 1-10. These personal traits of Hannah are worthy today and for all time.

The pedestal on which SeDell placed women follows what she considered the high regard Jesus had for women. In writing to the Women's Christian League, February 9, 1950, on The World Day of Prayer, these excerpts illustrate that point.

"Millions of women in some 80-90 countries will bow their heads and hearts at the

altar of God to pray for world peace and understanding. That surely will be a loud, clear petition reaching to Jesus and if we women are earnest enough in this prayer, surely He will listen and consider. This is a privilege and a freedom we women should not misuse.

"During Jesus' three years of ministry here upon earth He was a great champion of womanhood. Heretofore a woman was merely the property of some man and was virtually a slave in the home, first to her father and later to her husband and, of course, had no voice or power in affairs outside of the household."

Grandmother commented that because His mother Mary was widowed early in life, Jesus had sensitivity to the plight of widows of His day. Jesus placed women on an equal basis with men as shown in his visit to Mary and Martha by treating Mary with intellectual and spiritual respect. When women were anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume, the men criticized them. Judas admonished that the perfume could have been sold for money to feed the poor. Jesus replied, "Let her alone. Why are you annoying her?" Quoting directly from Grandmother:

"Such championship of womanhood distinctive of Jesus was quite uncharacteristic of the world He lived in and the women who followed Him must have felt the new note He was striking and they responded to His friendship with loyal gratitude.

"...Dear Jesus, we thank Thee that Thou hast guided our hearts and our footsteps to this Thy house today. We pray – forgive us our sins of commission and forgive us our sins of omission. (My mother Joan prayed that same line about sins.) We pray that the forces now so prevalent all about us will be conquered soon by 'Peace and Understanding.' We pray that women everywhere make every day a 'World Day of Prayer'"

Aunt Sela remembers her mother's playfulness and sense of humor. That trait is found in the fun she had the night that the husbands served supper to the ladies of Circle 7. The year was 1934 and Grandmother, who was the after dinner speaker, spoke about marriage and husbands in this way.

"I think we ladies feel like Cinderella of the old fairy story. To come out of the kitchen, so to speak, away from our pots and pans, away from the little worries of a potluck, about the number of pies, salad, the coffee, etc., not even having to bring our sandwiches and dishes. Tonight the minutest details have been arranged and so nicely taken care of by each and every man present. As Cinderella's happy eve with her Prince Charming had to come to a close, so must ours. Perhaps, like in Cinderella's case there is no magic slipper to entirely change our lives and, as to the Prince Charming, well, you know, men, years ago, 5-10-20-35-40 years ago, we took you 'for better or for worse'. But like Cinderella we will have most pleasant memories of this wonderful evening, memories that will go with us down the Pathway of Life.

"Our Toastmaster asked me to speak on 'Duties of Circle 7'. ...the ladies of Circle 7 perform their work because they love to do it, not thinking of it as a duty. Since we took our wedding vows years ago we wives have many duties to perform, but if asked to name them,

we won't be able to think of one duty. We perform our tasks out of a sympathetic understanding and love for our Prince Charming.

"A little girl at her grandmother's, playing outside with little girls, happened to play with some little boys older than they. Grandma said when she came in, 'You really shouldn't play with those boys. They are quite a little older than you.' The little girl replies, 'Why, Grandma, don't you know the older [that] boys grow, the better girls like 'em.'

"So, here's to our sweethearts of long ago. So, here's to our husbands of today. So, here's to our men of Circle 7. The older you grow, the better we like you!"

Speaking again to the women of her church at a Mother's Day program, a strong plea was made for upright living.

"We are a group here today, just mere everyday mothers, unsung, and our names will not go down in history, perhaps, as 'famous women', but nevertheless, much worthwhile good can come thru us. ...quite simply so by our daily constant upright living and devotions.

(Grandmother had been quoting some beautiful sayings about mothers when she continues.) "I want to bring to your attention something quite in contrast. Not far from here hangs a sign so that all passersby shall see and be welcome. 'Ma's Tavern.' 'Ma's Tavern! What a far cry, shall I say, from the old-fashioned saying 'My Mother's Bible.' Why I can remember the day when I thought children who called their mother 'ma' didn't love her as much as I did my 'mama'. Of course, I soon outgrew that childish notion. But, at that, can you feature a sign hanging out into the street 'Mother's Tavern'?"

"It is not for me to dictate, but we parents, we mothers, not our children, not our sons and daughters, not our boys and girls, but the pa's and the ma's, if you please, made it possible for this sign. It was the adult vote of our land, the individual vote of fathers and mothers, that hung up that sign 'Ma's Tavern' to disgrace us."

(On November 19, 1911, Tobias wrote, "Confirmation. At 7:30 after dinner Edgar, Merrill, Hazel, Dagmar and Therissa went to church to hear Pastor Finvold on temperance.")

"We have been in the midst of a campaign for a 'Home for Girls'. Are we actually proud of that fact? I think it's sad and a shame on us. Oh, yes, it may be nice for Rockford to have a haven for a wayward girl, but her parental home should be her haven and her own mother should be her guardian. This is a crushing thing to say, but perhaps, first we should have a home for 'Wayward Mothers'. In most cases, a girl's, our daughter's, conduct reflects on her mother. Yes, reflects on you and me."

It is interesting to me to note that the preceding remarks were made in 1941, the year I was born, and referred to a time between 1919, the year my mother was born, and 1933, the latter two dates being the ratification of the 18th amendment, and then the repeal in the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment, to the Constitution of the United States regarding prohibition.

In 1926 Grandmother wrote this about her two sons.

"I have two sons ages 9 and 10...right here is where we parents, if we are

capable of doing it, must step in and lay down the foundation of our child's future life. ...in actual earning money we hope our boys will learn more fully the value of their nickels and dimes. ...one of our financial writers says that the first step toward thrift is wise spending. This may seem to us going backwards. I read the other day of a multi-millionaire with an only son being asked the question, 'What are you teaching your son?' He answered, 'I am teaching him to spend wisely. If I can teach him this, I need worry about him no more.' If many of us parents knew the art of spending wisely, the world today would not everlastingly have to be preaching thrift. As it happens our sons' business adventure is quite strictly supervised by their employers, The Curtis Publishing Co. Our boys have been informed they are not wanted as salesmen for their magazines if they do not first of all do their school work satisfactorily. They have been told that boys who smoke cigarettes are not wanted by them. They say, 'Save your health, your most precious possession'.

"As a mother and in a plain everyday way, I am hoping that thru this experience my boys will learn that politeness and neatness have a great deal to do with their success, that their habits will be more orderly, that they will take better care of their clothes, of their shoes and of all of their possessions. That they will, in their simple ways, regulate their business matters so they will save some money and in the course of years, grow independent and self-reliant. This is really the goal set for them and the actual accomplishment of Thrift."

Grandmother SeDell often referred in her talks to the lives of presidents, both past and present. Before beginning the last section of this paper on patriotism, I will quote passages she spoke about Presidents Eisenhower and Lincoln and their mothers.

"We have a true story from before Eisenhower became President. As a General he was given a high honor. It happened the family was gathered in their family home in Abilene, Kansas. Of course, there were news reporters around. One of them went up to the mother of Ike and he said, 'Mrs. Eisenhower, aren't you proud of your son?' She looked him straight in the eye and she said, 'Which one?' She had six sons.

"We have the old saying from Abraham Lincoln, 'All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel-mother.' And she was his stepmother. Yes, some mothers are rare. We have a time old saying, 'God couldn't be everywhere; so he created Mothers.'"

## Country -

The years from the beginning of World War I, 1914, and the end of World War II, 1945, were filled with personal impact for my Grandmother. Two of her eight brothers-in-law, Edgar and Merrill Varland, served in the U.S. Army during WW I and her two sons, my Uncle Orv and Uncle Mark, served in the U.S. Navy in WW II. Family oral history says that she became a lifelong member of the Navy Mother's Club. As the daughter of Norwegian immigrants, SeDell was also emotionally involved with the plight of relatives back in war torn Norway. Grandmother's papers include clippings of poems and essays and talks she gave on the national holidays of Memorial Day, Flag Day and Armistice Day.

With thoughts of her mother-in-law, herself and all mothers, Grandmother read this, "A Woman's Prayer", on November 12, 1942.

"We cannot thank Thee, God, enough,  
For home in this dark hour. This day  
When war clouds darken every sky.  
Be with us in our homes we pray,  
And light our candle as Thou saidst,  
So that at even time will glow  
From every home a shining path  
And weary, war-sick ones will know:  
Here is a refuge, here is peace,  
A sheltering roof, a loaf of bread,  
A homey task and children's smiles.  
And, oh, we thank Thee that instead  
Of hate, our homes can foster love,  
The gift we would be worthy of.  
Help us keepers of the home,  
To keep a peaceful, smiling heart.  
And, God, if we but do this well,  
We shall have done a woman's part."

Grandmother also read and quoted from a poem, "A Prayer on Every Star", by William Stidger. Although written in WW II, the poem could also reflect the thoughts of Great-grandfather Tobias in WW I. Excerpts from the five-stanza poem:

"...Each night whatever stars may shine  
In God's clear skies above,  
Remember that I am watching them  
And you may watch them, too...  
Through misty, tear-dimmed eyes;  
I'll hang a prayer on every star...  
Good-by, my boy! What tender words;  
How filled with love and light.  
They warm my heart and hush my fears  
As I stand watch by night.  
And so, five thousand miles away  
From home is not so far  
Because I know my father hangs  
A prayer on every star."

The seventh and eighth born children of Tobias and Malinda Varland, Edgar and Merrille, were soldiers in WW I. From Tobias' diary:

April 3, 1918 – “Today 128 boys left for the war. Mama, Hazel, Merrille, Esther and I went to town to see them off as there were several that we knew.” (Edgar was already enrolled.)

April 29, 1918 – “It has been a hard day. This morning before Merrille left for the army, he, Mama and I knelt and prayed to God for his safety.”

November 11, 1918 – “Today we heard for sure that the war was over. There was a big celebration in town. The family and I prayed as we have not heard from Merrille for a month.”

December 31, 1918 – “The war is over and our boys are alive. Merrille is in France and Edgar in Texas.”

What joy and peace that first Armistice Day must have brought to the world and to my relatives!

Grandmother wrote this in an undated speech:

“On this Armistice Day let us consider the many ways in which our members are serving their country. First, our tho'ts turn to those actively engaged in the armed forces on land, sea or in the air, and to those who are ministering to the sick and wounded and any who may be prisoners. We also think of those who have made the supreme sacrifice and our sympathies go out to their sorrowing families.

“I light this candle to honor our boys, who are scattered thru out the world in the service of their country. These boys who are giving all, that peace may come, and who stand for the high ideals of freedom-loving people everywhere.”

On November 12, 1969, Grandmother expanded on her usual theme for the now Veteran's Day, when she would typically retell the Betsy Ross story and the meaning of the colors, stars and stripes of the United State flag, by telling the story of the Christian Flag. Referring to an event in 1897 in the Brighton village on Coney Island, the main speaker for a Sunday School rally failed to arrive. The headmaster or superintendent of the Brighton Public School, Charles Carlton Overton, stepped in at the last minute to deliver a message. With no prepared speech, an American flag that was draped over one corner of the pulpit inspired him. “Why not a flag for Sunday Schools and churches?” he asked. Why not a flag that would not be restricted by any geographical boundaries, but one to remind all men, all nationalities, of their allegiance to God just as the national flag reminds men of their allegiance to their country and countrymen? Grandmother continued telling the story of the Christian Flag, it's colors and it's symbolic meaning and how Overton went on to produce the actual flag. The pledge follows:

“I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag, and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands, one brotherhood, uniting all man-kind in service and love.”



On Flag Day, June 14, 1940, Grandmother SeDell again chose the story of the birth of the flag of the United States of America, but her talk to the Harmony Auxiliary at a church in the Fox River Valley was personalized by her pride in her ancestors that had first settled in this region. She heralded the early women as "unsung heroines who fought poverty, toil and sickness in their cabins, shanties and dugouts". She continued:

"As Norway was the mother country to this first settlement, so Ill. is a mother state. It cradled the development of the entire no. west. The settlers moving on into Wisc., Iowa, Minn., the Dak. and on to the coast, so that now we have over a million people of Norwegian descent.

"During the past week I have visited our national city Washington. I made two distinct visits I wish to mention. One the national cemetery for soldiers and the other the national cathedral for prayer. As I viewed the acres upon acres of graves, they indeed signified to me the red in our flag, the red lifeblood of the brave who were ready to die for their country. (My uncle, Captain Markeson T. Varland, retired U.S. Navy, is buried in Arlington Cemetery.)

"Then when I viewed the cathedral, a national house of prayer for all people, I tho't it stands for the white and the blue in our flag, namely purity and justice. Oh, that we could live and help others to so live that the youth in our land in our present day could be guided to the national cathedral for prayer and to be taught to worthily live for their country"

In his year 2000 letter, Torfinn Hovda verbalized his gratitude to the United States.

"The Norwegians on this side of the Atlantic should always be grateful to the people of the United States for their participation also in the Second World War. We cannot imagine what would have happened without them.

"The 'Marshall Plan' jumpstarted the postwar Norwegian economy."

Written on the back of an envelope in Grandmother's hand, there is no date and no audience indicated for this prayer for Norway.

"Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast guided our footsteps and hearts to this place of worship this p.m. In Jesus' name create in our hearts a deeper desire to follow Thee. The world is in such a turmoil. The world is sick with hate and misery and destruction. The world forgets 'The Quiet Place'. This p.m. we are thinking especially of the lands across the sea with their helpless victims of a war they never made. Dear Heavenly Father, we bring to you, fervently, Norway and her peace loving people. Give each and every one strength and courage to endure – physical and spiritual needs. Dear Lord, do not let them loose sight of thee. Lord, do not let them fall away from Thee. Tell them 'might is not right'. We in whose veins the same blood flows must somehow keep ever before the 'The Master's Face'. May we as women, as a group of individuals, so live from day to day in

close communion with our Master that eventually our Faith will break the shackles of war and our people will again be free. Entrusting them in your care, we pray together the perfect prayer – Our Father, who art in Heaven...”

As I began this paper I was searching for insight into my Grandmother's personality and her life. I wondered why she had written so passionately about her faith, her family and her country. I think it is in the blood, the same blood that guided the motto for our 1995 family reunion, "Faith, Family and Fogn", and the same blood that has motivated me. I wanted to share these writings with my mother's cousins, my cousins and most importantly, with my children and grandchildren. The box landed in my hands for a reason, that the hopes and fears of past generations would not be lost forever. I am grateful and humbled. Thank you, Grandmother.

Tobias Varland diary entries: 1911-1931  
Sela Dell Markeson Varland papers: 1932-1970

**CIVIL WAR PATRONAGE IN THE WEST:  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S APPOINTMENT OF WILLIAM JAYNE  
AS GOVERNOR OF THE DAKOTA TERRITORY**

Ed Bradley

On 12 February 1907 Dr. William Jayne, former governor of the Dakota Territory, gave a speech at the Abraham Lincoln home in Springfield, Illinois to the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The eighty-year-old man recalled meeting Lincoln for the first time more than seven decades previously, when the latter was running for re-election to the Illinois legislature. Following this brief encounter, Jayne and his father Gershom were on the road with Ninian W. Edwards to Huron, where Jayne's father and Edwards (a future brother-in-law of Lincoln) kept a store. During the trip Gershom Jayne predicted that one day Lincoln would be governor of Illinois. "I...thought my father was daft," Jayne told his 1907 audience. After all, young Abraham Lincoln was an "ungainly and poorly clothed young man.... He did not then look to me like a prospective Governor...."<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, President Abraham Lincoln would one day appoint William Jayne as governor — not of Illinois, but of the vast Dakota Territory. A somewhat controversial appointment, the selection of Jayne was nevertheless representative of Lincoln's patronage strategy for the western territories. Above all else, Lincoln sought to fill territorial offices with men who would strengthen the Republican Party. More often than not these appointees were midwesterners or easterners who had proved their party *bona fides* by their work in the 1860 political campaigns. Some of them — such as Jayne — were also friends or relatives of the president.

William Jayne — there are some references that include the middle initial "A" — was born on 8 October 1826 in Springfield. After completing his preparatory studies at Illinois College in Jacksonville, he graduated from the medical department of the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1849. Setting up his medical practice in Springfield (and serving as the Lincoln family physician), he became active in Republican politics, leading to his election as mayor in 1859. A member of the state senate in 1860, he resigned in the spring of the following year to accept his appointment as territorial governor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln: An Address by Dr. William Jayne Delivered before the Springfield Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, February 12, 1907 at The Lincoln Home*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Dr. William Jayne," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1916), 82; Appointment of William Jayne as Governor of the Dakota Territory, 27 March 1861, Private Collection of William Jayne III, Bowling Green, Kentucky; Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews, and Statements About Abraham Lincoln* (University of Illinois Press, 1997), 757.

The Dakota Territory was officially created on 2 March 1861, two days before Lincoln's inauguration and less than a month before Jayne's appointment. At the time, it was the largest of all the territories — bordered on the north by Canada, on the east by the present-day western boundaries of Iowa and Minnesota, on the west by the Continental Divide, and on the south by the Nebraska Territory. This vast land was sparsely populated, with (according to one census) barely above 2,000 white residents. It was also quite underdeveloped, with the capitol of Yankton offering lodging so rudimentary that for the first six months of his administration Jayne had to share his bed with the territorial attorney general.<sup>3</sup>

Minimal living space was only one of the new governor's problems. The appointment had ruffled some feathers, as some accused the president of engaging in cronyism by naming one of his Illinois friends to the position. "Illinois," one journal commented after noting the Jayne selection, "is not at all slighted under the present Administration." Moreover, Jayne was the brother of Mary Todd Lincoln's close friend Julia Jayne, who had served as a bridesmaid at the Lincoln-Todd wedding and was married to Senator Lyman Trumbull, a political associate of Lincoln. Trumbull, in turn, was widely acknowledged as the prime mover behind the effort to obtain the Dakota governorship for his brother-in-law. William Jayne got along quite well with Mary, writing in his later years that "my own acquaintance with her was pleasant & is kindly impressed on my memory."

The president himself acknowledged the somewhat awkward circumstances of the Jayne selection in a letter written three days after the appointment. Noting that Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, daughter of Mary's uncle Dr. John Todd, had asked for the Springfield postmastership, Lincoln stated that "The question of giving her the Springfield Post-office troubles me. You see I have already appointed William Jayne a territorial governor, and Judge Trumbull's brother to a Land-office [Benjamin M. Trumbull was appointed receiver of the land office at Omaha, Nebraska Territory]. Will it do for me to go on and justify the declaration that Trumbull and I have divided out all the offices among our relatives?"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ralph Y. McGinnis and Calvin N. Smith, eds., *Abraham Lincoln and the Western Territories* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1994), 169; Howard Roberts Lamar, *Dakota Territory, 1861-1869: A Study of Frontier Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Illinois State Journal* [Springfield], 25 March 1861, page 2, column 5; Jayne to William H. Herndon, 17 August 1887, in Wilson and Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants*, 624-25; Lincoln to John Todd Stuart, 30 March 1861, Henry Horner Lincoln Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois. Julia Jayne and Mary Todd wrote a poem satirizing Illinois politician James Shields that was published in the 16 September 1842 edition of the *Sangamo Journal*. The poem and the *imbroglio* followed its publication led to a farcical duel between Shields and Abraham Lincoln. Wilson and Davis, *op. cit.*, 267n.

There was also a political dimension to the appointment that troubled Illinois Republicans. At the time of the naming of Jayne the Republicans had a one-vote majority in the Illinois state senate, a majority that would vanish with his required resignation prior to his taking office as territorial governor. Moreover, his seat would almost surely go over to the Democrats, as Jayne had won a hotly contested (and reportedly fraudulent) election by only seven votes in a strongly Democratic district. The Jayne selection thus "raise[d] a rumpus" among state Republicans, with much of their ire focused on Trumbull. Recently re-elected to his U.S. Senate seat, he was in their view now interested in "providing only for his own family, while old political friends are left out on the cold." This minor controversy furnishes another example of how a territorial appointment often had political repercussions for the appointee's home state. <sup>5</sup>

The controversy also illustrates how Abraham Lincoln was not above naming friends or relatives to important positions in the territories. In addition to the Jayne appointment, William H. Wallace, an Illinois friend of the president, was named governor of the Washington Territory and then the Idaho Territory. Wallace's successor in the former position was William Pickering, a former Illinois state legislator and confidant of Lincoln. Anson G. Henry, named in 1861 as surveyor general of the Washington Territory, was Lincoln's Springfield physician and a good friend of Mary Todd. <sup>6</sup>

This pattern extended to offices besides those in the territories. Mary Todd's relative by marriage, Dr. Edward Wallace, was appointed head of the Naval Office at Philadelphia. Her sister's husband, Dr. William Wallace, was given a paymastership of volunteers, and her cousin John B. S. Todd was appointed brigadier general of volunteers. Illinois friends of Lincoln who received office included David Davis (Supreme Court justice), Norman B. Judd (minister to Prussia), Gustave Koerner (minister to Spain), Archibald Williams (U.S. district judge for Kansas), and Ward H. Lamon (U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia). Clearly, being a relative or friend of Lincoln did not hurt one's chances of receiving patronage. <sup>7</sup>

Yet the most important determinant of Lincoln's policy regarding territorial patronage was neither kinship nor friendly relations, but rather what the prospective appointee could do for the Republican Party. The president believed that the West was very important to the fate of the party, so his appointments were

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<sup>5</sup> New York *Herald*, 25 March 1861, page 1, columns 1-2; *Daily Illinois State Journal*, 26 March 1861, page 2, column 2 and 27 March 1861, page 2, column 4.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel E. Bell and James M. Smallwood, "The Pragmatic Lincoln: A Historiographical Assessment of His Western Policy," *Lincoln Herald*, vol. 86, no. 3 (Fall 1984), 137-38; Vincent G. Tegeeder, "Lincoln and the Territorial Patronage: The Ascendancy of the Radicals in the West," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 35, no. 1 (June 1948), 89; Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), 143-45.

<sup>7</sup> Harry J. Carman and Reinhard H. Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 115-17.

guided primarily by a very simple consideration: whoever could strengthen the party would receive the office.<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln's appointment of territorial governors certainly reflected this policy. William Jayne was a loyal Republican who had served as mayor, legislator, and campaigner for Lincoln in 1860, and as governor he evinced his party loyalty by calling for an antislavery law in his first message to the Dakota territorial legislature. A rough survey reveals that Lincoln appointed seventeen territorial governors over the course of his presidency, only one of whom (Henry Connelly of New Mexico) was a Democrat (Caleb Lyon of New York, who had served one term in Congress as an independent, was appointed governor of the Idaho Territory in 1864). According to Harry J. Carman and Reinhard H. Luthin's *Lincoln and the Patronage*, the authoritative study of Lincoln's patronage policy, Connelly's appointment was the only one "not tinged with party politics." The other sixteen appointees "were party wheel horses whose appointments were dictated by political expediency." If the appointee happened to be a friend of the president — such as Jayne — so much the better. But party loyalty was paramount.<sup>9</sup>

Historian Vincent G. Tegeder qualifies this theme by asserting that in making his western appointments Lincoln favored a particular faction of the party — the Radicals. According to Tegeder, Radicals who were named territorial governors included Alvin Saunders (Nebraska Territory), William Gilpin (Colorado Territory), and William H. Wallace. As for the Dakota Territory, the efforts of surveyor general George D. Hill (a native of Ann Arbor who was appointed through the influence of Zachariah Chandler) resulted in choice Dakota Territory surveying contracts being rewarded to radical Michiganites, who in turn dominated the patronage. Territorial Chief Justice Philemon Bliss, who had previously served as a congressman from Ohio, was an abolitionist, as was territorial secretary and Kansas native John Hutchinson. William Jayne himself, Tegeder asserts, was a radical, as seen by his support for the antislavery legislation and a railroad to the Pacific. Upon Jayne's resignation, Chandler and other Michigan radicals successfully pressed Lincoln to replace him with ally Newton Edmunds, brother of commissioner of the General Land Office James M. Edmunds of Detroit. Tegeder overreaches with his thesis — despite Radical pressure, for example, Lincoln refused to remove G. P. Waldron as provost marshal of the Dakota

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<sup>8</sup> Bell and Smallwood, "The Pragmatic Lincoln," 137, 140.

<sup>9</sup> Carman and Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage*, 107; Bell and Smallwood, "The Pragmatic Lincoln," 137.

Territory — but there is no doubt that Lincoln formulated his territorial patronage policy (including that for the Dakota Territory) with the prime aim of strengthening the Republican party as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

The same goal applied to his appointments outside the territories. Carman and Luthin write that the March 1861 switch in party power "was the occasion for the most sweeping removal of federal officeholders up to that time in American history." Of the 1,520 men and women who held their positions at the whim of the president, 1,195 were removed in the aftermath of the Republican victory in 1860. This number is even more impressive when one factors in the vacancies in the South that arose as a result of secession.

And no departments were immune from the turnover. The postal service saw its postmasterships awarded to staunch Republicans such as John L. Scripps, the editor of the *Chicago Press & Tribune* and author of a campaign biography of Lincoln. Diplomats were named not for their experience in international affairs but their work for the party, with Carl Schurz heading the ministry to Spain as a result of his rallying thousands of German-born naturalized citizens to the Republican ticket in 1860. Even the Treasury Department, headed by the comparatively non-partisan Salmon P. Chase, was rife with partisanship. One of Lincoln's most controversial patronage decisions was his October 1861 removal of 35 inspectors from the New York Customhouse. It is true that in making military appointments, the president at times called on Democrats. Yet both within and without the territories his civilian appointees were selected out of partisan political considerations.<sup>11</sup>

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One of these appointees was William Jayne, who would in large part be responsible for the fate of the Republican party in the Dakota Territory. Jayne's tenure was not without accomplishments, including the passage of a ten-hour law for women and children working in the mechanical and manufacturing trades. But judged by the criterion of advancing the interests of his party, Jayne's brief gubernatorial term was a failure, for the divisions within the Dakota Republicans allowed the Democrats and their allies to gain a foothold in territorial politics. It was not until Jayne's successor took office (and the copperhead issue was

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<sup>10</sup> Tegeeder, "Lincoln and the Territorial Patronage," *passim*; Bill Reid, "Dakota Territory," in Ralph Y. McGinnis and Calvin N. Smith, eds., *Abraham Lincoln and the Western Territories* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1994), 172-74.

<sup>11</sup> Carman and Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage*, 58,73,82-84,106,331,334.

invoked with more frequency) that the Republicans controlled both houses of the territorial legislature and (temporarily) halted their infighting .<sup>12</sup>

In 1861 Jayne was a young, tall, and physically imposing man, characteristics which perhaps spoke well for his ability to hold the party together. Unfortunately, he also possessed a strong temper (evidenced most prominently by his engaging in fisticuffs with a former receiver of the territorial land office) and none of the subtlety needed to reconcile his party's factions. Thus before long territorial chief justice Bliss, who yearned for Jayne's gubernatorial seat, formed an anti-Jayne faction. Bliss's position was strengthened by an 1862 Indian uprising (begun while Jayne was out of the territory) which featured raids by the Santee and other Dakota tribes on farms near Yankton. The uprising became bloody in August, when Indians murdered Judge J. B. Amidon and his son at Sioux Falls. Writing to Fifth Auditor of the Treasury John C. Underwood, Bliss lamented Jayne's ineptitude in handling the crisis, snorting that the governor was "a clever man [and] a tolerably shrewd ward politician, but without any appreciation of statesmanship and wholly unable to meet the present crisis." Governor Jayne was also unable to unite the Republicans during his tenure — that task would be left for his successor .<sup>13</sup>

Besides intra-party squabbles, another threat to the Republicans in the Dakota Territory came in the form of John Blair Smith Todd. Born in Lexington, Kentucky in 1814, Todd moved with his parents to Illinois thirteen years later. A West Point graduate, he served in the Second Seminole and Mexican-American wars before resigning from the Army in 1856 and settling in Fort Randall, Dakota as an Indian trader. Thereafter he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1861, opening his practice in Yankton. Lincoln appointed Todd brigadier general of volunteers that September (although the appointment was ultimately rejected by the Senate), and he held that title until July of the following year. In the meantime the new territorial legislature had elected him as a Democrat to the thirty-seventh Congress. He took his seat as a territorial delegate in December 1861.<sup>14</sup>

It did not take long for Governor Jayne to clash with Todd, who viewed the former as an *arriviste* who held an office that should have went to a resident Dakotan. Todd became the head of the territory's

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<sup>12</sup> Bill Reid, "Dakota Territory," 183,186; Lamar, *Dakota Territory, 1861-1869*, 93.

<sup>13</sup> Lamar, *Dakota Territory*, 68-70; Doane Robinson, *Encyclopedia of South Dakota* (Pierre: Self-published, 1925), 384; Herbert S. Schell, *Dakota Territory During the Eighteen Sixties* (Vermillion: Report 30 of the Governmental Research Bureau, University of South Dakota, 1954), 47; Philemon Bliss to John C. Underwood, 26 October 1862, The Papers of Salmon P. Chase, Reel 18, Madison Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>14</sup> Wesley C. Wilson, "General John B.S. Todd, First Delegate, Dakota Territory," *North Dakota History* vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1964): 189-94.



People's Union party, which according to Tegeuder was formed to counter Jayne and the Michigan radicals. The two men squared off in a hotly contested 1862 election for Todd's seat in Congress, with Todd declared the winner by the territory's Board of Canvassers. Yet Congress chose to seat Jayne instead, leading the Todd forces to appeal. Jayne resigned as governor and moved to Washington both to serve as territorial delegate and to counter on the ground efforts by the Toddites to persuade Congress to award the election to their candidate. In the spring of 1864 the House Committee on Elections awarded the seat to Todd, who took office in June. The Republicans in the Dakota Territory managed to elect one of their own to the seat that fall .<sup>15</sup>

During his brief tenure as territorial delegate to Congress, Jayne made a number of requests upon the president regarding public lands and patronage. Thus in a February 1864 letter, the former governor recommended that Lincoln appoint George M. Pinney, at the time U. S. marshal for the Dakota Territory, as provost marshal for the same. In a reply that both reveals a patronage strategy and betrays a slight annoyance, Lincoln informed Jayne that "I dislike to make changes in office so long as they can be avoided. It multiplies my trouble and harrassment immensely. I dislike to make two appointments when one will do. Send me the name of some man, not the present Marshal, and I will nominate him to be Provost-Marshal for Dakota. "<sup>16</sup>

Following the loss of his congressional seat, Jayne returned to Springfield and continued the practice of medicine. In 1869 President Grant appointed him pension agent at Springfield, a post he held for four years. Jayne also served three more terms as mayor and for forty years held a seat on the board of directors for the First National Bank (he would not return to the Dakotas until 1911). By the time he died at the age of eighty-nine on 20 March 1816, William Jayne had lived a full life as a public servant, physician, civic leader, and friend of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>17</sup>

Which brings us back to his 1907 speech to the Springfield chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The address reads in places as borderline hagiography, with Jayne asserting that his subject was a "pure, kind, gentle...man...sensitive and conscientious at all times and in every relation of life...never in youth or manhood did he knowingly do wrong to anyone." Lincoln's was "a beautiful,

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<sup>15</sup> Tegeuder, "Lincoln and the Territorial Patronage," 79-80; Schell, *Dakota Territory During the Eighteen Sixties*, 77-78; Robinson, *Encyclopedia of South Dakota*, 727-28.

<sup>16</sup> Jayne to Lincoln, 3 February 1864, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Madison Reading Room, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Jayne, 26 February 1864, Private Collection of Laurie Warren, Russellville, Kentucky.

<sup>17</sup> "Dr. William Jayne," 82; Robinson, *Encyclopedia of South Dakota*, 384.

blameless and beneficent life," and "among the marked rulers of men, he was not surpassed by any statesman of the modern world."

Yet if the speech is fulsome, it also serves as an insightful analysis of Lincoln's character. Lincoln, Jayne rightly observes, was reticent regarding his ancestry and childhood, was quite fond of his stepmother, loved to read books, and could often be seen walking the streets of Springfield alone in deep thought, practically oblivious to his surroundings. He was also "a man of ambition, determined to gain place and power." Jayne might have added that upon assuming the presidency Lincoln — who, despite the persistent myth to the contrary, was a practical politician *extraordinaire* — perceived that strengthening the Republican Party in the territories was key to maintaining his "place and power." Jayne's own appointment as governor of the Dakota Territory was just one example of this strategy .<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, 3,4,21.

## DEVELOPING THE GREAT PLAINS: A LOOK BACK AT LINCOLN

Sebastian F. Braun

Abraham Lincoln is still most remembered — and perhaps rightly so — for his role in the Civil War and in the end to slavery. From the perspective of the 1860s, those events and Lincoln's involvement in them can be seen as dealing with the past. To end the potential of secession and to end slavery marked some necessary housekeeping for the United States. At the same time, however, Lincoln was also involved in decisions that would define the future of the country. While the Civil War dealt with the problem of how to keep the existing country together, these decisions dealt with how to expand the United States. When Lincoln looked West, he made decisions that decisively defined how the United States would be formed in and through its relationship to the territory it claimed as its own but did not yet control.

This last fact — that the United States did not yet control the Great Plains and large parts of the intermountain West — is important in two ways. First, it shows that Lincoln's decisions, both in the East and in the West, dealt with the expansion of the liberal state. In the east, the question was how to expand the concept of equality as individual citizens before the state throughout the territory to all men (although not yet women). In the west, at issue was the orderly expansion of the state through a process that would create equal citizens and ensure the control of the state over them. Second, however, the fact that the United States still had to gain control over these territories shows that Lincoln was looking outside the United States. He was looking at territories controlled by indigenous peoples. It might be fair, then, to take a look back at Lincoln not only in a historical perspective, but to return the president's gaze to him from that West. How did the president's policies — the Homestead Act, the building of the transcontinental railroad, and the interactions with Native peoples on the Plains — shape the future of this region? I will argue that these three threads of federal policy under Lincoln are not distinct, but connected and aimed at the same goal: to expand the control of the state.

This is a critical look. It seems to be a trend that American presidents are rated differently from the perspective of Americans and from the perspective of non-Americans. In expanding the United States, Lincoln was expanding it onto territories of other nations, interfering with their sovereignty. While it might be true that Lincoln was pushing for Western expansion in part in order to establish Union control over the West to keep Confederate control — and slavery — out of the region, this had little bearing from the

perspective of indigenous peoples. In fact, where indigenous peoples had a choice between the Union and the Confederacy, the policies proposed by the Confederacy often sounded much more appealing, especially in the early years of Lincoln's presidency, when the Union withdrew most of its Indian agents and Indian policy resources.

Aside from directly political goals, Lincoln's policies were of course also geared toward creating a successful economic climate in the new territories that stood in contrast to the plantation economies of the South. Expanding the liberal state meant to create economic opportunities for citizens of the state to settle in this territory. Homesteading, the railroad, and even Indian policies were distinctively aimed at this economic goal, too. The economic development of the Plains, then, becomes a crucial undertaking linked to the political goals.

Homesteading was linked, of course, to the Jeffersonian ideal of the republic of yeoman farmers. Five days before the Homestead Act was passed, Lincoln created the Department of Agriculture, designed to provide technical support for the westward expansion of farming. The idea had always been that yeoman farming would ensure that European decadence, poverty, and disenfranchisement could be held at bay and instead the New Republic would be built on a democratic basis, both politically and economically. Jefferson's ideas had been implemented in the Land Ordinance of 1785, which created the model for future dispositions of federal lands in any further expansions. It is important to remember that in 1803, Louisiana Territory was not acquired in the sense that the land now belonged to the United States. Instead, the United States had bought the rights of discovery from France, which gave it, according to the 1823 Supreme Court decision in *Johnson v. McIntosh*, the overarching eventual title to the land, while, however, the indigenous peoples retained possession of their lands until they would sell them to the federal government. Only the federal government could buy lands from indigenous nations; thus, all lands would eventually convert into government ownership and be sold to individuals in the process laid out by Jefferson. The Homestead Act of 1862 did not invent the land survey method to be used, nor any other fundamental aspects of the process. Those were in place. Homesteading simply created a big land sale. Lincoln applied the method created by Jefferson for the fertile Ohio River Valley to the rest of the country, but especially to the arid regions of the Plains.

By 1862, the Plains were the last region in the United States that were still in the control of indigenous nations. The United States had fought a successful war of conquest against Mexico in the Southwest. California had experienced a huge influx of settlers after the 1849 goldrush, and both Mexican

and indigenous presences had been ignored and brushed aside. American settlements in Oregon and Washington were becoming large enough that the presence of the Hudson Bay Company and the existence of indigenous nations could be held at bay.

The West, then, was not mysterious and unknown; it was, instead, a land of known or at least expected possibilities and opportunities, which, like a wedge, was keeping the United States apart. Cheap land would attract yeoman farmers, build an agricultural republic, and fill the gap. A transcontinental railroad would span the divide and, with railroad land grants, lead the way to settlements. And a day after the Pacific Railway Act, the Morrill Act was passed, creating the land grant college system. Thus, the Department of Agriculture would provide support for farmers attracted by cheap lands, with land grant agricultural colleges providing extension services, and railroads connecting them to markets for their products. All of this, of course, would only be possible if indigenous nations would give up the land and either become yeoman farmers themselves and integrate into this ideal agricultural republic, or disappear. While the federal government tried to push them to choose the first alternative, it did not really care enough to provide resources to make it work or to prevent the second.

Initially, and through the lens of romantic revision, the policies might be seen as a success. In historic analysis, however, most of the policies were a failure. Homesteading was a "magnificent failure", as John Martin Campbell (2002) puts it, but it was a failure, nonetheless. While it brought hundreds of thousands of people to the plains, of the around seven million people involved in western homesteading, five million failed. Granted, these figures include those who never really tried, but if the goal of the policy was to create a republic of small farmers, these were nevertheless failures. John Bennett (1996:261) found that less than twenty percent of the settlers on the northern Plains stayed put on their first land. The others were forced to look for better land, and water. Those descendants that still stay on the plains might see homesteading as proof for the strength of human will in the face of adversity. For many of their ancestors, finally staying on a piece of land was a consequence of sheer exhaustion, desperation and stubbornness. After an initial land and population rush, it soon became obvious that to simply transfer eastern and midwestern approaches to land and agriculture to the plains simply did and still does not work.

On the broader scale, transferring institutions from the east to the western landscape is a consequence of the expansion of the modern state. The liberal state, in treating all citizens as equal individuals, needs to homogenize landscapes, cultures, and institutions. As V. P. Gagnon (2004:9) says, "The ultimate goal [of nationalism] is not so much ethnic homogeneity as it is the construction of

homogeneous *political* space as a means to demobilize challengers.... Homogenization projects are always works in progress, always requiring some level of violence, overt or covert, explicit or implicit, to reinforce and reimpose an idealized sameness on the messy realities of society." Just like the United States could not bear to integrate both, a capitalist industrial society and a feudal plantation society, so could it not create a special approach to the western landscape. Thus, homesteading, which had worked in the fertile regions of the eastern woodlands, allocated woefully inadequate resources to families.

Homesteading also did not create new sustainable plains of yeoman farmers because it was a non-capitalist and non-industrial ideal implemented at the beginning of an intensification of capitalist industrialization. The Civil War, perhaps the first industrial war, swept away not simply slavery, but an alternative economic and political model. From now on, in accordance with the increased control and homogenization by liberal states everywhere at this time, there would be one model for everybody. Feudal plantation culture, as for example James Agee showed in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, stayed ingrained in the South, but it was clear that it would not compete, anymore, as an economic-political model on a national level. The Pacific Railroad Act, from an economic perspective, stands in direct contrast to the Homestead Act, as it makes clear that the future of the country will be invested in large corporations that are making investments for the government and are in return rewarded by the state. Homesteaders, then, fit into this model not as independent yeoman farmers, but as a means for the railroads to regain their investments and to make a profit. Railroads are not needed to carry agricultural products to markets. It is the inverse: agricultural products, and therefore farmers, are needed to create business for railroads. Very quickly, homesteaders gave way to larger farms, industrial agriculture, and the connection and dependence of farmers to speculative markets. This allowed for economic growth, but meant that homesteading and homesteaders would disappear.

"Implicit in all this," as Fredric Jameson (1991:366) points out, "is the thud of the predictable second shoe, namely, the effacement of Nature, and its precapitalist agricultures, from the postmodern, the essential homogenization of a social space and experience now uniformly modernized, and the triumphant achievement of...standardization and conformity...[This] postmodern begins to make its appearance wherever the modernization process no longer has archaic features and obstacles to overcome and has triumphantly implanted its own autonomous logic." Just like homesteaders were used and abused in the development of the West, so too were American Indians. The homogenization of the land and the state would not allow for special cases, and "the relationship between peasant agriculture and traditional culture

has become only too clear; the latter follows the former into extinction" (Jameson 1998:67). The difference, of course, was that homesteaders were free to come and go — they could leave and go back to the developing cities to become wage laborers. With the beginning shift in economic reality from Jefferson's agricultural, egalitarian democracy to an industrialized, stratified society, workers were needed. The homesteading ideal, however, would continue to inform American popular expectations of rural life as well as official policy. The policies that Lincoln set in place would continue to constrict American Indian economic opportunities through allotment and consequential land loss. In fact, they still are a main reason for the disenfranchisement of rural, northern Plains Indian reservation communities.

While Lincoln himself did not set these specific Indian policies in place, the fact that they could be imposed on sovereign nations — that the liberal state would no longer tolerate alternatives within its boundaries — became established under Lincoln's Indian policies.

Under pressure by the immediate needs of the Civil War, the Union withdrew from its treaty obligations. This meant on one hand that annuity rations, upon which many reservation communities had become dependent, were no longer delivered. On the other hand, the withdrawal of army forces to the battlefields in the east meant that the federal government left the field to local actors. Although American Indian affairs had been affirmed to be the responsibility of the federal government, Lincoln gave states free reign in practice. While the army had never been able or willing to truly protect Indian lands and sovereignty, the withdrawal of the units sent a clear signal of government disinterest in any pretense to do so. This was a message that was not lost on local and state governments and on American Indian nations. In their decision to join the Confederacy, the Chickasaw, for example, cited the withdrawal of federal troops as a treaty violation that dissolved their own obligations toward the Union and free "to take such steps as to secure their own safety, happiness and future welfare as may to them seem best." Just as Lincoln could not tolerate secession of the South, however, he could also not tolerate the secession of Indian nations. After the war, this was made very clear in a series of punitive treaties with those southeastern nations who, in the face of disinterest by the federal government, had taken steps to take their political future into their own hands.

Where possible, punishment for such actions followed more immediately, such as in Minnesota. Lincoln purportedly wrote to his generals there that "necessity knows no law," and the army as well as the state militia were only too happy to follow that advice. I think it is important to understand that this was not simply the expression of special contempt against Native people, but the extension of a general policy

during the Civil War. After all, Lincoln had already suspended *habeas corpus* without the consent of Congress. Necessity knew no laws, and if there were laws — moral or legal — they could be suspended or ignored. Punishment for secession, whether by the Confederacy or by Indians, was not going to be limited by adherence to what undoubtedly seemed to be sentimentalities. Right made might, but Lincoln was too pragmatic to ignore that might also makes right. The Civil War saw the development of the mass destruction of civilian infrastructure as a tool and weapon of war. It would be the same generals using the same methods against Indians in the West that would end military resistance against conquest on the Plains. In the meantime, however, in the absence of the army and the state, local governments and their militias had free reign to forge ahead with action that might not have been endorsed by the federal government, but that was, in the end, tolerated by it, and might as well have been modeled on it. It was under Lincoln's watch that the Colorado militia massacred the Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek. The national media and the government might have been outraged by this act, but military actions against peaceful Indian villages before and after Sand Creek suggest that this might have been more due to the fact that it had not been controlled by the government than due to the tactics used.

Lincoln's policies toward the West point to his presidency as a turning point in American history. While old ideas, such as the yeoman farmer as the economic, moral, and political backbone of the country, were still influencing policies, they began to be used as a legitimization for new developments, as evidenced by the transcontinental railroad. The expansion of the United States into the West would be characterized and carried by private resource extraction companies, yet built upon old myths of tough individualism and rugged self-sufficiency. At the same time that the state celebrated these values, they had already been left in the dust of accelerating capitalism and industrialization. Yet they also provided a model for the expanding liberal state; the illusion that everybody started from the same base, that dreams were still achievable, and that opportunities were endless on the one hand, the model of organized and controlled equal citizenship on the other. It was only a matter of time and methods to close the frontier with gridlined, orderly rows of farms.

Looking back from the West, the combination proved a double strike against American Indian nations. As the state would no longer tolerate cultural, political or economic exceptions within its territory, assimilation would become the rallying cry for Indian policy. This assimilation, however, was still based on the illusions of turning the country into an agricultural paradise based on self-sufficiency. While private companies, with the help of government subsidies as established by the transcontinental railroad, would



develop the West primarily based on increasingly industrial resource extraction, Indians would be forced to develop into yeoman farmers, an idea that had already been outdated by the time it had been conceived.

Thus, while Lincoln's policies would develop the West for the interest of the state and major industrial interests, left behind under the wheels of the railroads would be those that were expendable to the project: homesteaders, buffalo, and Indians. By the 1930s, all three had come to be appropriated as quaint symbols of past times. As outlined by Lincoln's policies, as subjects of the state, they were meant to either adapt to the new realities or disappear. Lincoln follows a trend common for nationalist politicians, and one that perhaps mirrors the Spanish policies of 1492. Then, the *reconquista* stormed Grenada at the same time that Columbus secured new possibilities for the *conquista*. Lincoln consolidated the Union while he was grabbing for new Western resources. While he built the future of the country, his policies negated the existence and future of those who did not quite fit in.

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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN: WESTERN BRED PRESIDENT

Miles A. Browne

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, two Kentucky pioneer families were blessed with the birth of boys. One child was Jefferson Davis whose family eventually settled in the cotton rich land of Mississippi. The Davis family acquired vast land holdings and became wealthy slave owners. Jefferson Davis rose to the office of President of the Confederate States of America. He, and the Confederacy which he led, were dedicated to the belief that states' rights trumped the national will and to the proposition that all men were not created equal. The other child was Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln family owned small land holdings that they labored over by themselves and for their own benefit. Abraham Lincoln rose to be the President of the United States. He and the states he led were dedicated to the ideal of an indivisible nation that was dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal.

Tom Lincoln, Abraham's father, was a life-long pioneer. Carl Sandburg described pioneers as being "half gypsy (and that they were) luck hunters, and luck is out yonder-over the horizon and is there a calling and a calling: The pioneers, so often are believers in luck out yonder." Tom Lincoln pursued his luck and calling first in Kentucky, then over the horizon in Indiana, and lastly out yonder in Illinois. Tom's son found his luck and calling on the prairie land of Illinois.

As a lad, Abraham had helped his father clear the dense forest surrounding their Indiana home. During his growing-up years he had plowed, planted, cultivated and harvested farmland crops. At age twenty-one Lincoln landed in New Salem. A friend wrote that, "He assured those that he came in contact that he was a piece of floating driftwood...he had come down the river...borne along by the swelling waters, and aimlessly floating about, he had accidentally lodged at New Salem." It was there, in the village on the hill, that Lincoln was bent by an environment that would influence him for his lifetime.

The pioneer community of New Salem was the home of no more than twenty-five families. The population was an America in miniature. It had residents from the northeast states of New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and New York. It had people from the border state of Kentucky and residents from the southern state of Virginia. Lincoln biographer Benjamin Thomas evaluated New Salem's environment: "(It was) typical of that of the West in general (and) offered opportunities which Lincoln would not have had in an older community. Humble origin and lack of schooling were no handicaps, for they were common deficiencies. A newcomer had no difficulty in establishing himself, for no one had been there long, no

propertied class had emerged, and social castes were unknown. Equality of opportunity was in a large degree a fact, and democracy and nationalism were the political ideals." Once a lawyer asked one of them what the principle citizens believed regarding a certain subject. He was told that the village of New Salem had no principle citizen and that all of its citizens were principle citizens. The residents, like most pioneers, rarely failed to be generous and helpful. New arrivals in any frontier town found that their new neighbors were quick to lend aid if they needed it. The latchstring was always out. Despite meager provisions and tight quarters, a stranger was sure of a welcome.

Lincoln's first New Salem job was clerking in Denton Offut's general store. Offut often bragged about the strength of his young clerk. He marveled at Lincoln's ability to take an axe at the end of the handle and hold it out from his shoulder in a straight horizontal line, easy and steady. The rowdy and swaggering Clary's Grove gang believed that the leader of their pack, Jack Armstrong, could best the newcomer in a wrestling match. All of New Salem turned out to see the match. After all the bets had been made, and sides taken, the contest took place. Neither man was able to conquer the other and the match was declared a draw. Lincoln showed that he was more than a store clerk and gained the respect of his young contemporaries.

As a citizen of New Salem, Lincoln lived in the lifestyle of his fellow pioneers. He wore the common clothing of the frontier. His meals were pioneer basic. He knew and understood their superstitions, strengths, and weaknesses. He laughed and shared their down-to-earth humor. He was a champion at their rough and tumble physical sports. He was at their bedsides when they fell ill. He was at their gravesites when they were buried. Almost everyone lent Lincoln a helping hand during his stay in New Salem. A number of families offered him food and lodging. Village women kept his clothing in good repair. Schoolmaster Mentor Graham spent long hours helping him understand the finer points of surveying. Bowling Green, the local justice of peace, supported his interest in law. The debating society introduced him to the world of reasoned argument. Jack Kelso, the village blacksmith, introduced Lincoln to the plays of William Shakespeare and the poetry of Robert Burns. And most importantly, they voted overwhelmingly for Lincoln when he was elected to the state legislature. For Lincoln, it took a village.

Lincoln biographer Stephen Oates concluded that his frontier environment had an "ineradicable influence...making and molding him in ways he could neither erase nor forget...he came to manhood in the rural backwoods where people accepted the most excruciating hardships as commonplace. Where they went for seasons without baths, saw whole families wiped out by epidemics, endured a lifetime of

backbreaking toil for the sake of raising families and getting ahead. Where people relied on corn whisky, fire and brimstone revivals and bawdy jokes to erase the painful reality of the grind of day-to-day existence."

Lincoln's learning consisted of only a year of formal education. He was basically a self-taught man. Civil War historian James McPherson wrote: "Perhaps the deficits of Lincoln's education proved a benefit. Instead of spending years inside the four walls of a classroom, Lincoln instead worked on the frontier dirt farms...he split rails, he rafted down the Mississippi, he surveyed land, and worked in a store where he learned to communicate with the farmers and other residents of a rural community. Lincoln grew up close to the rhythms of nature, of wild beasts and farm animals, of forest and running water, of seasons of crops and of people who got their meager living from the land. These things, more than books, furnished his earliest education."

The Western culture brought together the son of a dirt-poor pioneer and the daughter of a Kentucky aristocrat. The marriage of Lincoln and Mary Todd would have been improbable in the Eastern and Southern cultures. Lincoln historian Douglas Wilson believed: "By almost any measure, Lincoln's fortunes during this period fairly soared. From being an uneducated backwoods youth without property or family connections, he rose to a position of relative prominence. Whereas in 1831 he had been little more than a refugee from his father's farm, an unskilled laborer and store clerk in the tiny frontier village of New Salem, by 1842 he was a leading politician in the Illinois capitol of Springfield and a partner of its foremost lawyer, he had married into an aristocratic family and was positioning himself for election a few years later to the United States Congress."

In 1856 Walt Whitman thought that he "would be much pleased to see some shrewd and fully informed, healthy bodied, middle aged, beard faced American blacksmith or boatman come down from the West, across the Alleghenies and walk into the Presidency, dressed in the clean suit of working attire, and with a tan all over his face, breast, and arms; I would certainly vote for such a man." In the election of 1860, Whitman joined thousands of others to do just that. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The middle-class got a middle-class president, at last...He (is) the true history of the American people of his time...a plain man of the people." During the years of the nation's fiery trial the United States would receive the benefits of a Western president.

February 11, 1861, was Lincoln's last day on the Illinois prairie. He believed that his presidency would confront a task greater than that, which faced Washington. In bidding his friends an "affectionate

farewell" he stated, "No one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people I owe everything." The bells of Springfield were ringing as the train that was to take Lincoln to Washington moved and carried him away from his prairie roots. The Western environment had molded his personality and laid the foundation for his political philosophy. Historian Theodore Blegan believed: "No one is divorced from his time and place. In Lincoln's case much of the lore of pioneer America was absorbed by the man as he lived his prairie years and by the intelligence that remembered that lore to the littlest details. It was gathered up, too, by a mind that grew through the prairie years in wisdom and certain individual qualities...."

When the train departed Springfield it passed the home of Francis Springer, a long time friend. Unable to attend Lincoln's farewell, Springer wrote a short note to his former neighbor: "I cannot repress my desire to say to you, good-bye...when the train bearing you passed my residence this morning, my heart said, God bless Lincoln, and make him second to none but Washington. Be assured (I speak of what I know) that thousands of earnest prayers ascend to heaven for you, and our beloved country."

As President, Lincoln was able to draw from his wide ranging experiences: from flat boating on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; from viewing the slave markets of New Orleans; from surveying the newly settled counties of central Illinois; from the reading of America's newspapers during his idle moments as New Salem's postmaster; from his appreciation of the King James Bible; from his reading and memorization of the writings of Shakespeare and Burns; from his mastery of Euclid; from his journey to the wintry plains of Kansas; from his view of the vastness of Lewis and Clark's America as he stood on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River; from rubbing elbows with New Yorkers; from his meetings with New England factory workers; from his lawmaking and leadership days in the Illinois state legislature; from his lawyering in the courts of central Illinois and from his legendary debates with Stephen Douglas.

Washingtonians noticed that their new president was obviously a Westerner. When walking, he ambled in the Western manner. His clothing was common and ill fitting. And, worst of all, he was seen wearing black gloves to the opera. And then, there was his speech. Lincoln's Western dialect and sayings freckled his speech. He greeted people with a "howdy," he "sot" down and "stayed a spell." He came "outen" the White House. He "yearned" his pay and he "made a heap." He "keered" for the nation and at times he was "hornswoggled." He had "larned" to read on his own. And, it was "Mr. Cheerman" and not Mr. Chairman.

On first inspection Senator Charles Sumner did not respect the new arrival from the American prairie. He was alarmed at what he observed about Lincoln. He did concede “now and then Lincoln showed flashes of thought and burst of illuminating expression.” However, he found that Lincoln lacked many of the cultural refinements needed for his leadership position. Charles Adams, grandson of John and son of John Quincy, was convinced that the untutored son of the northern plains lacked the grace and manners to be head-of-state. William Miller wrote, “Reporters covering the inauguration as President of the United States would pen observations like the following: ‘He was arrayed in a full suit of regulation black including a dress coat, an article he had probably never worn before in his life...a costume in which the owner looked, and was, exceedingly uncomfortable and awkward.’ But they would end like this...‘as I heard his closing paragraph I concluded that we have elected a President who is a great, strong man’.”

Lincoln did not dwell on what some “better than thou” men, and what the Eastern press thought of him — he had work to do. His first order of business was to form a Cabinet. The bottom line for each of his appointees was that whatever their animosities and selfish ambitions Cabinet members had to share his steadfast devotion for the Union. Three of his appointees — William Seward, Secretary of State, Salmon Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, and Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, had been his rivals for the presidential nomination.

Stephen Oates believed: “Lincoln’s Cabinet was a collection not so much of incompatibles as of opinionated, strong-willed, ambitious individuals, each of whom desired a prominent voice in decision making, taken together, they made up a balanced Cabinet, representing all the discordant elements in the party — former Whigs and former Democrats, liberals and conservatives, Easterners, Westerners and border-state Southerners. Lincoln thought them all capable men whose talents he needed to assemble a successful administration.” As a Westerner, he had no trouble working with a diverse group of people from different regions of the country. In New Salem and Springfield they had been his neighbors. This cultural diversity was found only in the West

Historian James Dougherty observed, “There were political Jack Armstrongs waiting to attack him and reduce him to a mere party tool. He handled these mistaken champions more quietly but just as effectively as he did the New Salem strong man. Persuaders and pressure groups soon found under the gentle wit and banter there was tough oak and granite. The dictatorial Mr. Stanton, the subtle Mr. Seward and blustering generals soon learned there was a man in the White House.” Lincoln biographer, Englishman Lord Charnwood, wrote: “He could use and respect and pardon and overrule his far more

accomplished ministers because he stood up to them with no more fear, with no dislike or envy or disrespect than when he stood up long before to Jack Armstrong. He faced the difficulties and terrors of his high office with which he had paid his way as a poor man or navigated a boat in rapids or in floods.”

In the early days of Lincoln's presidency, the White House latchstring was open. He stated: “They do not want much,” regarding a crowd wanting to see him, “and they got very little...I know how I would feel in their place.” Doris Kearns Goodwin, the author of *Team of Rivals*, wrote: “In Abraham Lincoln's White House there were few private spaces — just the family's bedrooms and library scrunched into the west side of the second floor. In the rest of the house, Secretary of State William Seward reported, “the grounds, halls, stairways, closets were always overrun with hundreds of people, standing in long, winding lines and waving their letters of introduction in desperate hope of securing a job. When Lincoln was told he was wasting too much time listening to ordinary people, he said: ‘I must see them.’ These are my ‘public opinion baths,’ insisted the president.” As his wartime presidential duties increased, Lincoln reluctantly limited visiting hours to three a day. Lincoln disliked the title of “Mr. President.” To a friend, who always addressed him by his proper title, he replied, “Now call me Lincoln, and I promise not to tell the breach of etiquette — if you won't — and I shall have a resting spell from Mr. President.”

In the long run, most Easterners learned to like or respect the Western bred President. When speaking to a group that opposed his election, Lincoln said: “When we shall become better acquainted—and I say it with great confidence—we shall like each other the more.” And so it was, even for the once highly critical Senator Sumner, who in later years wrote: “Abraham Lincoln lived in a part of the country which at the period of the Declaration of Independence, was a savage wilderness. Strange, but happy Providence, that a voice from the savage wilderness, now fertile in men, was inspired to hold the pledges and promise of the Declaration. The unity of the republic (which was built)...on a foundation of liberty and equality was vindicated by the citizens of a community which had no existence when the republic was formed...people are proud to trace aspiring talent to humble beginnings because they found (through Lincoln)...a new opportunity of the vindication for the dignity of free labor.”

Lincoln's respect for the dignity of labor and the opportunity for men to rise was solidified when he signed the Homestead Act on January 1, 1863. It put into law a position he had stated in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 12, 1861, “In regard to the homestead law, I have to say, in so far as government lands can be disposed of, I am in favor of cutting up the wild lands in parcels, so that every poor man can have a home.” The Act had a never-ending impact on the nation's demographics as thousands of homesteaders moved

westward. They were luck hunters and luck was out yonder in the Dakota and Nebraska Territories. The hunters found a life of their own making and were the driving force that launched economic development, railway growth and agriculture interests in the lands of the West.

At Gettysburg Lincoln stated that the United States had a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The American people were able to fully understand and appreciate the meaning of those words. They, the people, had marked election ballots, served on juries, signed petitions, and attended political debates. They had created a nation that was not ruled by kings and aristocrats, but led by a citizen of their choosing. Thomas wrote: "Throughout the western country everything was done by popular assemblies, by popular vote (and) through public discussion...in many a backwoods cabin Lincoln heard arguments on government, views of national policy, and judgments of men and things expounded with a sound sense and practical wisdom that would have done credit to a legislative body...thus Lincoln saw men come together in equality and mutual respect, not only in the state legislature, but also in private homes and in humble crossroads meeting houses to voice their free opinion."

About a hundred miles separated the presidential homes of the Union and Confederate Presidents. McPherson writes that a "broad consensus exists that Lincoln was more eloquent than Davis in expressing war aims...communicating with people...more skilled as a political leader...better able to endure criticism and work with his critics to achieve a common goal. Lincoln was pragmatic, flexible, with a sense of humor to smooth relationships and to help him survive the stress of his job; Davis was austere, rigid, humorless...Lincoln picked good administrative subordinates and knew how to delegate authority to them; Davis went through five Secretaries of War in five years; spent time and energy on petty administrative details he should have left to subordinates." In 1960 Southern born historian David Potter believed, "If the Union and the Confederacy had exchanged presidents with one another, the Confederacy might have won its independence." There is little doubt that the self-educated, Western influenced Lincoln was superior to the private-schooled and West Point-educated Southern aristocrat Davis. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, wrote: "Surrounded by all sorts of conflicting claims by traitors, by half-hearted, timid men, by Border States men, and Free States men, by radical Abolitionists and Conservatives, he has listened to all, weighed the words of all, waited, observed, yielded now here and now there, but in the main kept one inflexible, honest purpose, and drawn the national ship through."

In Springer's good-bye note to Lincoln, he wished that his friend would be "second to none but Washington." He underestimated Lincoln. In the words of Oates, "...scholars rank Lincoln as the best chief



executive...because he had the moral vision of where he must go to preserve and enlarge the rights of all people...(he) had an acute sense of history...because he perceived the truth of his age and embodied it in his words and deeds...because (of) his interaction with the spirit and events of his day (and) he made momentous moral decisions that affected the course of mankind."

John Wilkes Booth cut short Lincoln's presidency and his life. His death was a personal blow to Springer. In a memorial service honoring Lincoln, Springer commented: "Mr. Lincoln was not descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors...he ascended from the low condition of a frontier log cabin boy to the preeminent honor among the wise and good. From the poor and obscure but virtuous parentage have arisen our Benjamin Franklin, our Henry Clay, and last but not least our noble Abraham Lincoln." For Lincoln, the foundation of American democracy was the Declaration of Independence, which held that "all men are created equal" and had the right to life of liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Lincoln was a prime example of the Declaration's proposition and promises. In Lincoln's ideal America, as it was in New Salem, there would be no principle citizens, and all America's citizens would be principle citizens.

### **LINCOLN'S INFLUENCE ON THE SETTLEMENT OF BEND IN THE RIVER (WAKPAIPAKSAN)**

William J. Ellingson

The City of Flandreau, South Dakota celebrates 140 years of existence in 2009. Although not incorporated until ten years later in 1879, Flandreau has traditionally recognized 1869 as the first year of its permanent settlement. Prior to that Indians had inhabited the area for thousands of years and the Big Sioux River provided them resources for food and habitat. As early as 1683 French traders searching for rich trapping areas mapped the valley of the Big Sioux and trading posts were located along the river at various locations since as early as 1701. One was established in 1822 by Joseph La Framboise, a mixed-blood (French/Dakota) fur trader, at the Big Bend on its south bank near the present site of Flandreau.

It was in 1869 that several Indian families settled in the area of the Big Bend, took up homesteads and began farming with the intent of pursuing a new life independent of the United States Government. The settlement by those families in that area solidified the population base thereby enabling the community of Flandreau to develop. The original town site was founded in 1857 by the Dakota Land Company of St. Paul, Minnesota and was named "Flandrau" after Charles E. Flandrau, a former Minnesota territory

governor and Indian agent.<sup>1</sup> In 1858 Flandrau and the nearby settlement of Medary (Brookings County) were forced to vacate and then burned by a band of Indians who declared the settlers trespassers.<sup>2</sup> It wasn't until 1869 that it was settled once again and has been continuously occupied to the present. Shortly thereafter, under circumstances that history has not documented, the spelling was changed from Flandrau to Flandreau.

President Abraham Lincoln played a role in the 1869 resettlement of Flandreau in two respects. First, he signed a bill into law in 1862 referred to as the Homestead Act which was the culmination of 70 years of controversy over disposition of public lands. The U.S. Government had previously sold land to settlers in the West for revenue purposes. With the ascendancy of the Republican Party which wanted free distribution of land and secession of Southern states which opposed the idea, the 1862 Homestead Act became possible.

Second, President Lincoln signed a number of orders in the aftermath of the 1862 Minnesota Uprising which directly influenced the resettlement of Flandreau. Despite tremendous pressure from Minnesota residents and politicians, Lincoln ordered only 39 of the 303 Indians who were condemned to death by the military tribunals which had hurriedly tried several hundred Indians believed to have killed whites during the Uprising.<sup>3</sup> That document at once ordered the largest mass execution and the greatest act of clemency in American History. Other orders by those the President put in charge detained the remainder of the 303 who were condemned to death along with hundreds of other Indians whether they had been tried and convicted or not. Following their detention they were moved out of Minnesota territory.<sup>4</sup>

Jacob Eastman, earlier known by his Sioux name of Many Lightnings, was one of the Indians who was captured following the 1862 Uprising and displaced from his southeastern Minnesota homeland first to a stockade in Davenport, Iowa and then to a reservation near Niobrara in Nebraska Territory. It was several years later in March of 1869 that Jacob Eastman, his family and up to 24 other Indian families, left the Niobrara area on foot heading north across the frozen Missouri River with the final destination in mind of the place known as River Bend (Wakpaipaksan) which had been scouted out the previous year as a

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Fanebust, *Where the Sioux River Bends* (Freeman: Pine Hill Press, 1985), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p.46.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Carley, *The Sioux Uprising of 1862* (St. Paul: The Minnesota Historical Society, 1976), pp. 68-69.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy and Politics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p.113.

place to relocate and establish a new life. Jacob was one of the first to use the Homestead Act to acquire and settle on 160 acres in that area in an attempt to live independently of the U.S. Government. It was the descendants of Jacob and the other Sioux Settlers who eventually formed the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, but the story begins with the 1862 Uprising in Minnesota.

### The Sioux Uprising of 1862

"The Sioux Uprising in Minnesota was triggered by a trivial egg-finding incident that quickly mushroomed into a major conflict between Indians and whites."<sup>5</sup> The details of that incident which ended in the murder by four Indians of five white people and the resultant "pre-emptive" uprising by many of the Dakota Sioux in the area against white settlers have been recounted in a number of publications.<sup>6</sup> The Sioux War, as it has been referred to, started August 17 and ended for all practical purposes with the Battle of Wood Lake on September 23, 1862. Before it was over between 450 and 800 white settlers and soldiers were reported killed, and considerable property was destroyed in southern Minnesota.

Although triggered by a relatively trivial incident it was fueled by "institutionalized corruption of the Indian System."<sup>7</sup> During the first year of his administration in August of 1861, President Lincoln appointed George E. H. Day to launch an investigation into the alleged corruption and consequent unrest between whites and Indians in Minnesota.<sup>8</sup> By October, Day reported on facts "showing voluminous and outrageous frauds upon the Indians."<sup>9</sup>

Demands of the Civil War were causing delays in making annuity payments to reservation residents, but the money eventually arrived only to be siphoned off by corrupt politicians and Indian Affairs Administrators.<sup>10</sup> As Day described it, "Had the most skillful rogues in the [world] been employed to get up a safe mode of swindling...no more perfect system could have been devised."<sup>11</sup> Day urged a new

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<sup>5</sup> Carley, *The Sioux Uprising*, p.7.

<sup>6</sup> Carley, *The Sioux Uprising*; Roy W. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux: United Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967); Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986); Hank H. Cox, *Lincoln And The Sioux Uprising of 1862* (Nashville: Cumberland & House, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians*, p.74.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

accounting system be implemented to “save this honest Republican Administration with honest Abraham Lincoln at its head and an honest man...from the charge of *dishonesty* especially toward the poor ignorant Indians.”<sup>12</sup>

By January, 1862, Missionaries Thomas Williamson and Stephan Riggs advised “the Minnesota congressional delegation that the situation in Minnesota was critical...‘the Indians are greatly cheated by the traders’.... The Sioux were hungry and could not even afford to buy provisions...and inaction would guarantee ‘collision with the Indians on our frontiers.’ Six months later, a crisis in Minnesota proved the stark accuracy of Bishop Whipple’s description of the Indian System: ‘It commences in discontent and ends in blood.’”<sup>13</sup>

Usually by the end of June of each year the Indians’ annuity goods and cash would have arrived, but in 1862 June and July passed, and the money did not arrive. Early in August the Sioux leader named Little Crow, had obtained a promise from a local Indian agent that some provisions would be issued to his people, but the promise was not kept and no further credit would be extended to them by the traders. “The Indians’ anger at the traders’ refusal of credit was further inflamed when one of the storekeepers, Andrew J. Myrick, remarked brutally, ‘If they are hungry, let them eat grass.’”<sup>14</sup>

Following the killing of five white people on August 17, 1862 a council of chiefs was convened and arguments were made by many of the Indians attending to start a general uprising in protest of the conditions that they had been forced to tolerate. Chief Little Crow, although reluctant to do so, “agreed to lead the Sioux in a war to drive the settlers from the Minnesota Valley.”<sup>15</sup> The Sioux attacked the Lower Agency near present day Redwood Falls on August 18. During the attack on the Lower Agency, Andrew Myrick escaped out of a second-story window but was killed soon thereafter and his corpse was found with grass stuffed in his mouth as retaliation for his earlier statement to “let them eat grass!”<sup>16</sup> Thereafter, for only about one week, “the Indians were on the offensive but were stopped at Fort Ridgely and New Ulm.... The momentum of the Sioux was halted and the whites gained time to gather their forces. While raids by small groups of Indians against white settlers continued for many months, by the end of September the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> Carley, *The Sioux Uprising*, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Uprising was over for all practical purposes."<sup>17</sup> The battle that ended the war has historically been referred to as the battle at Wood Lake which took place north of the present-day Echo, Minnesota on September 23, 1862.

### Aftermath of 1862 Uprising

Many Lightnings, a Wahpeton warrior, fought and was wounded in the battle of Wood Lake. He, like the Sioux leader Little Crow, realized their defeat at Wood Lake was going to be followed by the extermination of all Sioux from Minnesota. Many Lightnings and others collected their families and fled to the northwest into British Territory.<sup>18</sup> In January of 1864, Many Lightnings and his two eldest sons along with other Dakota fugitives were captured near Winnipeg and were back in custody in Fort Snelling by April. In June of 1864 they were removed from Fort Snelling and transported to the prison of Davenport, Iowa.<sup>19</sup> The story of the Flandreau Sioux begins with the experiences of the Santee after their defeat in the Sioux uprising of 1862."<sup>20</sup>

At Davenport, Many Lightnings and others who had been held prisoner at Fort Snelling joined several hundred other prisoners who had been transferred from Mankato following the executions in December of 1862.<sup>21</sup> "Their living conditions were bad. As a semi-nomadic people they were accustomed to living with less, but this was less than less.... During the three years of their incarceration, nearly one-third of the men died, an alarming statistic."<sup>22</sup>

Of those prisoners being held at Davenport approximately 40 were pardoned by President Lincoln in 1864. It was reported that the president wanted to pardon others but was reluctant to do so without the agreement of the Minnesota delegation. Missionary Williamson and others continued to seek additional pardons. Finally, early in 1865 George E. H. Day, the former Northern Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was scheduled to meet with President Lincoln on April 16 to make final arrangements for release of the

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<sup>17</sup> Clifford Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah: A History of the Flandreau Santee Sioux*. Tribal History Program, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, 1971, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> William L. Bean, *Eastman \* Cloud Man \* Many Lightnings\* An Angle-Dakota Family\**. Compiled and printed by William L. Bean, of Flandreau, S.D., 1989, p. 44,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah*, 35.

<sup>21</sup> Carley, *The Sioux Uprising*, 78.

<sup>22</sup> Bean, *Eastman*, 48.

Davenport prisoners. Lincoln was assassinated April 14 and consequently that meeting never took place.<sup>23</sup> A year later, in "April, 1866, after about 120 had died in prison, the remaining 247 were pardoned by President Andrew Johnson.... The following June they were finally allowed to join their families who were then living on the Santee Reservation near Niobrara, Nebraska."<sup>24</sup> Many Lightnings was among those pardoned and those who went to Niobrara.

While imprisoned at Davenport, Many Lightnings learned to read and write, and "was swept up into the tide of evangelism that had been carried over from Mankato."<sup>25</sup> Dr. Thomas Williamson, a Presbyterian missionary, baptized a great many of the Indian prisoners into the Christian faith. "Many Lightnings was baptized as Jacob, taking a name he learned from the Bible, and adding Eastman, his beloved Nancy's surname."<sup>26</sup>

Nancy Eastman was born to the marriage of an English-American Lieutenant, Seth Eastman, and a Dacotah woman, Stands Sacred. Stands Sacred was living with her family on the Shores of Lake Calhoon, and Lieutenant Eastman was stationed nearby at Fort Snelling when they met.<sup>27</sup> In 1847 Nancy and Many Lightnings eloped and made their home initially at Oak Grove, and later further up the Minnesota River Valley near Redwood Falls.<sup>28</sup> From 1848 through 1858 five children were born to the marriage and later in life baptized as Mary, John, David, James, and Charles Eastman. Nancy died soon after giving birth to Charles. Early in his boyhood, Charles Alexander Eastman was encouraged by Jacob to "learn the English language and something about books."<sup>29</sup> Charles "went on to graduate from Dartmouth College and Boston University...eventually [he] rose to 'world wide prominence' as a lecturer and author of books on North American Indians."<sup>30</sup>

When Many Lightnings (Jacob) was captured in Canada he was with his two oldest sons and they were brought back to Minnesota with him. His two youngest sons, James and Charles, were left behind. John and David were with Jacob when he arrived at Niobrara in May or June of 1866.

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<sup>23</sup> Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah*, 53-54

<sup>24</sup> Carley, *The Sioux Uprising*, 78

<sup>25</sup> Bean, *Eastman*, 48

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 49

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

## The Niobrara Reservation

The Eastmans and others who arrived in 1866 spent the first year in cloth tents. "An attempt was made to plant potatoes and corn...but met with little success."<sup>31</sup> "The new location was far from ideal.... During the winter of 1866-67, there was a great deal of sickness...."<sup>32</sup>

There was a great deal of uncertainty during the three years the Eastmans lived at Niobrara. Early in 1867 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs recommended that a reservation for the Santee Sioux be established between the Big Sioux and James Rivers which would have included an area bounded by the towns of Redfield, Flandreau, and Huron, South Dakota. That land was withdrawn from sale and the Homestead Act for that purpose, but the reservation was never established and the order of withdrawal was rescinded in 1869. Thereafter it was surveyed and opened to homesteading.<sup>33</sup>

The debate continued as to what to do with those at Niobrara who had been joined by then by several hundred more Indians who were removed from the dismal conditions at the Crow Creek Reservation in Dakota Territory. Disagreement emerged between the Chiefs and many of the tribal members. There was some discussion by the government to remove them to the present state of Oklahoma. The local Indian Agent was being frustrated in his attempt to encourage permanent improvements and development of agriculture at Niobrara because of the uncertainty of the future of that reservation.<sup>34</sup>

By the spring of 1869 "there was a general movement of Santees into the Big Sioux Valley"<sup>35</sup> located in southeastern Dakota Territory, and even into Minnesota, by families that decided they had to do something to better their lives. In March, the Eastmans along with up to 24 other families "made the decision to take control of their lives to leave the uncertainty of the reservation."<sup>36</sup> Without authorization to do so, they crossed over the icy Missouri River near the mouth of the Vermillion River "into Dakota Territory, like the old days, when the whole village would move to another place for the autumn hunt. But this time things were different, the men had chopped off their hair, and put on 'civilized' clothing. They were now Christian Indians, resolved to live like the white homesteaders on their farms.

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<sup>31</sup> Bean, *Eastman*, 50

<sup>32</sup> Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah*, 59

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-64

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 71

<sup>36</sup> Bean, *Eastman*, 51

"On reaching the valley of the Big Sioux River where the watercourse doubles back to form a loop, they were once more in a terrain reminiscent of the fertile land near their ancestral villages...this site was known as Wakpaipaksan 'river bend'."<sup>37</sup> The location of the 1869 settlement was north of the abandoned Flandrau town site. "Some of the colony members had scouted the area a year earlier and found it to be an ideal spot to take claims."<sup>38</sup>

An early white settler in Minnehaha County recounted his first acquaintance with Indians in his article published as part of *Norwegian Pioneers History of Minnehaha County, South Dakota from 1866 to 1896*.<sup>39</sup> Ole Thompson reported that in the fall of 1868 he spoke with a couple of the 300 or so Indians who had set up tents in an area believed to be between Sioux Falls and Dell Rapids. He related the following:

I came to understand they had been in the Indian rebellion in 1862 and that Canty John was one that was to be hanged in Mankato but escaped and became free. I was given a report then about the big massacre in Minnesota. They related that the main cause of it was that the government agents who were ordered to give the Indians what they promised, took a part of it themselves and deceived them in many ways.... They received little or nothing and their wives and children were in need. This happened many times.

Therefore, they blamed the white people...who were the cause of their misery. They said if they had been treated right, there wouldn't have been any outbreak.

I thought then, there was a lot of truth in that.... We came here as Christians to proclaim to them civilization's better rule of life, but in many ways it was the opposite; I mean it was the government's fault and responsibility.<sup>40</sup>

Ole Thompson also related a trip he took in the fall of 1869. He took a load of goods to Flandreau "to do trade with the Indians. No white men had as yet gone so far north from where they live, namely Dell Rapids."<sup>41</sup> His recollections illustrate how white settlers helped the Indian homesteaders.

The first day we came to where Egan is now and there we...set up a fire as it was cold.... The next day we drove to Flandreau there were many Indians there and they always showed us friendliness.

The spring of 1870 my brother Gunder and myself were again in Flandreau to help the Indians cultivate. Many of them had taken up land. We were there three weeks and cultivated land.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Iver I. Oien and others, eds., *Pioneer History: Minnehaha County's Norwegian Pioneers History from the Year 1866 to 1896*. (Sioux Falls: Insty Prints, 1976), Translated and reprinted by Emily Brende Sittig and Clara Brende Christenson, pp. 47-49.

<sup>40</sup> Oien and others, eds., *Pioneer History*, 47

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 48



Long-term success by the Indian families who settled in the Big Sioux River Valley was not encouraged or predicted. To the contrary, when he first became aware of the exodus from Niobrara, John Williamson wrote "I am afraid (they will) only have a hard time and they will have all their claims taken away from them."<sup>43</sup> Newly appointed Santee Agent, Asa M. Jauney, expressed his attitude in a letter stating "The Indians who have left this reservation [Niobrara] are not capable of competing with white men in the accumulation of property. They have a very desirable location, so much so that white men will desire to have it and they will buy out many of them at low rates."<sup>44</sup> The government was officially opposed to the experiment and the Indians were required to denounce their tribal relations before being allowed to file homestead claims.

In the following year, 1870, the original 25 families were joined at River Bend by an additional 35 families. Between 1869 and 1872, the population of Flandreau doubled and when Sisseton Agent Adams visited in 1872, "he found two hundred twenty-seven people living in fifty-one log houses" but with only one plow for the Colony.<sup>45</sup> John Williamson sought government aid for the Flandreau Santees under the 1868 Treaty and in 1873 Agent Adams reported delivering clothing, "oxen and wagons, plows, hoes and scythes to about half of the families"<sup>46</sup> in the region, and recommended more aid noting that the colonists "through faith, have escaped the pollutions and thralldom of tribal and ancestry arrangements and are struggling against poverty and want."<sup>47</sup>

Despite serious agricultural problems during the 1870's such as grasshopper infestations, the colony achieved some stability and members were able to supplement their crops "by fishing, hunting and trapping, by making artifacts for sale from the pipestone quarries...and as game became scarce...by freighting, woodcutting and mail carrying."<sup>48</sup> By 1878 the population had increased to 365 and there "were now twice as many whites as Indians in the Flandreau area."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah*, 76

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 77

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 79

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 80

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 84

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 86

By the end of the 1870 decade which had many bad crop years, not unlike many white settlers, the Indians were having problems with indebtedness and taxes. In the 1880's the Indian population declined as some left to claim allotted land on various reservations and others migrated to Minnesota. Homesteads were being lost to foreclosure and nonpayment of taxes by Indians as well as whites. "By 1900, the land base had been considerably eroded. In 1902, there were only three farms of 160 acres or more being farmed by Flandreau Indians.... Nearly all of the men under 30 had no land and worked as day laborers or farmhands." <sup>50</sup>

The Indian land base continued to erode until, by 1933, "only two of the original homesteads remained intact," <sup>51</sup> and the Indian population was suffering generally as a result of the great depression.

### **Establishment of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe**

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century government services to the Flandreau Indian population were minimal. The Flandreau Santee was not a federally recognized tribe and consequently there did not seem to be any commitment to them or their well-being like there was to other organized tribes. In June of 1929, the Flandreau colony met and formed a Tribal Council and asked to be recognized by the federal government as a reservation.

It wasn't until passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934, known as the Wheeler-Howard Act, that the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe (FSST) was organized and recognized by the federal government as a separate and distinct Indian Tribe. The Act provided for the acquisition of additional lands for Indian Reservations, for the proclamation of new Reservations, for economic development on Reservations, and for Tribal self-government. Tribes could either elect to be recognized under the Act and participate in its programs, or not. The FSST voted to accept the Act and by "1937 3,138 acres had been purchased by the federal government for the use by the Tribe. Much of the land was purchased from life insurance companies which had probably acquired the land as a result of bankruptcies earlier in the Great Depression." <sup>52</sup>

The FSST has continued to pursue policies and take steps towards economic independence. In recent years it has taken advantage of revenues made available through its casino operation to expand its

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 104

<sup>52</sup> Allen and others, eds., *Dacotah*, 116

land base by purchasing land which it holds in fee, as opposed to land acquired by the federal government which is held in trust. The FSST also continues to focus on the health care needs of its members, and has developed retirement housing for its elders. In reflecting on its history and its current role, the FSST acknowledged that "The Flandreau Santee Sioux are a people who had once lost everything, but over 150 years have rebuilt a community balancing traditional values and faith with the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and continue to broaden our horizons across many disciplines and industries."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, <http://www.fsst.org/EconomicDevelopmentconcept.html>

## LINCOLN COULD HAVE BEEN IN THE BLACK HILLS — CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?

Robert E. Hayes

In keeping with the conference theme of the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln we should not leave any stones unturned. Yes, Lincoln had a dramatic and positive impact on the entire nation which includes the Northern Plains and the Black Hills. Many political historians label Lincoln as the best and greatest president of the United States has ever known. It is appropriate we honor Honest Abe on this milestone of history.

I want to thank Rex Alan Smith and his book *The Carving of Mount Rushmore* for help with this paper. I took the liberty to use Smith's metaphors, which was one of his great talents with his writing.

The Black Hills of South Dakota probably has more evidence to promulgate the homage of Abraham Lincoln than any other location in the State. Lincoln's image appears in the form of a carved bust on the side of a granite intrusion called Mount Rushmore and sculpted by Gutzon Borglum. In addition to the busts of the four United States Presidents, Borglum originally had enormous visions of grandeur and envisioned carving a 500 word history of the United States on the mountain with letters 3 feet high. In my estimation this was a preposterous idea. There would not have been room to carve the busts of the four presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. It was good this idea was dropped.

Growing up with Mount Rushmore, much of this paper are my own thoughts and ideas. My father operated the aerial tramway for better than seven years. During the summer vacations my mother would often pack me a lunch and I would go to work with my father. I usually rode to the top of the mountain with the first five men who were being hoisted. One of the men would say, Bobby, do you want to ride up with us? They always had room for a little boy. I would spend all morning on the top of the mountain talking to the winchmen, tool men, powdermen, drill doctor, and wave at the men drilling below the heads. I would come down before lunch and eat with the men in the tool dressing shop. In the afternoon I would help my father load and unload drill steel in and out of the cable car. I enjoyed unloading the empty lunch buckets after lunch and stacking them neatly by the hoisthouse. I worked six seasons as a seasonal ranger, three when I was in college and three after I retired; therefore, I have a deep knowledge of the carving and history of Mount Rushmore. I learned much more researching for this paper. The visible bust of Abraham Lincoln at Mount Rushmore is visited by nearly 3 million people each year. This is surpassed by the

Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. which attracts nearly 4 million visitors each year. I don't know any other location which attracts more visitors specifically for Lincoln.

The Lincoln Memorial stands at the west end of the National Mall as a neoclassical monument to the 16<sup>th</sup> President. The memorial, designed by Henry Bacon, after ancient Greek temples, stands 190 feet long, 119 feet wide, and almost 100 feet high. It is surrounded by a peristyle of 38 fluted Doric columns, one for each of the thirty six states in the Union at the time of Lincoln's death, and two columns in-antis at the entrance behind the colonnade. This nomenclature is difficult to understand. The north and south side chambers contain carved inscriptions of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address and his Gettysburg Address. Lying between the north and south chambers is the central hall containing the solitary figure of Lincoln sitting in contemplation. The statue was carved in four years by the Piccirilli brothers under the supervision of the sculptor, Daniel Chester French. The statue of Lincoln is 19 feet high and weighs 175 tons. The original plan was for the statue to be ten feet high, but this was changed so that the figure of Lincoln would not be dwarfed by the size of the chamber. A commission to plan a monument was first proposed in 1867, shortly after Lincoln's death. The design for that plan called for six equestrian and 31 pedestrian statues of colossal size, with a 12-foot statue of Lincoln in the center. That project was never started for lack of funds. Congress approved the bill to construct the memorial in 1910. Construction began in 1914, and the memorial was opened to the public in 1922. The Memorial was dedicated by former President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft on May 30, 1922. The Memorial is visited by millions of visitors each year and is the site of many large public gatherings and protests. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous I Have a Dream speech to a crowd by the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. Damaged over the years by heavy visitation and environmental factors, the Lincoln Memorial is currently undergoing a major restoration.

The Lincoln Memorial is more ornate than Mount Rushmore and the scale is much smaller than Mount Rushmore. The seated Lincoln is about 19 feet high at the Lincoln Memorial, compared to the distance of 60 feet from the top of Lincoln's head to the bottom of his chin at Mount Rushmore. The scale of the bust of Lincoln at Mount Rushmore is equivalent to man 465 feet tall.

Would you believe the image of Abraham Lincoln has been in the Black Hills long before Lincoln was born? I know this is a bizarre story but it is a true story. This can be explained by some complex geology.

Mount Rushmore is largely composed of granite. The memorial is carved on the northwest margin of the Harney Peak granite batholith in the Black Hills of South Dakota, so the geologic formations of the

heart of the Black Hills region are also evident at Mount Rushmore. The batholith intruded into the preexisting mica schist rock during the Precambrian period about 1.6 billion years ago, which equates to 1600 million years ago. However, the uneven cooling of the molten rock caused the formation of both fine and coarse-grained mineral, including quartz, feldspar, muscovite (mica), hornblende, and biotite. Fractures in the granite were sealed by pegmatite dikes. The light-colored streaks in the presidents are due to these dikes. The Black Hills granites were exposed to erosion during the late Precambrian, but were buried by sandstones and other sediments during the Cambrian Period. The area remained buried throughout the Paleozoic Era, but was exposed again to erosion during the tectonic uplift 70 million years ago. The Black Hills area was uplifted as an elongated geologic dome which towered some 20,000 feet above sea level, but erosion wore the area down to only 4,000 feet, the elevation of Keystone. The subsequent natural erosion of this mountain range allowed the carving by stripping the granite of the overlying sediments and the softer adjacent schists. The contact between the granite and darker schist is viewable just below the sculpture of George Washington.

It is well known the late Gutzon Borglum and numerous assistants were responsible for the carving of Mount Rushmore. My father Edwald Hayes was the hoist engineer for the aerial tramway for many years at Mount Rushmore. He had almost daily contact with the sculptor when Mr. Borglum was on the job at the mountain. Ed Hayes used to tell the story about Mr. Borglum. One day Mr. Borglum asked, Hayes do you see those faces in the Mountain?

I can't see the faces in the mountain, Mr. Borglum, replied Hayes.

Borglum went on to say, Their faces are in the mountain. All I have to do is bring them out.

This is true with any sculptor who takes a chunk of marble and carves a piece of art. The figure has been in the marble for millions of years and the sculptor has to chisel enough stone to come up with the final product.

Borglum selected Mount Rushmore as the site for several reasons. The rock of the mountain is composed of smooth, fine-grained granite. The durable granite erodes only 1 inch every 10,000 years, indicating that it was sturdy enough to support sculpting. In addition, it was the tallest mountain in the region, looming 5,725 feet above sea level. Because the mountain faces the southeast, the workers also had the advantage of sunlight for most of the day.

## The Beginning

How did this all come about? Doane Robinson is credited with promoting mountain carving in the Black Hills. Robinson was born in 1856, in Sparta, Wisconsin, and was christened Jonah LeRoy. Jonah, however, is not a word that comes easily to the tongue of a toddler, and to his sister, Sadie, became Doane, and Doane he remained, officially as well as unofficially, for the remainder of his life. Upon reaching manhood, Robinson took up a homestead in Minnesota. While his hands were on plow handles his mind was on books. He found that sowing and reaping and building fences was not his cup of tea. Next he studied law and set up a practice in what was Dakota Territory. Robinson found he would rather write stories than briefs and would rather address audiences than juries. Soon he moved into literature, particularly history, and eventually into the position of South Dakota's official historian.

There were two different stories of how Doane Robinson first came upon the idea of mountain carving which was later to be the carving of Mount Rushmore. The version he later wrote for the public is not true. The account in his private papers is true. There is a good practical reason and explanation.

Robinson said the idea came as an illuminating flash while he was making a speech in a cigar-fogged room in Huron, South Dakota on the afternoon of January 24, 1924. That was in the days when highways were known by name rather than by number, when the main road across South Dakota was alternately dirt and gravel. The road was known as The Black Hills and Yellowstone Highway. The road was marked by black and yellow posts. It was popularly known as The Black and Yellow Trail.

It is true that during that speech Robinson did suggest the carving of a monument in the Black Hills. In other respect, that is not how it happened, and we can only speculate on why he told it as if it were. Considering Robinson's inoffensive nature and Borglum's delicate ego, it appears likely that he did it to spare Borglum from knowing he had not been Robinson's first choice for the job. Robinson had previously contacted Lorado Taft.

Robinson had been trying to think of new ways of luring tourists to South Dakota. Featuring some of the nation's finest natural scenery, the Black Hills, despite the wretched roads, were already attracting large number of visitors. In Robinson's opinion they were not attracting enough, and he believed this was because tourists soon got fed up with scenery unless it had something of special interest connected with it to make it imperative. While contemplating on that, he began reading newspaper stories about the tourists flocking to see the gigantic reliefs being carved into a Georgia mountain by the sculptor named Borglum. Then Robinson remembered the needles, an area of great free standing fingers of granite in the Black Hills,

and his inspiration came. Acting accordingly, he wrote a letter to a man at the time regarded as America's leading Sculptor. The man was Laredo Taft who resided in Chicago. Taft responded very negatively and explained he was in poor health and indicated he was not interested.

Robinson followed up with another letter attempting to motivate Taft. Robinson presented many of his ideas and was promoting the Needles. Robinson told Taft: Near the summit is a little park through which the highway passes.... It is studded with column after column of these pinnacles and in my imagination I can see all the heroes of the old west peering out from them; Lewis and Clark, Fremont, Jed Smith, Bridger, Sacagawea, Red Cloud, and in an equestrian statue of Buffalo Bill Cody and the overland mail."At this time Robinson was getting a lot of positive support; the environmentalists of 1924 were not known by that name but they existed, and they were having fits. In barbed editorials and steaming personal letters, Robinson's suggestion was being condemned, and often Robinson was being condemned with it. One environmentalist accused Robinson of promoting a commercial rape of the Black Hills. Statuary among the Needles would be as ridiculous as keeping a cow in the Capitol rotunda," wrote another; and leave the Hills alone! was a common cry. He intended only to use a little corner of the Needles for a carved display that would commemorate the heroes of the Old West and at the same time bring a flood of tourist dollars to Dakota and the Black Hills.

Not all of the response was unfavorable. Many editors liked the idea and so informed their readers. Many individuals felt the same way, and so informed Robinson. Most commercial clubs (forerunners of chambers of commerce) thought it a grand idea.

Throughout early 1924, Robinson continued to speak of Laredo Taft as the potential sculptor. But as time passed and Taft showed no signs of changing his mind, Robinson began to mention Daniel Chester French, who had done the seated figure in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and also not mention that fellow who was getting so much publicity down in Georgia, Gutzon Borglum. Whether Robinson contacted French seems not to be known. Nine months after first approaching Taft, he did write to Borglum on August 20, 1924.

It is very conceivable that Robinson may have been thinking of contacting Sculptor Daniel French because the Lincoln Memorial was recently opened to the public in 1922. French's name must have been popular in the media at the time. It is conceivable that Robinson might have considered French as a possible candidate to carve a mountain in the Black Hills.



Robinson's letter was received by Borglum's assistant, Major J. G. Tucker. Tucker read it, delightedly scribbled, Here it is, Borglum! Let's go! across it and forwarded it to the sculptor at his home in Connecticut. Without knowing it, Robinson had approached exactly the right man at exactly the right time.

Eight days later Robinson received a telegram from Borglum accepting his invitation to go to the Black Hills. Now the two men began rapidly exchanging messages. Within a week they had established that Robinson was mighty glad as was Borglum. Robinson would make arrangements to meet Borglum in Rapid City and take him from there to tour the Needles, and he would arrange for Governor William Henry McMaster and Senator Peter Norbeck to be in the party. Borglum thought that would be a splendid arrangement, but said there must be no publicity about his visit until after I have seen the mountain.... Robinson would see that the visit was kept quiet. Borglum could come between September 19 and October 10."

Finally, on September 22, 1924, Borglum wired from the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago that he was leaving that night on Northwestern Train 503, booked for Rapid City.

At dawn on September 24, Chicago and Northwestern No. 503 was thirty-three hours out of Chicago was hooting and clattering at forty miles an hour along the bad River bottoms. Aboard the train the early rising Borglum was already up and preparing for the day. The train having no dining car was now slowing for a breakfast stop at the little Cheyenne River town of Wasta. Doane Robinson also was on No 503, having boarded at Pierre on the previous evening. Robinson detrained at Wasta and he saw standing together on the platform a solemn, big-eyed boy of eleven; a man whose militarily straight back and magnificent bay window gave him the profile of an upended half-potato; and a stocky, keen-eyed, dark-moustached man who so radiated energy as to appear in motion even when standing still. Robinson had not yet met Borglum, but he knew the third man in that trio just had to be him. Hurrying up to the group, Robinson introduced himself and in turn was introduced by Borglum to Borglum's young son, Lincoln, and to his assistant, Major J. G. Tucker. Obviously the man with the bay window was Major Tucker.

I can't help but thinking about how times have changed in the past seventy years. Robinson and Borglum had developed a relationship and made many plans without the convenience of the telephone. Apparently all of their communication was accomplished by the use of the U. S. Mail and telegraph. They met for the first time like they were old friends.

During breakfast and the remaining forty miles to Rapid City, Robinson explained to the sculptor that, unfortunately, he had not been able to get either the governor or Senator Norbeck to join them.

Borglum replied that he did not mind about that, and then went on to tell the historian what he had told him during their correspondence: he was opposed to carving western characters in the Black Hills. They were too local. This should be a grand national monument commemorating America's founders and builders. On a pocket pad Borglum quickly sketched a heroic figure of George Washington standing in lonely majesty above surrounding mountains. The sculptor said this was the kind of thing they should be thinking about.

When the train arrived in the Rapid City depot it gave a last sigh of compressed air. On the platform, a large crowd of men holding their hats and women holding their dresses against the gusting of the hot air wind. Despite Borglum's request, his arrival had been kept no more secret than a confidence whispered at a bridge party. Those in the crowd did not know why Borglum had come, but they knew he had come and that he was famous, and they were there to greet him. After Borglum had alighted from the train and had been greeted by all the proper dignitaries saying all the proper things, he and the party were taken by businessman Paul Bellamy on a short bus tour of the town.

Doane Robinson at first was dismayed and embarrassed by all the fanfare and hoopla with which the sculptor was being greeted. He promised to get him into town quietly, and now here Borglum was being fussed over as if he were the Prince of Wales. It did not take long for Robinson to learn that his concern was groundless, for, as he later dryly observed, Borglum was delighted! Knowing Borglum, he may have alerted the press that he was coming to Rapid City, because he was always a showman and always loved the fanfare and attention.

The luncheon called for speech making, and Borglum made a good one. He described his work at Stone Mountain and his audience was spellbound. Keep in mind the idea of mountain carving was preposterous and was not accepted by many.

Joined by Dr. C. C. O'Harra, the geologist-president of the South Dakota School of Mines at Rapid City, and by mineralogist Dr. J. P. Connolly from that same institution, the inspection party full of good will and prime chicken, set out to look over the high country surrounding Harney Peak. After a brief inspection tour that afternoon they retired to the Game Lodge, a luxurious resort hotel in Custer State Park, and continued their investigation the next day. Gazing from the top of Harney Peak out across the Needles, Borglum exclaimed, "There's the place to carve a great national memorial!"

Wait until we show you something a bit farther on, Robinson replied. Soon from another high range Robinson showed him a great line of domes and pinnacles flanking the south side of the peak.

There was a moment of silence. Then Borglum, cried out, Here is the place! American history shall march along the skyline! And for the moment at least that settled it. This was certainly not the end of the search.

After Borglum's visit to the Black Hills in the fall of 1924, a long winter followed. Doane Robinson was obviously discouraged. Robinson sent stories to the media attempting to keep his idea of mountain carving alive. The frequency of Robinson's releases became less frequent. Keeping the proposition alive in the press was the clamor of those environmentalists who were trying to kill the project. Many thought the idea was a preposterous pipe dream and soon forgot about the idea altogether.

One day when I was working the desk in the Visitor's Center a lady came up to the desk and pointed to a photo of Mount Rushmore showing the mountain prior to the carving which was displayed under a glass top. She was calling this to the attention of her young son who could hardly see over the counter top and saying, This is what it looked like before they ruined it. Many thought a mountain was being defaced.

There were still a few who were pushing the idea in Rapid City which included two civic-minded physicians, Doctors F. W. Minty and R. J. Jackson. The once-skeptical businessman Paul Bellamy came around supporting the project. Mayor John Boland, a former Keystonite, was beginning to support it. Recorded history of the latter two men will give much credit for their support of the carving.

On January 6, 1925, *The Rapid City Journal* did finally carry a story on the project which included an interview with State Forester Theodore Shoemaker of Keystone. If Gutzon Borglum wanted to carve statues in the Black Hills, said Mr. Shoemaker, the folks of Keystone thought he ought to do it in their neighborhood because that was where the best granite was to be found. More specifically, he added, the best rock for carving would be found on Old Baldy Mountain, Sugarloaf Mountain, or on an obscure crag called Mount Rushmore. The story was not run to be taken seriously...and it was not taken seriously.

It was not a Happy New Year for Robinson. The economy was not that great in South Dakota and the legislature did not have any money for such an ambitious project. Of all things, the price of gasoline inflated to 26 cents a gallon and irate voters wanted to know why. All things considered, there could never have been a worse time to ask the legislature to appropriate \$10,000 for such a foolhardy project. The Mount Harney Memorial Bill did give permission to carve a mountain in Custer State Park.

I believe it is safe to say that the Mount Harney bill would never have been presented to the legislature if it had not been for the help and persistence of Senator Peter Norbeck. Borglum also was persistent and again visited Norbeck in Washington on January 25, 1925. Norbeck was on record that

Borglum is one of the great artists in the world. Back in Pierre, despite the efforts of its supporters, the Harney bill was killed in early February by the committee. The committee members had been willing to authorize the carving of a South Dakota mountain, but they simply could not bring themselves to spend South Dakota money on it. As far as Robinson was concerned this was the end of his dream. Borglum was always optimistic that he could raise the money. This was always Borglum's problem, he never had a handle on finances and this haunted him many times.

Norbeck replied by telling Robinson not to give up now, but instead to cut the requested appropriation down to \$5,000 and get the bill reintroduced. In spite of other complications they had the Harney bill resubmitted as simply an authorization for the carving providing for no appropriation of money at all. The Mount Harney bill was passed by the legislature, and on March 5, Gov. Carl Gunderson grudgingly signed the bill.

Once the bill was signed, Norbeck, Robinson, and other supporters discontinued all public activity connected with the Mount Harney project, like prospectors keeping a gold strike quiet until their claim has been recorded. The opponents had until June 1, to petition for a referendum. Borglum even kept his pen and mouth shut.

In mid-April the Stone Mountain Association appointed a sculptor named Augustus Lukeman to finish the Confederate Memorial so this finally closed out Borglum which is another story.

Borglum was temporarily living in North Carolina. Borglum then went to Omaha to bid on a job that might be worth a quarter of million dollars. And from there he went to San Antonio, Texas to negotiate a contract for a commission to be called the Texas Trail Driver's Monument. This kept Borglum busy in the interim. Borglum maintained a studio in San Antonio for several years. This is where Ivan Houser worked for Borglum and was later an assistant sculptor at Mount Rushmore and later was a co-founder of the Rushmore Pottery in Keystone.

When July rolled around the Mount Harney project was now law. Since Borglum had been ousted at Stone Mountain, he was ready to trot. Progress moved very slowly. The governor was supposed to appoint a Mount Harney Memorial Commission and serve as chairman and was still preoccupied with the state's financial woes and with voters who were still giving him fits about the price of gasoline. The Norbecks were summering at Valhalla, the rambling mountain lodge near the Needles for a much needed vacation. Congressman Williamson was building a summer home on Iron Creek. Robinson was busy finishing a census report. Borglum continued to correspond with Robinson. Borglum gave estimates of the

cost of the monument which ranged from \$400,000 to \$1,000,000. If my memory is correct the cost turned out to \$8.00 less than \$1million.

In spite of the stagnation, Borglum decided to get going. He told Norbeck and Robinson that he would return to the Black Hills to find a mountain to be carved. There was no money for the trip, but Borglum said he was going at his own risk. At Borglum's insistence, Robinson and Norbeck agreed to meet him in Pierre on August 10 (exactly two years before President Calvin Coolidge handed Borglum the drill steel to proceed with the carving). His trip was beautifully timed. The public mood in South Dakota was ripe as the farmers were having a good year.

Upon their arrival in Rapid City a luncheon was planned and Borglum was to speak which drew a very large crowd. And his speech was a smashing success. And the reason was that he told his listeners exactly what they wanted to hear. He told them that seven other states wanted him to carve on their mountains. At this early date he said the figures to be carved were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.

At one time I believed that the carving of Theodore Roosevelt was almost an afterthought. Roosevelt and Borglum were personal friends. One of the early models only depicted the likeness of three presidents minus Roosevelt. If the entablature would have been feasible, just where would it all have fit together? There were as many as nine different versions of the model.

After the luncheon, Norbeck drove Borglum and Lincoln to the game lodge where they were to stay during their search. The next morning Norbeck drove them and the superintendent of Custer State Park, Colonel M. I. Shade, to Sylvan Lake, where they rented horses from the Sylvan Lake stables. Borglum was able to survey the entire high granite and they spent the rest of the day inspecting Borglum's selections. They returned the next day to further investigate the area.

The next day they met with State Forester Theodore Shoemaker in Keystone so he could show Borglum the mountains he was talking about. Their trip was very short. From Keystone they rode west up Battle Creek and the railroad track and they turned and rode southwest up Lafferty Gulch where they passed Sugarloaf Mountain, Old Mount Baldy and on to where they found themselves facing the great cliffs of Mount Rushmore. The wall was divided by four deep angling fissures, which were very evenly spaced. The cliff faced to the east, which in Borglum's opinion was the best of all directions for a favorable play of light. Borglum had decided he had found his mountain.

Upon returning to Rapid City that evening, he told the *Journal* that Mount Rushmore was perfect for his purpose and that he knew of no piece of granite comparable to it in the United States. Borglum knew he would have to examine Rushmore a good deal more closely before he could really know if it was carvable.

The actual carving of Mount Rushmore is another story

### **Borglum's Love for Lincoln**

It is common knowledge Gutzon Borglum had a love for Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln was his favorite subject for carving. How did this all come about? As near as I can determine, Borglum's first experience goes back to about 1908. The story is quite unique and bizarre and is best told by Rex Alan Smith.

On occasion Gutzon Borglum and his younger brother, Solon, competed for the same commissions which often caused hard feelings between the two brothers. The State of Nebraska was seeking a sculptor to do a massive statue of Abraham Lincoln for the Nebraska state capitol. The Borglums had grown up in Fremont, Nebraska. After several months, the Nebraska committee remained unable to decide which of the several applicants to choose. In early 1909, Gutzon invited Solon to come to his studio to discuss the matter. Solon reported that Gutzon asked him to withdraw his own application and to recommend Gutzon to the committee instead. Gutzon's reason said Solon, that I had never made a Lincoln, and that I did not know the soul of that great man. Upon hearing this Solon was cut to the quick, stunned and speechless. As far as he knew, Gutzon had never made a Lincoln statue either. The upshot of the affair was that neither brother received the assignment, and they were no longer speaking to each other.

Meanwhile, unknown to Solon, Gutzon was actually making a Lincoln. He was doing it on his own rather than on a contract, and he had begun a carving of the bust of Lincoln during the bidding for the Nebraska Lincoln. There can be no doubt that he had originally intended it as a model or demonstration piece to show the Nebraska committee.

When the bust was completed it was exhibited in a Fifth Avenue store in New York City, where it was an instant success. Meanwhile, Borglum had written asking President Theodore Roosevelt if he would display the bust in the White House to commemorate the centennial of Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1909. Roosevelt agreed and once again the bust was a great success. It was purchased by Eugene Meyer, Jr. and was placed in the rotunda of the Capitol where it can be seen today. It is a magnificent piece of work and when Lincoln's son, Robert, first saw it he exclaimed that it was just like seeing Father again. As

the first of Borglum's many Lincolns, it did much to establish him as a leading sculptor, and it was proof that he indeed, was able to capture the real soul of that great man.

I visited the Capitol in 1957 and to my surprise I spotted Borglum's masterpiece of Lincoln. Borglum continued with his infatuation of Lincoln. The "Seated Lincoln" was commissioned 100 years ago by a group of Newark, New Jersey citizens for the century anniversary of Lincoln's birth. (A wealthy Newark resident, Civil War veteran Amos Hoagland Van Horn, contributed \$250,000 for both the "Seated Lincoln" and the Wars of America). President Theodore Roosevelt came to dedicate Seated Lincoln on Memorial Day 1911, as thousands jammed the streets around the new courthouse, where the sculpture is still located today. Several years ago the pattern was discovered in a warehouse in Newark. Dr. Dwayne Pancratz of the Rushmore Borglum Story in Keystone made in new casting of the "Seated Lincoln" and it is on display in Keystone. During the winter months the "Seated Lincoln" has been displayed at the Alex Johnson Hotel in Rapid City and one winter was displayed in Hill City.

James Lincoln de la Mothe Borglum was born on April 9, 1912 and was named for his father's favorite president, Abraham Lincoln, and was called by his middle name, Lincoln. The James had to have come from his grandfather.

In this season of presidents, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Abraham Lincoln is being celebrated, perhaps no other artist is as closely associated with Lincoln's images as Gutzon Borglum.

### **Other Associations with Lincoln**

Like many other locations we grew up with Abraham Lincoln. A portrait of Lincoln was always visible in our classrooms. Lincoln's birthday was always a holiday and it was celebrated by a day out of school. In Rapid City, the Lincoln School was located on St. Joseph Street. We do have a Lincoln County in southeastern South Dakota.

One time I worked in the Lincoln Mine for Wah Chang Corporation in Lincoln County, Nevada. K. C. Lee, a Chinaman, was president of the corporation and was made an honorary citizen of the United States by an act of Congress because he was instrumental in providing much needed tungsten to the United States during World War II. I had the pleasure of meeting this little and distinguished gentleman at one time.

We have been exposed to Lincoln all of our lives. One of the models of the Ford Motor Company and I believe the company marketed their automobiles via the Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford Motor Company. The Lincoln was a separate model.

## Little Known Trivia

Now for the finally. I feel that many are not aware of some of the early history of the Black Hills. This may be a little bit of Black Hills trivia. It was late in my life when I learned this little bit of trivia. Could the Black Hills become a separate state? Sometime during the gold rush of 1876, the mineral rich Black Hills were proposed as a separate territory in a bill that reached the U. S. Senate. Unhappy miners began the movement for eventual statehood for the Black Hills in the gold rush day of 1876 because the capital of Dakota Territory was located at Yankton, and that remote river city proved unsympathetic to the concerns of the Hills.

The Black Hills gained some concessions from the Yankton Ring by threatening to form a district territory of El Dorado. The separatists later named the proposed territory Lincoln, and sent a delegate to Washington, D. C. to push their cause. Several members of Congress were interested, but a bill to create the new realm eventually failed.

When the question of admitting Dakota Territory into the Union came to surface in 1886-89, there was again support for a separate state for the Black Hills. There was also a movement to admit the entire territory as one sprawling state. These concepts for dividing up the territory yielded to the idea of sister states called North Dakota and South Dakota. Yet it's interesting to reflect on how close we came to living in a state called Lincoln.

Now it is time for some fantasy trivia. Following the Civil War, the community we now call Custer was originally settled by a group of southerners which were called Rebels. The original name of the community was Stonewall, obviously named for their hero Gen. Stonewall Jackson. The name was soon changed to Custer for obvious reasons. One time Barbara and I took a courtesy bus tour with Herman Jones who owns and operates Stagecoach West. We boarded the bus in Keystone. When we boarded the bus again at Mount Rushmore, we were quite surprised to see my barber and his wife from Bishop, California. It's a small world, after all. We stopped at a vista point on the Needles Highway. Obviously, at this point there was a good view of Custer in the distance. I suggested a story for Herman Jones and I often wondered if he took me seriously. Look at the view in the distance. If history followed its original course you might be viewing Stonewall, Lincoln today.

## Conclusions

- 1.) Abraham Lincoln had a tremendous, extraordinary, and gigantic impact on the Black Hills which would be difficult to equal.



2.) If Lorado Taft or any other artist would have accepted Doane Robinson's proposal we might have seen western figures, carved somewhere in the Needles, such as Lewis and Clark, Sacagawea, Sitting Bull, Jim Bridger or other westerners. There would have been no Lincoln.

3.) If it had not have been the persistence of Doane Robinson, Congressman William Williams, and especially Senator Peter Norbeck there would not have been a Mount Rushmore as we know it today.

4.) If it was not for state forester Thee Shoemaker, Mount Rushmore may have never been considered as the location for the carvings.

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**THE COWBOY AND THE WEST:  
A PERSONAL EXPLORATION OF THE COWBOY'S ROLE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY**

Stephanie R. Johnson

**Introduction**

One August evening in 1979, my grandfather, Clair Smith, had an idea. He and his brother-in-law had already resolved to drive cattle together from their respective ranches near Prairie City to Belle Fourche in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Gas prices were high and the men, angered by the cost of trucking cattle to market, determined that walking their yearlings would be more economical than hauling them. But while talking that night with his family, a new idea emerged: he should conduct a drive of his own.

He had enough cattle, close to 1,500 head dispersed across pastures near Prairie City and in the sandy foothills of the Slim Buttes. He had men with names like Chic Lafflin and Howard Hotchkiss who were well stocked with trail knowledge. He bought additional horses, borrowed a horse-drawn chuck wagon, acquired a pickup topper to serve as a kitchen, and gathered a few extra trail hands. By September 6, he had the loose ends tied up and his drovers turned the cattle south for the 70-mile journey. No one really knew what to expect. According to a September 9 story in the Belle Fourche Daily Post, a herd this size hadn't walked to Belle Fourche since the early 1900s.

Dick Rebbeck of the *Rapid City Journal* described "a close call when the cattle almost bogged down in a wet draw" and the "tough climb over a dry stretch toward Two Top," the highest point in a chain of rough buttes near the Moreau River. Some days heat waves quivered in the 100-degree air as the prairie lay still beneath, as if holding its breath, while the cattle trudged onward. Other days the wind whipped at the riders' leather-fringed chaps, hinting at fall's approaching chill. My grandfather pushed the cattle and his crew 10 miles per day to reach Belle Fourche in time for the September 15 sale. He told Rebbeck that he had trailed cattle numerous times before, "But I've never trailed this many this far before," he said.

Francis Ganje of the *Tri-State Livestock News* wrote: "Smith takes a long look at the evening sky; almost as if he's smelling the air.... With his hat tipped back and a knowing look in his eyes, he adds, 'But when we reach Belle Fourche, it'll be worth the trip.'" In one of the accompanying photos, my grandfather is reaching into his pocket for something, probably a lighter, and "chewing the fat" with Bob Petera of the

Belle Fourche Livestock Exchange (see appendix). His horse's reins are draped across the fingers of his other hand—the horse's face is touching my grandfather's shoulder. In the photo above, the 10-person crew looks into the camera from atop their horses, their expressions too distant to discern but their postures erect and shoulders squared. Below that, the cattle herd plods along, stretched in a long line like a rubber band from north to south. The caption ends with my grandfather's words: "We were looking for a change in diet, so we thought we'd head for Belle Fourche."

Knowing my grandfather, the reporters were lucky to get a quote from him at all. My mother remembers him being a soft-spoken trail boss, one whose voice rarely rose above a speaking tone when dealing with his trail hands. When I look at pictures of him on the drive, a thin man biting a Marlboro between his teeth, his face is made of sun-baked prairie soil, hard and laced with cracks from years of South Dakota wind. Yet his words were always soft as the velvet fuzz on a horse's nose.

My grandfather died in May 2006 after a battle with congestive heart failure. All I have of him are photos, my own memories, and family stories. But when I opened the book of his life and began reading the pages of his younger years, I found traces of someone that I knew well, someone still very much alive today: the American cowboy.

### **Vietnam to Present: The American Cowboy in Transition**

During the Vietnam War, America stopped revering the cowboy and showed a new aversion to its longtime hero. Hollywood produced only seven Westerns in 1977; compare this number with 54 in 1958 (Corkin 2). Corkin cites the year 1962 as the last year of the Western's "full flowering" (2). After that, Western films and the cowboys in them were increasingly violent, filled with irony and self-criticism, and darker in tone, such as "The Cowboys" (1972) starring John Wayne (Corkin 2, Courtwright 98). As the cowboy stars and their famous directors, such as John Ford, retired from the film industry, new actors and directors with different ideas about the world in which the cowboy functioned began portraying a West filled with chaos. After Vietnam, the spirit of the West either wasn't comforting or didn't seem real to both Hollywood and the American public. As a result, "there have been few Westerns produced and a paucity of notable films in the genre since the mid 1970s" (Corkin 2).

What caused the cowboy to fade after Vietnam? The answer lies in the question, specifically the "after Vietnam" portion. Remember that Western films had been used as tools to promote messages about World War II and the Cold War. Vietnam was no different. John Wayne, a vocal supporter of Vietnam and

patriotism in general, starred in the film "The Green Berets" (1968), a movie that endorsed Nixon's policies in relation to Vietnam. Savage notes that the cowboy and his 1940s Americanism departed from popular culture during the Nixon presidency (161). He argues that "The Green Berets" and Wayne's attempt at using the cowboy image to bolster support for Nixon's policies might have been the largest contributor to the fall of the Western genre. While the cowboy hero has been resuscitated in recent years, the unconditional reverence for him ended as American soldiers continued to die in Vietnam.

Robert Duvall as Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore in "Apocalypse Now" (1979) is the best example of America's reinvention of the cowboy because in the film's most famous scene, Kilgore, who wears a cowboy hat and waves a machine gun, orders his men to capture a beach that he thinks would be perfect for surfing. Kilgore and his men swoop over the nearby village in a fleet of helicopters as "Ride of the Valkyries" blares in the background. The soldiers call him "Big Duke," a John Wayne reference, and director Francis Ford Coppola unmistakably intends the scene to mirror a Hollywood cowboy's ride into town. Kilgore displays a terrifying ruthlessness despite his easy going Western talk; in fact, when a Vietnamese woman blows up one of his helicopters with a grenade, Kilgore references the Hollywood cowboy again by calling her a Native American—"Holy Christ, she's a savage!"—and then guns her down from the air. The scene ends with Kilgore standing on the conquered beach as airplanes execute a napalm attack behind him. "I love the smell of napalm in the morning," he says, his eyes shaded by the brim of his cowboy hat. "Smells like...victory."

If the film had appeared during World War II, then Kilgore probably would have been the hero he thought he was. "Apocalypse Now", which Coppola produced the same year as my grandfather's trail drive, gained fame for its realistic portrayal of Vietnam and for undermining Nixon's policies. Duvall's character epitomizes everything that went wrong in Vietnam—arrogance, disregard and disrespect for foreign cultures, the belief that violence will solve the world's problems, and the theory that America has a right to champion its political ideas abroad. The audience isn't supposed to like Kilgore or the politics he represents. The tactic of using the cowboy to inspire support for foreign conflict that worked so nicely with World War II and the Cold War failed to inspire a generation whose friends, husbands, and brothers had perished in Vietnam's faraway jungles.

After devoting this many pages to proving the cowboy's significance in American culture, it seems contradictory to say that the cowboy died in Vietnam. Too many components of American life are directly connected to the cowboy and his image. The rancher and the working cowboy existed after Vietnam and

still do today. The cowboy image in this country and abroad has endured because of the cowboy's incorporation with facets of American culture besides film and because his counterpart, the genuine cowboy, persists in being a social and economic contributor.

The real spirit of the West, the feeling among ranchers and cowboys across the country, did suffer briefly during the 1970s, just like the popular cowboy. The West lost many of its young men who had intended to return from the Vietnam jungles to run family ranches. Social and economic conditions of the time, including Nixon's beef price freezes, high oil prices, drought, and high grain prices (Norton 34), caused financial hardship for ranchers, including my grandfather. In 1979, the year John Wayne died of stomach cancer, he staged one of South Dakota's last cattle drives, partly in protest of oil prices.

I can detect a certain amount of the Hollywood cowboy's stubbornness in my grandfather's mission to undermine the system. Perhaps Ethan's relentless hunt in "The Searchers" to find Lucy might be a dramatized but related expression of the struggles my grandfather and other ranchers faced during those years—the need to provide for family, the attempt to make a life in a harsh land, the desire to continue ranching the way he always had without relying on technology. By refusing to truck his cattle, he denounced a socioeconomic system showing the strains of oil addiction and changes in growing global interdependence.

My grandfather's decision to hold a trail drive, to me, represents both a noble accomplishment and futile attempt to shield himself from a changing world. Oil prices had much to do with his choice, but I think deeper impulses affected his thinking. He was holding on to a way of life that was slipping away. Holding a cattle drive was an attempt to show himself and the world that he could hang on to that lifestyle when so many others were letting go.

The popular cowboy, too, found himself abandoned as America increasingly placed value in science, industrialization, and corporate food production. A string of cowboy comedies in the 1980s and 90s—"Urban Cowboy" (1980), "City Slickers" (1991)—poked fun at the cowboy image. A few serious films, such as "Unforgiven" (1992) and "Tombstone" (1993), reference the traditional cowboy image, but other films experimented with the cowboy stereotype, placing him in the city, in the driver's seat of cars, and in opposition to the modern world. The cowboy became a symbol of antiquity, someone incompatible with technology and globalization. I think of the cowboy portrayed in the city, lost among skyscrapers. The noise and the filth of the urban environment bewilder him and the taxi cabs' honk and the subway's rumble sound nothing like the tranquility of the West. He'll never understand the forces driving those buildings into

the sky, all the social, economic, and political issues entwined in the steel frames. And we laugh at the cowboy's mishaps, unaware of how much we laugh at ourselves by doing so.

While changing tastes in film affected the popular cowboy, other issues presented themselves for the working cowboy. Environmentalism rose up against the ranching industry, its proponents accusing cattle raisers of land misuse. The national government aligned itself with environmental interests and soon the cowboy became subject to federal land use regulations. Though America once saw the cowboy as steward of the land, the rancher that took his place did not incur such a positive image as the role of national government grew after World War II. According to Paul Starrs, the federal government has enforced a "paternalistic" relationship between itself and western ranchers since World War II, and ranchers have not enjoyed full autonomy over their land since the federal government established such offices as the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Department of Agriculture (27). Starrs believes ranchers understand the range in ways government officials cannot:

In quiet moments I have heard ranchers claim that they continue in ranching mostly because it lets them see what they want to: a land and its parts, country that they know like few, if any, others. It is not "the range" that they know but "their range," and it is a considerable source of irritation when an outsider—a newly appointed junior range conversationalist from the Bureau of Land Management, for example—comes to a conclusion about range capacity different from the rancher's. (35)

It is difficult to argue that the ranching industry should be free of government restriction. Government oversight ensures, for example, that factories reduce their emissions and that child labor is prohibited, limitations that contribute to the overall social good. It seems reasonable that the federal government should place restrictions on land use and management for ranchers. But complying to tightening government constraints doesn't come without expense. For example, settlers of the past often built their ranches near streams or springs. Today if a rancher owns more than 1,000 cattle and has corrals situated near a water source, then federal law mandates that the rancher must move those structures, even if no water contamination occurs (LPES 22). The cost of tearing down original corrals, ones the rancher's descendants likely built by hand, and relocating them is often too great for a one-man operation to bear.

In addition to government limitations, a "boom and bust" in the cattle market occurred in the 1980s and again in the mid-90s, with beef prices crashing and resulting in liquidation of cattle herds across America (Anderson, Robb and Mintert 2). My grandfather and his brother-in-law did what many other cattlemen did in the 80s: bought cattle hoping to turn a profit. But the market crashed. A drought

suffocated the grass that his herd depended upon. The interest rate on the loans he acquired to buy the cattle doubled. My grandfather declared bankruptcy in 1981, sold half of his land, and became a wheat farmer.

But he never hung up his hat, literally or figuratively. Though he plowed fields in the late 1980s up until the last months of his life in the spring of 2006, people still called him a cowboy. Maybe because he always wore his cowboy hat and boots—or maybe because he carried himself like a cowboy. He never wore jeans smeared with tractor grease to town. Every tool in his machine shop was laid in its proper place, unlike other machine shops which are littered with broken parts, oil barrels, and grease guns. Most of all, my grandfather loved the land. When I look at pictures of him standing in the wheat fields, slightly stooped with age, I see the way his hands caress the bristly beards of the wheat. I'm certain that he understood the value of the land not in dollars, but in the way it made him feel: free, strong, like you're standing inside the very soul of the earth.

### Conclusion

On a cold night in November, I interviewed my mother, grandmother, and one of my aunts for insight into my grandfather's cowboy life. I was looking for a sense of who he was in his younger years and what they remembered about his beliefs. I knew about the Hollywood cowboy and what he represented, and I just couldn't accept that my grandfather was like those men. Some of what the women said fit with the stereotypical cowboy image, but most of their comments surprised me.

"He used to kill rattlesnakes with his lariat," my aunt said of my grandfather's ability to use a rope against snakes. "I remember different times if we were riding and came upon a snake, like at the gate or whatever, then he would just swing his lariat and kill them that way."

"The cussing comes out. It's just a natural thing that happens around the cattle," my mother said. "I don't know what it is, but the cowboys sometimes say things they shouldn't say. Dad was always, you know, didn't mind too much of the others, but never goddamn it. No goddamn it."

My grandmother explained their early years of marriage, how they lived "down on the creek" in a one-room house with no running water for eight years. How my grandfather didn't go to church as a child or when they were first married, but that he took adult confirmation later in his 20s and became a Christian, and how he started out with a herd of 50 cattle and eventually owned 2,500 by the late 1970s.

I asked whether my grandfather enjoyed watching cowboy films or television shows, and what he liked about them. My aunt remembers going to only one movie with her father as a child—"How the West Was Won" (1962)—when she was eight years old. My grandmother said he was a John Wayne fan. But my mother's response was the most intriguing.

"We would watch them until late at night," she said. "'Bonanza', 'Gunsmoke', 'The Guns of Will Sonnett'. Those were gunfighter shows and they were kinda rough. And Dad goes, 'Yeah, I probably shouldn't let you watch these.' But we'd watch them anyway."

I learned that my grandfather never carried a gun on horseback, but that he would often take a rifle with him in the pickup "for wild animals." He saw Casey Tibbs, the South Dakota native who is known as the greatest bronc rider in American history, ride at a corral south of St. Onge, South Dakota. Before my mother left for college in Texas, she said goodbye to my grandfather in the downstairs basement of the Homme Lutheran Church, where he was attending a board meeting.

I asked my mom and aunt whether they felt accepted among the cowboys who gathered at my grandfather's roping arena for brandings. After all, my grandfather had no sons, so he relied on his six daughters for help on the ranch. My mother said that some men treated her differently, but her father saw her as capable and hard working. "[Other cowboys] were always saying, 'Well Cathy had better not do this'...and Dad was like, well, she can do that. And I would do it better," she said.

Throughout the interview, the distinction between real cowboys and pretend cowboys became clearer. The women stressed that not all cowboys were as soft-spoken and kind as their father, and that not all men who thought they were cowboys actually were. My aunt said that the definition of a cowboy doesn't come from clothing or rodeo, but from a way of life. "Standing at the corral, leaning on the top rail of the corral, and looking at the horses and the cattle...it was a way different pace of life than it is now. Way different."

My mother defined a cowboy as someone who could do the work and be tough when situations called for it, and that is what my grandfather did every day. "There were so many cowboys that were dressed like a cowboy, and then you put them out there and they couldn't get their rope together. And they couldn't ride hard, they couldn't stay on their horse. They weren't real cowboys."

I scanned my grandmother's trail drive pictures and saved them on my laptop. During the months that it took to write this thesis, a slideshow of those photos served as my screensaver. Whenever I stopped typing for a few minutes to gather my thoughts, images of my grandfather on horseback, the trail drive



crew, and the cattle herd would transition across the screen, like the cattle drive was happening before my eyes. I've memorized the details of those photos, how the prairie grass bowed to the wind, how the men's eyes creased from the sun's glare, how sleek the horses looked in black and white. When I see them, I realize that I'm looking into the heart of the West.

I met two cowboys in my search for the real cowboy: my grandfather and the overarching cowboy figure of American popular culture. Of these men, I prefer my grandfather. He was no gunfighter and his life wasn't heroic, but he has helped me see what it means to be a true cowboy. My grandfather proves that one can be a cowboy long after one has given up the ranching business—and that being a cowboy has nothing to do with clothing, rodeo, or Hollywood. It's an attitude. My father, who wrangles cattle but doesn't wear a hat or ride a horse, is a cowboy. My mother, who breaks colts and brands calves, is a cowboy. And me, a college student far from home who dreams of the West from my apartment window—I, too, am a cowboy.

## IN THE CAMERA'S EYE: LINCOLN'S APPEARANCE AND HIS PRESIDENCY

Gil Johnsson

When Lincoln came to the presidency, few people expected great things from him. You see, four presidential failures in a row had taught them to think otherwise. And Lincoln seemed even less promising than any of his predecessors. His early life in what was then the unsettled West — rugged and uncompromising as it often was — made him even less appealing with few hints of greatness to come. During the presidential election, he won the Republican nomination as a dark horse candidate, after strong contenders had eliminated one another. His party was entirely sectional in its appeal and most American voters cast their ballots against him. After his campaign got underway, Lincoln was mocked by journalists, scorned by rivals, and despised by enemies of the Union cause.

All of the above factors contributed to his overall weakness as good presidential timber. And, it was all made worse by his appearance. Lincoln, in short, was not a handsome man! To most prospective voters, he seemed strange, awkward, and unpresidential, even to his friends. When he visited New York in 1860, some of his supporters were able to meet him. They thought his form and manner seemed just plain odd. His western twang, rough manners and occasional dark moods, appalled them. His rumpled suit and clumsy movements didn't help either. And, to top it off, he told what many considered to be bad jokes. In other words, there was no shortage of things about the man that bothered them.

However, Lincoln, himself, made fun of his appearance. He told everyone he met that nobody had ever expected him to be President, going on to add that he was just being himself. There was one time when he was accused of being two-faced. Lincoln said in response, "If I had another face, do you think I'd be wearing this one?" But, it was typical of the man, as everyone later found out, to laugh at his appearance and to invite the world to laugh with him, a curious feature for a prospective politician, especially for one running for the presidency.

And laugh they did! In the early years of his administration, cartoonists, such as Tom Nast, had a field day. Some characterized him as an incompetent fool, others as a shyster lawyer or a clown. Many more called him a plain old party hack. The typical American voter thought much the same way. So, in the beginning, this is what he faced, wherever he went.

It was a long time a-coming through the years, before they actually awakened to the fact that they had, underneath all of that surface “stuff”, an extraordinary individual, with superlative character and a genius for political leadership, who eventually went on to guide an ungovernable nation through its greatest crisis — the Civil War.

One of the most interesting facets of Lincoln’s political strength, though, was his skill in the manipulation of imagery, including his own image. The instrument was the camera’s eye, the lens, which he was among the first to use in such a careful and systematic way for political purposes or gain. Up to that time, they all thought that he was just plain old Abe, nothing more, nothing less.

Photography, itself, wasn’t new. At least eight American presidents before him had been photographed. But as late as 1860, most American leaders and events were seen primarily through the medium of paintings, or engravings, or lithographs. After 1865, though, Americans saw their leaders mainly through the camera’s eye — a major shift in the imagery of elections in Lincoln’s day.

Lincoln, you see, was a transitional figure, if you will, in the language of photography, prior to it taking hold years later. As far back as 1858, he described a session with Mathew Brady as having his “shadow” taken, just as if a photograph were a silhouette. But he was also quick to see the political uses of Mr. Brady’s “shadows”, and he exploited them with great success. In the course of his presidency, he took an active part in the photographic construction of his own image. It helped him immeasurably in his political career.

Lincoln’s first use of political photography occurred before the Civil War when he was preparing to challenge Democratic leader Stephen Douglas for a senate seat in Illinois. By then, he had developed into a fairly prosperous lawyer and had been a member of the conservative Whig party for many years.

To have any chance of success in a frontier state, Lincoln knew he had to cultivate the common man’s approach. So, before the campaign began, he went to Chicago and had a photograph taken by Alexander Hesler, the end product designed to show him at his best political advantage. Hesler brought out the homespun features from his quite ordinary face. It needs to be mentioned that Lincoln also wore a plain old shirt and an equally well worn suit to the picture taking session. Especially striking was his hair. Lincoln creatively messed it up, while his wife who was along, must have sat there steaming, even though Lincoln told her afterwards that the people or voters wouldn’t recognize him unless he gave the hair on his head a good tussle. So, that’s the homespun image which most of us have seen at one time or another on those occasions when we read about him. The final result was a carefully worked out image of a rugged,

homespun frontier man. Probably got him quite a few votes. Lincoln probably heard about it at home, but Lincoln? He was more than pleased with his new wind blown look. He even encouraged all his backers to use the photo in all the promos. It ended up by being the Log Cabin to White House image that his backers were quite cleverly creating for him in his race to the White House. Yes, indeed, the back woods boy had come a long way. Armed with his credentials — corporate lawyers who represented banks and railroads, a married man with a bright financial future and owner of one of the largest homes in the rising city of Springfield, Illinois, Honest Abe, the awkward, uncombed rail splitter, rapidly acquired a package the voters would buy.

However, and this is an important point, the fancy folks out east needed more of a presidential look. So — back to the photographers. This time he visited the studio of the even then well known Matthew Brady, the great Brady, for a “work of art image.” And there was no photographer better qualified than Brady to give him just that! He placed Lincoln against a classical Greek column (a common prop in that day and age), and told Lincoln to adopt a very somber look. He then placed his left hand in a position on a stack of books. A shiny satin waistcoat added a touch of refinement, and once his Prince Albert coat was pulled snug and smooth, he was the perfect picture of neatness and refinement, or real class. Brady went on to improve upon the “first draft” and did some judicious retouching. Later, Lincoln often said, that Brady, the incomparable Brady, had made him president.

After the election, Lincoln developed yet another image problem, which was made painfully clear to him by an incident that occurred on a journey to Washington. One February afternoon in 1861, the President elect arrived by train in Albany, where a friendly crowd had gathered at the station to welcome him. The reporter for the local paper was there to cover the event and he described the mood of the people as one of intense excitement. As the train pulled in, all those good people of Albany were getting ready to cheer their new president. Then — Lincoln appeared on the platform. The bystanders began to cheer loudly which all too quickly sputtered into complete silence. The man who stood before them looked very little like a president, and a long ways from Brady's photograph. The reporter captured the event in words in the next morning's edition. Said he, “Mr. Lincoln looked tired, sunburned, and with a face full of whiskers” — all quite unlike the vigorous, smooth-shaven, and fully alert individual who had his face upon the popular prints and ribbons which many in the crowd wore, whereupon he was dubbed quite proudly “the rail splitter of western Illinois.” Campaign buttons had their official debut about this time, you see. Well, the people finally recognized him if only because of his height. Where was his image when he needed it!

Once in office, Lincoln created yet another image that was quite different from the Hesler and Brady photographs. He began by letting his whiskers grow into a full beard. There's a story here, too, by the way. David Ward, a historian at the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian, tells it this way. For one thing, we'll see that even Lincoln's beard couldn't escape political recriminations. It seems that Lincoln was, on one occasion, traveling from Philadelphia through Maryland on his way to Washington, D.C., when his bodyguard (he had only one), received word that there just might be an assassination attempt. They didn't know by whom, when, whatever. So, they changed his schedule and arranged for his train to arrive in the capitol city quite early in the morning. When news of his shift in plans leaked out, the Press got wind of it, the news was greeted with hoots of derision from the South, all his political enemies, and anyone else who always had something bad to say about him. Some cartoonist (I don't know who) created a political image of Lincoln sneaking into town in his nightcap and nightshirt and to drive home the point of Lincoln's fear, said cartoonist also drew a "fraidy cat arching its back," as Lincoln recoils from the image, let alone the reality of what faced him in the big city. The cartoonist was also careful to draw Lincoln with his newly grown beard. Said beard, you see, was news back then 'cause it was the subject of lots of speculation as to why he chose to grow it in the first place. They all remembered that he was a clean-shaven man up to that point. The response from the President at that time was that a young girl wrote to him and suggested that he would simply look better if he grew a beard. True story? Maybe. Ward takes the story further and says that it may be the fact that Lincoln knew he was going to war. You see, in times of war, he says, wherever violence looks like it will occur, men going back to even the Greek myths, have grown beards to assume a more barbaric look. (Really!) He was, you see, simply girding himself for that battle. Or, so says Ward.

To get back on track, Lincoln also took to wearing a plain black suit of an ordinary citizen. In addition, he exaggerated his great height by his headgear. Before the war, Lincoln had worn a top hat of conventional height. By the fall of 1862, his top hat had grown into a stovepipe affair that made him nearly a foot taller, or between 7 and 8 feet high. In short, he was out to tower above all other men. He enjoyed being able to do this, knowing that no one could miss him in a crowd. This gave him numerous advantages, he thought. What they were, I can't tell. In his photographs, Lincoln's plain black citizen's suit made another point. Henceforth, he was able to appear as an office holder exercising his constitutional right as commander-in-chief over the military in time of war. I found this an interesting point.

In 1863 and '64 yet another photographic image of Lincoln began to appear. This one we all have come to know, for it has happened to so many presidents since. After three years of dealing with horrendous problems of the Civil War, his once dark hair and beard were turning gray, and his angular features were taking on the fullness of age. His face became deeply lined with the anxieties of his office and his eyes, those eyes, they were always sad now, and his deep, deep sympathy for the suffering that the war had caused. To many, it was the saddest face they had ever seen.

In the same period, other qualities also became evident in Lincoln's changing appearance. As the war went on, the President began to show a growing strength and steadiness. The line of his jaw suggested firmness of purpose, and the set of his eyes showed a clarity of vision in this altogether extraordinary man of so many contradictions. He began to show more and more visibly his qualities of character, integrity and moral leadership that were the source of his greatness.

Lincoln had, of course, other photographs taken by other photographers during the course of his presidency. In fact, there were more than 120 photo sessions in the last eighteen years of his life, plus sitting as well for painters, sketch artists, and sculptors. Regardless of the media method, one saw pain, worry, but always his strong resolve to see the struggle through to the very end. This is the post that most of us know, I believe.

But, to go back to what I mentioned just a moment ago. Lincoln posed for other forms of the visual arts besides photography. He and his supporters made use of all of them in his political career. Painting was a popular form of expression and a good deal of information about portrait painters and their works is in existence. Lincoln was not immune from getting in on that art form. Sculpture was another. However, time does not permit extra space in my paper to cover those two formats. I will, however, share a story with you of the time that Lincoln sat for Leonard Wells Volk, sculptor. To shorten it up a bit, Volk's long range vision was to fashion a Lincoln statue. Well, Lincoln agreed to this request to pose for Mr. Volk and eventually met the artist in his Chicago studio. Then, the sculptor told the president that he wanted to show his chest and brawny shoulders au naturel. Obliging (and perhaps this was his mistake), Lincoln promptly stripped off his coat, waistcoat, shirt, tie, and collar, threw them on a chair, pulled his undershirt down a short distance, tying his sleeves behind him, and stood up without a sound for an hour or so to pose bare-chested as Volk requested. He might well have been more mortified than he admitted for when the session ended, Lincoln dressed hurriedly, bolted for the door, and fled the studio. However, he returned just a few minutes later, explaining to Volk, "I got down on the sidewalk and found that I had forgotten to put my

undershirt back on. I didn't think it would do to go through the streets this way". Sure enough, Volk glanced behind Lincoln, and saw the sleeves of his undershirt dangling below his coat. This time, Lincoln made sure he was dressed properly. After all, he was the President!

Let me take a moment to say right here, for lack of a better place, that contrary to criticisms that Lincoln told only bad jokes, he was a marvelous storyteller and a teller of jokes which he used, by the way, to illustrate a point, or to entertain his followers or in other key situations. They were not just pointless tales to be used for amusement purposes. Compilations of folklore are full of various examples of this little communication device of his.

To resume what I was saying earlier, it was on May 4, 1865, that Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address, and here we have perhaps the most intriguing story regarding the impact of photography and Lincoln — his assassination.

The speech was said by many to be the finest of his presidency. Frederick Douglas felt that it was more like a sermon than a state paper. The scene was captured by Alexander Gardner in a blurry photograph — one of the most extraordinary photographs of the occasion and one that will forever stand out in history. In the center is the president, towering over other men intent upon listening to his speech. In the background, the camera has caught his eventual assassin — John Wilkes Booth — watching and waiting for his opportunity, or so it seems. The crowd is riveted to what Lincoln is saying. As we know now, Booth succeeded in his objective though just two months later when he murdered Lincoln in the Ford Theatre. When? Friday, Good Friday, 1865. Lincoln's life was over, and the country was left to mourn.

To bring this paper to some sort of conclusion, words, themselves, will never fully describe the events of Lincoln's time in the same way that photography can. Those scenes of Civil War battlefields in photos taken by Mathew Brady, for example, remain for all time as representative of the carnage that we so vividly remember. And so do the photos of Lincoln, as well. That's why the picture of Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> inaugural seems so intriguing.

This much we do know.

It was approximately noon on Inauguration day and the rain had finally ceased. Arrangements were completed and the decision made to hold the ceremonies outside. A new procession of dignitaries was formed. Lincoln was escorted through a corridor to the temporary wood platform that extended from the east front of the Capitol. The day was cloudy, but had breaks that allowed the blue sky to show through in spots. The crowd was huge as we already know.

Soldiers were in mixed groups throughout the crowd. Some had come in uniform from the camps around Washington. Many more came from the hospitals nearby. Lincoln was, you see, always known as the soldiers' president. Gardner was there with his camera as I've already told you. He remained poised to record the event for history. You may also be interested to know that the second inaugural would be the only occasion on which Lincoln was photographed delivering a speech. Interesting. We must also remember that Gardner's photographs were subject to the limitations of a craft and technology still in its earliest stages. Accordingly, a subsequent look at the photograph that Gardner took of the President at the speaker's stand, leads to the conclusion that Gardner's efforts were either limited by movements during the show exposure or were simply out of focus. The final product is so unfocused that Lincoln's face cannot be seen clearly if at all, thus resulting in the controversy to follow.

But that is not the problem. Those who later saw Lincoln's eventual assassination, here's where the story gets murkey, apparently were able to recognize that the man standing up behind the right column that later caught the attention of those who were able to make a connection, was none other than John Wilkes Booth. Why was he there? Did he have in mind to kill Lincoln as he spoke? Hampered as I am in pursuing additional research out where I live, I was, quite by accident, able to uncover a partial explanation, by looking over a book of photos from the acclaimed Kundhardt collection. As it turned out, apparently, someone had taken a cut of the photograph, lightened the background, and there he was, Lincoln's assassin.

Questions linger to this day concerning Booth's activities in connection with Lincoln. Will they ever be resolved? No. The thousands and thousands of books about our former President testify to that fact. This great, yet humble, man will remain a person of perpetual interest.

Yet, is not that the reason why we are gathered here today?



## STORIES OF LINCOLN: GHOSTS, MYSTERIES AND CONSPIRATORS

Lillian Johnsson

One day several years ago, our door bell rang. I went to answer it, not really expecting visitors. I opened the door. There on our doorstep stood Abraham Lincoln, complete with top hat and frock coat. There was that first split second when my common sense and what my eyes were seeing, were in complete disagreement. Before I could decide if I was really seeing a ghost I heard Gill say, "Hey! Come on in!" Mr. Lincoln stepped into our home, removed his top hat, bowed ever so slightly, and said, "Mrs. Johnsson, I'm pleased to meet you. I'm Bruce Hanks. You may call me Abe, if you wish." Then I remembered. Gil had told me he had hired Bruce to present a series of programs on Lincoln in the Chamberlain schools.

There were two reasons why I was just a little shocked. First, no one today expects to find Lincoln on their doorstep. The second reason is more personal. My maternal grandfather, if he had grown a beard, would have looked exactly like Lincoln. And, he was originally from Illinois. There are still many relatives there. However, I should have realized that ghosts don't ring doorbells. Do they?

This has always been my favorite Lincoln story. But its hardly basis for a paper on Lincoln.

My next story is from a General Federation of Women's Clubs national convention in Boston. One of the guest speakers was Frankie Hewitt, Producing Artistic Director for the Ford Theatre in Washington, DC. Maybe I could work up a paper on this subject. My notes from the meeting say she became involved with the crusade to restore the Ford Theatre quite by accident. Then after much stonewalling from potential backers, she called in a favor. She ended up in a meeting with Lady Bird Johnson in the White House. With Mrs. Johnson's backing the Ford Theatre restoration was a done deal.

It was an interesting talk but the subject just didn't excite me. By now it was summer, maybe I would just forget about a Lincoln paper.

My husband, who is really good at suggesting things for me to do, said perhaps I could get some information from our friends in Blunt about Mentor Graham. Graham was Lincoln's teacher in Illinois. He saw Lincoln's potential and encouraged him to improve his grammar. When Graham left teaching, he moved to a small house in Blunt in 1883. Part of that house was damaged in a fire a couple of years ago.

No little voice told me I wanted to write about Mentor Graham.

Now I've read biographies about both Lincoln and Mary Todd. There must be something that will strike me. The subject for a paper on Lincoln was going nowhere. But, as Gil said, there was still time.

There were a couple of books that we picked up free at our library book sale. They were waiting to be read. Maybe I should forget about Lincoln for awhile.

The first book I picked up was a historical one on a subject which is dear to me. Its title is "The Murder of Tutankhamen" by author Bob Brier, PhD.

Using modern medical advances to scan King Tut's mummy, he was trying to discover why Tut had died. Brier was especially interested in the injury to Tut's head and how the priest-physician may have reacted to finding himself treating the PHAROAH!

Having settled down with ancient Egypt, I thought I was safe from more recent history.

WRONG! On page three Dr. Brier writes:

"Abraham Lincoln may have died because of his fame. After the President was shot in the head, the young surgeon attending him at Ford's Theatre did everything right. He examined the entry hole with his fingers, determined there was no exit hole, and let the President rest. Then the Surgeon General was summoned while Lincoln was removed to a near by boarding house. The Surgeon General was a bureaucrat who had not treated a patient for years. But he immediately took control of Lincoln's treatment. He inserted a probe into the entry hole and slid it in, almost up to Lincoln's eyes. The Surgeon General did not know that the latest medical wisdom — taught in Medical schools — **was not to** probe. The brain is so soft you can't tell if you are following the path of the bullet or causing additional injury. Recent re-evaluation of the case suggests that Lincoln might have survived with the bullet lodged in his brain. He was a victim of famous-patient syndrome."

Interesting but I don't have enough medical background to examine this possibility. I'll leave that for persons who do.

It was early September and I was having enough of politics. I wasn't about to look into what might have happened if Lincoln had survived. All this thinking about Lincoln was starting to give me a headache. So I turned to my favorite pastime, reading murder mysteries.

"Flashback" was written by Nevada Barr. Originally the author was a park ranger on the Natchez Trace Parkway. "Flashback" was the second of her series set in National Parks with park ranger, Anna Pigeon, as the main character. This story takes place in the Dry Tortugas National Park which is located in the Florida Keys. Fort Jefferson was located on Garden Key and had served as a Union prison during the Civil War. WHAT? Did I just read the Union had a Civil War prison south of the Mason Dixon Line in Florida? Oh, OH!! Before Page one came a page entitled "Historical Note". It said:

"In 1865, Dr. Samuel Mudd was tried and convicted of aiding and abetting John Wilkes Booth after the assassination of President Lincoln. He received a sentence of life

imprisonment to be served at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, Florida. Two years later, during a yellow fever outbreak at the prison, Dr. Mudd acted courageously, using his medical skill to treat the sick. Acknowledging his service, President Andrew Johnson pardoned him in 1869. Though there had been a great deal of discussion over Dr. Mudd's guilt or innocence, the device of the doppelganger was a complete fiction created for this story.

A month after Dr. Mudd was pardoned, Samuel Arnold's case was reviewed. President Johnson found there was sufficient doubt about his participation in the conspiracy to pardon him as well. After his release, Mr. Arnold lived a quiet life of seclusion on his farm in Maryland. In 1906, at the age of 72, Samuel Arnold died of consumption at his home. His wife and children were at his bedside.

Throughout their lives, both men maintained their innocence of any crime connected with the death of Mr. Lincoln."

By the end of that Historical Note, I was hooked. How was the author going to use that history in a modern mystery story?

The book begins with Anna Pigeon (the main character) taking a post as temporary supervising ranger in Dry Tortugas National Park. The park is a grouping of tiny islands in a natural harbor seventy miles off Key West. Park headquarters is in Fort Jefferson on Garden Key.

The fort and the islands have secret going-ons in the present. They also have shadows from the past when the fort was a Union prison during the Civil War, and when it harbored two of the Lincoln assassination conspirators.

Anna's sister sends her a packet of letters from a great-great aunt who lived at Fort Jefferson with her husband during that historical time.

With mysterious things happening in the present and in the letters from the past, Anna finds herself caught up in both time periods. Then the ghost of her great aunt shows up. Can Anna solve two disappearances, one in the past and one in the present? Or were there two murders?

The description of the fort and its story made me curious to know more about the fort and Dry Tortugas National park.

Dry Tortugas National Park was established on October 26, 1992. The park covers 64,701 acres. It is 70 miles west of Key West, Florida. The seven miles of seven low lying islands form the centerpiece of the park. But barely 85 acres of the park, or 100 square miles, are above water.

Ponce de Leon arrived in 1513 and found the water teeming with green, hawkbill, leatherback, and loggerhead turtles. So he named the area Tortugas which is Spanish for Tortoise. The Key was later

named Loggerhead Key and it is closed between March and September when the turtles are nesting. The Loggerhead Key Lighthouse built in 1858 still flashes to warn mariners. "Dry" was added to the area name because of the reefs and shoals which serve as a grave for more than 200 ships wrecked since the 1600's.

Fort Jefferson was called the Gibraltar of the Gulf. It was the largest masonry fortification ever constructed in the United States. It was planned by Thomas Jefferson in 1846 to dominate the Gulf of Mexico. It was to have walls 50 feet high and eight feet thick. More than 16 million bricks were used. Imagine, the Empire State Building needed only 10 million bricks. The fort has 2000 arches that run a mile around the three level fort. It also has a 6/10 mile long seawall and a moat to protect it.

There were terrible supply and construction problems. Twenty years after building began the fort was sinking. The weight of the walls was squeezing the sand out from beneath the foundation. Garden Key is only 16 acres and rather than a true coral, it is sand, shell and loose coral rock until you reach 80 feet below the surface of the water. While construction continued for 30 years the fort was never completed.

The development of rifled cannon and armored boats made the fort obsolete even while it was under construction. The high six-sided fort was occupied by Union troops during the Civil War due to its strategic location at the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico. As many as 2000 lived at the fort at one point.

The fort included 37 powder magazines and was designed to mount 420 heavy guns, some of which weighed 25 tons apiece. And they wondered why the fort was sinking. The parade ground held the ovens which once heated cannonballs so they could more effectively destroy their wooden targets. A Rodman cannon was capable of throwing a 300-pound shell three miles. Six of these 15-inch Rodman guns can still be seen at the fort. It is the largest collection of Rodman guns in the world.

Boredom was a big problem for persons at Fort Jefferson. As I said, Garden Key is only 16 acres. Even today the only way to get there is by boat or seaplane. There was brackish water because the cisterns cracked as the fort settled and seawater fouled the fresh water. Add to that heat, humidity, drought, and, of course, hurricanes.

After the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the army employed prison labor in the continuing construction. The death sentences of Union deserters were often commuted to work on the fort. Troublesome prisoners were frequently forced to carry cannonballs around all day or were hung by their thumbs in the hot sun.

In July, 1865, the fort became the prison of three of the men convicted of involvement in the assassination of President Lincoln. (You will remember that "Flashback" only deals with Dr. Mudd and Samuel Arnold.)

The fort was an active military post until 1874 but remained an important stopping point for military and civilian ships long after that date. In 1898, the battleship USS Maine stopped at the Dry Tortugas before sailing on its ill-fated voyage to Havana, Cuba.

Fort Jefferson was permanently abandoned in 1907. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed papers making it a national monument. Judging by the pictures of Fort Jefferson which came up on the internet, Nevada Barr did an excellent job in describing the fort, both past and present in her book.

But, did her aunt's letters follow history? Remember the author invented a doppelganger for Dr. Mudd. In the story he claims to have a photo showing John Wilkes Booth and several of the conspirators. But if one looked closely they would see it was not him but someone who looked like him — his double or a doppelganger. The photo disappears with a young girl and a Confederate prisoner.

But what about the conspirators? "Flashback" listed two. The internet said three. (Another source said four.) Just how many were involved in the conspiracy?

"Washington's Most Famous Ghost Stories" by John Alexander contained a picture of nine. There was Dr. Mudd. He returned to Maryland after he was pardoned. He died of pneumonia in 1883. Oh, by the way, did you happen to know his name is the origin of the phrase "His name is Mudd?"

Samuel Arnold we know was also pardoned and died in Maryland in 1906. John Wilkes Booth was gunned down when police cornered him and David Herold on April 26, 1865.

David Herold was hung on July 7, 1865, along with Lewis T. Powell, George A. Atzarodt, and, the first woman to be executed by the United States Federal Government, Mary Surratt. There is an odd bit about Mary's hanging. Apparently the hangman had made Mary's noose with only five turns instead of the required seven because he had thought that the government would never hang a woman. John Alexander's book claims Mary haunts the area where the gallows stood, still maintaining her innocence. The area is also said to be haunted by Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt who condemned Mary to hang and later worried he had been mistaken. Do you suppose they walk together and discuss the case?

There were more conspirators than I expected and they were all worthy of their own stories. I think I'll stick with Nevada Barr, Dr. Mudd, Samuel Arnold and Dry Tortugas Fort Jefferson.

Perhaps I should have called this paper "Lincoln Looks West to the Florida Keys."

## THE ONLY MAN WHOSE NAME WE KNOW: PHILANDER PRESCOTT

Tom Kilian

This is an account of a brief period in the life of a man generally unknown and unrecognized in the early history of the Sioux Falls area. He was the first white man who is known for certain to have visited the falls of the Sioux River.

His name was Philander Prescott. He was a frontiersman who worked as a hunter and fur trader among the various tribes in the Minnesota region for over forty years, from 1819 to 1862. He was born in New York State in 1801. On April 19, 1819, at the age of 18, he left Phelps town in Ontario County, New York for the West. He came to Detroit to work in a trading post for his brother who was a sutler there. His brother soon received orders to move farther west and to set up a store at the Falls of Saint Anthony in the Minnesota region and Philander accompanied him. Fort Snelling was built at about that time, in 1820.

For our purposes, Prescott came into view in 1832, as an employee of the American Fur Company based near the present St. Paul, Minnesota. The company gave him orders to move on west, to the Sioux River and set up a post, to trap beaver and trade for skins.

We have a substantial amount of information about Mr. Prescott, because of the efforts of a regional historian, Donald Dean Parker. Parker worked at South Dakota State College and was a prolific writer on topics of regional interest. Many of Parker's papers are preserved today in the archives at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College. Much of what we know about Prescott comes from his autobiographical notes, which Parker edited as "The Recollections of Philander Prescott". Prescott had written the material at the request of Alexander Ramsey, the territorial governor of Minnesota.

In September of 1832, Prescott set out across the prairies to the head of the Des Moines River and on to the Eastern edge of the large Coteau, which separates the Minnesota River from the Missouri.

With a party of about 100 people, mainly Sioux, they came first to the Pipestone Quarries. They moved on from the Quarries about 10 miles to the west, to a bend on the east side of the Sioux River, just east of the present town of Flandreau. The town of Flandreau was not laid out until 25 years later by the Dakota Land Company of St. Paul, who named it for a judge who was a stockholder in the company.

Donald Parker observed that the well known frontiersman, Joseph La Framboise, may have been in Prescott's party, as one of the two French hunters. Joseph La Framboise is said to have built and

operated a post in that area from 1822 to 1827 and was fully familiar with the region around. It may have been he who gave direction to Prescott to come to the Flandreau bend in the river, whether or not he was actually in the party.

On arrival, Prescott had with him a band of Sioux Indians, who were supposed to trap and hunt, along with the two French hunters. The party fell to work at once and Prescott stated that they "...chopped logs and rolled up log houses...some 70 to 80 feet long and partitioned off into rooms."

The party was beset with troubles almost immediately. It became clear that the area not only had very few beaver, but was also nearly destitute of game for food. Hunters and trappers of that time relied on hunting wild game to make up their daily rations. Here, they soon found that they were eating nearly every animal they could find. In his notes, Prescott speaks of shooting hawks for food and roasting them on a stick over a fire. He declared that hawks were quite good eating. The men ate skunks and wolves and whatever else they could find. Prescott said that he was able to manage eating a little of skunk but that wolf meat was too strong for his taste and he could not eat it.

The party had brought a store of corn along with them which they ground by hand and cooked into a kind of mush. This, with such wild meat as they might find, was nearly their entire ration of food, day after day. In time, the corn became damp and musty and was very unpleasant to eat.

In a short time, the Indians became restless, having little to eat but the musty corn and, with virtually no game to hunt, they broke camp and left the post and went south following the Sioux River. They continued south to a point where the Sioux flows into the Missouri, about 140 miles south of the post at Flandreau. Near there, the Indians sought out a village of Omahas, who were known to have a supply of food for the winter.

Soon after the Indians left, Prescott was visited by a Mr. William Brown, a clerk for the American Fur Company, who had come out from St. Paul to see what was going on and to estimate the prospects for beaver skins from that location. What he found was a very grim picture. The Indian hunters had left and there were very few beavers and very little game. However, Brown ordered Prescott to go out and follow the Indians and to try to persuade them to return, and to assure them that he, Brown, would provide them with plenty of corn if they would return.

Prescott dutifully left the post with the company of two men, traveling down river with a two wheeled cart and a horse to carry their baggage.

Let us try to reconstruct the scene of Prescott's trip down river. It was in bleak December — probably cold, with some snow on the ground and almost certainly with a chilly wind. The men would have had very poor clothing, by present standards. Cloth coats were of a heavy material similar to felt, stiff and inflexible. Some of their clothing would have been of leather — deer hide — held together with strings and pegs, to try to keep out the cold. Their bedding would have been of animal skins and possibly some rough blankets. Their footgear would have been handmade moccasins. They had no mittens or gloves.

When they camped at night, a fire of dry sticks would be their greatest comfort. Water came from the river in a jug or bucket. One of the men shot a small deer along the way and this deer meat and the ground corn made up their entire menu.

Travel was slow and demanding. There was no road or even a trail, except the trace left by the Indians. The countryside was just endless grass with occasional clumps of trees or brush. They went across country as they were able. They needed to stay near the river for water for themselves and their horse. All of their supplies were loaded on the two-wheeled cart.

They had to pick their way along slowly, to find places where the cart could travel, voiding rocks, ditches, brush, and other obstacles. The men walked along with the cart, whose wheels bounced and banged over the frozen ground. Riding on the cart would have been no job — the inaction would leave them colder and there were no springs on the cart — there would have been unending jolts and shocks as it pulled along.

Travel in this wilderness was slow going. Beside the rough ungraded land, they needed to keep to the high ground, traveling on the ridges to avoid the deeper snow in the valleys — and in warmer weather, to avoid the wet spots and mud holes in the lower places.

When making camp for the night, they would seek a spot which offered some shelter from the endless wind, especially in winter. One would locate in the lea of a hill, possibly under a shelf of rock in a thicket of cedar or heavy brush, to break the wind.

On today's highways, it is about forty miles from the falls to Flandreau. For Prescott, following the river and allowing for landscape, it would have been fifty miles or more to reach the falls.

They stopped and camped at the Sioux Falls. Prescott said the river at that time was about 20 yards wide, with a shoal and rapids out from the foot of the falls. He said the falls were about ten feet high, with many cracks, crevices and broken rocks through which the water flowed. With low water, it was hard to see the water as it filtered through the many breaks in the rock.



The following morning, they loaded up the cart and continued south, downstream, following the trails of the Indians, going on for about 40 to 50 miles. At sundown, they forded the Sioux River, where the Rock River flows in from the east, near the present town of Alcester, South Dakota. They were tired and hungry and made good use of their deer meat for supper.

By the time they reached that point, it had become clear to them that they were not going to catch up with the Indians, who had been traveling very fast, stopping only to make brief camp. They were evidently eager to get to the Omaha village, another two days journey to the south.

The Omaha village was probably where Trudeau, Mackay, DuLac, and Lewis and Clark all had found it, in the years from 1794 to 1804, on the Nebraska side of the Missouri six or seven miles below the mouth of the Sioux.

Prescott decided that to go on farther was useless and that the chances of persuading the Indians to return was remote anyway, for the Indians knew there was little game and nothing else to eat but musty corn, back at the Flandreau post. Following the morning, Prescott turned around and headed back north. They arrived again at their camp site at the falls and camped overnight there, a second time. The next morning they began making their way back to the fur post.

When they arrived back at Flandreau, Mr. Brown left to return to Fort Snelling. The two French hunters also left in search of better hunting grounds.

So, the visit of the first white man known for certain to have visited the Falls of the Sioux ended without drama or ceremony. But for his own account, his visit would have remained unknown to this day.

It is not positively known that there were no earlier visitors to the falls. The long time state historian, Doane Robinson, believed that Charles Le Sueur may have visited the falls as early as 1683, a hundred and fifty years earlier than Prescott. But Robinson had no proof that historians would accept. Robinson based his case on a visit he had had with Dr. E. D. Neill, a former secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society in March 1883, and upon a story by an unknown writer in the Toronto Star in 1887, and upon the logic which accounted for the information shown on the famous De Lisle map, published in 1701. The map shows many features of the landscape in some detail. It would have been difficult to provide this accurate information based on hearsay accounts from Indians or others and the information had been supplied to the map maker, De Lisle, by Le Sueur. Those interested in the Le Sueur question may wish to review the fascinating paper by Doane Robinson called "The Le Sueur Tradition" in volume IX of the South Dakota Historical Society Collections.

Donald Parker stated that there was a fur post from the Hudson by Elk Point, South Dakota in 1755 and that another post, tributary to Hudson Bay was abandoned by Flandreau in 1763. These early Frenchmen would have traveled the Sioux River. They would have made repeated portages at the Falls of the Sioux. It may well be that there were others, but we don't know their names.

The ubiquitous Joseph La Framboise, veteran trader, maintained a fur post at Flandreau from 1823 to 1827. It is hardly credible that, in all that time, through winters and summers, he would have sat in Flandreau and never ventured the short distance downstream to visit the most noteworthy landmark in the entire region. But, there is no record of such a visit.

It seems likely that we will never have more information on this question. While it is always possible that some new facts will turn up in some attic, archive, or library, for now, Prescott, in 1832, will have to do.

Prescott had a full-blooded Sioux wife named "Spirit of the Moon". He had a son with her at Flandreau, and named him Hiram. The boy was born on December 21, 1832 and may have been the first child with white blood born in present South Dakota of which there is record.

In later years, Prescott had been serving as an interpreter for the military. At the beginning of the war of the outbreak in 1862, Prescott learned that rebellious Indians were killing whites. On August 18, 1862, the first day of the war, he left his Sioux wife and children and set out for Fort Snelling to seek shelter. On the way, about 10 miles from the fort, he encountered a band of hostile Sioux, who killed him. A month later, on September 18, his body was found by the frontier scout and interpreter, Thomas Robertson, among a large number of other bodies. Prescott was the only one who had been mutilated and beheaded.

A military detachment under Colonel Sibley buried him where they found him. According to a dispatch in the *St. Paul Daily Press* on September 24, 1862, he was later reburied in the Pioneer and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery in Minneapolis.

So ended the eventful life of Philander Prescott, the first voyager we know among the nameless, faceless procession who must certainly have traveled up and down the Sioux River over several centuries in the early days of Dakota.

### Suggested Readings

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**SAINT ABRAHAM, MARTYR FOR THE TRUTH?  
OR JUST ANOTHER AMBIVALENT FACE ON MOUNT RUSHMORE? OBAMA'S TEST**

Gerald Lange

As the title suggests, there is quite a lot going on in this paper. You might call it a free-wheeling attempt to make sense out of Lincoln's legacy and to see if "the better angels of our nature" can find encouragement in his tragic life. It might be significant that his name-sake, Abraham, is the father of three conflicting religions adding turmoil to the world scene today.

With Hamlet, I can hear him lamenting: "The world is out of joint, oh cursed spite, that ever I was born to set things right!" Lincoln's writings show that he was steeped in Shakespeare, the Bible, *Pilgrims Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, and other "heavy" reading. Early in his career, he looked at the chaos in the country and concluded that: "If destruction be our lot, we ourselves will be its author...."

It might be useful to recall the Chinese definition of crisis — danger plus opportunity. Toynbee can tell you how crises in history produce leaps of human progress. But editorial writer Kathleen Harris has it right, TMI! From Alvin Toffler's "Future Shock" we have moved to another disruptive syndrome: "too much information." Blame a lot of it on the world-wide web!

The crisis of April 14, 1865 inspired the great writer Herman Melville to sum it all up in his poem, "The Martyr":

Good Friday was the day  
Of the prodigy and crime,  
When they killed him in his pity,  
When they killed him in his prime  
Of clemency and calm —  
When with yearning he was filled  
To redeem the evil-willed,  
And, though conqueror, be kind;  
But they killed him in his kindness,  
In their madness and their blindness,  
And they killed him from behind.

There is sobbing of the strong,  
And a pall upon the land;  
But the People in their weeping  
Bare the iron hand:  
Beware the People weeping  
When they bare the iron hand.

He lieth in his blood—  
The father in his face;  
They have killed him, the Forgiver—  
The Avenger takes his place,  
The Avenger wisely stern,  
Who in righteousness shall do  
What the heavens call him to,  
And the parricides remand;  
For they killed him in his kindness,  
In their madness and their blindness,  
And his blood is on their hand.

There is sobbing of the strong,  
And a pall upon the land;  
But the People in their weeping  
Bare the iron hand:  
Beware the People weeping  
When they bare the iron hand.

Like Melville's "Truth," Lincoln, in his two minute Gettysburg Address saw the Civil War as a test to see whether this nation, conceived in liberty with the idea that 'all men are created equal,' can survive the reality check of southern rebels, who, with Steven Douglas, viewed Jefferson's idealistic proclamation as "self-evident lies." Indeed, who in 1776 saw negroes, Indians, or even women, as equal?

Plenty of critics, including George McGovern, fault Lincoln for his rush to suspend the First Amendment in order to squelch war-time critics. Many more fault him for his remarks that held the races too different to live together on equal terms. At the time, this was conventional wisdom and imperative for any rising politician to support. But historical forces will change Lincoln's thinking.

In Kunhardt's weighty pictorial book, *Looking for Lincoln*, a source for much of this paper, we find that rabbis at Passover services immediately after his death compared his life to that of Moses. If that metaphor holds, then the forty years wandering in the desert by those liberated "chosen people of God" has stretched out to over a hundred years for the black descendents of slaves, still struggling to reach their promised land.

If the assassination of President Kennedy prompted the Civil Rights Laws in the 1960s, then it would seem that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments are a legacy of Lincoln's martyrdom. In any case, the freed slaves were quick to anoint Father Abraham as their "patron saint."

But, earlier, Harriet Tubman, the "Black Moses," wasn't so sure. She held Lincoln's feet to the fire, saying in 1862 that "God won't let Master Lincoln beat the South until he does the right thing! Master Lincoln, he's a great man, and I'm a poor negro but this negro can tell Master Lincoln how to save money and young men. He can do it by setting the negroes free." Like Winston Churchill said during World War II, that Americans would do the right thing...but only after they had exhausted all the alternatives!

It's well known that the English working class, even though jobless and hungry, helped keep England neutral by strongly supporting the destruction of slavery. Most interesting is the role of Karl Marx, then a German newspaper reporter who had a lot to say in praise of Lincoln's pragmatic shrewdness. He called him "...the single-minded son of the working class, (who) led his country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstitution of a social world." With the Emancipation Proclamation and Thirteenth Amendment, it won't be until the Russian Revolution that more private property will be confiscated. So, legally speaking, the Civil War was indeed a revolution.

Meanwhile before that event, Count Leo Tolstoy, then the greatest living author, told an interviewer, that "because Lincoln was a humanitarian as broad as the world who 'loved his enemies as himself'...he was a Christ in miniature."

But, not so fast! Tolstoy didn't know "the rest of the story!" He needed to check with the Dakota Indians in Minnesota and the civilian victims of Lincoln's "Scorched Earth" policy in the south. These acts of total war violated the Geneva Convention of 1863. Generals Sheridan and Sherman went on to spearhead the genocidal policies toward Indians after the Civil War until stopped by religious humanitarians and Congress.

Is world opinion again at work as President Obama closes Guantanamo and revisits the policies that tortured prisoners? How do we cope with the unintended consequence of our war on terror while promoting our mission to eliminate "evil" in the world? Is it one of the legacies of Lincoln we now resist in accepting?

Is it too much to speculate that Tolstoy's Christ-like theme of Lincoln being "driven" to uphold the "truth" may have forced him to honestly face the issue of paying for the Civil War? By 1863, it was costing three million a day. With secession ending any tariff income from the South, Congress resorted to the income tax and greenbacks along with massive borrowing to pay for the war.

Wealthy members of Lincoln's party fought him, but only won later by getting the Supreme Court to declare the income tax unconstitutional in 1873. It was not until 1913, with the Sixteenth Amendment, that

this tax was finally “legalized” after all four presidential candidates favored submitting it to a vote of the people in 1912. Certainly, today, if you like the IRS, you have to give some credit to “Honest Abe,” the first Republican president. As Will Rogers pointed out, only golf makes more liars out of people than the IRS.

In checking the literature, you’ll find amazon.com listing no fewer than 66,672 books about Lincoln. TMI — too much information! Only the Lord, Himself, commands more literature. How quixotic of anyone to think that anything new can be added to Lincoln’s well-massaged bones!

Back to what made Lincoln “tick,” one needs to visit his early bouts with despair. We are reminded of holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl’s thesis in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*. This one-time suicidal man desperately searched for a purpose in his life. At age 32, he wrote: “I am now the most miserable man living.”

Out of sync with his time, Lincoln deplored violence, even such routine chores as butchering. He didn’t drink or smoke, but he did enjoy telling bawdy jokes. While others dissipated their time and energies, Lincoln focused on studying every book he could lay his hands on. He finally found his mission through the legal pursuit of justice, aided by wisdom, and implemented through politics. Lincoln’s many setbacks, one could speculate, were necessary pitfalls that deepened his character.

Standing on principle against President Polk’s popular Mexican War and subsequent land grab in 1848 took courage. Empire building was popular back in Illinois, so Lincoln didn’t even run for re-election to Congress in 1868. Still, his hero, George Washington, would have approved his opposing the aggressive Mexican War designed to help spread slavery.

As another founding father, James Madison, warned, wars lead to a loss of freedom and democracy as the centralized government expands its power and extracts more in taxes. But, even under Madison’s presidency, war came nonetheless in 1812, and Dolly and James ended up fleeing the capitol with the portrait of Washington before the dastardly British burned the White House. Never mind that some cantankerous Yanks had earlier invaded Canada and burned government buildings at York!

Though Lincoln later “proved” that “a nation cannot exist half slave and half free,” that bold statement didn’t help him to win the senate election in 1858. The people in Illinois were not prepared to accept the implications of that kind of talk.

In fact, the inherent racial tensions boiled over a half century later in the 1908 riot in Springfield. Remember that this was the home town of the “Great Emancipator.”

But out of this tragedy William Walling and other white social reformers like Jane Addams of Hull House, joined black leaders like the intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois in creating the NAACP. Significantly, its on-going mission is still to complete Lincoln's vision of liberty and justice for all.

Perceived as an extremist, Lincoln's "long shot" nomination as the Republican candidate for president prompted the Deep South to drop out of the Union without even giving the new president a chance. Lincoln went so far as to offer a Thirteenth Amendment guaranteeing the permanence of slavery in states where it already existed. But the "Fire-Eaters" of the South had already forced a suicidal split in the Democratic Party thus virtually conceding the election to Lincoln. He wasn't even on the ballot in most southern states.

As president, with less than forty percent of the vote, what was it about his character and experience that drove him to struggle day and night to succeed in preserving the Union?

Certainly, he suffered profoundly after his twelve-year-old son Willy's death in 1862. Add to this the Union defeats on the battle fields and you have torments he admitted would literally drive him to his knees. If so, was he then impelled to act as a sort of Apocalyptic prophet totally committed to doing God's Will in exchange for victory?

Was he like Constantine, the Great ruler back in 313 who promised conversion to Christianity if he could only win the Civil War to unite the Roman Empire? But what a tragic irony! Making Christianity the official religion turned a pacifist theology into an instrument of empire! What ensued, of course is that formerly non-violent Christians began killing other Christians, because now they could proudly chant that "God is on our side!"

Was Lincoln able to sublimate his suffering in order to fulfill the transcendent promise of America — "liberty and justice for all?" Did he see himself as just an actor in the drama to make America the ideal godly "City on the Hill," first articulated by our pilgrim-puritan forefathers? Some authorities argue that this unbaptized and un-churched actor on the stage of history did see himself as a fatalistic victim in an inexorable drama that he alone could play out to its tragic end. In fact, his premonition of death reminds one of Martin Luther King's pre-Memphis talk about not getting to the "promised land" with his people.

Lincoln, the "Great Emancipator," could also qualify as the "Great Goralizer," as in his second inaugural, called his "Sermon on the Mount," he reaches back to the Old Testament to try to explain the evil of slavery and the Civil War. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."



Because both North and South facilitated and profited from slavery, both sides were to blame. Though they pray to the same God, yet both must suffer for the sin of slavery because God is just, freedom and equality have to be purchased by redemption, meaning that only after all the blood drawn by the lash is paid for by one drawn by the sword, and all the wealth piled up by the bondsman's "unrequited" labor is destroyed, only then, can the divine scale of justice be balanced.

This reminds one of Jefferson's stark assertion that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

If, indeed, ill-gotten wealth must be destroyed, then Lincoln's legacy might be playing out right now in the world as the manifold Madoffs, the folks at AIG, and others on Wall Street bedevil our portfolios so that our 401-ks are now 201-ks.

Maybe only practicing Christians or other "brothers' keeper" believers, having distributed their surplus to the poor, don't have this problem.

Perhaps, the Greeks were right: that Hubris begets Nemesis! The goddess of retribution is boss! So, when fear-driven mankind blows it, natural law takes over! Consequently, all the lately lost wealth, created mostly out of thin air, must be evaporated to get us back to reality. Simple as that! But what about the ten trillion dollar national debt? The bloated pentagon with more than 700 overseas bases designed to protect us against evil and spread democracy? What would the conservative, humanity-loving Lincoln say about all this?

As for Lincoln's legacy and links to the other faces, it's interesting to note, how Mt. Rushmore came to be. State Historian Doane Robinson seems to have thought about it first. Gutzon Borglum jumped at the chance to carve the mountain, saying that local money could be raised to pay for it. But his friend, President Calvin Coolidge, summering in the Black Hills in 1927, reminded him that drought-stricken farmers and ranchers who can't even pay their taxes were poor prospects for donations. Coolidge continued assuring him that "I know great governments do things like this," and so it was! Most of the money would be coming from Washington, the last \$200,000 from FDR's New Deal through the good offices of Peter Norbeck.

Ironically, although Borglum loved Lincoln, naming his own son after him, he wasn't so enthusiastic about civil rights for blacks, Jews and immigrants. It's revealing to read about this dark side of Gutzon, who held an attitude not all uncommon in the world or state today!

Lincoln greatly admired Washington and Jefferson, Washington, the humble first president who set the great precedents, signing the first bill restricting slavery from the Northwest Territory and Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence who also expanded the nation with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Both of these areas provided a bonanza of cheap or free land for ambitious settlers and Civil War veterans through the Homestead Act of 1862.

But the territory was already occupied by various tribes who thought they had a deal with the Great White Father in Washington. The best we can say for Lincoln is that his focus was so intense on winning the Civil War that he didn't have time to agonize over the troubles on the frontier. Certainly, the treaty payments owed to these starving people were not a high priority. His reputation as an honest, just, and sympathetic man could not prevail over the intense fear that raged on the frontier. So the Minnesota Massacre ensued. Though 264 Sioux were saved by Lincoln, still 38 died in the largest mass hanging in history. We can certainly appreciate today, with the popular gun shows, how rampant fear can drive ordinary people to arm themselves against perceived threats from other human beings or their own government.

Moving along to Teddy Roosevelt, who loved the martyred president. At his own inauguration, he wore a ring from Lincoln's former secretary, John Hay. Imbedded in it was a lock of Lincoln's hair. Roosevelt had Lincoln's portrait placed behind his desk, and tried to do "what Lincoln would have done." Like Lincoln, he saw the Constitution "...as a document that put human rights above property rights when the two conflicted." However, then Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon dissented, claiming that T. R. had "no more use for the Constitution than a tomcat had for a marriage license."

Like Lincoln, Roosevelt invited the most prominent black leader of his time, Booker T. Washington, to dine with him in the White House. But, like Lincoln, when he hosted Frederick Douglass, he was sternly reminded that it was indeed "the white house." Blacks could be there, too, but only as servants.

Fast forward to President Obama who made news when he replaced Churchill's portrait with Lincoln's in the Oval Office and swore on Lincoln's Bible to uphold the Constitution. What a better indication of where the legacy of Lincoln is going today! But the newly-elected President's parentage is unconnected to any slaves Lincoln had freed. Still, Obama attracted some ninety-five percent of the descendants of these people in the last election. Why the Republican Party lost these votes could be a topic for another paper some day. Maybe this helps to explain why the Republican National Committee picked a black, pro-choice chairman to work on what has become an ironic reversal of historical loyalties.

Looking back to the one-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, the Republican Club of New York picked Booker T. Washington as featured speaker in 1909. At their 125-dollar a plate dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria, Booker T. asserted that Lincoln "...lives in the present more potently than fifty years ago...that he lives in the steady, unalterable determination of these millions of black citizens." Maybe so, but in reality, most of them still lived segregated lives without the vote or many opportunities for a quality education or good jobs.

Speaking of education, Lincoln, with only a year of formal schooling, left a rich legacy in signing the Morrill Act, providing virtually free education at land-grant colleges. But, note that ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) was added to fill a gap in leadership during the Civil War. Note, also, the connection to Kent State and the killing of four students in 1970, as a result of the Vietnam War protest. Is this but a sad consequence of our hero's expansion of federal power confusing education with teaching students how to kill?

Also, back in 1909, playwright Percy Mackaye in his "Ode on the Centennial of Abraham Lincoln" called him the "mystic demi-god of the common man," symbolic of America's journey "from its humble beginnings to its growing eminence on the world stage" uniting the nation as "one vast communion..."

Left out of this vision, of course, were Native Americans. While Lincoln pardoned 264 who were accused in the Minnesota Massacre, still thirty-eight Indians hanged at Mankato on the day after Christmas in 1862 for their uprising against the injustices of white aggression. One could ask, where was the spirit of "malice toward none and charity for all" that characterized Lincoln's attitude toward the South? Maybe the memory of his grandfather being killed by an Indian on the Kentucky frontier caused him to leave Native people outside the national community.

Certainly there is dissent among many Native Americans today, who still claim title, by the Laramie Treaty of 1868, to the area where the four illustrious former presidents look eastward. Never mind that the "doctrine of effective occupation" or "might makes right" has trumped treaties whenever the power of the weaker party could not enforce it. They would appreciate a recent book by Ivan Eland entitled *Recarving Rushmore*. Lincoln and Roosevelt are blasted off the mountain by a libertarian's judgement that neither represented true peace, prosperity, or justice. But Washington and Jefferson, both slave-owners, are still there to "desecrate" the "Paha Sapa," the sacred Black Hills.

It's most serendipitous that today's superintendent of Mount Rushmore is a Native American, Gerard Baker. He's excited about the up-coming Ken Burns series on national parks. Baker accepts the

reality, but promises to promote true reconciliation through educational programs designed to reach a mutual understanding. Hence, the three controversial tepees at Rushmore today.

Again, much is made of the dramatic 2008 election. Another talented lawyer from Illinois, Barack Obama, is our first black president. It will be interesting to see how a Harvard Law School star with years of schooling is going to pursue the legacy of the self-educated Abraham Lincoln. We'll see if this is the final providential fulfillment of the American dream.

If so, then some poignant ironies intrude. As mentioned earlier, Obama is not a descendent of any slaves. His father is from Kenya. His mother, a white liberal, links him more to Planned Parenthood and Margaret Sanger than to Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass. Sanger's eugenic ideas to curtail the population explosion in Harlem, according to one internet source, link her to what was going on in Germany in the 1930s.

What an irony if Obama turns from Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" rhetoric where "liberty and justice for all" implies rights for the un-born, to a pragmatic political position that blows with the political winds of the time. Is it too much of a stretch to equate Lincoln's statement, that "if slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong," to Mother Teresa's Nobel speech asserting that "if abortion is not wrong, then nothing is wrong?"

Like his hero Lincoln, Obama inherits a mess. Both approached the presidency with a strong understanding of the Constitution. While Lincoln respected the Supreme Court, he vehemently disagreed with the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 declaring slaves, as property, having no civil rights. This "obiter dicta", making slavery legal everywhere in the United States, even went so far as to reverse a law signed by President Washington prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory.

Today's Dred Scott, to some, might be Roe v. Wade, an equally unsettling constitutional question. Ironically, the Fourteenth Amendment, reversing the Dred Scott Decision, is the same one used by the Supreme Court in 1973 to reverse all state laws limiting abortion.

The central question Theodore Roosevelt asked "what would Lincoln do?" raises an interesting debate. Would he agree that the mother has the right to trump any civil rights that the state or father might claim for the un-born child? Of course, we can't know for sure, but to base the "right" to an abortion on a Civil War amendment designed to expand human rights is certainly the mother of all ironies!

Most interesting is the fact that both Jesuit Georgetown and Notre Dame are reaching out to this most gifted new president, hoping that being a great admirer of Lincoln, he will also be pragmatic enough to

realize that abortion, like slavery, poses another "irreconcilable conflict" to many Americans today. Like Teddy Roosevelt, he should ask himself, "What would Lincoln do?" And then, he should listen very carefully for the answer. Certainly, the nation has scarcely ever needed a miracle more than right now, so maybe praying to Saint Abraham will save the Union again!

## THE INFLUENCE OF LINCOLN'S MIDWEST ON SOUTH DAKOTA

Jon Lauck<sup>1</sup>

There are several well-known connections between Abraham Lincoln and South Dakota. First, Lincoln appointed his doctor to be the first territorial governor of Dakota. Second, Lincoln signed the legislation creating Dakota Territory. Third, Lincoln was heavily involved in the Sioux uprising in Minnesota, which proved to be a critical event during the early territorial years. Less directly but perhaps more importantly, Lincoln signed the Homestead Act and the railroad legislation that completely reshaped life on the prairie. Even less directly, but perhaps even more significant for the development of Dakota, was the political culture of Lincoln's Midwest, which was transplanted to the Dakota prairie.

In southern Dakota at the time of statehood, 83% of native born Dakotans hailed from the Midwest and 14% came from the North Atlantic states. Only 1.5% came from the South and thus its heritage of aristocracy and slavery, its high degree of racial consciousness and conflict, and its pattern of inequitable land-holdings had little impact on Dakota.<sup>2</sup> The majority of Dakota settlers came from Midwestern states, especially Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana.<sup>3</sup> The political culture of Abraham Lincoln's Midwest, then, had perhaps the greatest influence on the development of territorial Dakota's institutions and cultural patterns. This paper will note these institutional and cultural influences which shaped the foundations of political life in Dakota Territory.

The origins of the political culture in Dakota Territory can be traced to New England and the Midwest, the two regions which supplied most of the pioneers who settled in the territory. Citations to English history and the tradition of "Anglo-Saxon liberty" were not uncommon among Dakotans, who recognized the migratory chain of democratic ideas and institutions which preceded settlement. The English folkways of New Englanders made their way to Lincoln's Midwest, the origin of most Dakota settlers, where, according to one study, they "exerted their genius in the perpetuation of orderly towns with

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<sup>2</sup> John David Unruh, "South Dakota in 1889," (doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, 1939), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Unruh, "South Dakota in 1889," 52. On the similar influence of the Midwest on the settlement of the Sacramento Valley, see David Vaught, "After the Gold Rush: Replicating the Rural Midwest in the Sacramento Valley," *Western Historical Quarterly* vol. 34 (Winter 2003), 447-467.

schools, churches, and colleges as nearly like those of New England as they could achieve."<sup>4</sup> The Yankees who migrated to the Midwest, according to Susan Gray, imposed "New England values and institutions as the template of all American culture" and sought to promote and preserve social order through a Yankee institutional framework composed of small churches, common schools, and local government.<sup>5</sup> The Yankees in the Midwest maintained their "older sectional loyalties" and their Yankee-Midwestern identity intensified during the Civil War and further shaped the consciousness of many of the settlers who migrated to Dakota in the post-war years.<sup>6</sup>

The influence of English history, institutions, and traditions, which traveled by way of New England and the Midwest, were readily identifiable in Dakota Territory. Dakota town names, for example, captured this cultural migration. Settlers often attached English or New England related monikers to their new towns, including Aberdeen, Alcester, Amherst, Andover, Avon, Bangor, Bath, Beresford, Brandon, Brentford, Bristol, Canning, Castlewood, Chelsea, Chester, Columbia, Ethan, Georgetown, Groton, Hartford, Hudson, Ipswich, Kennebec, Manchester, Montrose, Oldham, Onida, Putney, Rutland, Salem, Scotland, Scranton, Sheffield, Springfield, Stamford, Stratford, Turton, Utica, Vermont City, Watertown, Wentworth, Wolsey, Woonsocket, and Yale.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to town names, the operative law in Dakota Territory remained the precedents of the English common law and Dakota jurisprudence relied heavily on Eastern and Midwestern judges and case

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<sup>4</sup> Louis B. Wright, *Culture on the Moving Frontier* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1955), 88 (source of excerpted quote); Thomas J. Wertenbaker, "The Molding of the Middle West," *American Historical Review* vol. 52, no. 2 (January 1948), 227; John D. Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy: The Frontier vs. the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1953), 122; Susan Sessions Rugh, "Nineteenth-Century Americans," Richard Sisson, Christian Zacher, and Andrew Cayton (eds), *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2007), 190; Graham Hutton, *Midwest at Noon* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946), 33.

<sup>5</sup> Susan E. Gray, *The Yankee West: Community Life on the Michigan Frontier* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2-6; George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2007), 3. See generally John C. Hudson, "Yankeeland in the Middle West," *Journal of Geography* vol. 85 (1986), 195-200, "North American Origins of Middlewestern Frontier Populations," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* vol. 78, no. 3 (September 1988), 395-413, and "Who Was 'Forest Man'?: Sources of Immigration to the Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* vol. 6, no. 2 (Spring 1986), 72-75.

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest: Upland Southerners and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1787-1861* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996), xi, 13. On Midwestern regionalism, see David Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (New York, Vintage Books, 1961), 167-172.

<sup>7</sup> See generally Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (ed), *South Dakota Geographic Names* (Sioux Falls, SD, Brevet Press, 1973). On the transference of New England place names to the Midwest, see Thomas J. Schlereth, "The New England Presence on the Midwest Landscape," *The Old Northwest* vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer 1983), 126-28.

law.<sup>8</sup> When drafting a constitution during the 1880s, Dakota settlers borrowed heavily from the existing constitutions in the Midwest, including Lincoln's Illinois, from which the Dakota delegates specifically borrowed railroad provisions. When they finished one convention, in a nod to Lincoln's victory in the Civil War, the framers of the South Dakota constitution broke into singing "Marching Through Georgia."<sup>9</sup>

The cultural cohesiveness of Lincoln's Midwest, according to Louis B. Wright, could be traced to the "Anglo-Saxon tradition, the tradition of English law, the English language, English literature, and British religion and customs."<sup>10</sup> This English tradition and culture was filtered through New England and then through the Midwest, the two regions which were the greatest source of immigrants to Dakota Territory. As noted, in southern Dakota at the time of statehood, 83% of native born Dakotans hailed from the Midwest and 14% came from the North Atlantic states. A contemporary account noted that southern Dakota's population was "homogenous" and that its people were "mainly of American birth, natives of New York, Ohio, Michigan and the States of the Mississippi Valley."<sup>11</sup> Herbert Schell's history of Clay County found that the settlers of the formative period hailed from Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.<sup>12</sup> John Hudson found that settlers in Sanborn County held Iowa, Michigan, and New York state picnics so they could socialize with others from their states of origin.<sup>13</sup> Thirty-five thousand people came to Dakota

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<sup>8</sup> *Laws Passed at the First Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota* (Pierre, State Bindery Co., Printers, 1890), 254; Bernard Floyd Hyatt, "A Legal Legacy for Statehood: The Development of the Territorial Judicial System in Dakota Territory, 1861-1889," (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1987), 591, 599; Gordon Morris Bakken, *The Development of Law on the Rocky Mountain Frontier: Civil Law and Society, 1850-1912* (Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1983), 130, 67. Of the 19 justices appointed to Dakota Territorial Supreme Court from 1882-1889, 6 were from the East, 4 were from the Midwest, and 8 were from Dakota Territory. Hyatt, "A Legal Legacy for Statehood," 439. In 1877, the territory adopted much of Field statutory code and "Dakota did not change the Field draft provisions concerning the relationship between the Code and the Anglo American common law, and this left the reconciliation of what might seem to be inconsistent commands to the courts." Hyatt, "A Legal Legacy for Statehood," 171-72. Judicial officials in the West generally "stroved to impose legal uniformity, rather than to differentiate themselves from the East." Sarah Barringer Gordon, "Law and the Contact of Cultures," William Deverell (ed), *A Companion to the American West* (Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 134.

<sup>9</sup> Jon Lauck, "The Organic Law of a Great Commonwealth: The Framing of the South Dakota Constitution," *South Dakota Law Review* vol. 53 (2008), 219, 229, 239.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, *Culture on the Moving Frontier*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> na, *North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana & Washington: The New States* (New York and Chicago, Ivison, Blakeman & Co., 1889), 28, Beinecke Library, Yale University; L.E.Q., "New Empires in the Northwest," *Library of Tribune Extras* (August 1889), 13, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert S. Schell, *History of Clay County South Dakota* (Vermillion, Clay County Historical Society, 1976), 105.

<sup>13</sup> John Hudson, "Two Dakota Homestead Frontiers," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* vol. 63, no. 4 (December 1973), 462.



Territory from Wisconsin alone.<sup>14</sup> During the boom, one newspaper reported that nearly every train leaving Mason City, Iowa included “five to a dozen cars loaded with emigrants bound for South Dakota.”<sup>15</sup> The movement of Wisconsinites and Iowans into Dakota Territory comports with Frederick Jackson Turner’s conclusion that most of the “men who built up the West beyond the Mississippi” originally “came as pioneers from the old Northwest, in the days when it was just passing from the stage of a frontier section.”<sup>16</sup>

The Midwest which sent so many settlers to Dakota Territory bore the direct imprint of the American revolutionaries. While the delegates to the American constitutional convention were famously drafting a constitution in 1787, the Confederation Congress also worked to pass the Northwest Ordinance, which shaped the political and economic structure of the Midwest.<sup>17</sup> Congress sought to create new republican states in the Ohio Valley and to preserve the area for “orderly and industrious settlers.”<sup>18</sup> The Northwest Ordinance sculpted the contours of the Midwest by prohibiting slavery and primogeniture, promoting public education, preserving religious freedom and the common law tradition, ensuring jury trials and the right of habeas corpus, and fostering stable governments. This statute, written specifically by the American revolutionaries to provide the fundamental law for the future Midwest, “proved decisive in shaping the region’s political and social orders.”<sup>19</sup> The brainchild of Thomas Jefferson, the Northwest Ordinance advanced his goal of “exporting republicanism” to the new territories of the Northwest, which were required to adopt republican constitutions.<sup>20</sup> The political debates within the new states of the Northwest Territory took place within the parameters set by the political currents of the American Revolution and focused on

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<sup>14</sup> na, nt, *Press and Dakotian*, September 7, 1883, na, nt, *Grant County Review*, March 14, 1889; Merle Curti, *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1959), 66. “Wisconsin, heavily settled by Vermont and Massachusetts natives, provided the largest number of immigrants (11,685) to the Dakota Territory in 1880.” Gregory Rose, “Yankees/Yorkers,” Sisson, Zacher, and Cayton (eds), *The American Midwest*, 194.

<sup>15</sup> Unruh, “South Dakota in 1889,” 46.

<sup>16</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Problem of the West” (1896), in Raymond J. Cunningham (ed), *The Populists in Historical Perspective* (Boston, D.C. Heath and Company, 1968), 7. Turner cited the example of Senator Allen of Nebraska, who was born in Ohio, moved to Iowa, and then moved to Nebraska after serving in the Civil War.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew R.L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation: Rethinking the History of an American Region* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation*, xvii.

<sup>19</sup> Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation*, 1; Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy*, 134-35; Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2007), 16; Robert P. Swierenga, “The Settlement of the Old Northwest: Ethnic Pluralism in a Featureless Plain,” *Journal of the Early Republic* vol. 9 (Spring 1989), 73-74.

<sup>20</sup> Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation*, 8; Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy*, 122-23; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., “The Northwest Ordinance and the Principle of Territorial Evolution,” John Porter Bloom (ed), *The American Territorial System* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1973), 45.

the republican themes of ensuring liberty, instilling virtue, and combating corruption.<sup>21</sup> "The political leaders of the Old Northwest in the early nineteenth century," according to one study, "remained wrapped in the mantle of republicanism."<sup>22</sup> While the region south of the Ohio River was influenced by Southern states which "favored the expansion of the planter civilization" and the maintenance of aristocracy and landed estates, the area north of the Ohio River was governed by the republican mandates of the Northwest Ordinance.<sup>23</sup> It was the institutions and political culture of the Midwest shaped by the Northwest Ordinance, a product of the American founders, which in turn laid the foundation for political and social life in Dakota Territory. The Midwesterners who set out for Dakota Territory brought a deeply ingrained tradition of Northern republicanism with them.<sup>24</sup> Advocates of statehood in Dakota Territory who grounded their claims directly upon the rationales cited and precedents created by the American founders, both in the form of the federal constitution and the Northwest Ordinance, were not guilty of grandiosity, but were speaking an essential truth.

The influence of the Midwest is readily apparent in Dakota Territory in the form of settlers, law, cultural institutions, and a commitment to republicanism. General Beadle noted the "similarity of experience" of the Midwestern settlers of Dakota and their "familiarity with certain systems of institutions, customs and laws" which shaped the "character of the Commonwealth, laws and institutions" of Dakota.<sup>25</sup> Dakota Territory was thus fundamentally shaped by a transplantation of Midwestern culture. Malcolm Rohrbough has noted these "structural continuities" between the settlement of the Midwest and the lands further west. The same culture and institutions, according to Rohrbaugh, thus "stretched across time and place from the first to the second American West."<sup>26</sup> Most of the Midwestern settlers of Dakota Territory,

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<sup>21</sup> Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation*, 70.

<sup>23</sup> Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy*, 121.

<sup>24</sup> Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 142-43.

<sup>25</sup> William Beadle to Editor, *New York Tribune*, January 21, 1878, Beadle Papers, FF #1, DB 3536A, SDSHS. This is not to argue that the Midwest did not include a variety of ethnic groups. Swierenga, "The Settlement of the Old Northwest," 73-105.

<sup>26</sup> Malcolm J. Rohrbaugh, "The Continuing Search for the American West: Historians Past, Present, Future," *Old West/New West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 136. See also, Stephen Aron, "Lessons in Conquest: Toward a Greater Western History," *Pacific Historical Review* vol. 63, no. 2 (May 1994), 136-140.

according to H. Wayne Morgan, “wished to reproduce the settled communities they left behind.”<sup>27</sup> These “settled communities” were, for the most part, the settled communities of Lincoln’s Midwest.

The settlers of Dakota consistently embraced the symbols and figures of the American republican heritage in their choice of historical allusions and political imagery, a practice that Lincoln embraced. The American founders, for example, received constant adulation. Reverend Joseph Ward frequently appealed to “the principles so strenuously observed in the founding of our nation” and trumpeted the tradition of ordered liberty established by the American revolutionaries.<sup>28</sup> General Beadle said that no Americans exceeded the Dakota settlers “in loving reverence for the Fathers of the Republic.”<sup>29</sup> Statehood leader and future governor Arthur Mellette linked himself to the cause of the Founders when he criticized federal officials for “denying the right of self-government to a half million American citizens” in Dakota.<sup>30</sup> Judge Gideon Moody similarly denounced Dakota Territory’s treatment as a “colony” in the same oppressive fashion that the British Crown once treated its American colonials. He added that this treatment finally triggered the Declaration of Independence, a precedent gladly embraced by some of the more strident advocates of statehood, who sought to break free of Washington-based territorial governance.<sup>31</sup> South Dakota towns such as Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, and Mt. Vernon also carried on the legacy of the founders.

While the American founders and the Constitution provided powerful images and precedents for many Dakota settlers, the more immediate and most personal cultural reference point was the Civil War and the army of the Union commanded by Lincoln. One U.S. Senate report noted that it was “safe to assert that in no State or Territory can there be found so large a proportion of the people who fought the battles of the Union.”<sup>32</sup> A large percentage of Dakota settlers, a pioneer fondly recorded in his memoirs, “carried the musket to the front in the darkest days of the rebellion.”<sup>33</sup> Arthur Mellette said that many Dakota settlers

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<sup>27</sup> Howard Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1969), 372.

<sup>28</sup> Ward, “The Territorial System of the United States,” 53.

<sup>29</sup> Ward, “The Territorial System of the United States,” 55.

<sup>30</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1442.

<sup>31</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1444-45.

<sup>32</sup> “Admission of Dakota,” Report of the Senate Committee on Territories, 50<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, January 23, 1888, 4, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Dollard, *Recollections of the Civil War and Going West to Grow Up with the Country* (Scotland, South Dakota, published by author, 1906), 268. See also “Personal Memoirs of William H.H. Beadle,” 121.

had been “scarred and maimed in defense of the Union which they helped to preserve.”<sup>34</sup> Service to the Union in the Civil War could be the measure of a man in Dakota Territory. When candidates for political office were analyzed, their attractiveness grew if they had been a “good soldier” in the war or had “enlisted as private at first call for troops.”<sup>35</sup> The Union war veterans’ memories of their youthful battles and their camaraderie was strong. One “old soldier” who emigrated to Dakota from Ohio would frequent the Grand Army of the Republic meetings in Huron with another veteran. A young man who witnessed this interaction noted the “strong bond of friendship between those men that time could not erase.”<sup>36</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a Civil War veteran, similarly recalled the distinctiveness and power of this bond forged in war. Of the Civil War generation, Holmes wrote, “in our youth, our hearts were touched with fire.”<sup>37</sup> The continuing resonance of the Civil War was reflected in the “bloody shirt” politics of the late-nineteenth century. From 1865-1900, five of the six men elected president were Union veterans and in 1890 there were still a million living Union war veterans, many of whom were active in civic and social affairs.<sup>38</sup> Dakotans shared the national veneration of Civil War service .

The adoption of Civil War monikers, reliance on the imagery of the Civil War, and respect for the Northern cause and its leaders was ubiquitous in Dakota Territory. In and around Potter County, towns took the names Union, Appomattox, Gettysburg, and Shiloh and one of the county newspapers was named the *Potter County Union*.<sup>39</sup> In addition to the naming of lakes and towns for Civil War generals such as

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<sup>34</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1757; Doane Robinson, *South Dakota, Sui Generis* (Chicago and New York, American Historical Society, Inc., 1930), 488-89.

<sup>35</sup> Review of territorial governor applications, March 8, 1889, FF Data Governor, DB 149, RG 48, Records of the Department of the Interior, Records of the Appointments Division, Field Office Appointment Papers, 1849-1907, Dakota Territory Appointment Papers, National Archives.

<sup>36</sup> Frank Bloodgood, “Homesteading in Custer Township, Beadle County, South Dakota,” 17-18, FF H75.36, DB 3538A, SDSHS. The “stronghold” of the GAR was the Midwest, which sent many settlers to Dakota. Wallace Evan Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans’ and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1955), 36. On the Dakota GAR, see Stephen T. Morgan, “Fellow Comrades: The Grand Army of the Republic in South Dakota,” vol. 36, no. 3 *South Dakota History* (Fall 2006), 229-259.

<sup>37</sup> R. Hal Williams, “The Politics of the Gilded Age,” John F. Marszalek and Wilson D. Miscamble (eds), *American Political History: Essays on the State of the Discipline* (Notre Dame and London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 111 (Holmes quote). On how the soldiers viewed the high-stakes of the Civil War, see Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union* (New York and London, New York University Press, 1988), 26-27. See also James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought the Civil War* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1998). On the impact of the Civil War in Wisconsin, see Curti, *The Making of an American Community*, 131-36.

<sup>38</sup> Williams, “The Politics of the Gilded Age,” 111.

<sup>39</sup> *The Wi-Iyohi*, vol. 5, no. 2 (May 1, 1951); Herbert Schell, *History of South Dakota* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska

Lake Sheridan and the town of Sherman, Union County was named for the Civil War cause, Lincoln County was named for the assassinated President, and McPherson and Meade Counties were named for Union generals.<sup>40</sup> When the memorial for Ulysses S. Grant was unveiled in Woonsocket in 1885, businessmen were asked to “drape their places of business and cooperate in rendering the occasion as impressive as may be” and to close their shops for the day.<sup>41</sup> Civil War veteran Melvin Grigsby, when running for territorial delegate in 1888, made dramatic use of a Civil War analogy when addressing the prevailing economic concerns in the nation. He declared that the problem of monopoly was a “danger greater than the danger of African slavery” and recalled that “African slavery once deluged the land in blood.”<sup>42</sup>

Allusions to the Civil War were especially common in the debate over statehood since both conflicts were entangled in disputes over popular sovereignty. While hoping for a reasonable compromise to a standoff during Dakota’s battle to join the Union, Arthur Mellette offered the dark reminder that “Kansas struggled to statehood through blood.”<sup>43</sup> Judge Gideon Moody similarly noted that the unjust treatment of Dakota paralleled an earlier era when the “plains of Kansas were made to bleed with the blood of our martyrs.”<sup>44</sup> When calling for an end to territorial status, Major J. K. P. McCallum called on Dakotans to “throw off political thralldom” so that “we will no longer be slaves.”<sup>45</sup> Territorial Governor Gilbert Pierce, when criticizing advocates of the policy of declaring statehood despite the absence of Congressional approval, did so in the name of the “thousands of [men who] fought and shed their blood” for the Union during the Civil War.<sup>46</sup> In Congress, supporters of statehood for Dakota openly “waved the bloody shirt” when protesting efforts to stall its admission to the Union. One Republican asked if “20,000 scarred veterans now residing in Dakota, who marched through the burning sands and miasmatic swamps of the South to put down a wicked rebellion, stand with bared heads and beg long of their old opponents in arms to be admitted to the Union they helped save? We say again, then thousand times no! Men of ‘61 to 8,

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Press, 1975), 169; Winifred Fawcett and Thelma Hepper, *Veterans of the Civil War Who Settled in Potter County, Dakota Territory* (Gettysburg, SD, np, 1993), Center for Western Studies.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert T. Hoover, “Territorial Politics and Politicians,” Harry Thompson (ed), *A New History of South Dakota* (Sioux Falls, Center for Western Studies, 2004), 134, 137, 144.

<sup>41</sup> Albert Allen (ed), *Dakota Imprints, 1858-1889* (New York, R.R. Bowker Company, 1947), 102.

<sup>42</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1525.

<sup>43</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1761.

<sup>44</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1444-45.

<sup>45</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1741.

<sup>46</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1466.

stand upon your own rights as freemen...even if Dakota must remain out of the Union until an uprising of the free men of the state drives the rebel yell from the halls of Congress."<sup>47</sup>

Amidst the pervasive memories of the Civil War the cult of Abraham Lincoln lived on in Dakota Territory. Lewis Bloodgood, for one, kept the flame alive. Bloodgood hailed from Iowa, served in the Union Army, and was wounded in an attack on Mobile. Bloodgood, like so many other Midwesterners, moved from Iowa to Dakota Territory in 1880 and homesteaded near Huron.<sup>48</sup> During the war, Bloodgood and his comrades told the fellow soldiers in his regiment they were traitors for voting for George McClellan in 1864 and proudly reported that Lincoln won the regimental balloting soundly: "Old Abe received 432 votes, Little Mc 32."<sup>49</sup> After Lincoln's assassination, Bloodgood wrote that "I heartily wish our honest old President could have lived to have fully recognized the great end for which he had so long toiled, but he has long gone to his home."<sup>50</sup> Bloodgood's son recalled his father's discussions of his war service and noted that "when the news of Lincoln's assassination came through, the soldiers cried like babies. They all loved this man whose great, tender heart bore the sufferings of the soldiers. Father said no one except Jesus was ever loved by so many people and he hoped that his children and their children would love their country and revere Abraham Lincoln just as their Grandfather Bloodgood did."<sup>51</sup> During the 1870s, there was even a proposal to split off the Black Hills from the territory and call it "Lincoln" and also a proposal to divide the territory in two, with the southern half becoming "Dakota" and the Northern half becoming "Chippewa" or "Lincoln."<sup>52</sup> In 1889, the Union Veteran Club of Chicago also reminded Dakotans that the "men of 1861-65 made statehood possible for Dakota" and requested that one of the Dakotas be named "Lincoln."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Carrol Gardner Green, "The Struggle of South Dakota to Become a State," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, vol. 12 (1924), 528.

<sup>48</sup> FF H75.36, DB 3538A, SDSHS.

<sup>49</sup> Lewis E. Bloodgood to Father, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, November 12, 1864, FF H75.36, DB 3538A, SDSHS.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis E. Bloodgood to Mother and Father, Marine Hospital, New Orleans, May 9, 1865, FF H75.36, DB 3538A, SDSHS.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Bloodgood, "Homesteading in Custer Township, Beadle County, South Dakota," 5-6, FF H75.36, DB 3538A, SDSHS.

<sup>52</sup> Weston Arthur Goodspeed, *The Province and the States* (Madison, Wisconsin, Western Historical Association, 1904), vol. II, 470; John E. Miller, "The State of South Dakota," Benjamin F. Shearer (ed), *The Uniting States: The Story of Statehood for the Fifty United States: Volume 3: Oklahoma to Wyoming* (Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 2004), 1106, 1109.

<sup>53</sup> Waldo Potter to Augustine Davis, January 4, 1888, FF Letters, January-February 1888, DB 3544B, Augustine Davis Collection, SDSHS; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1898.

The deference paid to Union veterans of the Civil War affected politics and policy in Dakota. In 1887, the territorial assembly passed a law which paid for the burying of "Soldiers, Sailors or Marines, who Served in the Union Army During the War of the Rebellion" when their relatives could not afford a proper burial.<sup>54</sup> The same territorial assembly passed a law giving a preference in public works projects to "honorably discharged Union soldiers and sailors of the late war."<sup>55</sup> Old soldiers and their families were also afforded generous advantages over other settlers under amendments to the national Homestead Act adopted in 1870 and 1872 and these privileges "unquestionably were responsible for a large influx of settlement into the West" and "were widely heralded by the railways," who promoted the migration and settlement of veterans in the West.<sup>56</sup>

The influence of Civil War veterans was also directly felt through the Grand Army of the Republic lodges, which grew dramatically during the years of the boom and included many territorial leaders. In 1884 alone, the number of GAR posts in the territory increased from 13 to 62 and grew to 100 by the time of statehood.<sup>57</sup> The GAR reunion in Aberdeen in September 1885 typified the grandiosity and patriotic spirit of such occasions and featured reveille, a grand parade, music, prayers, speeches by the governor and other officials, the reading of a long paper entitled "The Life, Service and Character of General Grant," and the singing of "Marching Through Georgia."<sup>58</sup> In 1889, the territorial legislature created a Dakota Soldiers' Home after a request from a recent encampment of the Dakota department of the GAR.<sup>59</sup> In keeping with their support of Civil War veterans and the influence of the GAR, Dakota political leaders were also quick to denounce President Cleveland's veto of a Union soldier relief bill passed by Congress.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Laws Passed at the Seventeenth Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Dakota* (Bismarck, Tribune, Printers and Binders, 1887), 343; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, Vintage Books, 2008), 62, 100.

<sup>55</sup> *Laws Passed at the Seventeenth Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Dakota* (Bismarck, Tribune, Printers and Binders, 1887), 399. By 1889, the territorial legislature had passed a Soldier's Burial Act and a Soldier's Preference Act and had funded a Soldier's Home and the National Guard. "Veterans," *The Wi-Iyohi*, vol. IX, no. 1 (April 1, 1955).

<sup>56</sup> Hicks, *The Populist Revolt*, 10.

<sup>57</sup> na, "Growth of the Grand Army Republic," *Aberdeen Daily News*, April 24, 1885; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1385, 1757; Lamar, *Dakota Territory*, 246; Morgan, "Fellow Comrades," 229-259. John Higham called the GAR the "most powerful patriotic society of the day." Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1955), 57.

<sup>58</sup> na, "The G.A.R. Reunion," *Bismarck Tribune*, September 17, 1885.

<sup>59</sup> *Laws Passed at the Eighteenth Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Dakota* (Bismarck, Tribune, Printers and Binders, 1889), 157; "Veterans," *The Wi-Iyohi*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1, 1955).

<sup>60</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1447, 1465.

The political identity of many of the Midwesterners who would move to Dakota Territory was molded by the Civil War and served as another stimulant for republican ideology. The election of Lincoln in 1860 was viewed as a "regional triumph" for Midwesterners and marked the "moment in which the Midwest emerged as the preeminent region of the nation."<sup>61</sup> By fighting a different region with distinct cultural practices and by coming to realize all that they shared in common, the "Civil War enabled large numbers of Midwesterners to imagine themselves as citizens of a regional community defined largely by the middle-class residents of small towns from Ohio to Iowa and beyond."<sup>62</sup> The Civil War helped to focus the energies of Midwesterners on larger republican ideals and to transcend petty intra-sectional squabbles.<sup>63</sup> The Civil War, David Noble concluded, "marked the triumph of midwestern democracy."<sup>64</sup> This triumphant Midwestern culture of republicanism migrated along with the settlers to their new Dakota homesteads.

Lincoln's Homestead Act, the passage of which was made possible when Southern opponents in Congress seceded, was also critical to the development of Dakota. The Homestead Act made possible the creation of an agrarian economy based on small scale farming. At the time of statehood, there were over 50,000 farms in Eastern South Dakota, 92% of them ranging from 100 to 500 acres and 86% of them were farmed by the owners.<sup>65</sup> In 1890, South Dakota's 50,158 farms averaged 227 acres in size.<sup>66</sup> This agrarian economy stood in stark contrast to the more concentrated landholdings of the slavery-oriented South, which Lincoln's leadership finally undermined.

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<sup>61</sup> Andrew R.L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray, "The Story of the Midwest: An Introduction," in Andrew R.L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray (eds), *The Identity of the American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2001), 16-17.

<sup>62</sup> Cayton and Gray, "The Story of the Midwest," 15.

<sup>63</sup> Marc W. Kruman, "The Second American Party System and the Transformation of Revolutionary Republicanism," *Journal of the Early Republic* vol. 12, no. 4 (Winter 1992), 536.

<sup>64</sup> David W. Noble, *Historians Against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1965), 49.

<sup>65</sup> Unruh, "South Dakota in 1889," 77. On tenancy and inequality of land ownership causing political conflict, see Reeve Huston, *Land and Freedom: Rural Society, Popular Protest, and Party Politics in Antebellum New York* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000) and Alan Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1990). For another discussion of the disputes caused by the "maldistribution" of frontier land, see Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 83-85. On agrarian concerns over concentrated land holdings in later years, see Jon Lauck, "The Corporate Farming Debate in the Post-World War II Midwest," *Great Plains Quarterly* vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 1998), 139-153.

<sup>66</sup> Harold E. Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial Dakota," *Culver-Stockton Quarterly* vol. 7, no. 1 (1931), 33.



In Dakota Territory, the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln and the Midwest and the Homestead Act, inevitably became the majority party. In 1880, 80% of the territory was Republican.<sup>67</sup> At the time of statehood in 1889, Republicans would outnumber the Democrats in the state House by 108-8 and in the state Senate 37-3.<sup>68</sup> Because of the dominance of the Republicans in Dakota Territory and the even division of the federal government, Democrats in Congress — many from the South — opposed Dakota statehood. The *New York Times* reported that Democrats in Congress would block statehood for southern Dakota because the new state would send “two Republicans to the Senate.”<sup>69</sup> The *Utica Gazette* of New York opined in 1884 that Republican-leaning “Dakota will be kept knocking at the gate as long as the House remains Democratic.”<sup>70</sup> The fate of Dakota was thus caught up in the lingering sectional strife that Lincoln had tried to subdue.

The settlers who peopled Dakota did not arrive with intellectual blank slates nor did the order that they created emerge out of a formless state of nature. The Dakota pioneers borrowed heavily from the culture of Lincoln’s Midwestern republicanism. The New Englanders and Midwesterners who constituted the bulk of the boom migration to Dakota celebrated the history, figures, and symbols of American democracy, including, and perhaps most prominently, Abraham Lincoln. The honor afforded to this tradition was particularly heartfelt for the many Dakota pioneers who served the Union cause during the Civil War, which deepened the patriotic fervor in the North and further entrenched the democratic ideals for which they fought. More specifically, the Dakota pioneers embraced the republican principles at work in the Lincoln’s Midwest and enjoyed the fruits of the victory made possible by the victories of Lincoln’s army during the Civil War.

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<sup>67</sup> Jon Lauck, John E. Miller, and Edward Hogan, “The Contours of South Dakota Political Culture,” *South Dakota History* vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 2004), 158-59.

<sup>68</sup> Alan L. Clem, *South Dakota Political Almanac: A Presentation and Analysis of Election Statistics, 1889-1960* (Vermillion, SD, Government Research Bureau, Report no. 47, 1962), 25.

<sup>69</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1664.

<sup>70</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1726.

## BONANZA FARMING IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY

Shebby Lee

The Industrial Revolution was a transforming movement in world history but its ramifications spread far beyond mechanization and newly available manufactured goods. It created great cities in Europe and the New World and opened up career opportunities for farm boys (and girls) never before possible. But this revolution wasn't confined to urban factories and mills. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution arrived on the Plains in the form of large-scale, mechanized farms — so vast that managers of different sections communicated by telegraph — designed to fill the cars of the overextended railroads with much-needed cargo.

As so often happens in history, the convergence of several circumstances met in the Red River Valley of northeastern Dakota to create what would become known as the "Bonanza Farms".

The course of the river and the soil itself are the work of retreating glaciers some 9,000 years ago, which ground the rock and glacial debris into soil which, when combined with the silt of glacial Lake Agassiz, became as rich as any on earth.<sup>1</sup> The entire valley measures approximately 300 miles long by 50 miles wide.<sup>2</sup> It was not only extraordinarily fertile to a depth of from 12 to 20 inches, it was also flat, treeless, and without rocks. Such land could not be kept secret for long and settlement of the fertile valley began long before Dakota Territory was established (1861). There were non-Indian fur traders living in what would become Pembina (on the Dakota/Canadian border) as early as 1797, and farmers were planting wheat there by 1812 — nearly fifty years before the first settlers arrived in southern Dakota.<sup>3</sup>

The cool, northern climate of the region was ideal for wheat farming but there was a problem: despite a world-wide demand for number one hard spring wheat, the crude mills in nearby Minneapolis produced a highly perishable, discolored wheat, stripped of most of its nutrition, and speckled with particles of husk or bran. Even worse, it had a tendency to destroy the rollers used to grind the wheat — so it was not welcomed by millers. Then as now, no matter what the quality of their product, if farmers couldn't sell their product, it wasn't worth growing.<sup>4</sup>

In 1871 a process of grinding wheat with ceramic rollers rather than the traditional grindstones or

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<sup>1</sup> Don McCollar, *Earthwatch: The Red River Valley*.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Van Dyke. *The Red River of the North*. P. 803.

<sup>3</sup> T.D. Griffith. *South Dakota*. p. 40

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.prairiepublic.org/features/BonanzaFarm/chapter4.htm>

steel rollers, was developed in the Minnesota town of St. Anthony Falls.<sup>5</sup> It not only successfully ground the hard spring wheat grain but eliminated the impurities like bran, which absorbs moisture, and removed oil from the germ, which had caused rapid spoilage. This so-called "Minnesota Process" produced a wheat with a longer shelf-life and created a new demand for the hard number one. Suddenly spring wheat became highly coveted, along with the land which could grow it.<sup>6</sup>

1871 was also the year that the railroad arrived in the Red River Valley. The unique aspect of this event is that North Dakota was one of the few farm states in which the railroad *preceded* the farmer, thus accelerating both settlement and the inevitable rise in land prices.<sup>7</sup> So now we had a product, transportation, and a means to process it.

The Northern Pacific threw its considerable weight behind promoting the virtues and benefits of the Red River Valley. After all, the federal government had given the railroad over ten million acres as an inducement to lay track in the region, an amount equal to nearly a quarter of the future state of North Dakota, and the largest portion allotted to any railroad in America.<sup>8</sup> The future looked bright indeed for the Northern Pacific, which could not only profit from the sale of land, but also from hauling produce to the mills.

Unfortunately for the Northern Pacific, the Panic of 1873 rendered its stock worthless virtually overnight. But an ingenious scheme presented by the railroad's northern Dakota agent, James B. Power, saved the Northern Pacific and created an entirely new system of farming on a grand scale. To prevent the railroad's collapse, Power proposed that stockholders be given the opportunity to exchange bonds for land at the rate of \$110. With land selling for \$1.25 to \$10 per acre this offered a very attractive solution for distressed bondholders, plus offered a way for the railroad to reduce its indebtedness.<sup>9</sup>

Power had actually been pondering the prospects for the fertile Red River Valley for some time. He believed that selling the land in small parcels — as had always been done — would take too long to save the railroad. His proposal was to create large-scale, showcase farms on which a hundred laborers and 200 mules could clear a thousand acres in the same time it would take an individual farmer to clear

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<sup>5</sup> William E. Lass. *Minnesota: A History*. p 160.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.prairiepublic.org/features/BonanzaFarm/chapter4.htm>  
National Park Service. *The Bonanza Farms of North Dakota*.

<sup>7</sup> Hiram M. Drache. *The Day of the Bonanza*, p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Janet Lysengen. *The Centennial Anthology of North Dakota History*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Drache. *The Day of the Bonanza*, p. 42 & 47.

forty.<sup>10</sup>

His proposal was enthusiastically embraced and the first “Bonanza Farm” (so called because it implies a lucky strike, a get rich quick opportunity) was the Cass/Cheney farm: 11,520 acres owned by the president of the Northern Pacific and a board member. However, it was always known locally for its manager, Oliver Dalrymple, a Yale law graduate who despite recent losses in grain speculation, had proven success in large-scale wheat farming. Located twenty miles west of Fargo, the Dalrymple Farm made a profit almost from the beginning.<sup>11</sup> By 1877 Governor Pennington was reporting that the Dalrymple farm was producing 30 bushels per acre, and 5,000 bushels per day was being shipped from nearby Casselton.<sup>12</sup> The Dalrymple farm grew to 32,000 acres by 1885, yielding as much as 600,000 bushels of wheat per year. It employed 600 men at seed time and 800 at harvest, utilized 200 plows, 200 self-binding reapers, 30 steam threshers, and 400 teams of horses or mules. In 1881 the Dalrymple farm was threshing so much wheat it filled three trainloads per day with 30,000 bushels of wheat each.<sup>13</sup>

Soon other Bonanza Farms were established and at the peak in the 1880's there were 91 such giant operations on the northern plains, measuring from 3,000 to 75,000 acres each.

Northern Dakota farmers who had produced a thousand bushels of wheat in 1860 increased production to 170,000 bushels by 1870.<sup>14</sup> But with the advent of the Bonanza Farms, production skyrocketed. 1879 produced a harvest of one and three quarter million bushels of wheat from northern Dakota. During the decade of the eighties, production yields remained fairly steady at 20 bushels per acre, but the number of acres under cultivation increased from 120 thousand acres in 1880 to nearly three million acres just a decade later. In 1890 nearly 27 million bushels of wheat were shipped over the two railroads then operating in North Dakota.<sup>15</sup>

“From 1872 to 1880 wheat acreage in America jumped from 20,858,359 to 37,986,717, a 10 percent increase each year for eight years; seven million acres of the increase were in North Dakota.”<sup>16</sup>

Such phenomenal production was due not only to the increased acreage put into cultivation each

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<sup>10</sup> Prairie Public. Chapter 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> George W. Kingsbury. *The History of Dakota Territory.* p. 1030.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service. *The Bonanza Farms of North Dakota.* Drache. p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> David Boehm. *Wheat Industry Yields Rich History.*

<sup>15</sup> National Park Service. *The Bonanza Farms of North Dakota.*

National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. *North Dakota wheat production statistics, 1879-2008.*

<sup>16</sup> Drache. p. 207.

year, but also to the adoption of new and improved machinery during a period of rapid innovations in farm technology. Bonanza Farms introduced bulk handling of grain in tanks, rather than sacks, and were the first to use self-feeders and blowers in threshing machines. Cyrus McCormick himself traveled by private railroad car to the Dalrymple farm to watch his first twin binders in action.<sup>17</sup> Bonanza Farmers had the financing and the business acumen to take advantage of these new inventions far sooner than could independent small farmers.<sup>18</sup>

Bonanza Farms represented Big Business on the prairie. While the redemption of railroad bonds made it relatively easy to obtain the land, vast sums of capital were still required to buy the machinery, construct the dozens of necessary farm buildings, and pay for labor, board and housing. It was sometimes several years before a Bonanza Farm showed a profit, and unlike a smaller, self-sufficient family farm, all equipment, supplies, food, even the lumber for construction, had to be brought in from the outside.

Investors were not knowledgeable nor particularly interested in agriculture. Even laborers weren't required to have any knowledge of farming, because they simply followed orders from professional management. Bonanza Farms were the agricultural equivalent of eastern factories, achieving greater efficiency by using masses of large-scale machinery and a large labor force.<sup>19</sup>

A farm unit equaled 6,000 acres under the supervision of one manager, and each of these was further sub-divided into three 2,000 acre units, with its own cook camp, horses and machinery, blacksmith shop, foreman, and bookkeeper. In order to keep in touch with this far-flung empire, Oliver Dalrymple installed the first telephone in northern Dakota in 1876.<sup>20</sup>

The manager of a Bonanza Farm was therefore often more of a personnel director than a farmer. Strict military discipline was enforced, the men living in bunkhouses and observing behavioral rules that included no drinking, no swearing and — because of the high fire danger — no smoking. The daily routine was rigorous: workdays during harvest were thirteen hours long, but reduced to ten during seeding, haying and plowing. The recent economic downturn, however, kept men who needed employment on the straight and narrow. Sundays were always off, unless work had been delayed by weather during the week.

Because Dakota was sparsely populated, labor had to be imported, and the railroads helped by advertising for and transporting the men free of charge in the expectation of making a tidy profit come

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<sup>17</sup> John Stewart Dalrymple. *Oliver Dalrymple: The Story of a Bonanza Farmer* p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Drache. p. 210.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Dalrymple. p. 35.

harvest-time. Workers came largely from two sources: seasonal workers coming up from the South, and mid-western cities. But lumberjacks from Wisconsin and Minnesota also represented a substantial part of this workforce. At harvest time it was not unusual to have 1,000 men on the payroll.<sup>21</sup>

Day workers earned 60¢ to 75¢ per day, but most workers were hired on a monthly basis, earning \$16 to \$25 per month, including board, room and washing. For those lucky enough to be kept on over the winter, the rate went down to \$10 to \$15. Skilled workers, such as the head separator, or thresher, could earn \$4 per day. Foremen, of which there was one for each section, earned \$1,000 per year. Women, often the wives of foremen, were hired to do the cooking, cleaning and washing, could earn \$150 to \$200 per year, or \$3 per week for just the summer months, including room, board and washing.<sup>22</sup>

Bonanza Farms were preferred over working on small farms because there was less pressure and responsibility as part of a large crew, and because the living conditions were better. Despite the more or less regimented lifestyle, there were none of the menial jobs expected of workers on small farms such as repairing machinery, tending livestock, pumping water or gardening. And best of all, the food was great! Bonanza Farms had a reputation for meals of both quality and quantity and understandably, food represented a substantial part of the annual budget.<sup>23</sup>

The most important employee on a Bonanza Farm was the bookkeeper. He earned from \$600-\$900 per year and often had his own little home and enjoyed privileges on a par with the manager. With a large investment in land and machinery it was imperative that strict supervision be maintained over expenses. By virtue of being able to place volume orders, for example, Bonanza farms always purchased equipment at wholesale prices, and with ever-expanding acreage under cultivation there was new equipment purchased every year.<sup>24</sup>

The first Bonanza Farmer, Oliver Dalrymple succeeded to such an extent that he became something of a celebrity. He was interviewed regularly by newspapers and featured in the March and May issues of Harpers Magazine in 1880. The Dalrymple farm was the only starred place in North Dakota listed in Baedeker, prompting visits from European visitors and industrialists from the East, and it was not

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<sup>21</sup> Drache. p. 113.

Dalrymple. p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 110.

<sup>23</sup> Op. Cit. p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Drache. p. 209.

Dalrymple. p. 43.

unusual to see private railroad cars parked on the farm's siding during the hunting season.<sup>25</sup> Foreign visitors and even a president of the United States beat a path to the Dalrymple Farm: "In 1879 President Hayes...inspected the Farms, met my father", wrote the son of Oliver Dalrymple in his 1960 biography, "and sat on the porch after dinner having an extra cup of coffee before going back to his private car. 'Mr. Dalrymple,' said the President, 'do you ever get tired of looking out over nothing but miles and miles of waving wheat?' Oliver Dalrymple answered, 'Does a sailor get tired of looking at the sea?'"<sup>26</sup>

Although it was the Northern Pacific that started the whole movement, within a decade it was surpassed by James J. Hill's St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad. By 1890, the renamed Great Northern Railway, carried 20.7 million bushels of wheat to the Northern Pacific's six million bushels.<sup>27</sup>

Because of the one-crop nature of the system, it is amazing that the Bonanza Farm era lasted as long as it did. Favorable rainfall during the "Dakota Boom" produced high crop yields while prices remained high, and expenses — especially labor — remained low. Even the fact that Dakota had no access to water transportation was overcome by the sheer volume of production, which allowed Bonanza Farmers to negotiate low transportation rates to the mills.<sup>28</sup> Also, the practice of annually clearing new land (the most expensive part of the process) increased the total production of wheat, even as the older acreage became depleted and produced fewer bushels per acre.

As time went on, and more of the land was consumed, the work force became more transient. Workers who had been kept busy between planting and harvest by clearing new land were no longer needed on a permanent basis. Thousands of workers roaming the Red River Valley during the summer months, created resentment among a local population already jealous of the economic and political clout of their huge neighbors.<sup>29</sup>

At their peak there were only 91 Bonanza Farms among the thousands of family farms in Northern Dakota. However, the vast land tracts owned by absentee owners had a negative affect on immigrants seeking a strong community life as they pursued their fortune on the Northern Plains. An article in the *Minneapolis Journal* in 1893 complained that one Bonanza Farm with perhaps 7 families, or 35 permanent residents, occupied an area that should have supported 100 families of 500 people. It concluded that the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Op. Cit. pp. 44-45

<sup>27</sup> National Park Service. The Bonanza Farms of North Dakota.

<sup>28</sup> Dalrymple. p. 207 & 209.

<sup>29</sup> Prairie Public. Chapter4.

Bonanza Farmer was not a “social animal”.<sup>30</sup>

The end of the era came about when overproduction eventually exhausted the land. Contributing to its demise were a period of crop failure in the late 1880's, rising transportation and labor costs, and oppressive taxes. Investors saddled with unprofitable land, sold or rented parcels to smaller farmers and by the 1920s the Bonanza Farm era was over. It seems that the same single crop system that had doomed America's Southern Plantation system — in their case, overplanting of tobacco and cotton — also brought down the Bonanza wheat farmers of the northern plains. But the end did not have the same impact as the Southerners' spread westward with their slave economy intact, inflaming the issues which led to Civil War — or the widespread devastation which would plague the entire country during the dirty thirties. The difference was that investors never thought of the Bonanza Farms as a long-term commitment, and had no emotional connection to the land. When land prices and production simultaneously began to drop, the huge land-holdings were simply broken up and sold off.<sup>31</sup>

The Great Dakota Boom in northern Dakota has slightly different dates than those in southern Dakota, and more closely align with the Bonanza Farm phenomenon (1879-1886). During that time the population of northern Dakota grew by 100,000 people, according to the State Historical Society of North Dakota. And despite the huge success and public notice paid to the Bonanza Farms, the average sized farm in North Dakota during this time remained 200-300 acres. Even as late as 1910, North Dakota had only 341 farms over 1000 acres.<sup>32</sup>

But the legacy of the Bonanza Farms in North Dakota lives on. In the late 1950's North Dakota farms averaged 755 acres, nearly triple the national average.<sup>33</sup> And to this day, North Dakota remains the number one producer of wheat in the nation, outdistancing its nearest competitor (Minnesota) by more than threefold.<sup>34</sup>

The immediate and sensational success of the bonanza farms sometimes obscures the fact that they started as an experiment, and a risky one at that. The Northern Pacific had everything to lose and such mechanized farming had never been attempted on such a large scale.

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<sup>30</sup> Drache. p. 214.

<sup>31</sup> Prairie Public. Chapter 4.  
Drache. p. 211.

<sup>32</sup> Institute for Regional Studies. Bonanza Farms.  
<http://www.fargo-history.com/early/bonanza.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Drache. p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> USDA. North Dakota 2007 wheat production - \$1,708,200



The gamble paid off, bringing in many settlers and paying off the distressed investors in the Northern Pacific Railroad. The successor Great Northern Railway profited not only from hauling wheat, but from the shipments of goods purchased by the wheat farmers. It publicized the fertility of the Red River Valley and helped transform agriculture from a family-based, animal-powered endeavor in the 19th century to a technology-centric business in the 20th century.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> NPS. The Bonanza Farms of North Dakota.

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## REMEMBERING THE THIRTY-EIGHT: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE "WAR ON BARBARISM"

David Martinez

What Lincoln willfully partook in at the behest of the people of Minnesota was a euphemistic but no less violent war on barbarism, in which the lives and rights of an Indian nation were sacrificed for the sake of those who coveted their land. More specifically, the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War was the latest in a series of embattled encounters between white settlers and indigenous peoples stemming from the time when Miles Standish blatantly violated the treaty between the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Wampanoag. In this storied history of Indian-white relations, replete with conflict, treaties, and promises made and broken, Indian people have consistently been portrayed as the embodiment of all that was dangerous and foreboding along the so-called "frontier." Even as George Washington advocated a policy of peace and trade with the Indians, he did not hesitate to affirm the prejudices of the day, when he wrote to James Duane on September 7, 1783: "I am clear in my opinion, that policy and economy point very strongly to the expediency of being upon good terms with the Indians, and the propriety of purchasing their Lands in preference to attempting to drive them by force of arms out of their Country; which as we have already experienced is like driving the Wild Beasts of the Forest which will return as soon as the pursuit is at an end and fall perhaps on those that are left there; when the gradual extension of our Settlements will as certainly cause the Savage as the Wolf to retire; both being beasts of prey tho' they differ in shape." As evidenced by Lincoln's Indian policy, or what there was of it, the presumption that Indians must ultimately choose between civilization and extinction was just as prominent eighty years later, when there was still a frontier, expanding settlements, and "hostile" Indians.

On August 17, 1862 four Dakota men returning from a hunting expedition murdered a homeowner and his family plus two other men at Acton township, which led — in anticipation of unavoidable retaliation from the settler community — to the organized assault on Fort Ridgely and the town of New Ulm, thus generating what became known as the "Great Sioux Uprising." As far as the white settlers were concerned, they were victims of an unprovoked and savage attack by a race of people who hated their "civilization." As Lincoln's Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, summarized events in his annual report dated November 26, 1862: "It is estimated that from eight hundred to one thousand quiet, inoffensive, and unarmed settlers fell victims to savage fury ere the bloody work of death was stayed. The thriving town of New Ulm, containing from 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants, was almost destroyed. Fort Ridgely was attacked and closely besieged for several days and was only saved by the most heroic and unflinching bravery on

the part of its little band of defenders until it was relieved by troops raised, armed, and sent forward to their relief. Meantime the utmost consternation and alarm prevailed throughout the entire community." As for casualties incurred, Thomas J. Galbraith, agent for the Sioux of the Mississippi, would later report the approximate numbers of 644 civilians and 93 soldiers, totaling 737 killed as a result of the Indian "uprising." Although estimates were given for Dakota casualties and prisoners held, they were regarded as inconsequential compared to the settler community that wanted unmitigated and unrestrained revenge. Nor did it matter that the Dakota were victims of years of abuse and oppression at the hands of the Indian Bureau. Minnesotans, as the historical record portrays them, were unanimous in their condemnation of the Dakota Nation, even extending their rage and intolerance to the nearby Winnebago or Ho Chunk community, irrespective of the fact that the latter had nothing to do with the attacks. Nonetheless, it was under these chaotic and irrational conditions that the U.S. Army under Major General John Pope compelled former Governor Henry H. Sibley to establish a military commission, which would undertake the prosecution of hundreds of trials, convicting 303 of capital crimes punishable by death. President Abraham Lincoln then accepted the task of reviewing the cases one by one, even though the legality of the military commission was dubious at best and the trials were fraught with procedural errors — not to mention exhibiting a blatant disregard for the rights of the accused.

As a result of Lincoln's intervention, on December 26, 1862, a day that will live in infamy in the hearts and minds of the Dakota Oyate, the Dakota Nation, thirty-eight men were hung for alleged crimes against white citizens during an armed conflict between the Dakota and the United States. As one author summarized the execution: "Three drum beats signaled the moment of execution. Many of the men clasped the hands of their neighbors. As the rope was cut, and the bodies fell, a single prolonged cheer arose from the soldiers and citizens watching the spectacle. Then the soldiers cut down the bodies and the crowd dispersed. The crowd was orderly, probably due in large part to the preparation of Colonel Miller and the declaration of martial law. The bodies were buried in a single grave four feet deep on the edge of town."

Aside from the fact that this mass execution remains the largest in American history, what makes this travesty of justice all the more egregious is the vindictiveness with which it was carried out by a settler population that saw itself as above the Constitution and beyond any regard for human rights, as it sought what they firmly believed was a clear case of justified revenge. Although there were some non-Indians, such as Bishop Henry Whipple, who understood that the Dakota were not without mitigating circumstances, the vast majority were like the Indian Agent Galbraith, who spoke of the Dakota in his 1863 report only as

inveterate savages, who were only good for complaining about their withheld annuities, consequently turning a deaf ear to the Dakota's cries of starvation, which had become in the summer of 1862 an imminent threat to their lives. In fact, in an outrageous attempt at exonerating himself and his office from any culpability, Galbraith makes the claim: "He knows little of the Sioux Indians who has not learned that to imagine, manufacture, and improvise complaints is characteristic of the entire Sioux nation." Consequently, "it is well to take their stories of hunger, privation, and wrongs cum grano salis." At the same time, Galbraith does admit to there being corruption on the reservation. However, the inhumanity that the Dakota were forced to endure was instigated by pernicious traders who were in partnership with Galbraith in a scheme to defraud the Dakota of what few resources they had, namely, the cash annuities that they annually received from the U.S. federal government in compliance with the treaties that the two nations signed. Nonetheless, such dire circumstances bought the Dakota neither mercy nor sympathy from either the Governor of Minnesota, Alexander Ramsey, or the droves of Minnesotans who were thirsty for Indian blood after hostilities began on August 18, 1862.

During the war trials that followed after many Dakota willfully surrendered, President Abraham Lincoln was made aware of the conditions on the Dakota reservations, particularly at Lower Sioux, in addition to Minnesotans' clarion call for the Dakotas' extermination. With this in mind, the process through which Lincoln decided to reduce the number of condemned from three-hundred-and-three to thirty-nine (with the thirty-ninth being acquitted at the last moment) is seen by some as another instance of this President's Solomon-like wisdom. In other words, Lincoln is credited with having drawn a difficult compromise between a vengeful populace and a defeated Indian nation reduced to being prisoners-of-war. Indeed, no less a revered figure as Dakota writer and activist Charles Alexander Eastman expressed his gratitude for Lincoln's magnanimity, when he postulated in his 1915 book, *The Indian To-Day*, that a "new Indian policy" emerged when Lincoln refused "to order the execution of three hundred Sioux braves, whom a military court had, in less than two days, convicted of murder and condemned to be hung, in order to satisfy the clamor of the citizens of Minnesota." Lincoln, to the contrary, took a personal interest in the fate of the accused Indians. Clearly, though, Eastman's admiration for Lincoln is mixed with the acrimony he feels toward his Minnesota neighbors, many of whom sought the expulsion, if not the slaughter, of every Dakota man, woman, and child from what they regarded as their territory. Eastman scolds Minnesotans for forgetting "that these Sioux had been defrauded of the finest country in the world, their home, their living, and even cheated out of the ten cents per acre agreed to be paid for millions of acres of the choicest land." Indeed, the public outcry across Minnesota for the Dakota's annihilation would weigh heavily in Lincoln's

mind, even more so than the insufferable conditions on the reservation, not to mention the passing consideration he gave to the doubtful legality of the military commission that made quick work out of trying and convicting as many men as possible.

In the context of the history of Indian-White relations, which were frequently violent and typically involved a military response to so-called unrest on the “frontier,” it is easy to see how Eastman thought Lincoln was more enlightened than his predecessors. Certainly, Lincoln’s solution to the political dilemma at hand was more considerate of Indian needs than what one saw in the presidency of, say, Andrew Jackson, whose answer to frontier tensions was forced removal, which was given the force of law in 1830. Of course, what diminishes Lincoln’s aura is the fact that the Dakota were forcibly driven out of their homeland anyway, like the Cherokee before them, in spite of the precedent that Lincoln may have thought he set with the clemency shown for most of the accused. Where was Lincoln when the Dakota — and Winnebago, innocent bystanders — were being forced out of their ancestral homeland? Just as important, where was Lincoln’s courage and eloquence when the Dakota’s rights as human beings were trampled upon by a bloodthirsty population?

Unlike his concern for slavery and abolition and the ensuing “War between the States,” we do not have from Lincoln any great speeches or correspondence displaying the kind of thoughtfulness and articulacy for which generations would honor him. In fact, with respect to the Dakota, Lincoln is disturbingly silent. A part of this was due to the fact that Indian affairs were a blind spot in Lincoln’s presidency. As Miles A. Browne notes in his essay, “Abraham Lincoln and the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862”: “Lincoln admitted that he was poorly informed regarding Indian policies. He paid little attention to the Office of Indian Affairs.” One could say that in light of his ignorance, Lincoln was susceptible to the prejudices and stereotypes upon which both government and newspaper reports utilized without question in their description of events. The New York Times, for example, ran headlines that spoke of “atrocities,” “barbarities,” “massacre,” and “murder” perpetrated against the white citizens of Minnesota. At the same time, as Browne emphatically notes, Lincoln, unlike many in the Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana region, never became known as an “Indian hater.” In fact, Browne commends Lincoln for protecting an elderly Indian man from the vengefulness of his comrades, when he strayed into their camp during the Black Hawk War, allegedly demonstrating the future president’s innate sympathy.

Indeed, it seems to be because of the popular mythology — hagiography might be the better word — of Lincoln as a good and honest man that those who have reflected on his handling of the Dakota cases have tended to be protective of his legacy. Daniel W. Homstad, in his 2001 article “Lincoln’s Agonizing

Decision," does not hesitate to exonerate Lincoln from any wrong-doing on the basis that the U.S.-Dakota War occurred at an inopportune time for any additional problems to be brought up with the President. As Homstad explains: "On a personal level, [Lincoln] and his wife, Mary, still grieved over the death, nine months earlier, of their 11-year-old son, Willie. On a political level, the administration faced one crisis after another. The war effort was in tatters." Major battles were either lost or failed to achieve their objectives. Moreover, as "the blunders mounted, Lincoln also faced a challenge to his leadership from disgruntled cabinet members." On top of it all, the issue of slavery loomed large. Nonetheless, as Homstad portrays Lincoln: "Somewhere between the bad tidings and bouts of depression the president managed to work on the final drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation," which was issued in two stages: first, September 22, 1862, which declared that the slaves would be freed if the rebels did not cease hostilities and rejoin the Union by January 1; then, on January 1, 1863, when the warning of the preliminary proclamation was carried out across ten Southern states. In between these seminal dates, Lincoln was called upon to handle the aftermath of the so-called "Dakota Uprising."

Yet, it is precisely because of this historical context, particularly as it relates to Indian affairs, that makes Lincoln's decision all the more enigmatic and perplexing from an indigenous perspective. More to the point, insofar as Lincoln fulfilled the responsibilities of the presidency, which included both domestic and foreign affairs, in addition to his role as commander-in-chief overseeing the war effort against Confederate forces, it seems preposterous that a matter as serious as the U.S.-Dakota War should entail only minimal resolve from the Executive Branch. However, as the record shows, even when Indian affairs directly impacted on the Civil War, the matter was only given a cursory response from the President. For example, during the early stages of the conflict the Office of Indian Affairs was overtly concerned that rebel agents were out in force, attempting to ally Indian nations against the Union, much as the British had done before them. In fact, such espionage was an immediate issue for Lincoln's Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, who stated in his 1861 report: "Very shortly after assuming the duties of this office, I learned that emissaries from the States that had rebelled against the government were endeavoring to alienate the various tribes within the southern superintendency, and west of the States of Missouri and Arkansas, from the friendly relations which they had until then sustained to the government of the United States." Nonetheless, when the Cherokee Nation split its loyalties between the Union and Confederacy, such that many siding with the South signed treaties with the rebel government in the hopes of obtaining a quid pro quo that they could not get from the Union, the response from the Lincoln administration was negligible. It was only after abandoning the southern tribes to the Confederacy began looking like a serious



tactical blunder did Lincoln begin paying more attention to the political and military potential of Indian nations, such as the Cherokee. Still, Principal Chief John Ross, writing to Lincoln on behalf of Cherokees still loyal to the Union, received an ambiguous reply, in which Lincoln stated on September 25, 1862:

Your letter of the 16th Inst was received two days ago. In the multitude of duties claiming my constant attention I have been unable to examine and determine the exact treaty relations between the United States and the Cherokee Nation. Neither have I been able to investigate and determine the exact state of facts claimed by you as a failure of treaty obligation on our part, and justifying or excusing the Cherokee Nation to make a treaty with a portion of the people of the United States in open rebellion against the government thereof. This letter therefore must not be understood to decide anything upon these questions. I shall however cause a careful investigation of them to be made.

Lincoln goes on to promise Chief Ross: "the Cherokee people remaining practically loyal to the Union will receive all the protection which can be given them consistently with the duty of the Government to all parts of the country." This is different, of course, from the kind of treaty-based assurances that Ross was looking to get from the President for a Cherokee Nation that was caught between Confederate raids hitting them from the east in Arkansas and an uncommitted Union force standing north in Kansas.

Despite Eastman's affirmation that Lincoln signaled a new era in federal Indian affairs, it is accurate to say that the Lincoln administration simply regarded Indian affairs as inconsequential to the immediate needs of the Union. With regard to the Cherokee Nation, and by implication to Indian nations in general, one can argue that Lincoln could safely assume such an attitude because he benefited from a generation of forced removals that took place across the eastern U.S. during the 1830s-1850s. Because so many Indigenous Nations were weakened, even devastated, from the ordeal of forced relocation, Lincoln implicitly believed that he need not give Indian people the same level of concern he felt compelled to show for either the Civil War or slavery. Lincoln was more worried about what the British and French thought than any Indian nation. Indeed, insofar as actions speak louder than words, Lincoln's legislative agenda speaks volumes about his intentions for Indian Country. The 1862 Homestead Act, which received significantly more attention from Lincoln than the Dakota's equally important complaint that they had been defrauded of virtually all of their traditional lands throughout Minnesota by unscrupulous treaty parties, would in the post-Civil War years greatly accelerate westward expansion across Indian lands by granting adult heads of families 160 acres of surveyed public land for a minimal filing fee and five years of continuous residence on that land. In other words, Indian oppression, such as what was occurring at Lower Sioux, could wait.

What could not wait was the speedy termination of the Dakota problem. Upon news of the so-called "uprising," which included frantic pleas from Minnesota Governor Ramsey, Lincoln dispatched Major General John Pope, who wanted "a final settlement with all these Indians." In the spirit of Pope's "final settlement," Sibley's military commission sought to achieve through legal channels — however dubious the legality of the means chosen might have been — what could not be attained militarily, which was the elimination of the Indian as a problem on the Minnesota frontier. After all, it was not that long ago when with a combination of congressional and executive action, in addition to military support, the "Indian problem" was addressed with equally drastic measures. Thus, as Lincoln deliberated over the evidence sent to him by Major General Pope, what mattered more than the merits of the cases was appeasing a Minnesota population that was threatening anarchy, if he did rule as they saw fit.

What was at stake, as far as Minnesotans were concerned, was the war on barbarism that American settlers had been waging across Indian Country, ever since the first cabins were erected with the intention of colonizing the land. Showing Indians clemency was like showing the wolf mercy after it had been caught rampaging through one's livestock. Thaddeus Williams, a doctor living in Saint Paul, who described himself as "an humble private citizen," sent a lengthy letter to Lincoln, in which he gives graphic descriptions of heinous acts committed against unarmed and defenseless women and children, arguing that if the state of Minnesota is to see a future for itself, then it must be rid of the Indians that "kill & steal all our stock, murder & rape our mothers, wives & daughters, depopulate counties, burn towns, & turn thousands of acres of hay & wheat, oats & corn out to destruction." Like others, Williams vows vengeance if so-called justice is not delivered to the people of Minnesota. For clemency, Williams argues, would only embolden the Indians. "The Indians, if unpunished," Williams writes, "will not give the Great Father, as they term you, credit for magnanimity, or generosity; they will boast in their Wigwams, and as they dance around their war fires, decorated with scalps of our hardy pioneers & their daughters & wives, & children, that we dared not punish them; that we were afraid; & thus they will be emboldened to commit the same acts again, & can always find a pretence for a provocation." In the end, Williams beseeched Lincoln for "a just regard for the memory of our murdered citizens" by requiring "that these savages be executed." Otherwise the future of Minnesota, and by extension America, would suffer from the "painful sense of insecurity" that "pervades the frontier." Such terrorism, as Williams portrays it, was endangering the kind of progress on which the United States was built. For unless the Dakota were severely punished there would be "no more emigrant trains, loaded with hardy yeoman & the implements of industry" heading westward to settle new lands.

The clarion call came from more official quarters, as well. "We protest" the possibility of pardoning "these Indians," Senator Morton S. Wilkinson and Representatives Cyrus Aldrich and William Windom declared in a letter to Lincoln, "because, if the President does not permit these executions to take place under the forms of law, the outraged people of Minnesota will dispose of these wretches without law. These two peoples cannot live together. We do not wish to see mob law inaugurated in Minnesota, as it certainly will be, if you force the people to it." Subsequently, a memorial was sent to Lincoln on behalf of the citizens of Saint Paul, who described the Dakota assault as unprovoked and instigated without warning upon an unsuspecting populace. "Without warning, in cold blood," the memorial reads, "beginning with the murder of their best friends, the whole body of the annuity Sioux commenced a deliberate scheme to exterminate every white person upon the land once occupied by them, and long since sold to the United States." As far as the state of Minnesota was concerned, the "savages" already had had their "fair trial" and were duly sentenced to death by a military commission. It did not matter to them that the commission in question did not have jurisdiction over the Dakota cases, the illegitimacy of which was exacerbated by seating judges who were severely biased against the defendants due to their having fought the accused on the battlefield.

Carol Chomsky, in her 1990 article titled "The United States-Dakota War Trials: A Study In Military Injustice," outlines the irregularities of the trials that eventuated in the mass execution of thirty-eight Dakota men: "The Dakota were tried, not in a state or federal criminal court, but before a military commission. They were convicted, not for the crime of murder, but for killings committed in warfare. The official review was conducted, not by an appellate court, but by the President of the United States. Many wars took place between Americans and members of the Indian nations, but in no others did the United States apply criminal sanctions to punish those defeated in war." Thus, what began as a court of inquiry, limited to gathering information but restricted from trying and sentencing, soon turned into a kangaroo court. The order that Colonel Henry H. Sibley issued on September 28, 1862, according to Chomsky, "appointed a five-member military commission and authorized it to 'try summarily the Mulatto, and Indians, or mixed bloods, now prisoners, or who may be brought before them ... and pass judgement upon them, if found guilty of murders or other outrages upon the Whites, during the present State of hostilities of the Indians.'" It was under such dubious auspices that hundreds of trials were prosecuted. Louis Fisher, in a 2004 article titled "Military Tribunals: Historical Patterns and Lessons," which was written at the behest of the Congressional Research Service, summarizes the legal problems inherent to the 1862 war trials, stating:

Counsel was not provided to the defendants, even for those who had little command of English. There is also a question whether Col. Sibley possessed authority to

convene the tribunal. Article of War 65 provided that in cases of capital crimes, the officer who convened a court-martial could not also be the accuser. General Pope and Judge Advocate General Holt concluded that Sibley was an accuser, "and Sibley did not disagree." Sibley's defense was that Article 65 applied only to the court-martial of an inferior soldier, not to a military tribunal of outsiders. Yet the army had determined, by January 1, 1862, that military tribunals should be conducted with the same procedures as courts-martial. Whether for soldiers or for outsiders, the purpose of Article 65 was to prevent actual or perceived bias.

And yet, Lincoln did not hesitate — although he at one time hoped to delegate this — to take on the cumbersome duty of evaluating the three hundred and three cases placed before him. Instead of throwing all the cases out as should have done, he determined to ascertain which ones were to be formally sentenced to death. As Lincoln states in his own words, which were published in a message from the President "in answer to a resolution of the Senate of the 5th instant in relation to the Indian barbarities in Minnesota," he was "Anxious to not act with so much clemency as to encourage another outbreak, on the one hand, nor with so much severity as to be real cruelty, on the other." Consequently, Lincoln says he "caused a careful examination of the records of trials to be made, in view of first ordering the execution of such as had been proved guilty of violating females."

Homstad points out that Lincoln was overwhelmingly reluctant to hand down death sentences, which came up regularly during the Civil War, compelling him under the Articles of War to make these decisions. "In reviewing the death sentences," Homstad writes, "of civilians handed down by military commissions, Lincoln disagreed with 60 percent of the trial courts." Nonetheless, Lincoln made exceptions of cases involving "cruelty or sex offenses. Any death sentence for rape or murder, whether from courts martial or commission, stood a 50-to-80 percent chance of being upheld upon presidential review." However, when the Dakota cases were reviewed for instances in which women were "violated" only two cases out of hundreds met this criterion. Lincoln claims that because of this unexpectedly low number he "directed a further examination." The number may have been "unexpected," more than likely, because Lincoln took at face value all of the slanderous remarks made about Indian men as sexual predators. In any case, two was simply not enough to quell the pandemonium that was waiting to explode across Minnesota. Upon further review, Lincoln employed the criteria of distinguishing between those who participated in "massacres," which was clearly a crime that typically involved citizens — not to mention fitted the language that Minnesotans used to describe their confrontation with Dakota forces — from those who merely partook in "battles," which denoted a more specifically armed encounter between Dakota warriors and American soldiers and militia. Those who were guilty of massacring Minnesota civilians,

according to the review of abundantly problematic cases, "numbered forty, and included the two convicted of female violation. One of the number is strongly recommended, by the commission which tried them, for commutation to ten years' imprisonment." Thus, Lincoln ordered the executions to take place on December 19, 1862, however, more time was requested in order to prepare for what was expected to be a large and potentially unruly crowd gathering at Fort Snelling.

On December 27, 1862, Sibley sent a telegram to Lincoln, which stated simply: "I have the honor to inform you that the thirty eight (38) indians & half breeds ordered by you for execution were hung yesterday at Mankato at ten (10) o'clock am — Everything went off quietly and the other prisoners are well secured--."

Little more than a month later, on January 27, 1863, Thomas J. Galbraith, the same Indian Agent who oversaw the Dakota people's demise, had the audacity to assert in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: "The radical moving cause of the outbreak is, I am satisfied, the ingrained and fixed hostility of the savage barbarian to reform, change, and civilization." It was with this same mentality that Congressman Aldrich, who was serving as the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, pushed forward a resolution introduced by Congressman Windom for the "Removal of Dakota and Winnebago Indians" from the State of Minnesota. In typical bureaucratic whitewash, neither the mass execution nor the excruciating hardship that Dakota prisoners were undergoing was mentioned in the resolution. On the contrary, Secretary of Interior, Caleb Smith, wrote as if removal was for the higher good of the Indians: "The time is now as hand when these tribes will perish if their habits of life are not changed. Their only hope of existence is in becoming agriculturalists, and it is to be considered whether sound policy in this respect does not require that all the efforts of the government shall be given in that direction. Money annuities should cease to be paid to them to any extent; the bounties of the government should be bestowed in clothing, food, and agricultural implements, the building of houses, the employment of instructors in all branches of labor in which they are capable of being improved; and such system should be adopted as would necessarily compel them to labor." The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Upon reflecting on the inhumane tragedy at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, where Eastman served as the government physician at Pine Ridge Agency, he states in his 1916 autobiography: "All this was a severe ordeal for one who had so lately put all his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man. Yet I past no hasty judgment, and was thankful that I might be of some service and relieve even a small part of the suffering." Eastman's cautious attitude is made all the more remarkable when one considers that he was also a part of the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War, albeit as a small boy of four years of age.

Nonetheless, one wonders how Eastman was able to check his anger. Perhaps, he sensed that history would be the final judge of events, such that even Lincoln must be held accountable. In the final analysis, whereas Lincoln was willing to rend the United States in two and go to war over slavery and the southern states' rebellion against the federal government, he could do little more than to illegally condemn thirty-eight Dakota men to death in order to appease the people of Minnesota, who actually wanted much more state sanctioned revenge from him than he was willing to give. This is not justice by any means. It is cowardice. Lincoln feared his own people, giving in to the mob rule mentality that shouted to him from across southern Minnesota. At best, one can say that Lincoln's decision — however agonizing, as Homstad claims — was the least wrong choice he could make. At worst, one can make the valid claim, as this author asserts, that Lincoln is a war criminal.

## LINCOLN: SAVIOR OF THE UNION, MAY HE REST IN PEACE

Jean Elliott Rahja

Frederick Douglass dedicated a monument in Washington, D. C. erected by Black Americans to honor Abraham Lincoln eleven years after his death. The former slave told his audience: "There is little necessity on this occasion to speak at length and critically of this great and good man, and of his high mission in the world. That ground has been fully occupied. Any man can say things that are true of Abraham Lincoln, but no man can say anything that is new of Abraham Lincoln."<sup>1</sup>

Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, was thought to be an illegitimate child, the daughter of a Virginia nobleman who took no responsibility for her. Lincoln once said, "God bless my mother, all that I am or even hope to be, I owe to her." When Lincoln was nine, his mother died of "milk sickness" (poisoned milk from cows that ate snakeroot weed). A year later his father married Sarah Bush Johnson, a widow and mother of three children. She cared for Abraham and his older sister, Sarah, as if they were her own.<sup>2</sup> She encouraged Abraham's reading.

Lincoln's father moved his family from Kentucky to the free state of Indiana. Lincoln helped plow fields, cut wood, pick berries and plant seeds. He was known for splitting wood faster than anyone. He carried a book with him wherever he went. Lincoln read *Aesop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, the Bible, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Burns, Blackstone, the Indiana Statutes, and the United States Constitution.<sup>3</sup> Lincoln borrowed law books from a lawyer named John Stuart. Years later, he became Stuart's law partner.

Abraham Lincoln left Indiana and moved to Macon County, Illinois in 1830. He worked as a store clerk for a friend who allowed him to live upstairs over his store rent free. He worked on a flatboat that transported goods all the way down to New Orleans and back. He saw the horrors of slavery. He saw black men and women working in chains, whipped and sold like cattle. When the Black Hawk War of 1832 broke out, Lincoln joined a volunteer company and served for three months. Lincoln campaigned for a seat

<sup>1</sup> Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *Team of Rivals*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2005. p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> Beschloss, Michael, *American Heritage, The Presidents*, New York, Crown Publishers, 2005. p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 190.

in the Illinois General Assembly as an anti Jackson Whig and lost. He moved on to New Salem, Illinois where he worked in a general store and mill. He earned a reputation for kindness, reliability and honesty. A postmaster job opened up and he was hired. Then he studied to be a surveyor and was hired as a surveyor.

Lincoln fell in love with a slender, blue eyed girl with auburn hair named Ann Rutledge. Her father owned a tavern. Lincoln courted her and they became engaged. Her death of typhoid fever plunged Lincoln into a deep melancholy. For a period of time he was inconsolable saying the three women that he loved were his mother, sister, and Ann and they were all taken from him.<sup>4</sup>

Lincoln was elected to the Illinois Assembly and soon rose to leadership in his party. The Illinois capital was moved from New Salem to Springfield. Lincoln moved to Springfield and boarded for free with a tradesman named Joshua Speed who said that he took pity on him because of his poverty and melancholy face. They became lifelong friends. Abraham Lincoln was admitted to the bar in 1836. He worked as a capital attorney and also as a circuit lawyer. Lincoln was opposed to slavery. In 1864, he wrote, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."<sup>5</sup>

As Lincoln was accepted into Springfield's social life, he met Mary Todd of Lexington, Kentucky who was visiting her sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Todd Edwards. Mary was well educated and charming. They planned to be married on January 1, 1841. Lincoln broke the engagement, after which he experienced an emotional breakdown. Joshua Speed and his mother nursed him back to health. Mary was still waiting. They were married November 4, 1842.<sup>6</sup> Four sons were born to this marriage. Robert the eldest was Harvard educated, and served as secretary of war under President Garfield and President Arthur, Edward who died at age 3, William who died at age 11, and Thomas (Tad) who was afflicted with a speech impediment.<sup>7</sup>

Lincoln was elected to the thirtieth United States Congress in 1846. When he arrived in Washington, the United States was still fighting the Mexican War. Lincoln opposed the war and shouted: "If the President is allowed to invade a neighboring nation whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion, you allow him to make war at pleasure."

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 192.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.192.



The 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act supported by the Illinois Democrat senator Stephen A. Douglas would repeal the Missouri Compromise which prohibited slavery in territories north of the 36 degree parallel. It would give settlers the right to decide for themselves. It would open up the entire Louisiana Purchase to slavery.

On March 20, 1854, a coalition of Whigs, Free-Soilers, and antislavery Democrats met in Ripon, Wisconsin and formed the Republican Party.<sup>8</sup> Lincoln was outraged by Douglas's proslavery speeches. Senator Douglas supported the 1857 Dred-Scott case that ruled slaves as property.

In Lincoln's debate with Douglas he quoted the Bible, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He said that our government cannot endure half slave and half free. Lincoln lost to Douglas. Lincoln said that any man who justifies the enslavement of others, justifies his own. Lincoln's friends assured him that more and more influential people were eyeing him for the presidency. Calls for speeches came from northern states.

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln made his appearance on the Missouri River. He asked questions about the fur trade and asked Joseph LaBarge, a voyageur for the American Fur Company, to send him a buffalo robe the following season. When LaBarge was in Washington, D.C. the following year, he presented Lincoln with a buffalo robe.

The Republican Convention of 1860 held in Chicago at the "Wigwam," had four strong candidates for president. They were William H. Seward of New York, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, Edward Bates of Missouri, and Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania. The crowd stood up and shouted for the candidate from Illinois. Lincoln won on the third ballot. The November 6, 1860 election results showed Lincoln won 180 out of 303 electoral votes.<sup>9</sup>

On February 4, 1861, seven southern states met in Montgomery to proclaim the Confederate States of America.<sup>10</sup> They were South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.

Lincoln and his family boarded the train leaving Springfield for the nation's capital. There were speeches and receptions along the way. Word reached him of a plot against his life in Baltimore. Lincoln's

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.193.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.196.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.197.

family remained on board. Lincoln was put on a private coach. He was hidden as an invalid in a Pullman berth and began his secret midnight journey to Washington arriving at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. In his disguise he entered the Willard Hotel. There he would organize his cabinet. Each of his Republican opponents became loyal cabinet members.

On March 4, 1861, Lincoln rode with President Buchanan in an open carriage with protection from the cavalry, infantry and riflemen in windows along the way. He arrived at the capitol where he spoke on the east portico. Chief Justice Taney, who was the author of the Dred-Scott decision, administered the oath.<sup>11</sup> Lincoln spoke of unity and that we must defend the Constitution of the United States.

The Confederate Army fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Lincoln ordered a blockade of the South and called for 75,000 volunteers. Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee left the Union.

The North was decisively defeated at Bull Run (Manassas) on July 21, 1861.<sup>12</sup> This was the first major encounter of the war. Lincoln replaced General Irvin McDowell with General George B. McClellan. On November 1, General Winfield Scott, who was ill, resigned his post as General-in-Chief of the Union forces. McClellan was assigned his post.<sup>13</sup> George B. McClellan graduated second in his West Point class and was called, "the second Napoleon" by some. Lincoln asked him to present a strategic plan for winning the war.<sup>14</sup> McClellan responded with a paper outlining a strategy for all theaters of war from the Atlantic coast to Texas. The main effort would be Virginia where McClellan would lead an army of 273,000 men supported by a large naval fleet to capture Richmond and the major cities down to New Orleans.<sup>15</sup>

As it turned out, McClellan's main defect as a military commander was he never seemed to have enough provisions, horses or men. He could never move forward and found fault with his fellow generals. He blamed others for his inactions and refused to cooperate with the navy. McClellan's main focus was to attack Richmond.

In February, Lincoln deferred to McClellan's plan to march on Richmond where he was defeated by General Lee whose forces overwhelmed McClellan's army. McClellan blamed Lincoln for not sending reinforcements. Lincoln replied that he had sent all that he could. That same month Lincoln's son Willie

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.198.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.199.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.199.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 200.

<sup>15</sup> McPherson, James M. *Tried By War*, New York, the Penguin Press, 2008. p. 45

died after a bout of cold and fever. Lincoln's wife, Mary, wore black and mourned Willie's death for two years.<sup>16</sup>

President Lincoln reorganized the Army into four corps, and relieved McClellan of all duties except those as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln appointed General Edwin M. Stanton as Secretary of War. Stanton said this army has to fight or run away. "The champagne and oysters on the Potomac has to be stopped."

The Union army in other areas forged ahead. The greatest coup of all was the capture of New Orleans by a fleet under the command of David Farragut whose ships proceeded up the Mississippi to capture Baton Rouge and Natchez and then on to Vicksburg.<sup>17</sup>

During these months of military frustration in Virginia and successes elsewhere, Lincoln also had to deal with the escalating issue of slavery. Many slaves entered the Union army as it moved south. Lincoln signed into law a bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia.<sup>18</sup>

The only general in the Union army who seemed to not bombard Washington with excuses and complaints was Ulysses S. Grant, commander of the army of Tennessee. McClellan continued to be inactive. He would counter a command with another plan. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson were forging ahead.<sup>19</sup>

McClellan was finally relieved of his command. He boarded a train for New Jersey where he would sit out the rest of the war except to run against Lincoln in the election of 1864 which he lost.<sup>20</sup>

Lincoln put the finishing touches on the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1. By August the president allowed the War Department to begin training black regiments on the South Carolina sea islands. In the next two years the Union mobilized two hundred thousand black soldiers and sailors.<sup>21</sup> They played a major part in ending the war eventually. Lincoln sent a telegram to General Meade stating that Vicksburg fell to General Grant on July 4 and if General Meade could complete his work so gloriously begun by defeating Lee's army the rebellion would be over. General Mead sent a reply saying he would try, but also

<sup>16</sup> Op cit. *American Heritage, The Presidents*. p. 201.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

<sup>21</sup>.Ibid. p.200.

reported of supply difficulties, poor roads, and men exhausted. On July 11, he said they would attack the following morning. No attack. Meade sent another telegram the next day stating they would attack the next morning unless something intervenes. Lincoln said, "They will be ready to fight a magnificent battle when there is no enemy there to fight." That is exactly what happened. Lee's army had crossed the river on a rebuilt pontoon bridge and at a ford where the river had receded.<sup>22</sup>

And so it went. Lincoln displayed a great deal of patience with his generals. The telegraph machine played an enormous part in Lincoln's ability to communicate with his generals. Lincoln sent a hand written letter to General Grant congratulating him on his victory at Vicksburg. This was eight months before Lincoln and Grant met personally, but from the moment Lincoln wrote this letter they forged a partnership that would win the war.<sup>23</sup>

Lincoln commissioned Grant to be the highest ranking officer in the army; General-in-Chief. Grant ordered five separate armies to advance simultaneously against the Confederate armies to prevent them from reinforcing one another, Lee's army being their main objective.<sup>24</sup>

Francis Carpenter, the artist staying at the white House while he worked on his famous painting of Lincoln reading the Emancipation Proclamation to the cabinet, wrote that during the first week of Grant's campaign, the president scarcely slept at all. He said that he paced back and forth with black rings under his eyes.<sup>25</sup>

Confederates were nearing Washington. Lincoln sent a telegram to Grant to come and defend the city. Grant had issued an order that was not carried out. Grant left his command and went to Washington. He fired one general and put another in charge, and remained long enough to see that his order was carried out.<sup>26</sup>

General Sherman captured Savannah on December 22, 1864. Francis Preston Blair was sent to speak to Jefferson Davis under a flag of truce in January, 1865. Lincoln's terms were Union and freedom.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.148.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p 267.

<sup>25</sup> Morse, John T., *On Becoming Abraham Lincoln*, Delray Beach, FL, Levensger Press, 2008. p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Op cit. *Team of Rivals*. p. 643.

The Confederates wanted an armistice while negotiations were taking place. Lincoln replied, "No armistice."<sup>27</sup>

Lee surrendered at one last battle southwest of Richmond in Appomattox on April 11. President Lincoln delivered a speech from the White House balcony celebrating Lee's surrender. Lincoln believed that the promises that he had made to the American people were kept. He spoke for the Union. John Wilkes Booth was in the audience and vowed, "That is the last speech he will ever make." Booth carried out his ugly threat three days later.<sup>28</sup>

At 7:22 the next morning on April 15, after the all night vigil in the back bedroom of the Petersen home the young army doctor who held Lincoln's hand said, "He is gone." Secretary of War Stanton announced, "Now he belongs to the ages."<sup>29</sup>

Lincoln's body, and the coffin of his son Willie, arrived at Springfield for burial at Oak Ridge Cemetery. His body had been removed from the train at ten different cities for viewing along the way. John Carroll Power was hired by the Monument Association in Springfield as Custodian of Lincoln's Monument.<sup>30</sup> They could not have found a more honest, reliable man to oversee Lincoln's tomb. He was there to receive the bodies.

Two men named Mullen and Hughes were counterfeiters who came up with the idea of stealing Lincoln's body for a ransom of \$200,000. They hung out at a saloon in Chicago called the Hub. There, they met a man named Swegles who was actually an informant for a Federal Agent named Tyrell. The men hired another man, suggested by Swegles, who was also an informant and who had a team of horses and a wagon. He was instructed to be waiting for them to carry the body to a hiding place in the Indiana Dunes.<sup>31</sup>

Mullen, Hughes and Swegles walked to the cemetery on November 7, 1865 with tools and a stolen ax to do their dastardly deed. They climbed over the fence so as not to be seen. They removed the marble panel at the foot of the sarcophagus. It was a beautiful piece of sculpture. A carved garland of oak leaves surrounded the name "LINCOLN" and the epitaph: "With Malice toward None, with Charity for all" which was taken from Lincoln's second Inaugural Speech.

<sup>27</sup> Op cit. *Team of Rivals*, p.713.

<sup>28</sup> Op cit. *Tried By War*. P. 263.

<sup>29</sup> Craughwell, Thomas J., *Stealing Lincoln's Body*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2007. p. 2

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 105.

The federal agents along with members of the Monument Association were waiting in the Monument Hall in their stocking feet in order to be as silent as possible. Swegles went to the door and whispered that the thieves were inside the catacomb. The men came running out in the dark. One of the agents cocked his pistol and accidentally pulled the trigger. The shot rang out. When they got to the tomb, there was no one there. There were tools and the broken slab of marble scattered about, but the men were gone.<sup>32</sup>

The thieves were arrested a couple of days later. There was a lengthy trial and they were finally found guilty of larceny and conspiracy, and would serve one year in the Illinois penitentiary.<sup>33</sup>

A member of the Monument Association came to Powers and said he had trouble sleeping for fear someone else would try to steal Lincoln's body. The two men decided to remove the coffin from the sarcophagus, carry it down to the basement and bury it there in an unmarked grave.<sup>34</sup>

Some years later it became necessary to have a local workman make some repairs on the coffin and build a wooden crate to place it in. After he finished, Powers told him that he would bury it the next day. The men from the Monument Association, who were older by now, came to help and chose another part of the basement with a lower water table where they buried the coffin. When they finished, it was late and the men were exhausted. Powers told them to go on home. He would cover the grave the next day.<sup>35</sup> It lay exposed for a few days before he was able to spend the time down there alone to cover the grave and put some boards on top so that it did not look like a fresh grave. Word got out in Springfield that Lincoln's body was not in the tomb.

When Mary Todd Lincoln died, her coffin and the coffins of Edward, Thomas, and one grandson were brought to Springfield to be buried in the newly rebuilt Monument along side President Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln's coffin was placed back in the original marble sarcophagus where it had been vandalized twenty-five years earlier.<sup>36</sup>

Ten years later the Monument was in precarious condition and the foundation was unstable. The monument had to be disassembled in order to lay a new foundation, and then rebuild the entire structure.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 153.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 127.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 185

The Illinois Legislature appropriated a hundred thousand dollars for the reconstruction. New wooden crates were built to hold the lead coffins. They were placed in a steel vault and lowered into the tomb.

By 1930, the Lincoln tomb needed another round of repairs. The exterior of the monument was not changed. The interior was remodeled to serve as a lobby where visitors would be welcomed and the staff would tell the story of the Lincoln family. A circular corridor was built from Memorial Hall to the tomb chamber. The white marble sarcophagus that formerly held Lincoln's body was removed. Since 1901, the president's remains have rested ten feet below the monument floor encased in a steel cage sealed permanently in a solid block of concrete.<sup>37</sup> Above Lincoln's grave they placed a massive headstone of red marble.

Lincoln's body has been moved ten times since his death.

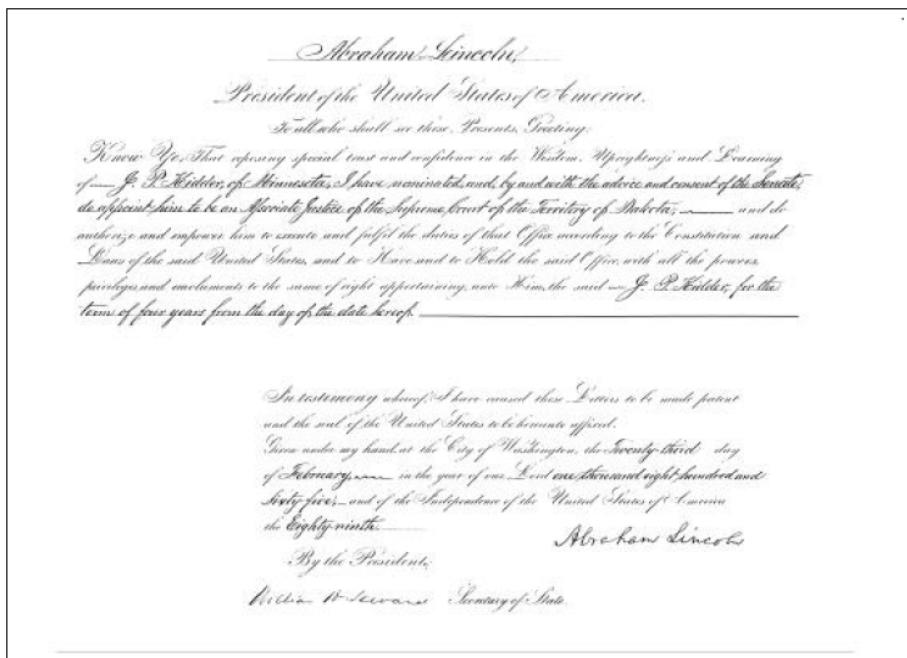
<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 210.

THE KIDDER FAMILY OF VERMILLION:  
AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

Arthur L. Rusch

In 1865, Jefferson Parrish Kidder of Vermont and Minnesota came to Vermillion, Dakota Territory as a newly appointed U.S. District Judge and Associate Justice of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court. He was appointed to that position by President Abraham Lincoln and was subsequently re-appointed to the Territorial Supreme Court by President Grant in 1869 and 1873; by President Hays in 1879; and by President Arthur in 1883.

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A copy of Lincoln's appointment of Kidder is on display in the courtroom of the courthouse in Vermillion

Although Judge Kidder was a well known leader in Dakota Territory for eighteen years, few have heard of him today. Outside of Kidder County, North Dakota; the town of Kidder in Marshall County, South Dakota; and several Kidder Streets and Kidder Townships, Kidder's contributions to the Territory, to the opening of the Black Hills, and to the founding of the University of Dakota (now University of South Dakota) are largely forgotten.

Although this paper will touch on Judge Kidder's contributions to Dakota Territory and the formation of the State of South Dakota, its emphasis will be on the personal tragedies which afflicted the Kidder



family after they came west from Vermont. Even though the Kidders were among the wealthiest and most influential families in Dakota Territory, the tragic deaths of the Judge and members of his family during the fifty-year span from 1858 to 1908 demonstrate just how hard life on the frontier could be.

### ***Background***

Territorial judges were appointed by the President of the United States for four-year terms. In a unique twist on current judicial procedure, the territorial trial judges sitting *en banc* (together as a body) made up the Territorial Supreme Court.<sup>37</sup> In the early days, when there were only three trial judges, this resulted in the trial judge sitting as an appellate judge on his own cases.<sup>38</sup>

The 1861 federal act for Dakota Territory created a three-judge supreme court.<sup>39</sup> President Abraham Lincoln appointed the first three justices of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court: Chief Justice Philemon Bliss of Ohio, Lorenzo P. Williston of Pennsylvania, and Joseph L. Williams of Tennessee. Among his first actions, Territorial Governor William Jayne divided Dakota Territory into three judicial districts. The First Judicial District, headquartered at Vermillion, included everything from the Iowa border to the Clay-Yankton County line and north all of the way to the Canadian border.<sup>40</sup> Judge Williston was assigned to the First Judicial District at Vermillion and held the first session of court ever held in Dakota Territory at Vermillion on August 6, 1862.<sup>41</sup>

Judge Williston served in the First Judicial District until 1864, when he was appointed by President Lincoln as the First Chief Justice of the Montana Territorial Supreme Court.<sup>42</sup> President Lincoln then appointed Ara Bartlett, an old Illinois friend, who had been the mayor of Kankakee, Illinois, as Williston's replacement in the First Judicial District. Bartlett served in Vermillion until 1865, when Lincoln appointed him to be the Chief Justice of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court and he began hearing cases in the Second Judicial District headquartered in Yankton.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Judge Jefferson Parrish Kidder***

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<sup>36</sup> <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000164> (accessed March 9, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Bruce J. Gering, *The South Dakota Judicial System: Past and Present*, 28 S.D. Law Review 88 (1982).

<sup>38</sup> The most striking example of this would be the famous trial of Jack McCall for the murder of "William Hickok, alias 'Wild Bill.'" (McCall v. U.S., 1 Dak. Rpt. (1 Bennett) 307 (D.T. 1876)) in which Dakota Territorial Chief Justice Peter Shannon, who served as the trial judge and sentenced McCall to death, also wrote the unanimous opinion of the Territorial Supreme Court upholding the conviction and death sentence.

<sup>39</sup> Dakota Territory Organic Act of 1861, §9, 12 Stat. 239, 241-242 (1861).

<sup>40</sup> The Second Judicial District, headquartered in Yankton, consisted of everything from the Clay/Yankton County Line to the Yankton/Bon Homme County Line and north to Canada. The Third Judicial District, headquartered in the town of Bon Homme, included the rest of the territory, which at that time included what is now all of South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and some of Idaho and Nebraska.

<sup>41</sup> George W. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, (S.J. Clarke Pub. Co., Chicago, 1915) pages 129 and 180.

<sup>42</sup> Kingsbury at page 181.

On February 23, 1865, Lincoln appointed Jefferson P. Kidder of St. Paul, Minnesota, as an Associate Justice of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court, and he became the Territorial Judge who was assigned to the First Judicial District at Vermillion. Judge Kidder arrived in Vermillion on the steamboat *Graham* on June 10, 1865, and established a home there.<sup>44</sup>



**Jefferson Parrish Kidder (1815-1883)**

Jefferson Parrish Kidder was born in Braintree, Orange County, Vermont, on June 4, 1815. He graduated from the Norwich Military Academy, in Northfield, Vermont, and then farmed and taught school. Eventually Kidder studied law at Montpelier and was admitted to the bar in 1839. He then practiced law at Braintree and West Randolph; was a member of the Vermont State constitutional convention in 1843; served as State's Attorney from 1843 to 1847; was a member of the Vermont State Senate in 1847 and 1848; and served as the Democratic Lieutenant Governor of Vermont in 1853 and 1854.<sup>45</sup> Kidder also served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1856.

The Kidder family, including four children (three sons and a daughter), left Vermont in 1857 and moved west, initially to Minnesota. When Kidder settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1857, he was first a

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<sup>43</sup> *Id.* at page 420.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.* The Kidder home stood at the south end of University Street in Vermillion until about 1975 when it was demolished.

<sup>45</sup> <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000164> (accessed January 3, 2009). During much of the time that Kidder served as Lieutenant Governor of Vermont, the governor was ill and Judge Kidder served as acting Governor. Bernard F. Hyatt, *The Frontier Judicial System of Dakota Territory, 1861-1873* (unpublished Masters Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1976) page 334.

Democrat and later a "War Democrat."<sup>46</sup> He served as a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives as a Democrat in 1863 and 1864.<sup>47</sup> During the 1863 session, the Legislature was so evenly split that Kidder had the controlling vote, and it was his vote for Republican Alexander Ramsey, as United States Senator, that decided that contest.<sup>48</sup> Kidder then became a Stalwart Republican.<sup>49</sup>

Kidder made his first appearance in what was to become Dakota Territory when he came to the falls of the Sioux River as a member of the Dakota Land Company party in 1858. That group, attempting to organize Dakota Territory, selected Kidder as its provisional Delegate to Congress. Despite Kidder's influence and efforts in Washington, the Dakota Land Company was unable to gain government recognition and ultimately abandoned their efforts to organize Dakota Territory.<sup>50</sup>

After President Lincoln appointed Kidder as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Dakota Territory on February 23, 1865, the Kidder family (other than their daughter Marion, who had married in St. Paul) moved to Vermillion. Kidder was appointed to a second term on the Territorial Supreme Court by President Grant on April 6, 1869, and to a third term, again by President Grant, on March 18, 1873. Judge Kidder continued to serve as a justice of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court until February 24, 1875, when he resigned after he had been elected as Dakota Territory's non-voting Territorial Delegate to Congress. While Judge Kidder was serving as the Dakota Territorial delegate to Congress, he was largely responsible for the congressional decision to open the Black Hills to white settlement, both through his congressional speeches and his personal contacts with President Grant.<sup>51</sup> As the Dakota Territorial Delegate to Congress, Kidder worked diligently to gain statehood for the territory and spoke in favor of dividing Dakota Territory into two states.<sup>52</sup>

Kidder was elected as a Republican to the Forty-fourth and Forty-fifth sessions of Congress (March 4, 1875-March 3, 1879) and was an unsuccessful candidate for re-nomination in 1878.<sup>53</sup> Although Kidder's judicial seat on the First Judicial District had been moved from Vermillion to Deadwood during his terms in Congress, after his defeat, Congress quickly passed legislation to create a Fourth Judicial District in Dakota

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<sup>46</sup> "War Democrats" during the Civil War, were northern Democrats who supported the Civil War while opposing some or all of Lincoln's other policies.

<sup>47</sup> <http://bioguide.congress.gov>, supra

<sup>48</sup> Before the enactment of the 17th Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1913, all United States Senators were elected by the state legislature.

<sup>49</sup> Hyatt, supra, 335.

<sup>50</sup> Kingsbury, supra at page 420 and 1324.

<sup>51</sup> Randy Johnson and Nancy Allen, *A Dispatch to Custer: The Tragedy of Lieutenant Kidder*, (Mountain Press Publishing Co., Missoula, MT, 1999) pages 77-80 and Kingsbury, supra 931-937.

<sup>52</sup> Kingsbury, supra at page 1596.

<sup>53</sup> According to Kingsbury, supra at pages 1052, Kidder's failure to gain re-nomination was the result of "dirty tricks" at the Republican convention.

Territory, again headquartered in Vermillion, and Kidder was appointed to that newly created position by President Hayes on April 2, 1879; he was reappointed by President Arthur on April 27, 1883. Kidder then served until his death on October 2, 1883.<sup>54</sup>

As the leading resident of Vermillion, Judge Kidder took an active role in the founding of the University of Dakota. Although the legislature had approved a university in Vermillion in 1862, no action had been taken to start it for nearly 20 years. However, following the great flood which devastated Vermillion in the spring of 1881, a group of citizens met in Judge Kidder's office to organize the University. Following the meeting on April 30, 1881, Judge Kidder prepared the articles of incorporation and served as president of the board of trustees.<sup>55</sup> He personally held numerous meetings throughout the county to promote the passage of the \$10,000 Clay County bond issue for the construction of a building and also donated 10 acres of land for the campus.<sup>56</sup> This was land which had been the homestead of his son, Lieutenant Lyman Kidder, who had been killed in military service 14 years earlier.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to his judicial service, Kidder served as a member of the First Dakota Territorial Constitutional Convention in September of 1883, representing Clay County.<sup>58</sup> Although it was offered to him, Kidder declined the appointment as chairman of the constitutional convention.<sup>59</sup>

Judge Kidder was appointed to five terms as a territorial judge in Dakota Territory by four different presidents, and actually served for fourteen years.<sup>60</sup> This far exceeded the record of any other territorial judge, none of whom served more than two terms for a total of eight years. In fact, most of the territorial judges served only one four-year term, being unable to win reappointment. Some of Judge Kidder's success in winning reappointment resulted from the popular support of the local bar.<sup>61</sup> However, his political influence in Washington resulted from several fortuitous political connections which he had made over the years. In 1839 he was admitted to practice law in Vermont by Judge Jacob Collamer, who was later a United States Representative, Postmaster General, and United States Senator from Vermont.<sup>62</sup> Judge Kidder was also a close personal friend of Stephen Douglas, United States Senator from Illinois and

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<sup>54</sup> <http://bioguide.congress>, supra.

<sup>55</sup> Cedric Cummins, *The University of South Dakota: 1862-1966* (Dakota Press, Vermillion, SD 1975) pages 8-9.

<sup>56</sup> Cummins, supra at pages 10-11.

<sup>57</sup> Johnson and Allen, supra at page 81

<sup>58</sup> Dakota Constitutional Convention, Vol I (Printed 1907), Introduction, page 7.

<sup>59</sup> Kingsbury supra at page 1672.

<sup>60</sup> Kidder was appointed by Lincoln in 1865; Grant in 1869 and 1873; Hays in 1879 and Arthur in 1883.

<sup>61</sup> In 1873 when there was significant opposition to his reappointment, both houses of the Dakota Legislature passed resolutions opposing Kidder's reappointment but he was supported by every member of the bar in the First Judicial District. Bernard F. Hyatt, supra pages 213-214.

<sup>62</sup> Hyatt, supra page 334.

Democratic candidate for president in 1860, who grew up in Vermont in a town near where Judge Kidder grew up.<sup>63</sup> United States Senator Alexander Ramsey of Minnesota owed Kidder a debt of gratitude, as pointed out above. Finally, Kidder had close ties to the Northern Pacific Railroad and its Board of Directors, who supported his requests for reappointment.<sup>64</sup> Although Judge Kidder was a political and judicial leader in Dakota Territory, and the Lincoln appointee who served the longest, the tragedies which afflicted his family demonstrate just how hard life on the frontier could be, even for those who were wealthy and influential.

#### ***Jefferson Parrish Kidder, Jr. (1856-1858)***

The first of the tragic deaths which were to plague the Kidder family after they came to the frontier was that of their youngest son, Jefferson Parrish Kidder, Jr. He died shortly after the family moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. He was 2 years, 2 months and 24 days old. It is unknown where he was originally buried, but ten years later, in 1868, his body was moved to the Kidder family plot in Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul, Minnesota, to lie next to his brother Lyman.<sup>65</sup>

#### ***Lieutenant Lyman Stockwell Kidder (1842-1867)***

Nine years later the Kidder family faced the death of their eldest son, Lyman Stockwell Kidder. Lyman was born at Braintree, Vermont, on August 31, 1842. He had moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1858 with his parents, and during the Civil War fought in the Union Army with the Curtis Horse Regiment, the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Cavalry and the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Mounted Rangers.<sup>66</sup> After the Civil War, he was apparently dissatisfied with civilian life, and in February 1867, he obtained a presidential commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from President Andrew Johnson.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Id.*, pages 334-335.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*, pages 212-214.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson and Allen, *supra* at page 7. Records of Oakland Cemetery, St Paul, Minn., for grave 1, Lot 2, block 28.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/WWkidder.htm> (accessed 1/3/2009)

<sup>67</sup> E. A. Brininstood, *Troopers with Custer* (Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 1994) pages 323-324.



**Lieutenant Lyman Kidder**

In June of 1867, Lt. Kidder was assigned to Fort Sedgwick, Colorado Territory, near the present location of Julesburg, Colorado. On June 29 he was given dispatches to deliver to Lt. Col. George A. Custer, who was patrolling south of the fort. Kidder and his detachment never arrived, and in July, Custer's patrol found the bodies of Kidder, his 10 men and their Indian guide, Red Bead.<sup>68</sup> They had been engaged in a running battle with a band of Sioux and Cheyenne until they were forced to make a last stand in a small ravine, where they were killed and their bodies mutilated.

The battle site was in what is today Sherman County, Kansas. The bodies were initially buried at the site of their death, but Lyman Kidder's body was later identified by his father, who removed his son's body for re-burial in the family cemetery plot in Oakland Cemetery, in St Paul.<sup>69</sup> The rest of the bodies were moved at that time to the cemetery at Ft. Wallace and subsequently to Ft. Leavenworth, when Ft. Wallace was abandoned.<sup>70</sup> *South Dakota History, The Death of Lyman S. Kidder*, Vol.6, No. 1 (Winter, 1975) contains a moving account of Judge Kidder's efforts to locate his son's body and bring it back to St. Paul for burial, together with much of his related correspondence with Lt. Col. George A. Custer.

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<sup>68</sup> Barton Voigt, *South Dakota History, The Death of Lyman S. Kidder*, Vol.6, No. 1 (Winter, 1975).

### ***Marion Kidder White (1839-1868)***

The very next year, 1868, Marion Kidder White, the oldest of the Kidder children, died at 29 years of age. She had likewise moved with her parents to St. Paul in 1858, but married Dana White there and remained in St. Paul when her family moved to Vermillion in 1865. The funeral for her brother, Lyman, was held at her home on March 19, 1868, and a short time later, in November 1868, the Kidder family learned of Marion's death from typhoid fever.<sup>71</sup> She was also buried in the Kidder family plot in Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul, Minnesota, to lie near her two brothers.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Judge Jefferson Parrish Kidder (1815-1883)***

On October 2, 1883, Judge Kidder died following a bladder operation conducted in a room in the Merchant's Hotel in St. Paul. Several weeks earlier Judge Kidder had contacted a friend in St. Paul to arrange for a room at the Hotel for medical treatment, for the removal of a stone in his bladder. It appeared that the operation had been successful, but early in the morning of October 2, he was discovered to be in great pain, and the doctors concluded that "inflammation" had set in and that the case was hopeless.<sup>73</sup> An autopsy found that he had 47 bladder stones.<sup>74</sup> The blame was placed upon his refusal to take recesses from his court sessions when "nature called," sometimes for up to six hours without a break.<sup>75</sup>

Upon Judge Kidder's death, the only surviving member of the family was his son, Silas Kidder, who lived on in Vermillion until 1901, when he moved to California due to poor health. Silas was a prominent resident of the Vermillion community, as a farmer and businessman. He also served as Mayor of Vermillion, in the Territorial Legislature in 1870-1871, as Clerk of Courts, and Postmaster before moving to California in 1901 due to ill health.<sup>76</sup>

Silas had four children: Jefferson, Maudie, Lyman, and Lulu.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Johnson and Allen, *supra*, page 75. Records of Oakland Cemetery, St Paul, Minn., for grave 2, Lot 2, block 28.

<sup>70</sup> Johnson and Allen, *supra* page 87.

<sup>71</sup> *Id.* pages 75-76.

<sup>72</sup> Records of Oakland Cemetery, St Paul, Minn., for grave 3, Lot 2, block 28.

<sup>73</sup> Kingsbury *supra* at page 1323.

<sup>74</sup> Johnson and Allen, *supra* at page 81.

<sup>75</sup> *St Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press*, October 3, 1883, page 7.

<sup>76</sup> *South Dakota Legislative Manual: 1999-2000* page 216. At the time of his move to California, Silas donated his father's papers to the South Dakota State Historical Society which has contributed to the information available about the Kidders. Johnson and Allen, *supra* page 82.

<sup>77</sup> Robert DeArment, *Deadly Dozen: Twelve Forgotten Gunfighters of the Old West* (Univ. Of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2003) page 195 and *Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, SD) April 23, 1908.

### ***Lyman Kidder (1880-1885)***

Little Lyman Kidder died in Vermillion on May 3, 1885. He was 5 years and 7 days old at the time. The funeral services were held at the Kidder home and Lyman was buried in Bluff View Cemetery in Vermillion.<sup>78</sup>

### ***Maudie Kidder (1879-1885)***

In that same year of 1885, the Silas Kidder family lost their daughter Maudie. She was 6 years old at the time and was buried under the same stone at Bluff View Cemetery as her brother who had died just months earlier.

### ***Jefferson Parrish Kidder (Jeff) (1875-1908)***

The third tragic death in Silas Kidder's family was that of Jefferson Parrish Kidder (Jeff), who was born on November 15, 1875, and named after his famous grandfather.<sup>79</sup>

Growing up in Vermillion, Jeff Kidder read many dime store novels of the Wild West, and his life-long ambition was to be a gunfighter.<sup>80</sup> Jeff worked in the post office where his father was the postmaster, and the residents of Vermillion remembered him as always packing a six-gun and spending all of his earnings on ammunition so he could spend hours practicing his quick draw and shooting.<sup>81</sup>



**Jeff Kidder**

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<sup>78</sup> *Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, D.T.) May 7, 1885.

<sup>79</sup> DeArment, *supra* page 194-195.

<sup>80</sup> *Id.* page 194.

<sup>81</sup> *Id.* page 194 and Herbert Schell, *Clay County: Chapters Out of the Past* (Broadcaster Press, Vermillion SD 1985) page 148.



Jeff Kidder graduated from Vermillion High School and also attended the University of South Dakota for a time before his parents moved to California in 1901 on account of his father's ill health. Although Silas and his wife moved to California, Jeff went to Arizona Territory, which was the "wild west" at that time.<sup>82</sup> For a time he worked as a cowboy, a miner, and a law enforcement officer in Nogales, Arizona Territory.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, on April 1, 1903, Jeff Kidder was hired as an Arizona Ranger. The Arizona Rangers was a law enforcement agency in Arizona, modeled on the Texas Rangers. They had been established in 1901 to deal with outlaws in the sparsely populated Arizona Territory, particularly along the Mexican border.<sup>84</sup> In his five years as a Ranger, Jeff Kidder became a legendary figure in the history of the Arizona border and developed a reputation as one of the fastest draws in the Southwest.<sup>85</sup> According to one of his fellow Rangers, "Jeff was a noble, manly fellow, brave and energetic, the best all around man I had.... Jeff Kidder was one of the best officers who ever stepped foot in this section of the country. He did not know what fear was." It was said that he spent much of his inheritance, when Silas died, on ammunition.<sup>86</sup> Tom Rynning, commander of the Arizona Rangers, said: "Jeff Kidder was the fastest — absolutely the quickest hand with a six-shooter I've ever met up with."<sup>87</sup> He also developed a reputation as obnoxious and belligerent when under the influence of alcohol, and stood trial in Bisbee, Arizona, on an assault charge.<sup>88</sup>

On the evening of April 3, 1908, Kidder walked across the international border into Naco, Sonora, Mexico, and went to a saloon there under circumstances which are still unclear.<sup>89</sup> While there, he became involved in a confrontation and ultimately a gun-fight with three or four Mexican policemen, who may have been acting under the instigation of some of the criminals whom Kidder had been pursuing.<sup>90</sup> Although Kidder wounded several of the Mexican policemen, he was shot in the stomach and his intestines were perforated.<sup>91</sup> At that time, such a shot was almost always fatal.<sup>92</sup>

Although Kidder was able to get out of the bar and to the US/Mexican border under heavy gunfire, he ultimately ran out of ammunition and was captured and beaten by the Mexican policemen, who then

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<sup>82</sup> Schell, *supra* page 148.

<sup>83</sup> DeArment, *supra* page 196.

<sup>84</sup> *Id.*

<sup>85</sup> DeArment, *supra* pages 196, 201 and 203.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.* page 200 and *Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, SD) April 23, 1908.

<sup>87</sup> De Arment, *supra* page 201.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.* pages 198 - 199.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* page 204.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.* page 207 and *Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, SD) April 23, 1908.

<sup>91</sup> *Id.* pages 205-206 and *Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, SD) April 23, 1908.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* page 206.

dragged him to the local jail.<sup>93</sup> A later examination showed a skull fracture and several broken ribs. Kidder lay in the jail without medical attention until the next day, when some of his friends were able to get a Mexican judge to order his release to a private residence. Although doctors came from Bisbee and Naco to minister to him, there was little they could do, and he died the next day, April 5, 1908, as did one of the Mexicans.<sup>94</sup> He was buried in the Inglewood Park Cemetery in Inglewood in Los Angeles County.<sup>95</sup>

The Rangers, and many others in southern Arizona Territory, believed that the criminals that Kidder had been so diligently pursuing had instigated the Mexican police officers to kill Kidder.<sup>96</sup> A board of inquiry subsequently found that there was not enough evidence of that fact to bring criminal charges against the Mexican officers, but enough evidence so that they were all fired.<sup>97</sup> Later, Kidder's best friend in the Rangers, Billy Old, went into Mexico for two years, and many in Arizona believed that he had hunted down and killed each of the men involved in the death of Jeff Kidder.<sup>98</sup>

The Kidders were not typical of the homesteaders who came to Dakota Territory. When they came to Vermillion, and over the next 18 years, Judge Jefferson Kidder was one of the most politically influential citizens of the new territory as a judge and Delegate to Congress. His accomplishments in Congress and his role in founding the University of South Dakota were important contributions to Dakota Territory. Despite this, his family was not immune from the hardships of the frontier. The deaths of three young children and a young married daughter from illness were perhaps similar to the hardships which many settlers endured on the frontier. However, the violent deaths of his son and grandson are more characteristic of a movie Western than what most settlers actually faced. Although Judge Kidder was able to influence events in the Territorial Capitol of Yankton and in Washington, D.C., he wasn't able to protect his own family from these tragedies.

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<sup>93</sup> Schell, *supra* at page 149.

<sup>94</sup> DeArment, *supra* page 206.

<sup>95</sup> Jeff Kidder's grave site location in the Inglewood Cemetery is 396 Sequoia

<sup>96</sup> Schell, *supra* at page 148-149.

<sup>97</sup> *Id.* page 149

<sup>98</sup> DeArment, *supra* page 207 and Bart Skelton, *In Old Arizona*, [http://www.gunsandammomag.com/cs/Satellite/IMO\\_GA/Story\\_C/In+Old+Arizona+---+January+2008](http://www.gunsandammomag.com/cs/Satellite/IMO_GA/Story_C/In+Old+Arizona+---+January+2008) (accessed April 18, 2009)

**VIKINGS, COYOTES, AGGIES, AND UTES:  
FIFTY-FOUR YEARS IN THE GARDENS AND DESERTS OF ACADEME  
PART ONE, THE AUGUSTANA YEARS**

Robert C. Steensma

Wallace Stegner once told historian Richard Etulain that “memory can be an artist as well as a historian. You draw on it all the time” (42). And in his novel *Recapitulation* the central character, Bruce Mason, says, “Dangerous to squeeze the tube of nostalgia. Never get the toothpaste back in” (27). But I also like the statement made by the Scottish novelist and dramatist J. M. Barrie back in 1922: “God gave us memory so that we can have roses in December” (289).

I often find roses in my December years by looking back on my more than half a century on college and university campuses in my home state of South Dakota and my adopted state of Utah, both of which are my pride and which I stoutly defend against those in the eastern media who sneer at us as a bunch of hayseeds who suffer excruciating headaches if confronted with anything resembling an idea.

My memories cover five years as an elementary student at Augustana’s Model School, four more as an undergraduate at Augustana and two more as a faculty member, one as a graduate student and three as a professor at the University of South Dakota, four at Utah State University, and thirty-five at the University of Utah. Some of these were among the best years of my life, and early in my career I found that teaching was all that Geoffrey Chaucer spoke of way back in the fourteenth century when he described the scholar among the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales*: “Goodness and virtue were start and end of his speech. And gladly would he learn and teach.” For me teaching and research were a garden which certainly nourished my mind and spirit and, I hope, those of the more than 11,000 students I taught. But there were times, too, when the garden became a desert as the anti-war barbarians roamed campuses across the country trashing libraries, burning buildings, assaulting military people, cheering the casualty lists, disrupting classes, screaming obscenities, and indulging in screeching attacks on Presidents Johnson and Nixon as vicious as the later ones on president Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Today’s talk will center on my elementary and undergraduate years at Augie with occasional references to events in my two years as a faculty member.

I first came to Augie in 1936 when the college ran a laboratory school in the little white building that many still remember as the Cottage, which after World War II became a kind women’s dormitory annex for East and Tuve Halls. We were living at 2008 South Covell, just three blocks west of the campus. I don’t recall much from those years except that the classes were small, the teachers excellent, and piano lessons

twenty-five cents a week (unfortunately I stopped after about a month, much to my lifetime regret). I remember one humorous moment when Herbert Brende rewrote the words to a song from Disney's Snow White movie: "Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to school we go./ We study junk and then we flunk. Hi Ho, Hi Ho, Hi, Ho!" But I also got my first lesson in compassion in the first grade when one of my classmates was a very sweet but hopelessly tongue-tied girl who in spite of her handicap reached out to all of us with smiles and love and grace. For over seventy years I've hoped that Diane was later given a chance for a full life. But I also managed to lose my mittens one winter, got a severe case of frost bite, and had my hands bandaged in salve and gauze for several weeks.

At the end of five years my brother and I were transferred to Mark Twain and a year later to Lincoln when we moved to 106 South Jefferson. After graduating from Lincoln and then Washington High School with an academic record that would deny me entrance to the University of Utah today, I entered Augie in September 1948.

When I stepped off the bus at 28<sup>th</sup> and Prairie, I was very much the kind of student as Wallace Stegner when he entered the University of Utah in 1925. In his novel *Recapitulation*, he describes his alter ego Bruce Mason as a teenager, which I think fits me to the proverbial tee:

He knew this Bruce Mason who walked down South Temple Street. He had lived with him a long time, he knew what he could do and how he would respond to different situations. But Bruce Mason walked double. Inside him, walking with the same nerves and sweating through the same pores, went a thin brown youth, volatile, impulsive, never at rest, not so much a person as a possibility, or a bundle of possibilities: subject to enthusiasm and elation and exuberance and occasional black moods, stubborn, capable of scheming but often astonished by consequences, a boy vulnerable to wonder, awe, worship, devotion, hatred, guilt, vanity, shame, ambition, dreams, treachery, a boy avid for acceptance and distinction, secretive and a blabbermouth, life-crazy and hence girl-crazy, a show-off who could be withered by a contemptuous word or look, a creature overflowing with brash self-confidence one minute and oppressed by his own worthlessness the next; a vessel of primary sensations undiluted by experience, wisdom, or fatigue (19).

The campus then was far different than it is today. There were only ten buildings—Old Main, Men's Hall, East Hall, the Administration Building, the Cottage, the Science Building, the cafeteria, music building, and two army barracks buildings used as men's dormitories and a faculty office annex—and Viking Stadium. Later, when I was a sophomore or junior, Tuve Hall on the west side of the campus was built as a women's dormitory. The faculty numbered about 60, of whom only nine held the doctorate.

Our student body, as I remember, numbered about 650. Many were the grandchildren of Scandinavian immigrants, came from farms or small towns on the Northern Great Plains, and were the first in their families to attend college. Except for my mother, who held a two-year normal teaching certificate

from Sioux Falls College, I was the first person on either side of my family to graduate with a bachelor's degree. And during my freshman and sophomore years, there were many men and some women who had served in World War II and who took their college work more seriously than we did.

When I stepped on campus I was as green as the beanie we freshmen had to wear (my wife Sharon had more courage; she bravely refused to wear a beanie when she was a freshman at Utah State University). I probably thought that a *cappella* music was what the Vikings sang as they stormed throughout Europe killing, pillaging, burning, and establishing Lutheran congregations. I learned that the Augustana alma mater, sung up-tempo, is a wonderfully danceable tune, that our contemporaries at the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State were bunch of drunken heathens (just as they thought we were a herd of Holy Joes and Josephines who prayed, chanted psalms, and sang Kumbayah twenty-four-seven). And I learned those masterpieces of literature, those Viking cheers, "Oikle Toikle..." and "Escavanta, Toravanta...", and the Augie fight song, which, I believe, ranks only second to "Utah Man," the only one of my four schools' cheer songs to be recorded by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

As an undergraduate at Augie I came under the tutelage of some very fine professors, most of them not nationally famous, but men and women who were committed to teaching and influencing young minds. There were Ruth Stenseth in German; Sven Froiland in biology (most of my coed classmates had crushes on that handsome war hero); Carl Chrislock, Richard Solberg, and Ole Tønning in history; and two of my very favorites, Herbert Krause and Edwin Gunberg, in English. Another favorite was Ole Odney, who had been a classmate of my mother's at Washington High School. He taught freshman and sophomore gym, coached the basketball, tennis, and golf teams, and assisted in track and football. He was a gentleman through and through, a kind and caring man whom all of his athletes loved.

If I had to pick one as my role model for my own teaching it would be Doctor Gunberg. Ironically, one of my friends and my predecessor as editor of the *Mirror*, our campus weekly, Marilyn Kirkeby, predicted that I would become in her words, "Gunberg the Second." It was Gunberg who introduced me to works that I found out at USD and Kentucky few of my classmates had read. Dr. Gunberg was not only my role model as a teacher but also my great benefactor when he used his influence to get me a teaching fellowship at USD to begin my graduate studies.

But Edwin Gunberg and Herbert Krause would have been appalled, as I have, to see what has happened to literary studies in the last few decades. Literary study has been infested with a number of deadly intellectual viruses: deconstruction, semiotics, metanarrative, postmodernism, postcolonialism, biopoetics, recovered memory theory, radical feminism, Marxism, and others. No longer is literature to be

read with what Jim Thorson, born at DeSmet and now emeritus at the University of New Mexico, calls the "Ain't that purty?" approach: read a few lines and ask your class, "Ain't that purty?" What Jim means is that literature is best read as art and not as sociology, psychology, self-therapy, or political diatribe.

Krause, too, left his mark on me with his enthusiasm for literature, history, and creative writing. I remember his coming to our Shakespeare class, his arms full of books, all of them with slips of paper marking passages he would use in his lecture. He stacked them up in front of him, and we could tell the progress of the lecture as a book once used was put aside in another pile.

Augustana provided me with other memories. It was on this campus that I had my first date and fell in love for the first, second, and third times, only to be Dear Johned for the first, second, and third times—and recovered for the first, second, and third times. In the old *Mirror* offices in the basement of the Cottage, I was taught to play poker by two friends, whose names I will not mention in order to protect the guilty, even though both are in this audience. And it was inside those same *Mirror* offices, which two freshmen coed reporters called "a den of iniquity," that some of the senior staffers held, literally, an in-house snowball fight that upset our neighbors in the adjoining office, the *EDDA* yearbook staff, some heartburn. And it was during my undergraduate years at Augustana that I saw my first stage musical at the old Coliseum downtown, a traveling roadshow production of *Oklahoma*, which has for that reason remained my favorite musical ever since.

When Sharon and I drive past the top of Sherman Park on our visits here, I recall the Sunday afternoons in autumn and spring when we gathered for the weekly Lutheran Student Association outings. We played badminton, volleyball, and softball, had devotions, and then a picnic dinner. We made the hillside ring with "White Coral Bells," "Qui Quo Madi, Madi, Madi, Das Nicht, Um qua qui, um qua quo," "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder," and many other songs, and then often ended with "Goodnight, Ladies" before returning to the dorms or our homes.

There were also the extracurricular activities during our freshman year. I remember the nights spent scavenging in the old Army Air Force Base and the back alleys of downtown Sioux Falls to find material for the big homecoming bonfire on the "South Forty" (just southwest of here between the present humanities building and the dorms). We raced around Sioux Falls, often eight of us in each car, usually with lady classmates sitting on our laps (O Paradise!). And we had to stand guard through the night to prevent the Coyotes from USD and the Jackrabbits from South Dakota State from burning our bonfire.

Then on Friday night of homecoming week there would be the crowning of the homecoming queen, always a senior. And when we were seniors, Delores Bue, later married to Phil Natwick, became "our"

queen. When we were freshmen, about twenty of us men were members of the Pep Club which marched in the Saturday morning homecoming parade in our ridiculously ugly corduroy uniforms of blue shirts, gold pants, and those awful green beanies. Were our children and grandchildren to see a picture of us in those outfits, they'd get a hearty laugh. "Not cool, Dad; not cool, Grandpa."

Those four years still bring back so many other pleasant memories that I can only allude to them. The great productions that directors Bob Snook and Earl Mundt put on in the Little Theatre. The splendid orchestra and band concerts directed by Professor Guderyahn. The magical music of the *acappella* and radio choirs directed by Carl Youngdahl and Arnold Running. The spiritual enrichment of chapel from Monday through Thursday and the comedy of the student body skits every Friday morning.

Those Friday morning festivities were superb. A mock dedication of a campus outhouse. A parody of an absent-minded professor giving a lecture to a group of air-headed undergraduates. A football player who was also an excellent musician acting and dressed as the mad Russian pianist who threw a two-by-four and a long rope out from under the lid of the Steinway followed by a frozen fish. He misjudged the distance from the stage and accidentally threw the frozen fish into the audience and kayoed a coed. Or a young lady, when I was teaching in 1955 or 1956, who came out wearing a Spanish dancer's dress and flowered hairdo and a fake rose in her teeth to sing to the music of Bizet' *Carmen*, "We go down to the Club Cabana, 'cuz we can't dance at Augustan-ya." And also during my teaching years were the famous Rub-a-Dubs, a trio with Del Smith on guitar, Richard Bowen on banjo, and Dick Boettcher on a thunderous bass made from an inverted washtub, a guitar string, and a mop handle. Richard Bowen later went on to become president of three universities, one in South Dakota, then Idaho State, and finally Boise State.

It was only a few years later, in the 1960s I believe, that Augustana abolished its ban on ballroom dancing, a move that irritated some of the older alumni and that moved a friend of mine to observe, with tongue in check, that some archaeologists had recently uncovered Sodom and Gomorrah, restored it, and moved it to 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Summit Avenue in Sioux Falls.

And then there were the athletics. During my four years as a student, we never had a winning season in either football or basketball. The football team won eleven games and lost twenty-six (and being shut out three consecutive games in 1949). The basketball team, despite the sterling performances of Dave Kvernes and Jim Gremmels, who led the conference in scoring to become the North Central Conference's most valuable player for two consecutive years, won thirty and lost fifty-two.

As I've rejoiced in the last five years when my University of Utah football Utes have gone undefeated in two seasons and been denied this year's national championship by the thugs who run the

Bowl Championship Series, I remember those days at Augie with some degree of sadness. On the other hand, although the golf team of Jerry Crump, Phil Bruns, John Egan, and I won only one match in my senior year (against those Coyotes from down south), our tennis team of Miles Browne, Cliff Anderson, Bob Fedde, and John Hoyapotubbi swept the singles, the doubles, and the North Central Conference championship.

One other aspect of my undergraduate years at Augie was my enlistment in the Naval Reserve, where I served under Augustana alumni officers who had served in World War II: Evans Nord, Wally Estensen, Les Olsen, Arnie Bauer, and Dayton Armin. And then I went to Reserve Officer Candidate School with Al Scarbrough, Don Reshetar, Bob Elmen, Howard Potas, Roger Schmidt, and Bill Ranney. In the summer after my freshman year I went aboard a destroyer, the USS James E. Kyes, DD-714, to sail to from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor and back with about 35 other enlisted men from Sioux Falls, including among others Bob Aldern. On the way over, with all of my shipmates, I cleaned heads, chipped paint, scraped rust, and stood outside deck watches in some wet and violent weather. Years later, when I was promoted to the rank of Captain, I told several Navy Birthday audiences that if you start out, as I did, as a seaman recruit and do enough dirty work, you'll eventually be promoted to captain.

Just a brief note about my two years on the faculty. Dr. Don Fryxell, who had been a student of Wallace Stegner's at the other Augustana (you know, the jock factory), hired me for a two-year appointment in 1955 after I received my M.A. What a teaching load! Four sections of freshman English with thirty-two students each, a 500-word theme each of the sixteen weeks, and an in-class theme every other week, an American literature class with fifty students and a term paper. Also reading a midterm and a final exam in each class, I probably read 3,400 papers each semester.

But working for Don Fryxell was of immense value. At the start of my first semester he told me that he wanted to see all of the second batch of freshman themes from my classes, all 128 of them. About a week later he asked me to come over to the home he and Lucy owned on South Jefferson to go over my readings and markings of the themes. When I got there, we had coffee, cookies, and small talk before he brought out my themes and a spiral notebook with his comments on every single one. He pointed out in his comments what I had done well, what I hadn't, where I needed to improve, where I had been too tough or too easy. It was the best possible tutorial a young teacher of writing could ever wish for.

From all my years in the academy, I have come to share Wallace Stegner's feelings about education, as expressed in his dedicatory speech for the Marriott Library at the University of Utah in 1968 and later published in *The Sound of Mountain Water*:



Except as we belong to a tradition and a community...we are nothing. We have no language, no history, no lore, no legend, no myth, no custom, no religion, no art, no species memory. But the moment our built-in emotions of fear and aggression are modulated to the need of companionship and mating and protection of the young, we have begun to form, in the most rudimentary way, the community of men, for which another name is the Kingdom of God.

...It seems to me one of the noblest activities of any culture [is a] measure of what had been, indication of what may be, testimonial to our purposes that are shared even in antagonism, reassurance that *homo sapiens* has been and will remain sapient (285-6). Augustana taught me all of these things, and for that I am eternally grateful.

As Stegner said of his years as an undergraduate at the University of Utah, I could say of my mine at Augie:

It is ultimately the love of books I owe them. As an organism I have outlived... all those who taught me most, but their influence still works in me.... As my tennis-and-basketball-playing friends ushered me into the human world and taught me how to belong, this handful of teacher-friends introduced me to the life of the mind, where, even though I didn't know it then, I most wanted to live. No university, even the greatest, could have done much more (120).

And from these professors and my friends, I learned that important lesson from another statement of Stegner's newly engraved on a wall outside the Salt Lake City main library on the centennial of his birthday on February 18: "Culture is a pyramid to which each of us contributes a stone." Perhaps Augustana gave me part of whatever stone I have contributed.

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## AMERICAN COUSINS: J. B. S. TODD AND THE LINCOLNS

Brad Tennant

The 1860s shall forever remain one of the most significant decades in American history. In addition to the 1861-1865 Civil War, other notable events included the creation of Dakota Territory in 1861, the 1862 Minnesota Sioux Uprising, and the 1865 assassination of one of the country's most well-known presidents, Abraham Lincoln. Unless, however, one is familiar with the history of the northern plains during the 1860s, it is unlikely that many American history textbooks or Lincoln biographies will focus in any detail on the connection between Lincoln and the early years of Dakota Territory. As a result, "Abraham Lincoln Looks West" is a very appropriate theme for the Forty-First Annual Dakota Conference on the Northern Plains. This theme has resulted in a variety of notable paper topics, many of which will likely find a limited audience beyond those with a specific interest in northern plains history. Nonetheless, there is much to be learned of Lincoln's presidency and his political and personal connections to Dakota Territory. This paper addresses one such topic — the connection between the territory's first congressional delegate, John Blair Smith Todd, to Abraham Lincoln and, more specifically, to Mary Todd Lincoln. In short, this is a story that focuses on J. B. S. Todd and the Lincolns, who were in fact American cousins.

On 2 March 1861, two days before Lincoln's inauguration, President James Buchanan signed the Organic Act creating Dakota Territory.<sup>99</sup> Although Buchanan's signing of the legislation officially created Dakota Territory, the task of appointing officials was left to Lincoln. The territorial positions filled by Lincoln included a territorial governor, who also served as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a territorial secretary, three federal judges, and a Surveyor General along with other land office personnel. The most noteworthy of Lincoln's initial appointees was that of Dr. William Jayne as the first territorial governor. Having lived in Springfield, Illinois, Jayne was both a friend and personal physician to Lincoln.<sup>100</sup> While Jayne and Lincoln enjoyed a special camaraderie that lent itself well to the patronage system, Jayne did not have as much political clout with Lincoln as one might first expect. Instead, John Blair Smith Todd dominated the early politics of Dakota Territory more than anybody else at the time. Even before Lincoln's 1860 election, John B. S. Todd was paving the way for the creation of Dakota Territory. In addition, his familial relationship with the president's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, gave him even more influence during Dakota's formative years.

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<sup>99</sup> Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, Fourth Edition, Revised, (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004), 77.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

According to his 1872 obituary that appeared in the *Yankton Press*, John Blair Smith Todd was born on 4 April 1814 in Lexington, Kentucky.<sup>101</sup> He was the first of six children born to Dr. John Todd and Elizabeth Fisher Blair Smith Todd.<sup>102</sup> Four years later, in December 1818, Mary Anne Todd was also born in Lexington, Kentucky. In addition to Mary Anne, Robert Smith Todd, and Eliza Ann Parker Todd had a total of seven children with Mary being their middle child. Since John Todd and Robert Smith Todd were brothers, John Blair Smith and Mary Anne were then first cousins.<sup>103</sup> As such, the cousins maintained close family ties throughout their lives, which became especially evident during the early 1860s when John served as delegate for Dakota Territory at the same time that Mary was the First Lady.

Brothers John and Robert Smith Todd eventually moved their respective families to Springfield, Illinois where the younger John Todd, Mary Anne, and many of the Todd cousins lived for many years.<sup>104</sup> While living in Springfield, the United States Military Academy at West point accepted J. B. S. Todd as a cadet, thus marking the start of a lengthy military career. Todd attended West Point for five years from 1832 to 1837 and eventually graduated 39<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in his class.<sup>105</sup>

Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Todd began his active military service by participating in the Florida Indian Wars where, five months later, he was promoted to First Lieutenant. After his Florida tour, Todd spent the next several years assisting with the relocation of various tribes to Indian Territory. This included assignments at Fort Towson, Fort Smith, and Fort Gibson. In November 1843, Todd received his promotion to the rank of Captain. In 1847, Captain Todd, along with Captain Robert E. Lee, served under the command of General Winfield Scott during the Mexican-American War. Todd participated in both the landing and battle at Vera Cruz in March 1847 and in the defeat of Santa Anna's forces the following month.<sup>106</sup>

Following the Mexican-American War, Todd served on the western frontier of the northern plains. As an increasing number of whites passed through the plains heading west during the 1850s, tensions between the whites and the Lakota mounted. In 1854, these tensions erupted into open hostilities when

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<sup>101</sup> State Department of History, *South Dakota Historical Collections*, (Pierre, SD: State Publishing Company, 1914), Volume VII, 496.

<sup>102</sup> Donna McCreary, *The Family of Mary Lincoln*, accessed at <http://www.beauproductions.com/marylincoln/biography/geneology/htm>.

<sup>103</sup> *First Lady Biography: Mary Lincoln*, The National First Ladies' Library, Education and Research Center, Canton, Ohio, accessed at <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/>.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*; Norman Thomas, "John Blair Smith Todd, First Dakota Delegate to Congress," *South Dakota Historical Collections and Report*, (Pierre, SD: State Historical Society, 1949), Volume XXIV, 178.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas, *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-79.

Lieutenant John Grattan and a small group of soldiers attempted to arrest a Minneconjou brave for allegedly killing a cow that strayed from Mormon settlers. As Grattan's command rode into a Brule Lakota encampment to make the arrest, shots rang out. In the end, Grattan and his entire force were killed.<sup>107</sup> In the wake of the Grattan incident, Captain Todd participated in a retaliatory expedition led by General William Harney against the Lakota. In 1855, Harney, with approximately a thousand soldiers, set out to deal with any troublesome Lakota and to provide protection for whites traveling west along the Oregon and Mormon trails.<sup>108</sup> It was during this time that the United States decided to designate a military post along the Missouri River to complement the already established Fort Kearny and Fort Laramie. As a result, the United States government agreed to pay \$45,000 to the fur trading enterprise of Chouteau and Company for Fort Pierre. Upon his arrival in October 1855, General Harney immediately expressed his dissatisfaction of Fort Pierre. Harney later wrote to his superiors regarding the dilapidated condition of the post and the infeasibility of trying to make repairs. As a result, in 1856, Harney began supervising the construction of Fort Randall approximately thirty miles above the mouth of the Niobrara River.<sup>109</sup>

Having served in the military since his graduation from West Point in 1837, Todd resigned from his military commission in 1856 and became the post sutler at Fort Randall.<sup>110</sup> In doing so, Todd began a new chapter in his life that included businessman, land speculator, Indian agent, and politician. Being a post sutler could be very profitable if a person possessed a sound business sense, which Todd indeed did have. As post sutler, Todd was licensed by the United States military as a civilian trader, who was authorized to conduct business with a variety of individuals including military personnel, area Indians, emigrants traveling westward, and traders moving up the Missouri River. Given that many Indians were naive when conducting business, a sutler could often take advantage of his Indian customers. In addition, soldiers stationed on the remote plains had little choice as to where they could spend their pay, and post sutlers were more than happy to help them spend it. Such was the business climate for John Todd as he began his business career as the post sutler at Fort Randall.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Schell, 66.

<sup>108</sup> Harry F. Thompson, ed., *A New South Dakota History*, (Sioux Falls, SD: The Center for Western Studies, 2005), 88.

<sup>109</sup> Schell, 66-68. Captain J. B. S. Todd's field diary that includes the events of the 1855 Harney Expedition is housed by the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota. Also see Ray H. Mattison, ed., "The Harney Expedition Against the Sioux: The Journal of Capt. John B. S. Todd," *Nebraska History*, 43 (June 1962), 89-130.

<sup>110</sup> Wesley C. Wilson, "General John B. S. Todd, First Delegate, Dakota Territory," *North Dakota History*, 31 (July 1964), 190.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas, 181.

Todd, however, did not enter the business world without assistance. While Todd made his plans to become the Fort Randall sutler, he contacted a fellow West Point graduate who had also turned entrepreneur — Daniel Marsh Frost. Todd knew Frost from the time that they served together under General Harney. In 1853, Frost retired from military service, moved to St. Louis, and began working in the fur trade and other miscellaneous business enterprises. Now, in 1856, Todd was offering to make Frost his partner. As a result, the Frost, Todd and Company was established with its headquarters based in Sioux City, Iowa.<sup>112</sup>

While Frost provided much of the investment capital and business aptitude, Todd had the knowledge of the frontier and political savvy that gave the duo a promising future. Although their original plans centered on establishing fur trading posts along the Missouri River, it soon became apparent that the fur trading era had declined substantially. As a result, Frost, Todd and Company began focusing its attention on the possibility that the United States would soon open new lands for town sites and eventual settlement.<sup>113</sup> Over the next few years, this speculation proved to be true. In fact, the Todd-Frost partnership would not only prove to be extremely profitable, it also came to play an important role in the development and early settlement of what would soon become Dakota Territory.

When Minnesota was admitted as a state in 1858, it became obvious that a new territory would soon be created. This is exactly the opportunity on which Todd and Frost were basing their hopes and business speculations. Of course, the creation of a new territory was only one part of their business plan. In order for them to profit as land speculators, the Yankton Sioux would have to be removed from the region, thus making way for future white settlement. As early as 1857, the federal government had sent an agent to gather some of the principal Yankton leaders and to bring them to Washington, D. C. for the specific purpose of negotiating a treaty. The agent, however, lacked any personal connection to the Yankton tribe and was essentially disregarded. Since Todd had successfully established himself in the area and conducted business as a licensed trader with many Yankton Sioux, he became the most obvious choice to help negotiate a treaty.<sup>114</sup>

In order to successfully negotiate a treaty with the Yankton, Todd knew that he had to gain favor with two individuals in particular. The first was Charles Picotte, whose father was French and his mother Yankton. Given his background, Picotte enjoyed favorable relationships with the Yankton nation and often served as an interpreter when called upon. Furthermore, Picotte often assisted the Frost, Todd and

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Robert F. Karolevitz, *Challenge – The South Dakota Story*, (Sioux Falls, SD: Brevet Press, Inc., 1975), 45.

<sup>114</sup> *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Volume VII, 498.

Company in carrying out its business arrangements with the Yankton. Given Picotte's association with the Yankton and Todd, plus his ability to serve as an interpreter, Todd immediately sought his assistance in the treaty negotiations.<sup>115</sup>

The other person whom Todd knew was imperative to successfully negotiating a treaty was the Yankton leader Struck by the Ree. Struck by the Ree accepted the encroaching white settlement as inevitable and supported the cession of land. According to a well known quote attributed to Struck by the Ree, he once told his fellow Yankton that, "The white men are coming in like maggots. It is useless to resist them. They are many more than we are. We could not hope to stop them.... We must accept it, get the best terms we can get and try to adopt their ways."<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Todd escorted sixteen Yankton leaders to Washington, where the Yankton Treaty was signed on 19 April 1858. According to the terms of the treaty, the Yankton agreed to a 430,000 acre reservation in return for \$1.6 million in annuities to be paid over the next fifty years. Meanwhile, the amount of land ceded to the United States under the terms of the treaty totaled over 11.1 million acres.<sup>117</sup>

Although Todd's role in the 1858 Yankton Treaty cannot be overrated, a complication involving the carrying out of the treaty soon became evident. Whites generally understood that the ceded lands could be settled a year after the April 1858 treaty signing. On the other hand, the Yankton were under the impression that they did not have to remove to their reservation tract until one year after the treaty's ratification, which did not happen until 17 February 1859. Nonetheless, by the summer of 1859, the Yankton were beginning to relocate thus making way for white settlers to enter the ceded lands.<sup>118</sup>

In anticipation of the eventual opening of new lands, Todd and Frost, along with a group of influential major and minor partners, organized the Upper Missouri River Land Company in February 1858, which of course preceded the signing of the treaty by two months and its ratification by almost a full year. The Upper Missouri River Land Company, led by Todd's actions, began in earnest to push for the signing of the treaty while establishing new trading post sites that could easily be transformed into town sites once the treaty took effect.<sup>119</sup>

In July 1859, as the Yankton began moving to their reservation, the Upper Missouri River Land Company went through some organizational changes resulting in the newly created Yankton Land and

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<sup>115</sup> Karolevitz, 45, 47. After the Yankton Treaty of 1858 was successfully signed, Picotte received a considerable amount of land for his role in the treaty process.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. Struck by the Ree is sometimes mentioned as Strike the Ree or Old Strike.

<sup>117</sup> Herbert T. Hoover, *The Yankton Sioux*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 30.

<sup>118</sup> Schell, 71-72.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, 184-85.

Town Company with John Todd as its president.<sup>120</sup> It was inevitable that a new territory would soon be formally organized, and Todd and Frost were using any influence that they had to promote the creation of this new territory and to have the territorial capital located at one of their town sites. Later that year, Todd traveled to Washington with a petition of over 400 signatures supporting the new territory.<sup>121</sup> Given that the Democratic Party controlled both the House of Representatives and the Senate during the 35<sup>th</sup> United States Congress, the creation of a new northern territory that could eventually become free states was not well received. Consequently, Todd's efforts did not succeed.<sup>122</sup>

Congress' failure to create a new territory did not deter Todd's efforts in any way. In fact, he spent the 1860-1861 winter organizing rallies and petitions, and he returned to Washington with another petition in early 1861.<sup>123</sup> With several states already seceding and civil war on the horizon, the political climate had changed since Todd's last visit to the nation's capital. The Senate passed a bill supporting the creation of Dakota Territory on 26 February, and the House of Representatives passed the bill on 1 March. The following day, 2 March 1861, President Buchanan signed the Organic Act officially creating Dakota Territory. Two days later, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the country's sixteenth president.<sup>124</sup> By the time of Lincoln's inauguration, it is safe to state that John Blair Smith Todd was the most well-known resident of Dakota Territory; however, Lincoln's presidency would further contribute to Todd's political prestige. As previously mentioned, President Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and John Blair Smith Todd were first cousins.

Given his record of service in Dakota Territory, Todd would undoubtedly have enjoyed a great deal of political success had he not had a personal connection to Lincoln. However, his relationship to Mary Lincoln suddenly became a point of emphasis for Todd and his political supporters. For example, the choice of Yankton as the temporary territorial capital certainly coincided with Todd's wishes — both politically and commercially. Historian Herbert Schell stated that "the hand of J. B. S. Todd is evident in the selection of Yankton as the temporary capital" noting that, being a cousin of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, gave him "influence in the President's household."<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, historian Doane Robinson believed that Dr. William Jayne, Dakota Territory's first governor, accepted "Captain Todd's town" (i.e. Yankton) as the temporary capital due to Mrs. Lincoln's personal request that her cousin's town be chosen, although there

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>121</sup> Schell, 76.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas, 189.

<sup>123</sup> Schell, 76-77.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas, 189.

<sup>125</sup> Schell, 94.

is no known historical record testifying to this preference.<sup>126</sup> When Governor Jayne arrived in Yankton in late May 1861, the community was still in a primitive state of log cabins and shacks. However, if Mary Lincoln really did have some input in Yankton's selection, it is unlikely that Jayne would have voiced his protest. For that matter, there were no other communities at the time that could offer anything more than Yankton.<sup>127</sup>

The selection of Yankton as the temporary capital would obviously give it an advantage in its permanent selection, which was decided by the first territorial legislature in 1862.<sup>128</sup> Yankton being the capital was also in Todd's best business interest. Since Todd and Frost had already established many promising town sites along the Missouri, Todd knew that the Surveyor General's main land office would be located in the capital, along with branch offices in surrounding town sites, and would therefore contribute to the claims filed and settled in those communities. Although Todd did not appear to use his connection to the president to affect political appointments on a large scale, there were two appointments in particular in which he likely played a role. Henry Kennerly and Jesse Wherry were both appointed as land office officials, and both had some personal and business connections to Todd.<sup>129</sup>

Among Governor Jayne's first responsibilities upon arriving in Dakota Territory was a proclamation calling for an election for a territorial delegate to Congress and the election of a territorial legislative assembly.<sup>130</sup> Todd became an immediate front runner for territorial delegate, and his supporters did not hesitate in emphasizing his qualifications as well as his connection to the Lincolns. For example, in the 20 July 1861 issue of the *Weekly Dakotan* newspaper, an editorial acknowledged Todd's role in ending the Indian title to the land making way for its settlement. The editorial ended by stating that "he is so well acquainted with the wants of every section of the Territory — his intimate relations at Washington with the Chief Executive — [and] his honesty and ability all point to him as the man for Delegate." Other published endorsements referred to Todd as "a man well known," "respected," "a man of means," and "acquainted with the necessities of her [Dakota's] people, and possesses the qualifications, as well as the personal

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<sup>126</sup> Lynwood E. Oyos, ed., *Over a Century of Leadership – South Dakota Territorial and State Governors*, (Sioux Falls,

SD: Center for Western Studies, 1987), 3.

<sup>127</sup> Karolevitz, 54-55.

<sup>128</sup> Schell, 95.

<sup>129</sup> Thomas, 190.

<sup>130</sup> George W. Kingsbury, *Dakota Territory*, (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), 178.



relations and influence necessary to secure her claims."<sup>131</sup> In the general election held on 16 September 1861, Todd easily outdistanced the other two candidates.<sup>132</sup>

Three days after his 1861 election and with the Civil War underway, Todd received notice that he had been commissioned as Brigadier General of the Dakota Volunteers and assigned to command the North Military District in Missouri. He served in this capacity from 15 October to 1 December 1861 at which time he received a leave of absence in order to take his seat as congressional delegate.<sup>133</sup>

Within a year of his 1861 election, Todd began his 1862 campaign bid for re-election as delegate. The 1861 election was necessary to choose a delegate to represent the territory for only the remainder of that session of Congress. In contrast, the 1862 election was intended to elect a congressional delegate for a full two-year term.<sup>134</sup>

Interestingly enough, Todd's opponent in the 1862 election was none other than Governor William Jayne. Jayne stressed that he belonged to the Republican Party, which was not only the President's party but the party in power at the time. Todd, on the other hand, was a Democrat. Although Todd had adamantly declared himself as a pro-Union Democrat and actually ran under the People's Union Party banner, Jayne's supporters focused on the Democratic label more than anything else. Meanwhile, Todd's supporters again emphasized his family connection to the Lincolns. It was argued that Todd could capitalize on his relationship to the President enabling him to gain favors for the territory through the various executive departments.<sup>135</sup> Norman Thomas, who was a Professor of History at then Black Hills State Teachers College and Todd biographer, wrote that Todd's supporters claimed "that he would have more influence because he was a cousin of Mrs. Lincoln and after all, she was the real president."<sup>136</sup>

Jayne was declared the original winner of the 1862 election, although Todd successfully contested the election results on the grounds that votes from the northeastern part of the territory had not been counted. In fact, Jayne had already been seated as delegate before the election results were overturned giving Todd his re-election victory. In 1864, Walter Burleigh, who had been Indian agent for the Yankton

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<sup>131</sup> "John Blair Smith Todd Papers," H75.15. Folder #2 – Clippings and Manuscripts, South Dakota State Archives, Pierre, SD.

<sup>132</sup> Kingsbury, 185, 187.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas, 194; *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Volume VII, 498.

<sup>134</sup> Thomas, 195.

<sup>135</sup> Schell, 104; Kingsbury, 216-17.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas, 199.

Sioux, successfully denied Todd a third term as Dakota Territory's congressional delegate.<sup>137</sup> As a result, Todd's stint as territorial delegate ended in March 1865, about six weeks before Lincoln's assassination.

On 14 April 1865, John Todd was staying at the White House as a guest of his cousin and the president. When they attended Ford's Theatre that fateful night, Todd sat in a nearby theatre box. After Lincoln was shot, Todd helped carry the president's body to a nearby house where the president spent the last hours of his life before passing away the morning of 15 April. As word of the shooting spread, medical doctors, pastors, cabinet members, military personnel, politicians, and other noteworthy individuals gathered to be with President Lincoln. Among the list of prominent names in attendance was John B. S. Todd. Not only did later reports list Todd as being with the President and First Lady throughout the night, a *New York Times* article stated that, after the Reverend Doctor Phineas Gurley said a prayer at Lincoln's deathbed, the good reverend joined Mrs. Lincoln in the parlor where another prayer was offered. According to the *Times* account, five individuals sat with the grieving First Lady including "Gen. Todd of Dacotah (a cousin of hers)." Later, when Abraham Lincoln's body was transported to Springfield, Illinois for burial, Todd was listed as a member of the president's body guard.<sup>138</sup>

Todd returned to Dakota Territory several weeks later. In 1867, he served as Speaker of the House for the Territorial Legislature. Upon his death in 1872, Todd's obituary in the *Yankton Press* closed with the following words:

In the death of General Todd, Yankton and the Territory have lost one of their noblest citizens, a man who has done more for Yankton and her people than any other man, a pioneer citizen who, through his own efforts accomplished the organization of our Territory, and has worked faithfully for its advancement on every occasion.<sup>139</sup>

John Blair Smith Todd's role in the creation and settlement of Dakota Territory is his greatest legacy. Although many attempted to capitalize on his relationship with the Lincolns, his biggest accomplishments came before Lincoln's presidency. Nonetheless, J. B. S. Todd and the Lincolns maintained a special bond, especially with his first cousin, Mary Todd Lincoln. In retrospect, this relationship could have been no more evident than on the evening of 14 April 1865 when the Lincolns and Todd attended the theatrical performance entitled *Our American Cousin*.

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 205, 210.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Volume VII, 498, 501.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S CABINET (1860-1864)

Clarissa Thompson

The sixteenth president of the United States of America — Abraham Lincoln — was a man history remembers as one of its greatest. But what is not written in the textbooks is that Lincoln set himself up for a challenging administration. If it had not been for the recent election of Senator Barack Obama, the fact that Lincoln created a cabinet of rivals to prevent things being easy would not have been commonly known. This fact also garnered more attention due to Doris Kearns Goodwin's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Lincoln placed in his cabinet men who did not agree with him on some or any of his policies. He did it so he would be as effective a President as he could be, and this earned him a special place in history as one president who sought to effect real change.

After winning the election of 1860, Lincoln had to step into the Presidency ready for the southern half of the nation to secede; of course that was the last thing he wanted and fought hard to keep it from happening. David Schenck, a southern lawyer contemporary with Lincoln, remarks that the federal government under a Republican administration threatens society "because the fundamental principle of the party was war on our property, and the object was the 'Equality of the Negro & the white man.'"<sup>1</sup> Lincoln was firmly opposed to secession and admitted that instead of keeping the government together by force the United States should have "a government of fraternity."<sup>2</sup> Lincoln did not want to use force to keep the Union together because he firmly believed that the country should feel affection for itself. This tension between the two halves of the nation was not what the Founding Fathers had envisioned.

During Lincoln's campaign and after his election, "the threat of southern secession was broad-based and real. White southerners bitterly viewed Lincoln's election as a northern endorsement of the antislavery crusade against their society, and they feared the consequences of a 'Black Republican' regime."<sup>3</sup> A *New York Times* reporter wrote on November 9, 1860, that Lincoln, despite "the storm of desperate opposition that his election has occasioned in some quarters, preserves an equanimity that inspires confidence in his friends. It is not the apathy of the stoic, the inertia of one unconscious of danger, or the phlegmatic silence of a sluggish temperament. No, it is the calm and dignified self-reliance of a man

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Harris. *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 250.

<sup>2</sup> Harris. *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 255.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

who has marked out his course."<sup>4</sup> Lincoln was ready for the fight to come, and even though he did not recognize that force might be necessary, he was going to try first to win this battle with intellect and sound judgment.

In dealing with the situations on his plate, mainly the issue of secession and its relation to Lincoln's view of slavery, he sought to build a cabinet that was made up of people whom he could rely on for differing opinions. This also meant that in his cabinet were many different ideologies, ethics, and personalities. Lincoln's Vice President, Hannibal Hamlin, from 1860-1864, played an important role in Lincoln's cabinet selection. He was a strong supporter of black rights before and after the Civil War which made him a good running mate for Lincoln. Although Hamlin did not play a role in the cabinet, Lincoln sought his advice when making his selections. And even though he was removed from the Union ticket in favor of Andrew Johnson in 1864, his role, although small, was enough to assist Lincoln in his choices for his legendary cabinet of rivals.

President Lincoln's Cabinet included all of his major rivals for the Republican nomination for President in 1860 — William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Simon Cameron, and Edward Bates.<sup>5</sup> Of course, these men all objected to the others being included in the cabinet. But one of the concerns of both the Republican party, and Lincoln's was in establishing his cabinet in which there was enough geographic distribution and balance between former members of the Whig and Democratic Parties. "No President ever had a Cabinet of which the members were so independent, had so large individual followings, and were so inharmonious," noted a New York politician.<sup>6</sup>

William H. Seward, his main rival in the Republican Party, was Lincoln's pick for Secretary of State. But Lincoln felt that without the support of Seward and his eastern Republican faction his administration would not succeed. Seward was the leading Republican in the nation in 1860 but was defeated for the Presidential nomination by Lincoln.<sup>7</sup> But Seward was gifted in foreign relations and was one of the reasons that European countries did not throw their support behind the Confederacy.

Edward Bates, from Missouri, Lincoln's leading rival in the lower North, was a hopeful candidate for Lincoln's cabinet. Later he would receive the position of Attorney General. This appointment Lincoln hoped would provide the South with assurances that he was not going to be a sectional president and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>5</sup> The Lincoln Institute. "Mr. Lincoln's White House." 2008. <http://www.mrlincolnwhitehouse.org>.

<sup>6</sup> The Lincoln Institute.

<sup>7</sup> Mark E. Jr. Neely "Seward, William Henry." World Book Online Reference Center. (2008).

would increase conservative support for his administration.<sup>8</sup> He opposed slavery but was known to disdain blacks. Bates was said to be “inflexibly opposed to secession, and strongly in favor of maintaining the government by force if necessary,” even though Lincoln had yet to come to the conclusion that force might be necessary to keep the Union together.<sup>9</sup>

In the position of Secretary of War was Simon Cameron, a Pennsylvania senator and as a prominent Republican, an appointment Lincoln felt should help smooth out some of the wrinkles in his party. But Cameron’s reputation was shady and this appointment made his supporters nervous. In fact, Lincoln attempted to get Cameron to decline the position of Secretary of the Treasury, which was his original offer, after talking it over with his advisors. Cameron would not decline and the touchy subject of not alienating Pennsylvania proved the deciding factor. Unable to bring himself to put Cameron in “control of government finances, where he might fulfill the corrupt expectations of his critics,” Lincoln nominated him for Secretary of War.<sup>10</sup>

Gideon Welles, who had been a Democrat and a former Congressman from Connecticut until the creation of the Republican Party in 1854, was appointed as the Secretary of the Navy and worked to boost morale and create an efficient administration.<sup>11</sup> He aided Lincoln during the Civil War and was affectionately known as “Old Neptune,” and under his supervision the Union Navy grew immensely.<sup>12</sup> Lincoln picked Welles because he believed that due to the maritime tradition of New England it seemed appropriate that the new Secretary of the Navy be from that region. Harris writes that Welles was “honest, fundamentally conservative, and determined not to be driven by partisan concerns” and was one of Lincoln’s best appointments.<sup>13</sup>

Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase is considered “one of the greatest secretaries” for maintaining the national credit and raising money to carry on the Civil War.<sup>14</sup> Lincoln was in favor of finding him a place in his cabinet because of his important leadership in organizing the antislavery coalition after the Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed. Also active in aiding runaway slaves, Chase was known for his honesty and competence.<sup>15</sup> Being an Ohio statesman, Chase represented the West in Lincoln’s cabinet.

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<sup>8</sup> Harris, 257.

<sup>9</sup> Harris, 259.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>11</sup> James E. Sefton. “Welles, Gideon.” World Book Online Reference Center. (2008).

<sup>12</sup> Harris, 258.

<sup>13</sup> Harris, 258.

<sup>14</sup> Jerre S. Williams. “Chase, Salmon Portland.” World Book Online Reference Center. 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Harris, 272.

And although there are many noble accounts of Chase, he was also said to be a bureaucratic meddler who did not always have the Treasury Department's best interests in mind.

Montgomery Blair was given the position of Postmaster General in Lincoln's new administration. Blair was from Maryland and the southern representative in the cabinet. He was also despised by radical Republicans and most of the members of the cabinet. This appointment Lincoln knew would please the anti-Seward faction, which had sought to prevent Seward's appointment to Secretary of State. And although he was not well-liked by other cabinet members because of his politics, Lincoln found in him a confidante.

Finally, in the position of Secretary of the Interior Lincoln placed Caleb B. Smith, an Indiana Republican. Smith helped to "swing the Indiana delegation to Lincoln" at the Republican National Convention, which laid the path for Lincoln's presidential nomination.<sup>16</sup> Smith at the convention seconded Lincoln's nomination — he admired Lincoln since they were in Congress together. And Indiana was an important state to have on Union side. Smith was conservative and did not approve of the emancipation of the slaves but was selected due to his geographical representation.

Lincoln's cabinet was not made up of friends who would agree harmoniously with one another, but instead it was made up of the men he thought best suited for the job. Instead Lincoln saw sense in establishing a Cabinet of rivals, men who did not necessarily get along. Secretary of State Seward said about Secretary of the Treasury Chase, "there are differences between myself and Chase which make it impossible for us to act in harmony."<sup>17</sup> Seward went on to cite former president Andrew Jackson's belief that the cabinet ought to be a unit. And said would not be if he and Chase were both members. This did not scare Lincoln into changing his mind however and his cabinet of rivals was therefore established.

This project interested me because since the recent election of Senator and now President-Elect Barack Obama there have been many comparisons between him and Lincoln. These comparisons have become more frequent as Obama selected people for his Cabinet and chose a "team of rivals" approach, similar to Lincoln.<sup>18</sup> Former Vice President Al Gore sees a parallel between Obama and Lincoln: "Obama as a great orator with the power to inspire others...[shares] the finest characteristics of another Illinois politician now generally considered to be America's greatest president."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin. *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 129.

<sup>17</sup> Harris, 275.

<sup>18</sup> Goodwin, *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*.

<sup>19</sup> Swanson, Ian. *The Hill* "Gore Compares Obama to Lincoln." August 8, 2008, <http://thehill.com/leading-the-news>.

I think this project shows how Lincoln wanted to create a semblance of unity though the challenge of bringing people together who did not necessarily think alike or get along. Lincoln's challenge was to show the rest of the country that if he could help resolve the conflict in his own administration there was hope for the rest of the nation. And today, with the election of Barack Obama who is the first African American elected to the Presidency, we can see that there truly has been a fundamental change in America. But this is not just because Obama is an African American, for he is a different kind of politician, someone who has not been seen since Abraham Lincoln and that is what makes his election so exciting. Goodwin reminds her readers of Lincoln's Gettysburg address and says, "Lincoln's conviction that we are one nation, indivisible, 'conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal' is a conviction which this country stands on today."<sup>20</sup> Obama is looking at history and finding what works for him — establishing a "team of rivals" and he looks to improve upon it, changing it for the better.

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<sup>20</sup> Goodwin, 749.

## LINCOLN'S PARDON, MANFRED'S *SCARLET PLUME*, AND THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY: NEW SCHOLARSHIP ABOUT THE AMERICAN WEST

Harry F. Thompson

In the final chapter of *Scarlet Plume*, Frederick Manfred's novel of the Dakota War of 1862, the fortunes of the fictional characters Scarlet Plume, a Dakota Yankton, and his captive-lover, Judith Raveling, intersect with several historical characters: Isaac Heard (a St. Paul lawyer and aide-de-camp), General Sibley, and missionary-interpreter Stephen Riggs. We learn of Abraham Lincoln's part in the events unfolding here through Rev. Riggs, who relates to Judith that Lincoln had pardoned all but 38 of the 303 captured Dakota. In Manfred's novel, one of those not pardoned, possibly through mistaken identity, is Scarlet Plume.

What interests me in this paper, which is an extension of my article in *Western American Literature*, is the insistence by Manfred, in this and his other Buckskin Man tales, and by most western novelists that actual events and figures adhere to some generally acceptable standard of historical representation. Historical accuracy, or authenticity, is a reasonable expectation to make of a historical novel — and most western novels are historical. The thinking seems to be that if the novelist (or historian, for that matter) can recreate the past — recover the authentic — he will reach the truth of what happened. Some have speculated that this search for the authentic arose from Mark Twain's scathing criticism in 1895 of James Fenimore Cooper for the "literary offenses" in his historical fiction. What is interesting is the motivation behind this pursuit of authenticity — why does this matter to the writer and, apparently, the reader? And what does it tell us about literature and history, about their interconnectedness? These questions raise major issues about historiography, literature, and that branch of philosophy called epistemology, or ways of knowing — and are becoming increasingly the subject of scholarship about the American West.

As William Handley and Nathaniel Lewis point out in the introduction to their collection of essays called *True West*, "Examining the conceit of western authenticity is, to contemporary critics, the revisionary equivalent of the historian's re-evaluation of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. It challenges many assumptions we make about western writing and opens the door to an important new chapter in western literary history and cultural criticism...."<sup>1</sup> One notable indication of this re-evaluation is the University of Nebraska Press's inauguration of a new series called "Postwestern Horizons," of which *True West* is the second volume. The major re-assessment now underway in the literary West is not being taken up by such New West historians as Patricia Nelson Limerick, Donald Worchester, or Richard White. For all their



accomplishments, these so-called revisionist historians have largely failed to come to terms with postmodernism's fundamental challenge to the way we write history.

If we had time, I would now explain how history or, more accurately, the writing of history has no more authority in terms of knowing the past than has literature — and in fact history is actually a literary genre, as it was generally understood until the nineteenth century. Suffice it to say that, as historian Dominick LaCapra observes in *History & Criticism*, the supposed authority of history is derived primarily from the authority of the document, specifically letters, diaries, notes, memos, and other “original” sources (46-7). Conventional historiography holds that access to the past and the “truth” of the past is derived from the objective study of these historical sources.

But history constitutes a particular way of knowing the past. As a mode of inquiry, Michel Foucault argues, history is itself historicized and cannot stand apart to offer a privileged critique of the past. Further, historical inquiry cannot be conducted outside of the philosophical or political preferences of the historian. Whether it is the document or the historian, knowledge of the past—knowledge itself—is produced in a time, and at a place, and by a person or persons.

One way to get to the significance of this insight is to look at the oppositional binary that is established by the novel *Scarlet Plume* — between Dakota spirituality and organized Christian religion, which closes down meaning by establishing a false dichotomy and precludes the possibility of the novel's exploring multiple pasts. Scarlet Plume's spirituality is characterized by his unquestioning acceptance rather than avoidance of his fate. Acceptance, however, does not imply sacrifice, since for what indiscretion, in the context of the novel, can he be understood as seeking atonement? It is Judith Raveling who associates Scarlet Plume with the Christian church's depiction of a passively sacrificial Christ (349). Among the Dakota Sioux, however, his death would not have been understood as sacrificial, but possibly as just recompense for his forbidden relationship with a white woman (see Mick McAllister, 30).

In opposition to the spirituality of the Dakota Sioux, the novel sets the proselytizing Christian church, as exemplified in the character of Stephen Riggs. Examining Riggs's narrative of his participation in the trials leading up to the executions, as found in his letters and memoirs, demonstrates the value and even the necessity of reading *Scarlet Plume* and other western novels beyond the authority of history. If there were such a thing as a “true” or “truer” West, it would reside somewhere in the open spaces of contesting narratives and not in any one, dominant narrative, regardless of the historical accuracy claimed. The “truth” of the past may best be approached not by pursuing a single narrative but by facilitating a multiplicity of narratives. As indicated earlier, Riggs does not enter the novel until the morning of the mass

execution, but his role as the final and dominant representative of Christian religion is presaged in the characters of the Skywater missionaries Claude Codman and his wife, Theodosia, known as the “Good Book Woman,” and the Christianized Dakota.[11] Identified in the novel as “missionary and interpreter,” Riggs first appears in the text as the one to whom Cut Nose voices his objection in response to the requirement that the condemned wear an execution cap, a sentiment not shared by Scarlet Plume, whose stoicism further distinguishes him, notably, from the other condemned Dakota (360). Judith’s encounter with Riggs takes place at the point of the condemned prisoners’ march to the gallows, when she asks Riggs whether there would be any possibility of a reprieve from President Lincoln, to which he responds, “None, madam” (360). Clearly, the most egregious aspect of the trial is that it goes forward despite the certain knowledge that some of the prisoners who will be executed are innocent. Riggs’s final response to Judith’s plea for intervention is commiseration: “Madam, I’m sorry. Truly. But I can do nothing.... It is too late” (362). Paradoxically, as both a product and proponent of organized religion, Riggs cannot fathom Judith’s sense of Dakota spirituality, at least as it is constructed by the novel.

The novel condemns Riggs and organized religion, much as the judge condemned the Dakota Sioux, because Riggs’s unwillingness to intervene on behalf of Scarlet Plume and Rdainyanka is shown to be but a manifestation of the Christian church’s oft-observed preference for form over substance. The novel sharply contrasts Riggs’s ineffectualness with Scarlet Plume’s stoicism, but this is not the only way in which Riggs may be understood, as can be seen in what I call Riggs’s dissenting narrative. This narrative is made of Riggs’s own letters to his wife, Mary, and to his fellow missionary, Thomas S. Williamson, and it offers another, though not necessarily a more authoritative, perspective on the trial — a perspective largely unknown to Manfred, since these letters were in the private possession of the Riggs family at the time of the novel’s writing. Other Riggs letters were available to him, however, at the Minnesota Historical Society, as were the autobiographical sources by Riggs cited in this essay, including his memoir *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux* (1880). In his memoirs and letters to his wife, Riggs portrays himself as a reluctant participant in the trials, carrying out what he understood to be his necessary duty. The letters and memoirs disclose his resistance to the procedures and prejudices of the military commission which the novel fails to acknowledge.

Immediately following his and his family’s escape from the Hazelwood Station in August 1862, Riggs went to Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey to offer to help other white settlers and Dakota Christians endangered by the conflict (Anderson 266). In response, Governor Ramsey commissioned Riggs as chaplain under then-Colonel Sibley’s command (*Mary and I* 188). Released from military service

at Mankato on 14 November 1862 with instructions to carry the condemnations to General Pope at the military headquarters at St. Paul, Riggs wrote to President Lincoln, he informs Williamson, "asking him to exercise his pardoning power in the case of our friends but deprecating the idea of a general reprieve *without a reason* [emphasis Riggs's]" (19 Nov. 1862). In the novel, Riggs indicates to Judith that the president's final decision cannot be altered, but in this letter he states that he attempted to influence the final outcome of the trial by intervening on behalf of the more than two hundred Dakota who were reprieved. While engaged in distributing funds to the survivors of the conflict, Riggs was called back by General Sibley to assist Colonel Miller during the executions, a spectacle, Riggs confides to Mary, that he had hoped to avoid (5 Nov. 1862). He obeyed, he recounts in his memoir, out of a sense of duty and with the hope that he could prevent mistakes and facilitate justice (*Mary and I* 209-10). Within days of the executions, Riggs returned to his family at St. Anthony and spent the next several months writing textbooks and teaching the Sioux in the camp at Fort Snelling.

The letters that he wrote to Mary and others during and immediately after the trials indicate that, unlike many of his fellow Minnesotans, Riggs was able to make a distinction between guilty and innocent Dakotas, the result, in part, of having lived among the Sioux for more than twenty years. In these letters, he demonstrates both his refusal to defend those who had committed murder and his opposition to condemn those who had not participated in the attacks. Riggs came to realize that the military commission lacked the evidence and the wisdom to make accurate judgments about the Dakotas and that both the massacres and the trials were tainted with innocent blood. As difficult as it might be for those schooled in source-based history to admit, however, his letters and memoirs embody no more epistemological authority than do the accounts written by others who witnessed or participated in the events of 1862 — and no less, theoretically at least, than does the novel. As would anyone thrust into similar circumstances, Riggs struggled to justify his own actions or inactions with regard to the condemned prisoners, thereby rendering the "evidence" in his letters and memoirs suspect. Riggs's letters and autobiographical writings reveal a complex individual, torn by his conflicting feelings of compassion and strong sense of justice. Memoirs are especially suspect as "evidence" of their author's experience, not only because they are susceptible to intentional use for purposes of self-justification, but, as products of narrativization, they comply with the inherent storytelling processes of selecting and ordering of materials. James Wilkinson points to the paradoxical situation in which historiography now finds itself as a consequence of the growth of "evidence," by which he means "those remains [of the past] that historians use in making histories": "Never have historians had so much evidence at their disposal; never has there been so much mistrust about what the

evidence shows" (81). The "historical" Riggs is a composite of all the sources Manfred consulted and did not consult and is both more and less than the sum of all he did and all that was done to him — and of all that has been written and thought about him during and after his life. Riggs is, in other words, a sub-discourse of the discourse we know as the Dakota War of 1862, and as such he is a thoroughly historicized (mediated) subject.

Portrayed in the novel as a dispassionate and ultimately ineffectual advocate for the Dakota prisoners, Riggs functions as a foil to Scarlet Plume's evidently superior spirituality. Since he represents, through his association with organized religion, a society that fails to distinguish between justice and revenge, Riggs cannot be accorded "fair" treatment within the world established by the novel, despite the author's desire for historical accuracy. The absence of any allusion in the novel to the moral struggle that Riggs endured during the trials, as represented by the letters and memoirs, indicates the degree to which the oppositional binary of Christian religion and Dakota spirituality structures the novel. To continue to measure the aesthetic "success" of *Scarlet Plume*, other *Buckskin Man* novels, and western historical fiction, generally, on the basis of whether they are accurate or inaccurate representations of the past and whether historical or aesthetic considerations are of primary importance is to miss the significance of the re-assessment of the literary west.

It may not be possible for us fully to acknowledge the novel as an alternative "history," as being equally authoritative as the traditional histories by Folwell, Meyer, or Anderson, or the letters and memoirs written by Riggs and other participants. Aware of the constraints imposed by historicity on our knowing the past, we should be able to recognize in the novel form a worthy challenger to the autonomy of history. Although conceding with Foucault the limitations of knowing anything outside of our own historical time, we should nevertheless value the historical novel that is conscious of its status not as fiction but as historiography — for theory's challenge to epistemological hierarchies with respect to the past is not about the writing of fiction (metafiction) but about the writing of history (metahistoriography), i.e., the novel's assertion of its role as a credible vehicle of knowledge. Both Native American and Mexican American authors (Leslie Marmon Silko and Rudolfo Anaya) have been in the vanguard of the move beyond historicity in the western novel, the result of their distrust of any "official" historical authority or grand narrative, such as the "winning of the west," which has more often than not served only to dispossess minority cultures. Awareness of the limitations of knowledge should breed humility, not inertia, and humility is the beginning of knowledge — if not wisdom.

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## ARTHUR AND MARGARET MELLETTE EXPERIENCE LINCOLN'S DEATH

John Timm

Arthur Calvin Mellette was born one hundred, three years before me. Nevertheless, my research of the Mellette family over the past several years has resulted in a friendship that has bridged time. They are friends of mine from another time and place. How great is that! I'm glad they lived, were who they were, and did what they did. I like them for the same reason that I like any of my contemporary friends, because they are worth knowing. Friends and family who lived at the same time as the Mellette's called them Cal and Maggie, and so do I. And, that is how I will refer to them throughout this paper.

Cal and Maggie met when Cal began attending the University of Indiana at Bloomington. Cal was eighteen years old and Maggie was seventeen. Maggie's father, Theophilus Wylie, was one of the school's leading professors and his cousin, Andrew Wylie, had been the college's first president. So you can see the Wylie legacy is deeply rooted in the University's history and is still revered on that campus to this very day.

Cal and his older brother, James, were both students and took room and board at the Wylie residence during the school year. A romance blossomed between Maggie and Cal, and they talked of marriage. As a young couple they had high hopes for the future, but how could anyone make plans while the Civil War was threatening the future of the entire country?

Cal was twenty-three years old when he graduated from Indiana University. At that same time, older brother James had received his draft notice and was ordered to take induction into the infantry of the Union Army. James had health problems that were serious enough to cause concern about his ability to survive the rigors of the war. Being a struggling farm family, the Mellette's did not have the resources to hire a substitute soldier to go in James' place. So as a family, they decided that Cal would go in James' place.<sup>1</sup>

Before going off to war, Cal and Maggie vowed their love and devotion to each other. They decided to keep diaries, believing it would keep their spirits united. They reasoned that exchanging the diaries after the war would give them back the time they were apart. They hoped to marry if Cal could survive the war.

Those diaries offer a first hand account of a very dramatic time in American history. Their writings give witness to the emotions, bitterness and morals of a nation ripped apart by war. Maggie's diary describes her daily experiences in Indiana which was, even within its own borders, torn apart by the differing views of the war, while Cal's diary reveals the rigors of survival and combat of the infantry soldier.

We are going to focus our attention on those parts of the diaries that describe the shock and agony of a nation as its President is assassinated and the country begins its struggle with reconstruction without him.

To comprehend the roots of the Civil War, it is helpful to think of America in the first half of the nineteenth century as two separate nations. The America of the North was progressing by undergoing urban and industrial revolutions. While agriculture was still important, the northern economy was being shaped by emphasizing commercial enterprises such as railroads, shipping canals, steamships, banking, and booming factories.

The South, on the other hand, had remained the slave-based, agrarian economy it had been in Jefferson's time, when gentlemen plantation owners were helping create the nation. Southern wealth was based on two major factors: (1) cotton produced and shipped only to the textile factories of Great Britain and New England; and (2) the slave workforce who produced that cotton, as well as the other staples of the southern states, such as tobacco, rice, and corn. Even though importation of slaves had been outlawed in 1807, the slave population continued to grow at an astonishing rate. Overseas slave trade had been prohibited, but trading slaves between the states was still an enormous business. Many southerners felt that this contradiction of logic was unfairly forced upon them by the North.<sup>2</sup>

Abraham Lincoln's election without a single southern vote was a sign that the slave states had lost control of the national government and probably could never regain it. Seven angry southern states seceded from the Union. Further hostilities were initiated when Lincoln tried to repossess the most significant piece of property in the Confederacy, the federal base at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. This action caused four more states to secede. With that, the Confederacy was formed and the Civil War was on.<sup>3</sup>

The war was one of the bloodiest in human history up to that time. As the battles became more intense, the bodies piled up, and the war fatigue grew. The vicious, devastating warfare, murderously divided families and friends. Half of the country lay smoldering.<sup>4</sup> More than 360,000 Union soldiers were dead. Another 275,000 wounded. At least 258,000 Confederate dead and 100,000 more wounded. (In *The Atlas of the Civil War*, James McPherson notes that if the same proportion of Americans were killed in a war today, the number of dead would exceed 5 million.) In the Confederate states, an estimated 50,000 civilians were dead.

Almost from the moment Abraham Lincoln was elected president, people began plotting to kill him. A murder plot even changed the way he arrived in Washington D.C. to begin his presidency.

Lincoln left his Illinois home on a rainy February morning in 1861. In the notorious "Baltimore plot" local rebels schemed to assassinate him when his train passed through that city. However, Detective Allan Pinkerton foiled the scheme by persuading Lincoln to pass through Baltimore incognito and hours ahead of schedule.

Lincoln reluctantly agreed, and newspapers later made fun of him for "sneaking" into Washington at night. One reporter even described an elaborate disguise used by Lincoln, but all he actually had changed was his hat and he wore a cape.

The newspaper stories embarrassed the President. He felt he had made a mistake by following the detective's advice. Lincoln said he didn't like "stealing into Washington like a thief in the night," and he vowed he would never again change his plans for the sake of safety.

He kept his promise. Over the next four years, he received more than 10,000 death threats. He kept some of them in an envelope marked *Assassinations* in his desk, but he never again changed his plans to avoid danger.<sup>5</sup>

Why did so many people want to kill Lincoln? Today he is considered one of our most beloved presidents. But in the 1860's, many people hated him. They blamed him for the terrible Civil War. Almost no one expected the war to last more than a few weeks or maybe a few months. The Union supporters felt confident for victory because they had more soldiers and more money. However, the Confederates had confidence in their military leaders and their soldiers' grit.

When President Lincoln issued the *Emancipation Proclamation* on January 1, 1863, it stirred antislavery emotions in Cal. Those feelings had initially been implanted in his soul when he was only eight years old. Back then, Cal had come across a copy of the book, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*", by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The book so moved him that he read it several times, nearly committing it to memory. The thought of families being separated and sold upset him. The book began developing a social conscience in him that carried through into his adult life.<sup>6</sup>

Cal was ill for nearly his entire time in the army. After only a month he was in the grips of a cold virus and fever, although he did manage to keep up. But most troubling, was the diarrhea from which he suffered. It bothered him from the beginning of his service and haunted him all through the war.<sup>7</sup>

### **Entries of Lee's Surrender from Maggie's Diary**

April 4, Tuesday 1865 "I worked a little in my garden this morning — Pa brought home some good news. Richmond had been taken! Oh, if it is only true. What rejoicing there will be all over the land. If it is true, then there is hope for the termination of this cruel war. I went with Pa to look at some maps. General Thomas' forces have been moved to



Lynchburg, Tennessee. (Cal's regiment was in Thomas' forces.) Yes, Cal must be there — I feel uneasy, but I will hope for the best. Pa thinks they could have gone by rail, but if they marched it would take them twenty days. I fear Arthur could not stand that. Oh, how I wish he were home!"<sup>8</sup>

Friday April 7, 1865 "Had breakfast. Rather cold today. I finished Arthur's letter and sent it to town with Lou. She was going uptown to get a hat. I helped Ma make supper. Shortly after, bells began ringing and the cannon was fired! We knew there must be a victory. I felt God's goodness and tears came to my eyes. A feeling of faith and gratitude fills my heart. We went over and collected Libby and Annie and we all went up to Howe's Corner, it was there that we found out that Lee had been captured! I know Arthur will feel the joy, just as I did when he hears the news. He is the only person who can enter my feelings just now".

On April 7, 1865, "Confederate General Robert E. Lee asked General Ulysses S. Grant for terms of surrender! On April 9, Lee surrendered to Grant at the Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. According to Grant's terms, Lee surrendered all arms, artillery and public property, except side arms of the officers, their private horses and baggage".<sup>9</sup>

Well, all of the national trauma suffered from the Civil War was not ended merely by General Robert E. Lee surrendering at Appomattox. Strong Confederate armies remained in the field in North Carolina, Texas, and elsewhere throughout the South, and those generals had not followed Lee's example. Furthermore, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was still at large and he was urging the other Generals to fight on.

Reconstruction of the South would be a long and painful process. At the conclusion of the war most of the South was in a state of ruin and confusion. Cities were destroyed, towns sacked, fields laid fallow, and the economy was in shambles. Thousands of people died of starvation. For millions of people, the main objective immediately following the war was survival. The awesome task of the reconstruction would test the leadership abilities of President Lincoln as much and likely more than that of the war!

Then came the horrible news, Lincoln had been assassinated! Once again we turn to Maggie's diary.

Saturday April 15, 1865 "I got up in time for breakfast this morning. I helped Toph (Theophilus, the Wylie's second to youngest son) plant his melon seeds in the garden and helped fix the parlor. About 12 o'clock I saw Pa and Toph returning from town. I went out to greet them, hoping they might have letters from Arthur. They told me that President Lincoln had been assassinated! Shot last night at 10 o'clock in his private box at Ford's Theater. He died this morning at 7 o'clock.<sup>10</sup> I felt so badly that I wanted to go away alone and cry. I did not feel like I could take any more interest in my work. Poor Pa, he seemed to feel so badly too. Oh, how very sad.

After dinner, we went up to the church for singing. When that was over, we went to Professor Kirkwood's. I had to return a book that I had borrowed. Just as we were leaving, the professor came home with a newspaper in hand. He told us that Secretary of

State William H. Seward and his son Frederick had both been assassinated at the same time as Lincoln.<sup>11</sup> We thought everyone in the street looked sad and in shock, *but some of the hateful butternuts were rejoicing!*

We heard that Mrs. Young said, 'She was going to give a grand dinner to express her joy.' Can there be anyone living with a heart in their body who can rejoice as such a terrible act! We went up to Mrs. Marquis', to call on her. She seemed to feel so badly. We took supper at Mrs. Murphy's. She then walked home with us and stayed until after 8 o'clock. After getting home I read the account of the assassination in the paper."<sup>11</sup>

April 16, the Sabbath, 1865 "A bright day. We went off to church. We heard as we were returning from Sunday school that Secretary of State Seward still lives. They have discovered the supposed assassin is J. Wilkes Booth.<sup>12</sup> We can neither talk or think of anything else but the assassination. Lincoln did not speak from the time he was shot. I have thought of Cal so very much and how he will feel when he hears of the news. I wrote half a page of foolscrap.<sup>13</sup> I told him how badly I felt about Lincoln".

**From the diary of Secretary of the Navy,  
Gideon Welles (April 14-15, 1865)**

"The giant sufferer lay extended diagonally across the bed, which was not long enough for him. He had been stripped of his clothes. His large arms, which were occasionally exposed, were of a size which one could scarce have expected from his spare appearance. His slow, full respiration lifted the clothes with each breath that he took. His features were calm and striking. I had never seen him appear to better advantage than for the first hour. After that, his right eye began to swell and that part of his face became discolored."

"...The room was small and overcrowded. The surgeons and members of the Cabinet were as many as should have been in the room, but there were many more, and the hall and other rooms in the front or main house were full. One of these rooms was occupied by Mrs. Lincoln and her attendants, with Mrs. Harris. Mrs. Dixon and Mrs. Kinney came to her about twelve o'clock. About once an hour, Mrs. Lincoln would repair to the bedside of her dying husband and with lamentation and tears remain until overcome by emotion."

(April 15) "...About 6 a.m. I entered the room and by eleven past I began feeling faint. I left the room and the house and took a short walk in the open air. It was a dark and gloomy morning, and began raining before I returned to the house some fifteen minutes later. Large groups of people were gathered every ten or fifteen yards, all anxious and solicitous. One or more from each group stepped forward as I passed, to inquire into the condition of the President, and to ask if there was no hope. Intense grief was on every persons face when I replied that the President could survive but a short time. The colored people especially — and there were at this time more of them, perhaps, than of white — were overwhelmed with grief."

"...A little before seven, I went into the room where the dying President was rapidly drawing near the closing moments. Soon after, Mrs. Lincoln made her last visit to him. The death struggle had begun. Robert, the President's son, stood with several others at the end of the bed. He bore himself well, but on two occasions gave way to overpowering grief and sobbed aloud, turning his head and leaning on the shoulder of Senator Sumner."

"Not everyone was similarly moved. Declining the honor of accompanying Lincoln's body back to Illinois, Zachariah Chandler, the Radical Republican senator from Michigan said, 'The Almighty continued Mr. Lincoln in office as long as he was useful.'"

Another view of the aftermath, from a Union soldier, Sergeant Lucius Barber of Illinois (April 21, 1865), who had been imprisoned at Andersonville as a prisoner of war captured while fighting in Georgia under General Sherman:

"...We marched at half past five. The news came today that President Lincoln, Secretary Seward and son have been assassinated, resulting in the President's death and severely wounding others. And now, while the nation is rejoicing with unspeakable joy at its deliverance, it is suddenly plunged into the deepest sorrow by the most brutal murder of its beloved chief."

"We are now continually passing paroled men from Lee's army on their way to their homes, or to where their homes were. Many found blackened ruins, instead, and kindred and friends gone, they know not whither. Oh, how much misery, treason and rebellion have brought upon our land."

### **Back to Maggie's Diary**

Wednesday, April 19, 1865 "Today Lincoln is to be buried and there is to be church services all over the states. A day of mourning and prayer instead of rejoicing, as we expected it would have been less than a week ago. Oh how sad! I did not go to morning church as we could not all go at the same time. I will go to afternoon chapel and then again to the services tonight. I went to College Chapel after dinner. The bell was tolled for half an hour. Shortly after we got there, the Masons came in one door and the Odd Fellows the other. The chapel was packed. Mr. Gellett conducted the meeting. Excellent prayers were made by Mr. Hopkins and Pa. Mr. Hopkins then made a short speech. Mr. Gunn from Kentucky presented a short history of President Lincoln. Mr. Atwater then spoke. He stated that he was glad to think that Lincoln had lived long enough to see the Civil War through to a triumph and though his manner of death was dreadful, he suffered no pain. Lincoln regretted that so many noble men died in battle and that after death their bodies would be trampled on by the enemy. Lincoln will at last find peace, resting where the grass will wave over him in quietness. Oh, I did not know how he had endeared himself to the nation until after his death! Everyone mourns him as if a relative."

"A dispatch arrived in town today. It reported that Mrs. Lincoln is very ill and not expected to live. Our loss must be nearly nothing compared to that poor woman! Oh, to lose a husband that she had lived with for so long. What could be harder? This is a day I will never forget. God works in mysterious ways, but it is hard to see what good will come from what appears to be so evil. I don't suppose any death in the world ever filled every heart as this has done with so much horror or consternation. Even his most bitter enemies appear to mourn!"

Our story will now follow Cal from the time of Lee's surrender until his return to Maggie.

### Entries from Cal's Diary

Monday April 10, 1865, Lick Creek, Eastern Tennessee "Glorious news today! Lee<sup>15</sup> surrendered! Rumor circulated that evening that General Johnson<sup>16</sup> had also surrendered. If it only proves true! How many hearts are glad tonight. What rejoicing in the North!"

Friday April 14, 1865, Lick Creek, Eastern Tennessee "We had a holiday. Everyone was in the greatest of spirits! First Brigade had a meeting in the afternoon. It was a great treat! There was prayer, music, and celebration. It was moving to see the whole ground covered with uncovered soldiers receiving the preacher's benediction."

Saturday April 15, 1865, Lick Creek, Eastern Tennessee "The saddest news of the war arrived today. President and Secretary Seward were assassinated. I dearly hope it is untrue, but it is official. What a disgrace to the nation! Its greatest benefactor and second father has been murdered. General Lee has advised his generals to surrender."

From the time of Lee's surrender until Cal was finally mustered out of the service in September of 1865, he was serving with the occupational forces under General Thomas. Their duty was to police and keep the peace amidst the devastation, hardship and turmoil as the politicians continued bickering as to how reconstruction should be accomplished. General Thomas led his forces through Tennessee, Louisiana, and finally to Texas.

To make matters worse, Cal's health continued to present major problems. Cholera Morbus continued to keep him weak and violently ill with diarrhea and dehydration. He was exposed to smallpox, but luckily escaped getting that disease. Nevertheless, he was usually too weak to complete most of the tasks assigned to him without help.

General Sherman had always credited his devastatingly destructive war tactics as ultimately shortening the war and saving soldiers' lives. That reasoning was argued and unappreciated by the victims of his ruthlessness. General Sherman viewed his "scorched earth policy" as "justice" for treason. Sherman blazed through the confederacy leaving nothing to support life. Houses were looted, animals that were not taken by his Union troops were killed.

Most of the South was devastated — physically, economically, even spiritually. Returning Confederate soldiers found their homes burned. In some cases, entire towns, even whole counties had been evacuated. Many women and children hitched themselves to plows in the absence of field animals.<sup>17</sup>

Vice-President Andrew Johnson ascended to the presidency after Lincoln's assassination. He made every effort to continue Lincoln's lenient reconstruction policies to create provisional state governments. However, the victory of the Radical Republican Party in the 1866 election led Congress to impose a more extreme reconstruction policy calling for military control over the former Confederate states. Re-admission to the Union required state conventions. Delegates were elected by universal male suffrage,

except for those who participated in the Confederate war effort. As a result, state conventions consisted mostly of freed slaves and newly arrived citizens from the North, derisively known as "carpetbaggers." President Johnson vetoed the act saying it was unconstitutional. Congress however, overrode the veto.<sup>18</sup>

On Saturday, December 9, 1865, Maggie came downstairs for breakfast. The house was unusually quiet. She turned from the staircase, entering the dining room. Sitting at the table was Cal. Maggie's eyes grew wide and filled with tears. A large smile spread across Cal's thin, sickly face. The room filled with pure joy.<sup>19</sup>

## End notes

<sup>1</sup> The draft was first employed during the Civil War by the Confederacy in 1862 and by the Union in 1863. By 1863, the Civil War was becoming very unpopular in the Northern states. Discontent with the way it was being waged, high casualties, and general weariness was sapping the enthusiasm for preserving the Union. Led by Democratic "Copperheads," an anti-war movement emerged. Many northerners did not want to risk their lives for the sake of the Union, much less to free slaves.

To keep the war effort going, more men were needed to fill the army's ranks. On March 3, 1863, Congress passed a law authorizing conscription and clamping down on objections to the measure. Exemptions were made for men who were the sole support of women and children. Men could also avoid service by finding a substitute or paying a \$300 fee to the government. Objection to the war was not a grounds for exemption.

Tension rose and draft riots broke out in several cities. In July of 1863, riots erupted throughout New York City against the draft. African Americans and army stations were targeted by rioters. Eventually, Union Troops fresh from the Battle of Gettysburg were sent to restore order, in the end more than 1000 people were killed or wounded. *Living History America, The History of the United States in Documents, Essays, Letters, Songs and Poems*. Edited by Erik Bruum and Jay Crosby. Pp 421, Published by Tess Press, an imprint of Black Dog and Levental Publishers Inc., 1151 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011.

<sup>2</sup> Even without African trade, the slave numbers were incredible. Nearly 700,000 slaves Counted in the Census of 1790 had swollen to 3.5 million in 1860. At the same time, the General population of the South grew far more slowly, absorbing few of the immigrants flocking to the American shores. It was room to grow more cotton, and slaves to plant, pick and produce it, that underscored all debate about America's expansion, prompting at least one foreign war and southern talk of the conquest of Cuba and other lands to the south. *Don't Know Much About History*, by Kenneth C. Davis, Pp 138. Avon Books, a division of The Hearst Corporation, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019-1990.

Actually these slaves had enormous power. By simply stopping work, they could threaten the Confederacy with starvation. By deserting the plantations, they would have destroyed the South's ability to supply its army. *Black Reconstruction* by W.E.B. DuBois.

<sup>3</sup> *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. Pp. 184. Published by Harper Perennial (a division of Harper Collins Publishers).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid Pp 186

<sup>5</sup> *The President Has Been Shot* by Rebecca C. Jones. Pp. 8-9. Published by Penguin Books USA Inc. 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

<sup>6</sup> *...And the Last Shall be First* by John Timm. Pp3 Published by Pine Hill Press, 4000 West 57th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57106

<sup>7</sup> Most men suffered from diarrhea and dehydration. Army physicians used the term "flux" to describe general bowel ailments. It was worse in the summer than in the winter. More men died from bowel disorders than were killed in battle. The soldiers referred to it as "quick step" and mentioned it in their letters more than any other ailment. *The Civil War Diary of Arther Calvin Mellette* revised edition, edited by Gerald W. Wolff and Joanita Kant, Pp 20.

<sup>8</sup> *The Civil War Diary of Margaret Wylie Mellette* revised edition, edited by Joanita Kant, Pp 11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid Pp 12

<sup>10</sup> President Lincoln was mortally wounded on 14 April 1865. He was shot in the head with a Derringer pistol by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater. He died the following morning at the house of a Mr. Peterson, on 10th Street, where he had been taken immediately after the shooting. His body was returned to the White House where it was embalmed and put into a casket on a catafalque. At least 25,000 people viewed his remains and paid their last respects, though thousands were turned away. The funeral was held on Wednesday. While these services were taking place in Washington D.C., memorial services were held throughout the nation. Businesses were closed and public buildings were draped. Never before had such a service been held for a national figure. Lincoln's body, along with the remains of his son, Willie, were transported by train more than 1,500 miles to their home, Springfield, Illinois. (Willie Lincoln had died of an illness, while a boy, living at the White House.) The train left Washington D.C. on the 21st and reached Springfield on May 3rd.

<sup>11</sup> This information about Lincoln's Secretary of State, William H. Seward, and his son, Frederick, was not correct and serves as a good example of the inaccurate newspaper reporting during these times.

<sup>12</sup> John Wilkes Booth and a companion, David Herold, had ridden all night by horseback for Charles County, Maryland. Near Bogantown, they called on a Dr. Mudd to set Booth's broken leg, which had been injured as he jumped to the stage from Lincoln's box seat at Ford's Theater, where he had shot Lincoln. Many rewards were posted and both military and local police were searching everywhere for the assassin. Authorities heard that Dr. Mudd has accepted a call from two strangers and Mudd was arrested. Booth and Herold were tracked to the Potomac River. There they had crossed and were tracked to a barn. Fire was set to the barn and Herold surrendered. Booth did not. Booth was shot by Sergeant Boston Corbett through the neck and head, dying in less than three hours, twelve days after he had shot President Lincoln. Booth's body was taken to Washington, D.C., and was buried without ceremony, by gravediggers who were the only ones who knew the whereabouts of the grave. Herold was tried by a military commission and was hanged on 7 July.

<sup>13</sup> *Foolscap*, a dunce's cap, special sizes of paper for writing or printing, especially legal documents, sold in sheets ranging from 8 by 13 inches, to 12 or 13 inches. Double foolscap is 17 by 27 inches. Named from former watermark of a fool's head and cap, said to have been ordered used in place of royal arms by Cromwell's Rump Parliament.

<sup>14</sup> A military guard stationed outside the lines to give warning of the approach of an enemy. To place a picket guard by tethered horses.

<sup>15</sup> Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) Considered to be one of the finest generals of all time. Demonstrating incredible tenacity of purpose and aggressiveness in battle, he was also known and respected for many acts of kindness and civility. His intellectual prowess and aura of serenity seemed to surround him. Born to a most distinguished Virginia family, he was second in his class at West Point. He distinguished himself in the Mexican War as being wounded and cited with three brevets for bravery. President Lincoln offered him the command of the Union armies. Lee chose instead to take charge of Confederate troops in Virginia. In June 1862 he was given the command of the Army of Northern Virginia, when Joseph E. Johnson was wounded. Greatly outnumbered, Lee nonetheless performed brilliantly, protecting Richmond for almost three years, at the same time, leading two major invasions of the North.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Eggleston Johnson (1807-1891) A native Virginian, was a confederate general of considerable ability. Prior to the Civil War he had taken part in the Black Hawk War, Seminole War and Mexican War, where he was wounded five times, brevetted three times and led a column in the attack on Chapultepec. Early in the Civil War, he was made the fourth ranking general in the Confederacy, which he found insulting and protested vigorously to President Jefferson Davis. The result was a bitter feud between the two men. Lee replaced Johnson as commander of the Department of the Potomac in June 1862, after Johnson was wounded two times at the battle of Seven Pines. In November of 1862 he returned to duty as commander of the Department of the West. President Davis refused to accept Johnson's strategy which led to a costly defeat for the South at Murfreesboro, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. In February 1865, Johnson was given command of the Army of the Tennessee (where Cal was). On April 18, 1865, after a spirited effort, Johnson and General Sherman settled on an armistice, despite President Davis' orders to take his forces south and continue fighting. Johnson surrendered on 26 April 1865. In the years that followed the war, Johnson was elected to Congress and became a railroad commissioner in Washington, D.C. Ironically, Johnson died of pneumonia, which he caught while standing in the rain at the funeral of William Sherman.

<sup>17</sup> *Don't Know Much About the Civil War* by Kenneth C. Davis. Avon Books, a division of The Hearst Corporation, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

<sup>18</sup> *Living History America: The History of the United States in Documents, Essays, Letters, Songs and Poems.* Edited by Erik Bruun and Jay Crosby. Pp448-449 Published by Tess Press, an imprint of Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, Inc. 151 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011

<sup>19</sup> *...And the Last Shall Be First* by John Timm, Pp29, Published by Pine Hill Press, 4000 West 57th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57106

## MYSTERY OF THE TREE RINGS

David Volk

Good morning, I would like to thank the Center for Western Studies for again inviting me to participate in this excellent conference. I find it to be such a wonderful experience to spend a few days with people who love history as much as I do.

Last year I did presentations on two books...a children's book, "Mystery of the Round Rocks" and "Draftee: A High School Teacher Goes To War", a book about my two years as Army draftee in the early 1970's.

As I mentioned last year, writing was really not something I had ever considered doing and it has been an interesting career move. And having two ex-politicians writing children's books was certainly something that Mark Meierhenry and I never considered back when he was Attorney General and I was State Treasurer.

Anyway, our first book continues to do well and is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> printing and was awarded a Bronze Medal for Best Children's Fiction by the Independent Publisher's Book Awards. However, in the spirit of full disclosure I should mention that the last time I looked "Draftee" was 1,329,753<sup>rd</sup> on Amazon's best sellers list.

The latest book is called "Mystery of the Tree Rings" and while our first book took place in eastern South Dakota, this story takes place in the Black Hills. It again involves the 10-year old twins, Max and Hannah, who go on another journey of discovery with their grandfather. The real star of this book, however, is a 762 year-old Ponderosa Pine, that actually exists in the Hills, and involves all that this pine tree has seen and experienced during the past seven centuries. The past is contained within the rings of the tree, and its name is Rosa.

Like our previous book, this tale contains a lot of South Dakota history and also like our first book reads at about a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. Fourth graders in our state have a SD history unit during their school year and we try to tie our books into that component.

I do a lot of substitute teaching, especially 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades and I have been surprised how few books there are in classrooms that deal with our state's natural history.

In the story, the grandfather, who has kept a journal for many years, tells the twins he is going to introduce them to someone who has kept a journal for 762 years. During their hike through the Hills, Max



gets lost and then, scared and tired, sits down under an old Ponderosa Pine (Rosa) who tells him her story of all she has seen and of the journal she has kept within herself.

In addition to trying to teach our young people about South Dakota history in a fun way, we also try and leave our readers with a lesson. In this book we try and encourage students to keep their own journal and start writing their own history. At the back of the book we even have empty pages for them to start their own journal.

I have always loved history, especially South Dakota history, and I really feel too much of our history is lost. Not the big events but the small things, the minutia of everyday life. This came home in a very poignant way when a good friend of mine recently lost his father who was 93. Right up until Bill Srstka, Sr., died he had an incredible recall of his life, especially what it was like to be a soldier and walk across Europe in WWII after the D-Day landing. What a tragedy that we never captured the details and experiences of that incredible journey by this young man of South Dakota.

Recently I have been assisting a friend with a program called 'Story Telling America' and hope people will take advantage of something like this or just do there own recordings of loved ones, especially at this time when so many of our relatives, from that "Greatest Generation" are getting so old.

We are right now working on our third book called "Mystery of the Maize" and it will be about the history of corn in this state. This book will have the same cast of characters and for the most part will take place in my hometown of Mitchell, SD. It will feature both the Corn Palace and the Prehistoric Indian Village archeological dig. One of the things I like about this book is it will tell the story, although briefly, of the agrarian Native Americans who lived along our rivers here in South Dakota for hundreds of years. So much of our Indian history deals with the Lakota tribes and I think it is important to also cover the history of the Mandan, Arikara, and Hidasta tribes. They were here long before all of us, including the Sioux, and the village by Mitchell is over 1,000 years old.

I am guessing this will be our last book although there is a part of us that would like to do one more called "The Mystery of the Pheasants" just because that is such an incredible story and wonderful success story for our state. In fact we just celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of pheasants being introduced into our state from China.

Again, I would like to thank the Center for Western Studies for having me here and would be glad to answer any questions.