



PEOPLE, PLACES and EVENTS
100 Years in Brown County, South Dakota
Volume II

Reprints of "THE BROWN COUNTY CENTENNIAL MINUTES" Scripts

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Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh

January 9, 1989 "William Rehfeld's Letter to His Son John"

Today I would like to share with you some of the contents of a letter written in 1880 by William Rehfeld of Warner to his son John. He tells of working on the railroad and I quote: "During the summer of 1880 we graded 223 miles of railroad from Ortonville to Ashton and Frederick, Dakota, and from Huron to Redfield, Aberdeen and Ordway. One thousand men were in the crews. We lived in covered wagons, tents or dug-outs; no hotels and no locked doors.

On the first and fifteenth of every month the paymaster came in a railroad car as far as the rails were laid, in Minnesota or Wisconsin. They left the pay car at the end of the tracks and hired a livery team to drive the last hundred miles. They hired a two-seated spring wagon. The driver sat on the front seat, the paymaster and his clerk on the back seat. Between the two seats were two big satchels filled with \$25,000 in currency. They drove west along the grade to the camps or tents and paid us all off. There were no county or state organizations, no judge, sheriff, police or tax collectors, no politicians, no lawsuits, no envious feelings, no state attorneys. Everybody had enough railroad work to do for \$1.25 per day for 10 hours of work. Nearly all were happy, contented, satisfied, and with no place to spend more than they earned, there were no debts." End quote. This pay figures out to $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour.

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January 16, 1989

"J. P. Williamson and Buffalo Skins"

Dr. John P. Williamson and Stephen Return Riggs were missionaries working with the Sioux and Yankton Indians from about 1850 until 1900 or later. During the Civil War the government was under considerable stress and officials were slow in getting food rations to the Indians. The Indians, of course, were hungry and sullen. Dr. Williamson heard that there were great herds of buffalo in the James River valley, so he organized a hunting party of young braves and came up into the Rondell territory. As they were making camp for the night they saw a party of riders coming from the east. A young Indian rode toward them and found that they were stragglers from the Minnesota Massacre in western Minnesota. He raced back and told Dr. Williamson to lie flat on the ground. The Yankton boys covered him with many buffalo skins. The war party hunted for fresh scalps, but did not find the minister. They kept going northward and a few weeks later encountered General Sully and his soldiers several miles west of Ellendale in the Forbes, N. D. area. This was the battle of Whitestone Hill. Today there is a small museum and a memorial there.

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Dacotah Prairie Museum

Helen Bergh

January 23, 1989

"August Witte and His Hardware Store"

Sometime in the early 1880s a young officer in the German army had acquired a few days of leave. The young man was August Witte and since he was an officer he was not supposed to leave Germany. He disregarded all the rules and came to the United States. Because he was absent without leave he was a hunted man and never dared go back to Germany.

After a short time in Minnesota he came to Dakota and landed in Aberdeen. Soon after his arrival he, with Arthur and Otto Mueller, started a hardware business on the east side of Main Street, midway between First and Second Avenues, a business that lasted three quarters of a century.

It was quite a store. The center from front to back was filled with beautiful old hard coal heaters with their rounded doors filled with mica windows and the very ornate, heavy metal tops. Shelves along both sides held every conceivable bit of hardware anyone could want, from several dozen sizes of screws, bolts and tools to nails, all the way from tacks to bridge spikes. Small shallow drawers filled the walls from floor to ceiling, and if you wanted something up under the ceiling a clerk climbed up on a ladder with castors that would roll along the wall. There was paint, kerosene lamps, spades, pitchforks and shovels, and in a lean-to in back, facing the alley, there were ox yokes. The bookkeeper worked at her desk on a small balcony in the back, and down on the main floor Mr. Witte himself, a very pink-cheeked, white-haired, rotund old gentleman, sat in his chair with his feet up on his desk.

His military cap is on display at Dacotah Prairie Museum and we use his old cash register in the museum gift shop. Stop in and see them.

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January 30, 1989

"Sam Brown's Ride"

Today we have the story of Sam Brown, a scout, son of Red Wing and Major R. Brown. He was born March 7, 1845, and became a scout under his father. When the major resigned Sam took his place and was entrusted with the entire western line of defense. Scouts were stationed at Fort Wadsworth, later renamed Fort Sisseton. Indian scouts had their own log building at the fort.

On April 6, 1866, the scouts at Fort Wadsworth heard rumors of a possible Indian attack. Sam Brown wrote a message, telling of the alarm, to go to military headquarters at St. Paul. At sunset he left the fort and, guided by the stars, headed for the Elm River scout station in Brown County. When he reached the station he learned that it was a false alarm. The Indians were not hostile. They were bringing word of a treaty in Washington. Brown knew that if his message went to St. Paul the troops would come. He had to stop it.

Riding a fresh pony, he started back to Fort Wadsworth. A freezing rain turned into a blizzard. He tied himself to the saddle with his lariat. Twice the buckskin fell on the ice and Brown was thrown from the saddle. Of course he could not see but he tried to keep the wind at his back. At daybreak the storm eased off and he found himself 15 miles off course, because the wind had changed. He was within 5 miles of a butte called Buzzard's Roost where he had hunted buffalo. He turned his pony into the wind and finally reached the fort. A new message went to army headquarters. The 150 mile ride in 12 hours, much of it in a snowstorm, had crippled him so he never walked again.

The old scout building is now at the Lake Traverse Memorial.

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Helen Bergh
February 6, 1989

"Hugh Glass and the Bear"

Today we will talk about Hugh Glass, the fur trader who was mauled by a bear. In 1823 Hugh Glass was a member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. under the leadership of Gen. William Henry Ashley. Near the mouth of the Grand River which is close to Mobridge there was a shoot-out with the Ree Indians and Hugh Glass was shot in the hip. Gen. Ashley's group retreated down the Missouri River and soldiers from the Yellowstone River and Fort Atkinson, Nebraska, came. The three groups went back to punish the Rees. After the battle Major Henry went back to Yellowstone with Hugh Glass as a guide and provider of meat.

Rounding a bend in the river near Lemmon, Hugh Glass met a grizzly bear and her cubs. The bear mauled him terribly but he was able to shoot her. Major Henry left two men with Hugh Glass, but after five days they thought he would soon die. So they took his gun and left him to follow the others to Yellowstone. They told Major Henry that Hugh Glass had died and they had buried him.

Glass recognized the men's voices. He pulled himself to a spring, ate some sour berries and vowed he'd live and get even. He could not walk but he crawled on his hands and knees toward Ft. Kiowa just north of present day Chamberlain. He had no food except berries, grapes and plums. He came to a deserted Indian camp and found a dog which he killed with an old knife he found. After cooking it and eating it he was strong enough to put together a raft of driftwood and grapevines and he floated the rest of the 100 miles to Ft. Kiowa where he rearmed and joined Major Henry's trappers on the way to Yellowstone. And here is where the historians tell different stories. One source says he met the two deserters and forgave them; another authority says he never saw them again. We do know, however, that he hunted for eight more years and was finally killed by his old enemies, the Rees.

Fifteen miles south of Lemmon there is a monument that marks the spot where Hugh Glass met the bear.

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Helen Bergh
February 13, 1989 "Coursing in the 1890s"

In the 1890s fast-footed jackrabbits brought national fame to Aberdeen's coursing hound owners.

Coursing hounds are dogs that chase game by sight instead of scent. The Coursing meets were held out on the open prairie northwest of Aberdeen. From 30 to 50 dogs were entered. Judges and officials on horseback went with the dogs looking for rabbits. Following these were perhaps a thousand or more spectators in buggies, wagons and on horseback.

A jackrabbit, hearing the racket, pricked up his long ears. The "slippers", as they were called, pointed the dog to the rabbit. All moved at a furious gallop, the kill out of most people's vision. The dogs were judged on speed, nimbleness and cleverness in forcing the rabbit off course, and the kill. One judge said they were the fastest jackrabbits he had ever seen.

In 1894 the Aberdeen branch of National Coursing was organized; the next year out of state people came. Conditions here were ideal - fast rabbits, level ground, no fences. Eleven out of 12 rabbits escaped. An Oakes, N. D. hound won the cup. In 1896 two dogs died from heat exhaustion. An Illinois dog won \$500.

In 1897 no contest. The rabbits got sick and died.

In 1898 the last meet was in the Grain Palace with 100 imported rabbits. Hounds chased; rabbits escaped.

End of coursing.

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February 20, 1989

"Memories of Groton Fires"

Walter Allen, an Aberdonian long associated with the Dakota Farmer, remembered some disasterous fires in Groton when he was a small boy. Lightning struck a roof and it continued to burn even after barrels of water were dumped on it. Another time a prairie fire swept in from the west and everyone, even the kids, fought it with wet brooms and gunny sacks. It reached a barn. A cow's tail was caught in a big jagged knot hole. The hair was all burned off. A third fire caused him untold embarrassment. The school house burned at night and he slept through it and missed the excitement. For years afterwards his school mates would ask if he were awake yet. The fourth big fire happened in the early 1890s. Walter and his mother were in a buggy driving west of town a couple of miles to visit at Shade-lands. He turned in the seat and looked out through the back window and saw thick black smoke. They turned back and saw the west side of Main Street on fire. Roofs were falling in. It reached the drug store where chemicals blazed in all colors and created a thick yellow smoke. Everybody was yelling and carrying things to safety. Store windows on the east side of the street were cracking. The wind came up and carried burning scraps. Some people hurried home to watch their own houses. Finally a charge of dynamite made a fire gap and most of Main Street was in ashes.

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February 27, 1989

"Missionaries Among the Sioux"

Today we will talk about some of the men who spent their lives as missionaries to the Sioux. Dr. Stephen R. Riggs, a Congregationalist, and Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, a Presbyterian, began their mission work in Minnesota but wanted a larger field in which to work, so they came to Dakota.

First they learned the Sioux language so there would be no need for an interpreter. They created a Sioux alphabet, wrote a Sioux English dictionary, and translated the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, and hymn books into Sioux. These men had sons who continued their work and built Indian schools from Oahe to Santee, Nebraska and northwest into Montana. They emphasized character building, housekeeping, sewing and manual training. Sometimes they had a full house, sometimes one or two.

The state bridge at Pierre was dedicated to Stephen Riggs and his son, Thomas L. Riggs. The memorial speech was given by Jessie Williamson, part of which I quote: "Journeying with them, eating or going hungry with them, hunting with them, made him one of them because they trusted him."

Bishop William Hobart Hare, an Episcopalian missionary, also built schools. Indians at first didn't trust him. He merely said, "Watch how I live." The Indians did watch and learned to love and trust him.

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March 6, 1989

"Early Hotels: Park Place and Kennard"

Because of excellent rail connections as well as a great influx of new inhabitants there was need for many hotel rooms. By 1889 Aberdeen had 20 hotels. Today we will talk about two of them. In August, 1881 John Proud established the Park Place Hotel in the area now occupied by the Great Northern depot. As soon as a rough floor was laid and before there was a roof people rolled in blankets slept there. Mr. Proud kept enlarging the hotel until it was 3 stories high in the shape of a hollow square. It had 100 rooms, two baths, a lobby with a tiled floor, steam heat, and black walnut furniture. Mr. Proud had a dozen or so trees brought in from the Jim River with two wagon loads of dirt for each tree. Some are still there. In the center courtyard was a fountain, so it became a real "park place."

In a few years the building was moved off in sections, the larger part becoming the Minard Hotel on First Avenue and a few years ago it was moved to North Fourth Street. Two other parts were remodeled into the Minard Apartment on South Lincoln and Tenth Avenue.

The Kennard Hotel on the corner across from the Court House was built in 1887. Of cream colored brick from Minnesota. three stories high with a tall parapet of bricks in an ornamental design, the building was a magnificent addition to the young prairie town. Some of you will remember the tower on the street corner. There was a second story door on the north side, almost a perfect circle with stained glass on either side. This opened onto a narrow balcony which encircled the tower.

The building had all the conveniences and comforts of the day, including steam heat, gas lights, steam elevator, electric bells and fire alarm. They served fantastic food. The dance floor was said to be the finest in the city.

Years later the building was occupied by Aberdeen Commercial Club and still later by the Moose Lodge. A few years ago it was torn down and replaced by the Clark Building.

Centennial Minute
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March 13, 1989

"Two Aberdeen Depots"

In 1886 a company of Aberdeen business men put up \$25,000 to build a connecting line of the Great Northern Railroad from LaMoure, N. D. to Aberdeen. The city agreed to issue bonds to repay this money if the line could be completed by January 1, 1887. The men worked through heat and blizzards to finish it. On Christmas Eve, 1886, the whistles blew, the bells rang and the crowd cheered, for the job was done and the 300 workmen were entertained at a banquet.

Mr. James J. Hill, president of the railroad in St. Paul, had bought the bonds and in a gesture of friendship and good will, tore them up, so Aberdeen did not have to pay the \$25,000. Mr. Hill designed and built the present depot east of the Court House in 1906. By 1922 there was a daily passenger train in and out with a deluxe sleeper and two freight trains a day.

Today the building has been restored to its original appearance and is occupied as an office building.

The Milwaukee Depot, now Burlington Northern, is the fourth Milwaukee depot in Aberdeen. The first, in 1881, was built east of Main Street. In 1888 a new one was built on the west side of Main Street. There were dormer windows with diamond shaped panes of glass and a wooden platform. In 1906 this station burned and a new one was built. In 1911 another fire burned that depot and all the shops. Then the present depot and all the other buildings were replaced, this time with brick. The second floor was for offices. There was a dining room. During World War II the Red Cross maintained a canteen and served pheasant sandwiches and other food to troops passing through.

In earlier days the Columbian and Olympian were two passenger trains that were nick named "flyers." They passed through every day, one going east and one going west. A few years later the Hiawatha was the flyer that came through. Approximately 40 trains a day passed through Aberdeen.

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April 10, 1989

"Aberdeen's Extra Avenue South of the Tracks"

Aberdeen has an extra avenue south of the Milwaukee tracks. Many years ago William Buck, an early, long time city employee, told the story of Railroad Avenue, Aberdeen. During August Witte's term as Mayor way back in the 1880s Mr. Buck held several of the city's administrative jobs, among them that of street commissioner. He had gone ahead and graded Railroad Avenue as he had the other streets and put in crossings and side walks. When the railroad sued to get possession of it a trial was held at the County Court House, then in Aldrich Park. Every day the jury had to cross the tracks on their way down town for their meals and when they crossed the avenue they took a good look and decided that it looked like a street. When the trial was over the verdict was that it was indeed a street. And so it became a public thoroughfare instead of a side track for the railroad. At first it was called Chicago Avenue but soon changed to Railroad Avenue. And that is why there is an extra avenue south of the tracks instead of starting out with First Avenue as was done on the north side.

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April 3, 1989

"Brown County Authors and Artists"

Today we will talk about some of the Brown County people who have become famous writers and artists. L. Frank Baum was not a South Dakota product but he spent several years here, first as owner of a novelty store and then as publisher of the newspaper "The Dakota Pioneer," a weekly paper, \$1.00 a year. It contained his humorous column "Our Landlady" in which he poked fun at everybody and every event. In the late 1890s he left Aberdeen for Chicago and the newspaper business. By 1900 he published his first book, "The Wizard of Oz."

Hamlin Garland spent a small part of his life in Dakota. His experiences were not happy ones and his writings colored the thinking of many eastern people. He described a night during a snow storm and I am quoting: "The frail shanty, cowering close, quivered in the wind like a frightened hare. The powdery snow appeared to drive directly through the solid boards and each hour the mercury slowly sank."

Walter P. Butler, Aberdeen's first Civil Engineer and an excellent map draftsman, wrote many sketches of Aberdeen pioneers and historical articles concerning Brown County and Aberdeen.

Two artists were Frances Cranmer Greenman and Frank Ashford. Mrs. Greenman became an excellent portrait painter who painted many famous people, including movie stars. She was also the author of a book "Higher Than The Sky," telling of her early years in Aberdeen. Frank Ashford, too, grew up in this area, on a farm near Stratford. He painted portraits of many famous people, including President and Mrs. Coolidge. This portrait hangs in the Game Lodge in the Black Hills. Several other paintings are in the Alexander Mitchell Library.

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April 24, 1989

"Badger Clark - Poet of the Pines"

Today we will visit about Badger Clark, South Dakota's poet laureate from 1939 to 1957, sometimes called the "Poet of the Pines," sometimes the "Cowboy Poet." He was born in Iowa on New Year's Day, 1883, his father of Puritan stock and his mother a Quaker. In 1898 they moved to Deadwood, S. D. where his mother died. Three years later his father remarried a very fine person who greatly influenced Badger. Following high school graduation in 1902 and a year of college he went to Cuba and worked on a plantation. In 1905 he came back to Deadwood, contracted tuberculosis and went to Arizona where he worked on a ranch and wrote poetry. He sent one poem to his step-mother who sent it to a magazine. He got \$10 for it. Then he knew what he wanted to do with his life.

In 1910 he returned to the Hills and in 1927 moved to Hot Springs. He got permission to build a cabin in Custer State Park and he called it the "Badger Hole." He built it with logs, rocks and bricks which he hauled on his back from a deserted saw mill. The Badger Hole near Legion Lake belongs to South Dakota - stop to see it when you visit Custer State Park. His front room was large for pacing; no car, no telephone, no radio - nothing to bother him. He did a lot of speaking, his step-mother saw to that, but he probably never earned more than \$600 a year.

Badger Clark wrote cowboy songs and poems, many of which were never credited to him. He ate only the plainest of foods, bought bacon for the little skunks that played around his hearth. He walked all over the hills and put animals, flowers and trees into his poetry. He was a picturesque figure as he strode along, wearing high, shiny boots, riding breeches, officer's coat, flowing windsor tie and wide-brimmed hat. He had a well-balanced program of reading, writing and chopping his own fire wood, and led such a secluded existence that he was left out of the 1940 population count.

The Cowboy's Prayer is included in one of several volumes of poetry. When it became apparent that perhaps the hills would always be there but he would not be roaming through them, he wrote "I Must Come Back," published in 1958, the year after his death. I quote from it:

"My earth, the loveliness of you
From all your gorgeous Zodiac
Down to a glistening drop of dew;
I must come back - I must come back."

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April 17, 1989 "Dr. Neils Ebbeson Hansen, the Prairie Planter"

Today our story is about the Prairie Planter, Dr. Neils Ebbeson Hansen. He called his work "creative horticulture," science plus imagination. Born on a farm in Denmark on January 4, 1866 he came with his family to America in 1873. The Hansen family moved to Des Moines, Iowa where he went to school, worked in a museum, and mastered eight languages.

In 1895 he studied botany with Professor Hart of Brookings and learned the needs of the prairie farmer. Hansen was sent around the world to places with a similar climate, to Russia, Turkestan, Siberia and Transcaucasia. He rode thousands of miles in a jolting wagon drawn by three to five horses and more hundreds of miles in a sleigh to find the northernmost home of alfalfa. He was lost in a blizzard and only the double reindeer suits worn by him and his companions kept them from freezing. One important discovery was crested wheat grass. Carloads of seed came to the Dept. of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. Packets of seed were sent to experimental stations.

Crossing the dry treeless steppes of Turkestan and Siberia he found plants that were a cross between the blue flowered and the yellow flowered alfalfa and realized that was what South Dakota needed. He was able to bring back a half teaspoon of the seed which he planted and ten years later 60,000 pounds were produced in western South Dakota. He called this alfalfa "Cossack" for the Russian cavalry.

Dr. Hansen went to China where the temperatures fall to 50° below zero to find the western limits of the pear tree. He bought thousands of pounds of pears, took out the seeds and returned the fruit to the people, who were amazed at the generosity of this American. He came back with 68 pounds of pear seeds. He crossed these with other pears.

Altogether he made 8 trips to that part of the world. He developed many kinds of apples, plums, apricots, berries, roses and other plants especially for South Dakota. His son has continued his work.

Dr. Hansen truly earned the title "The Burbank of South Dakota."

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
March 27, 1989

"Names of Brown County Towns"

The naming of a town or other area is always a source of interest. All of you in the listening audience have heard that Aberdeen was named after Aberdeen, Scotland, the home town of Alexander Mitchell, president of the Milwaukee Railroad. Frederick was named for a Milwaukee R.R. ticket clerk, Kustad Frederick Bergstadius, and many people believe that Savo was named for Savo, Finland, his birth place. Hecla may have been named for a volcano in Iceland or for Hecla, Michigan. Houghton was named for W. C. Houghton, an early lumber dealer in Columbia. Hardy W. Campbell, founder of Putney, named it for his home town of Putney, Vermont; Ordway, of course, by Territorial Governor Nehemiah Ordway, who promised to make it the great metropolis of the West. Mansfield was named for John Mansfield who donated land for the town.

Verdon and Ferney got their names from the French wife of a railroad official who named them for places in France. Huffton got its name from John Huff. Detroit was named by someone from Detroit, Michigan. Plana probably was named for Plano, a manufacturing plant started there; Tacoma Park named for Tacoma, Washington. C. H. Pryor of the Milwaukee R.R. was a native of New England. He owned the town sites and gave the towns along the Milwaukee R. R. New England names; thus we have Groton and Bath. The Rondell trading post and store were named for the Frenchman Francis Raundelle, who built the post. Warner was named for an early resident, Warren Tarbox - with a slight change in spelling

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March 20, 1989

"The Story of Manuel Lisa"

Today we have the story of Manuel Lisa, a great Spanish trader who did much to improve both the lives of the Indians and their relations with white people. He was born Sept. 8, 1772 in New Orleans and by 1790 he became a trader with the American Fur Co. at St. Louis. He established a second post near Council Bluffs, Iowa but spent most of his time in the wilderness struggling with other fur companies for the fabulous fur treasures of Dakota. Some years furs valued at \$30,000 went back to St. Louis.

During the War of 1812 England got the Indians to help. Capt. William Clark, then governor of Missouri Territory, asked Manuel Lisa what to do. The answer was, "Keep the Indians happy and loyal to the U. S."

So Manuel Lisa and 87 men with a great deal of merchandise traveled up the Missouri River and coaxed Tamaha, "the one-eyed Sioux," to sneak into camps and persuade the Missouri Indians to desert the British, thus saving the American forts. On the trip up the river they established several forts and a blacksmith shop at Great Bend, near Pierre, where they worked constantly, making plows, knives, hatchets, lances, etc. for the Indian trade. Manuel Lisa brought cattle, hogs, domestic fowls, seeds, etc. and loaned traps to the Indians. The old and weak Indians were cared for at the forts. In this way he acquired the confidence and friendship of the Indians.

Centennial Minute
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May 1, 1989

"Ghost Towns in Brown County"

In the early days of Brown County settlements started along railroad right of ways and became shipping points for grain and livestock. Some prospered and grew, others disappeared. Brown County has several so-called ghost towns. In the northern part Chatham, Santa Clara, Lansing, Shelby, Liberty, Brainard, Savo and Detroit are entirely gone. Huffton elevators remain. Only three of these towns were formally platted: Detroit, vacated in 1889, Pectoris, on the west bank of Sand Lake never got beyond the platting stage and was vacated in 1888, and Brainard, east of Barnard in 1925. Winship, in the northwest corner, was not really a town but there were a railroad siding, an elevator and a school.

In the south and east parts of Brown County only the elevator remains at Ordway and Randolph. The Gage elevator on the North Milwaukee was moved away many years ago, as were the Richmond and Nahon elevators. Both of these last were shipping points on the M & St. L. Railroad. Nahon was midway between Stratford and Aberdeen. Rudolph, on the Northwestern Railroad, was the end of the journey for a great many early settlers and is now only a memory. Bright, on the Brown County-Spink County line, and St. Ansgar near Verdon are gone. Verdon has lost many businesses and much population but is strong in spirit. Plana has little left but pride and memories. Chedi, east of Bath, lost out to James long ago, and James, too, is only a remnant. Many of these names continue as township names.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
May 8, 1989

"Brown County Post Offices"

Today we take our mail service for granted. In the early days of Brown County post offices were situated in all areas. Some functioned for only a few years and as towns grew larger they took over the work of the smaller post offices.

The first post office was at Yorkville on the James River in 1879. An Aberdeen attorney, Ira Curtiss, rode horseback down and back for \$3 a trip. In 1883 their papers went to Bath. In the northern part of the county, Detroit, Shelby and Marna were established in 1883. By 1887 Detroit and Shelby had moved to Hecla and Columbia. Marna moved to Lansing with a name change to Hecla, Santa Clara moved to Detroit, Brainard moved to Columbia, Liberty and Chatham moved to Hecla. The only post office not on a railroad was Bern, later renamed Murray and in 1907, after the building of the M. & St. L. Railroad, it was moved to Wetonka in McPherson County. Bern, or Murray, was on the stage coach road from Aberdeen to Bismarck. The Murray family provided meals and lodging.

Savo post office was in the kitchen of Abraham West. The mail was brought from Silverleaf, N. D. for 3 cents a mile. Mr. West got no salary but was paid for writing out mail orders. He had a Sears catalog in his kitchen and wrote so many orders for people that the Sears Company gave him a surrey with fringe on top as a premium. Savo post office moved to Frederick.

In the southern half of the county the Dodge post office moved to Gem. The Gem post office functioned in the living room of the E. S. Nelson farm until it moved to Rondell in 1896. St. Ansgar opened in 1883, moved to Verdon, and then to Groton. During the years that Mr. Nelson was post master he constantly worked for free rural mail delivery, which began in 1897. Bright, on the Brown-Spink County line, had a railroad siding and a post office. Hufilton post office moved to Putney. Plana's to Bath, Chedi to James and then to Groton. Mansfield post office opened in 1882 and stayed in Spink County until 1921 when it moved to Brown County - not as long a move as it seems, for the main street of Mansfield is the dividing line between Brown and Spink Counties. After 1900 Stratford and Richmond, Randolph, Barnard and Tacoma Park established post offices.

Brown County Post Offices - continued

In Aberdeen the post office was established when the town was one month old and vibrated back and forth across Main Street several times until 1904. Senator Kyle did his best to get Congress to appropriate money for a building but it saw no sense in spending money out in South Dakota. One day he found Speaker Reed, often called Czar Reed, in the right mood. After some choice profanity he said yes, he'd rather see a building then send all that money to the Philippines. So, in 1904 the handsome limestone building was erected on the corner of Main St. and 4th Ave. South. 1937 saw the present brick building erected on Lincoln St. and 4th Ave. South.

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May 15, 1989

"Trivia"

Today we will review some South Dakota trivia.

A. L. Ward's Restaurant had the first commercial ice cream freezer.

The first daily train came in from St. Paul March 24, 1882.

The first hospital was the old Cassels house, the white brick house on First Ave. and Lloyd St. S. E. Patients paid \$8.00 a week to stay there.

There were no ready-to-wear stores. You made your own clothes or hired a dressmaker who went to the homes of her customers and sewed for 75¢ a day. It took 8 yards of cloth for a dress. In 1880 ox wagon trains traveled from Pierre to the Black Hills carrying heavy machinery for the mines.

In 1884 all Dakota Territory spent $1\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars for schools.

The pumps for the Aberdeen sewer system were run by the force of the water from the artesian well.

Prices of lots on Lincoln Street were so high people bought on Main Street.

The first concrete paving was done in 1907 to supplant wood blocks.

A boarder from another hotel moved to the Sherman because it used silver instead of steel knives and forks.

And in more modern times,

the Black Hills spruce is the state tree;

the state motto is "Under God the People Rule;"

the coyote is the state animal;

the state bird is the ring-necked pheasant;

the state mineral stone is rose quartz, the gem stone is Fairburn agate;

the state song is "Hail South Dakota;"

state colors are blue and gold.

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May 22, 1989

"Harvey Dunn, Pioneer Prairie Painter"

On March 8, 1884, during the height of a spring blizzard, Harvey Dunn was born in a sod house a few miles from DeSmet. Following high school he studied art in Brookings and in Chicago.

He loved South Dakota and its people, the prairies and the pioneers. After many years of absence, during which he became the artist portraying the battle scenes and work of the Army in World War I, and an illustrator for several magazines and books, he came back to DeSmet to visit, renewed old friendships and made new ones. He made many trips back and sent paintings which were exhibited in the Student Union Building at Brookings. Shortly afterward he gave the paintings to South Dakota to be left permanently with the South Dakota State University as custodian. From time to time he sent more paintings. Dunn's works hang in the Smithsonian, at West Point, in many museums in the East, and in numerous private collections. A special building, the Memorial Art Center, recently renamed the South Dakota Art Museum, was built in Brookings to house this collection. Some of these pictures are "The Prairie Is My Garden," "Something for Supper," "Woman at the Pump."

Harvey Dunn worked only in oils. He taught at the Grand Central School of Art in New York city for several years before his death in 1959.

His pictures deal with themes most people can relate to and appreciate. He was much more concerned with depth of feeling in the picture than in following rigid rules of composition. These paintings have done much to further interest in the history of the nation's prairie pioneers.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
May 29, 1989

"Brown County Cemeteries"

Memorial Day was created by southern ladies who decorated graves of Civil War soldiers, both those wearing the gray uniforms of the Confederacy and those wearing the blue uniform of the Union. The custom has spread and today we observe it nationally.

Brown County has approximately 37 cemeteries, perhaps a few more. The county churches all have their own burying grounds; the larger towns have several.

In pioneer days when living was much harder than it is today and when many more babies and small children died, burials were often made in some corner of the homestead or near a clump of trees or bushes. Markers were sometimes of wood and have disappeared, or a prairie stone. As families moved these graves were forgotten and subsequent owners of the land may not even have known about them. There are perhaps 8 or 10 of these small forgotten cemeteries in Brown County, neither marked nor maintained.

Many small cemeteries are very well maintained, the grass mowed and the fences kept in repair. There are 4 H clubs in our county as well as in other counties who have taken over this work. We are most grateful to them.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
June 5, 1989

"Brown County's Country Churches"

When the pioneers came westward they had very definite priorities. First, of course, they had to have a shelter of some kind, whether it was a sod house, a wooden house or a tar paper shanty. Their next priority was the church, with the first services held in the homes until a building could be erected. The third priority was schools. These three followed each other closely.

We have already spoken of the Trinity Episcopal Church at Groton and the Welsh Presbyterian one at Plana. Today I'd like to mention some others. The Scandanavian Church near Stratford in Gem Township was organized in 1881 in the sod house of A. C. Hanson; the present building erected in 1897 is beautifully kept in its setting of trees. There was Peace Lutheran Church near James in Henry Township, St. John's Lutheran in Highland Township. Up in Richland Township stands the Aurland Lutheran Church with its monument to the old settlers, and in Riverside Township the Augustana Lutheran Church. Very close to the state line is the restored Apostolic Lutheran Church. In 1905 there were two Finnish Lutheran churches close to the Savo post office and one south-east of Ferney in Garden Prairie Township - almost on the Brown-Day County line. Some of these buildings are gone, some are no longer in regular use but they are maintained. All the towns had their churches and as cars became common and farm populations changed much church attendance changed from rural to town.

Centennial Minute

Dacotah Prairie Museum

Helen Bergh

June 12, 1989

"J. L. W. Zietlow - South Dakota's
Mr. Telephone"

J. L. W. Zietlow, an immigrant boy of seventeen, was a watchmaker tremendously interested in electricity. In the early 1880s he homesteaded in Spink County, soon went to Minnesota where he worked with another man interested in electricity and together they developed a new telephone system somewhat different from Alexander Graham Bell's. Zietlow brought the first switchboard to Aberdeen in 1885. There were 52 wires on it which they thought were more than enough, since many people thought the telephone was a nuisance and highly impractical in home and office.

In 1886 the Dakota Emner Telephone Co. was organized. It was a one man operation. Zietlow managed the company, set poles, strung wires, and made installations and repairs, all with his left hand, his right arm having been lost in a saw mill accident. The very first poles were lengths of 2 x 4s nailed to fence posts. The telephone office occupied the upstairs of a building near the present jail, and Mrs. Zietlow, a son and two daughters manned the switchboard. Zietlow kept the lines open, using a kite to carry wire over Snake Creek in Spink County during spring flood.

W. G. Bickelhaupt joined Zietlow in 1898 and the Dakota Central Telephone Co. was formed. During the next six years 3,000 miles of toll lines and 60 exchanges were built. In 1905 Zietlow invented the automatic dialing system, so Aberdeen was among the first cities of the world to have automatic dialing.

By 1918 the corporation was worth \$5,000,000. Mr. Zietlow died in 1923 and after many attempts the Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. finally gained control in 1933.

The old switchboard and several early telephones are on display at Dacotah Prairie Museum. Stop and see them when you are in town.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
June 19, 1989

"A Memorial to a Team of Mules"

The world is full of memorials to people and events but seldom, if ever, has there been a memorial to a couple of mules.

Before the days of mechanized equipment garbage and other refuse had to be hauled to the dump by horse or other animal power. The Aberdeen Street Department owned a pair of mules, Maude and Kate, born in 1904 and acquired by the city in 1909. Through blistering heat in summer and bitter cold in winter they faithfully hauled their heavy loads to the city dump. They were fed oats and hay, curried morning and night and carefully housed. When they grew older they were put out to pasture. Kate died in 1932 and Maude in 1935.

A local reporter who had a streak of sentiment in him suggested a memorial to these faithful public servants. And so the Maude and Kate Memorial Fund grew as the reporter wrote more and more stories about the mules. The public donated, among other things, coins, until in October, 1935 there was enough to buy a granite stone, polished on one side and with an inscription which reads: "In memory of Maude and Kate, city mules, 1904-1935." The stone was placed beside the old iron watering trough at the south-west corner of Aldrich Park, the watering trough where they had always stopped to drink.

In the mid 1950s the street was widened, the iron trough was taken away, and the stone was moved into a hedge. In 1961 the Park Department pulled it out of the hiding place and mounted it on a concrete slab at the south-west entrance to the park. Notice it the next time you walk or drive past Aldrich Park.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
June 26, 1989

"Women in the Black Hills"

Several women came to the Black Hills area in the 1870s. One was Alice Ivers Tubbs, a cigar smoking gambler. Born in England in 1851, she came with her parents to America and married a mining engineer. She visited her first gambling hall and saw her husband killed in a mining accident in Colorado. Very few occupations were open to women so she turned to gambling to make a living. She became so good at it she was known as Poker Alice. Her second husband, a gambler, died and she moved to boom towns in Colorado. In Silver City, New Mexico, she broke the bank, took over the bank and kept on playing. She moved to Deadwood and opened a gambling house. The reformers ran her out, so she opened another at Sturgis. She was arrested and so retired and bought a house east of Sturgis where she raised flowers, chickens, and angora cats. In 1928 Gov. Bulow sent her a pardon for bootlegging because he couldn't stand to send a white-haired old lady to prison.

Another character was Martha Jane Canary Burke, known as Calamity Jane. She was in her mid twenties when she came to Deadwood during the gold strike, not to pan gold but to prove her skills at riding, drinking, shooting and cussing. She acquired the title "Calamity" because, in spite of her rough exterior, she was always on hand to help when disaster struck. She proved to be a very capable nurse during epidemics of small pox and other diseases.

A third woman was definitely a lady. She came to the Black Hills in 1874 but stayed only a short time. Later, when the Hills were officially opened she came in as a teacher. Annie G. Tallent was the first white woman in the Hills and the first superintendent of schools in Pennington County.

Centennial Minute

Dacotah Prairie Museum

Helen Bergh

July 3, 1989

"General W. H. H. Beadle and the S. D. School Lands"

Today we will talk about South Dakota's permanent school fund, a source of support for the public schools. When territories became states the U. S. government gave approximately 1/18 of the land to the states for establishment and support of schools. In South Dakota the lands reserved were sections 16 and 36 in every township. A section is a mile square with 640 acres and most townships are 6 miles square consisting of 36 sections.

As a farm boy growing up in Indiana Gen. Beadle heard a good deal about the Indiana school system and the mismanagement of land that had been set aside to support schools. In college he heard the same thing. The school lands had been sold too cheaply at \$1.25 to \$2.50 per acre.

After his service in the Civil War he was appointed surveyor for Dakota Territory. In 1876 he gave the territorial legislature a history of the waste and robbery of school lands. He became Territorial Superintendent of Schools and when division of the territory and statehood began to be discussed he urged that school lands not be sold for less than \$10.00 per acre. Of course he was ridiculed because the men who were planning to speculate after statehood scoffed at the idea. Gen Beadle kept on talking and wrote out his proposal for the Constitutional Convention - that \$10 be the minimum price, that the money go into a permanent fund to be invested and the interest earned to be pro-rated among school districts in the entire state. His ideas were accepted and the school lands were saved. By 1920 the average price per acre was \$59.35. Some of the land is still owned by the state and is leased out as hay land.

There is a statue of Gen. Beadle in the state capitol and another in Statuary Hall in our national capitol.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
July 10, 1989

"Early South Dakota Visitors"

Today I'd like to mention just a few of the men who visited in Dakota in pre-territorial days. The first on record were the Verendrye brothers who came from Canada and left a lead plate buried near Ft. Pierre in 1743. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 President Jefferson sent an expedition out to explore the territory. In May, 1804 Captains William Clark and Meriwether Lewis left St. Louis, Missouri with 3 boats, 2 horses and 45 men, including 1 negro.

In 1811 John Jacob Astor, head of the New York Fur Co., sent trappers up the Missouri River to the mouth of the Grand River, then west to the Black Hills. In 1825 the O'Fallon-Atkinson expedition arrived, also interested in the fur trade.

In 1831 Pierre Choteau (for whom Pierre was named) came up the Missouri River in the steamboat Yellowstone. The boat returned to St. Louis with 10,000 pounds of buffalo tongues, a delicacy in eastern cities. The next year, 1832, the artist George Catlin came up on the Yellowstone and painted Indians. In 1833 the German scientist, Prince Maximillian, came.

1839 brought the Belgian priest, Father John Peter De Smet, a peace maker among warring tribes. Known as a black robe, he traveled from St. Louis to Oregon and from the Shoshones to Canada. He spent these 10 years establishing missions.

1843 brought the ornithologist John James Audubon, who studied and painted birds and fossils.

In 1845 the French priest, Father Ravoux, held mass at Sand Lake in Brown County.

About 1855 General Harney, with 1200 men, came to Ft. Pierre. However, the fort was too small, there was no fuel or forage, so he went back south and established Ft. Randall.

Joseph Nicollet and John C. Fremont, the Pathfinder, were sent by the government to map Dakota Territory. They came up into Spink County and established permanent trading posts along the Big Sioux and James Rivers and along the Missouri River.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
July 17, 1989

"Sacajawea, the Bird Woman"

Our story today is about Sacajawea, the Indian guide for Lewis and Clark.

Sometime around 1787 Sacajawea, the Bird Woman, was born. She was a member of the Shoshone Indian tribes who occupied the Idaho-Montana country. At age 12 or 14 she was captured by a party of Hidatsa Indians and taken to a Hidatsa village near Bismarck. There the French fur trader Charbonneau, either by buying or gambling, acquired her as his wife. At this village in the fall of 1804 Lewis and Clark secured Charbonneau as guide and interpreter for the rest of the journey. Sacajawea, with her baby strapped on her back, went along. Lewis and Clark were most grateful.

She was primary guide, remembering landmarks through the mountains. They met the Shoshone Indians of which her brother was one of the chiefs so they were able to get ponies and provisions. There were difficult times, sometimes game was scarce, traveling was hard, stones and cactus cut their moccasins. Sacajawea cheered them on, doctored them, mended moccasins, helped convince Indians that they were not a war party. Squaws never went to war. She knew which rivers to follow. At the Pacific camp Sacajawea taught the men how to cut and sew new moccasins and how to boil ocean water for the three bushels of salt they would need on their return trip.

And here the historians do not agree. Some say she died at about age 25 among the Shoshone people in Wyoming. Others insist that she lived to be about 75. Some say she died at one of Manuel Lisa's trading posts. There is a monument to her at Portland, Oregon. There is also a note of her death in Captain Clark's journal of 1825 to 1828.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
July 24, 1989

"The Land Boom of 1900-1910"

By 1900 there was no land left for homesteading in this area. During the bad economic times of the mid 1880s and 1890s many people gave up and left. They relinquished their land. In the first decade of the twentieth century multitudes came to buy these relinquishments. The livery barns were busy, the hotels were full. The land was cheap but with the influx of buyers and better crop conditions much land went from \$5 to \$10 per acre up to \$75. Nature was kinder weatherwise. It was a period of rapid progress. Many mortgages were paid off, new buildings replaced many of the first ones, artesian wells were drilled, many of the claim shanties were replaced with comfortable modern homes. In the towns plank sidewalks gave way to concrete, sanitary sewers were installed, electric lights became general.

As early as 1886 Mr. J. L. W. Zietlow brought the telephone to Aberdeen. By 1910 most homes had telephones. Rural mail delivery was enjoyed by everyone. A few people were enjoying that new mechanical means of transportation - the automobile.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
July 31, 1989

"Aberdeen's First Newspaper"

On August 4, 1881 D. C. Wadsworth published the first issue of The Aberdeen Pioneer on white muslin because, with everything ready for the press, the supply of paper had not arrived. It consisted of a double sheet with printing on only one side of the cloth.

Today we'll take a look at some of the news items. President Garfield is very ill. Sitting Bull refused to ride on a train. An advertisement for the Milwaukee Railroad, "Travel over 4,000 miles in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Dakota without doubling on the tracks," and the prediction of an Aberdeen booster, "Aberdeen is destined to become one of Dakota's largest cities. Only a few days old, it is a leading railroad center now. In a short time church bells' peals will fall upon the air, banking businesses will be old, all branches of commerce and industry will be represented in and around Aberdeen." And from a drug store, "Kendall's Spavin Cure, bone and similar horse maladies, good for deep-seated pain, corns, bunions, frost bite, bruises, cuts or lameness, anything that human flesh is heir to." Another item: "Track laying on the north end of the Jim River line has been delayed owing to the fact that the bridge across the Elm River at Westport has not been completed." And finally, from another Aberdeen booster, "The first passenger coach came to Aberdeen on August 1, 1881 at 7:05 p.m. A St. Paul paper only 24 hours old was in the mail. Verily we shall soon be out of the wilderness."

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
August 7, 1989 "Our Brown County Fair"

The first Brown County Fair was held in an open space southwest of the present Dakota Farmer building on South Main Street. It was not in existence for very many years but was revived as the Tri-State Fair in 1921 on the present fair grounds. It was called Tri-State because it included the Dakotas and Minnesota.

A very large stock pavilion was moved from the northwest part of Aberdeen, a large grand stand was built and other buildings were moved in. There was a concrete railroad siding along the west side so stock could be unloaded direct from cattle cars. This concrete wall was taken out in the summer of 1988. Everything was pretty much in readiness for the fair when on July 2, 1921 a terrific windstorm came and damaged the buildings. However, the fair went on. There were car races and horse races. There were enormous displays of flowers and farm products. It was a period when community clubs and extension clubs were organized in almost every area of the county and many of them had individual booths filled with their own displays.

The carnival part was small, a merry-go-round and a ferris wheel. Over the years it has of course changed, and today the 4 H young people show their fine projects. It continues to grow every year. We know it now as the Brown County Fair.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
August 14, 1989

"The South Dakota State Fair"

The South Dakota State Fair actually began at the fair grounds south of Aberdeen in 1884. The Brown County Agriculture and Industry Society and a group of Aberdeen business men pooled resources and leased 80 acres south west of the Dakota Farmer building. There was a half-mile race track. The fair opened October 8, 1884. The next year several buildings were erected, the main one in the shape of a cross, each section 30 feet by 78 feet. A grandstand was built.

In 1887 it was called the Central Dakota Fair. In September, 1889, just before statehood, it was called the State Fair, six bands came from other cities who wanted the state capital, just as many fire companies and several units of the state militia. There were 10,000 visitors. Aberdeen and Brown County had each contributed \$2000, but the fair was in debt \$2000 when it ended. In 1890 Susan B. Anthony spoke to 8000 persons at the fair grounds.

Other cities had the fair but it returned to Aberdeen in 1893. Bad weather ruined the 1894 fair. The bill to locate the state fair permanently in Aberdeen was killed in the legislature. In 1895 the Association sold the buildings to Aberdeen. The grounds were used for coursing, races and pigeon shoots.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
August 21, 1989

"The Changing Face of Farming"

The past 125 years have seen revolutionary changes in farming. This period is marked by the transition from hand labor to machine production. The walking plow turning a single furrow and pulled by oxen or horses is now a museum piece. The sulky plow had the advantage of a seat for the driver. There followed the gang plow, which turned over several furrows at a time, all of these made possible by the invention of the steel plow by John Deere.

Harvesting by hand with a sickle was a slow task. The cradle, which is a scythe with 4 long thin wooden fingers, enabled a man to cut a whole acre of grain in a day and lay the grain in bunches to be picked up and tied into bundles with bands of twisted straw. The beating of the grain from the straw with a flail became a thing of the past. The McCormick reaper, built in the 1870s, cut grain much faster and the horse-powered threshing machine separated the grain a lot faster than the flail. By 1880 threshing machines were much improved and the huge steam powered engines took over the work of the horse. The period from 1890 to 1915 marked the heyday of steam. These monstrous machines worked slowly but had power to do 12 to 16 furrows at a time. Gasoline and kerosene and now diesel powered tractors took over the work steam had done and today we have self-propelled combines doing the work of many men. Old timers miss the toot of the old steam whistle, the smell of thick black coal smoke from the smoke stacks and the sight of the big old straw piles with cattle eating on all sides.

Centennial Minute
Dacotah Prairie Museum
Helen Bergh
August 28, 1989

"The Campaign for Statehood"

The campaign for statehood began in the southern counties of the territory in 1879. People in the northern part of the territory were agreeable to the idea of division into 2 states until the territorial capital was moved from Yankton to Bismarck in 1883. Most of the Dakota pioneers were Republicans and a Democratic Congress in Washington opposed statehood. Political leaders met at Sioux Falls in 1883 to write a state constitution. A second constitutional convention was held in Sioux Falls in 1885. Voters accepted the second constitution and elected state officials. This did not impress Congress. The movement to divide into North and South Dakota was accepted by the territorial voters in 1887. In 1888 a new Congress passed an Enabling Act providing for admission of the two states. President Grover Cleveland signed the measure February 23, 1889. A new Constitutional Convention was held in Sioux Falls to readopt the 1885 Constitution and fix the boundary line at the 46th parallel. The territory became two states and these were admitted to the Union on November 2, 1889.

Arthur C. Mellette was the last territorial governor. He had led the fight for statehood and he became the state's first governor. Pierre was selected as the temporary capital.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired September 4, 1989

"The County Seat Battle"

In a Sunday issue of the Aberdeen American News back in March, 1946 there is a most comprehensive account of the struggle for the county seat. Aberdeen business man John Simmons did some reminiscing. Apparently he was one of the most determined supporters of Aberdeen. According to Mr. Simmons Brown County was the only county in the state that decided the county seat location with a two-thirds vote instead of a simple majority. In 1887 the first election came up. Only 60% voted for Aberdeen. In 1889 Congress passed the Enabling Act permitting South Dakota to enter the Union. Simmons led the fight to get a constitutional amendment to add a clause that county seats located by plurality (two-thirds vote) could be changed by petitioning county commissioners. Then voters could decide by a majority vote. To do this the convention delegates had to be in favor of such a clause. After considerable fighting 8 delegates were selected who would name 2 men favorable to the clause and who would attend the State Convention on September 6, 1889. The next step was to get it through the legislature. John Simmons fought for it. George Daly of Columbia got it side-tracked until the last day of the session. The bill was debated hot and heavy and after a large amount of oratory both pro and con it was signed and became a law. An election in the spring of 1890 gave it to Aberdeen. So, after several journeys back and forth between Columbia and Aberdeen, the county records found a permanent home at last. Brown County was not alone in its struggle. Most counties went through the same experience. In Spink County it was called the Spink County War.

Centennial Minute
Helen Bergh
Dacotah Prairie Museum
aired September 11, 1989

"Milwaukee Stockyards"

Before the days of concrete highways and hugh semi-trucks the railroads did all the shipping of manufactured goods, lumber, coal, machinery, grain and livestock. Railroads were required by law to unload cattle, hogs and sheep after a certain number of hours so that they could rest and be fed and watered.

About 1920 or 1921 the Milwaukee Railroad built a very large stockyard immediately west of Aberdeen and to the north of U.S. 12. The many stock pens had the capacity to handle a train load of live stock at one time. Employees were on duty night and day to take care of the animals whenever a train might come in.

These stockyards were the largest mid-stop feeding and resting yards between Montana and Chicago. Stock buying stations were maintained by Armour, Morrell, Swift and independent buyers.

By the 1940s concrete and blacktop roads were being built and trucking was in full swing. This marked the decline of railroad transportation and the need for stockyards. Today the area of this stockyard is pretty much grown over with tall grass and cattails.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired September 18, 1989 "The Red Cross U.S.O. Canteen"

During World War II the Red Cross maintained a canteen at the Milwaukee depot in Aberdeen. Pheasant sandwiches became world famous. This project was supported by people from a large area who wanted to do something for the service men. People gave money, labor and food.

A great many women worked in teams of 15 or 16 with a supervisor. Every morning food was prepared in the Milwaukee Women's Club rooms. There were many pheasants and people went out in groups to hunt them. A local locker plant dressed and froze them. Fifteen or 20 were given out each day to the supervisors who cooked them. The ground meat was mixed with ground vegetables and eggs to make a sandwich filling. Each person had her own job to do, including cleaning up afterwards.

The food was carried over to the depot in big baskets. Two people made coffee in the large urns.

No one knew when the troop trains were coming until a very short time before they arrived. The boys came into the station and everyone was at her post, pouring coffee or milk, filling sandwich and cake trays and answering questions from the young men who could not understand how a community would do all this without any charge. There were always birthday cakes with lighted candles to be carried back to the train, for the stops were only a few minutes long. As many as 4 to 5000 were fed many times. Some days as many as 5 or 6 troop trains came through between noon and midnight.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired September 25, 1989

"Tree Planting in Brown County"

The Timber Culture Acts of March 3, 1873, March 13, 1874 and June 14, 1878 were created to "encourage the growth of timber on the western prairies." One quarter, or 160 acres, of each section was set aside for this purpose. Early settlers could file on this 160 acre plot if they agreed to plant 10 acres of trees and try to keep them alive. Many thousands of these tracts, called tree claims, were planted to hardy trees, mostly ash and box elder. Many survive today. Many are parks today. One Columbia resident walked to Fargo to teach school one winter and in the spring came back carrying a sack full of seed.

During the dry years of the 1930s there was a good deal of wind erosion and the planting of shelter belts became a common practice to control the force of the wind. These shelter belts were several rows of trees. Usually Chinese elms formed the center row because of their height and rapid growth. On either side were rows of shorter, more bushy trees such as Russian olive, cedar and wild plum. In sandy soil subject to blowing the shelter belts were planted a quarter of a mile apart. Not only did they reduce soil erosion but they provided food and shelter for wild life.

Today many remain but unfortunately many have been bulldozed out as some of the trees have died. However, people today are very tree-conscious and again are doing a great deal of tree planting.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired October 2, 1989 "Brown County's First Extension Agent"

During the years of 1911 and 1912 alfalfa, a new legume hay crop, was introduced to farmers of South Dakota as a result of the research and experimentation of Prof. N. E. Hansen of State College, Brookings. A number of farmers from all parts of Brown County and several Aberdeen business men formed an association and hired H. F. Patterson to come and advise and help farmers with the planting of alfalfa. This group eventually became the Farm Bureau organization which operated the newly created Extension Service. Mr. Patterson was actually the first extension agent in South Dakota.

The Extension Service at Brookings was organized in 1914. Its purpose was to help with improvements in the home and on the farm. They furnished pamphlets and blue prints for cupbaords and other pieces of furniture and gave advice for the betterment of every phase of farm and home life.

A Mr. Roy Smith was hired to succeed Mr. Patterson and Brown County shared a home extension agent with two other counties until 1921, when Miss Edith Sloan became Brown County's first full time home extension agent and W. C. Boardman became a full time extension agent. There have been many changes of programs and personnel since then. This year, 1989, marks the 75th anniversary of this service in South Dakota.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired October 9, 1989

"South Dakota's Industries"

We sometimes think South Dakota is entirely agricultural. To-day we talk about just a few of the many industries found here.

A potato chip plant at Clark uses potatoes raised on local farms. At Canton a factory makes baseball caps. Black Hills jewelry finds a nation-wide market as do the Dakotah products in the Webster and northeastern area. The Hoven creamery makes and ships quantitties of butter. The Hauck ranch near Agar produces buffalo meat. The small town of Tea produces insulated coveralls. Milbank has a cheese factory. Milbank also has a granite quarry. Mahogany granite is produced in great quantities for monuments and building trim. Right now Japan is a good customer. Big Stone produces great amounts of electrical power using coal as a fuel. Ipswich has a candle factory which has world-wide customers. They use bees wax produced in the Dakotas. Raven Sports Wear near Sioux Falls makes clothing. Lehmans of Hecla makes hay stack loaders and movers. Other South Dakota products include popcorn, strawberries, watermelon and glass eyes for animal mounts.

Closer to home, Farm Power and Safeguard manufacture metal equipment, 3M makes face masks, K.O.Lee Co. manufactures tools with a world-wide market.

Centennial Minute
Helen Bergh
Dacotah Prairie Museum
aired October 16, 1989

"Lights on the Farm"

In pioneer days lights were candles or kerosene lamps whether people lived in town or on the farm. Fairly early in the 1900s many people on farms began enjoying better lights. One type was known as the acetyline light.

By the 1920s a great many farms had 32 volt light plants run by a small gasoline engine. There were 24 large heavy glass jars which were the batteries hooked up to a generator powered by the engine. The lights made a wonderful difference. Women had washing machines, irons and vacuum cleaners run by that light plant. Some farm equipment was run the same way. Radios in the late 1920s were run from the light plant.

Eventually the batteries wore out, just about the time the depression of the 1930s hit. Many people hooked up 5 car batteries to the generator and powered the whole thing with a wind charger. We always have plenty of wind and many chargers were put on old windmill towers.

In the late 1930s planning was begun for rural electrification. Today we call it R.E.A. By late 1940s and 1950s wires were stretched all over this area and we had electricity, not just 32 volts but enough voltage to run any and all equipment, and through the R.E.A. we can have cable TV.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired October 23, 1989

"A Century of Change"

As we approach the end of South Dakota's centennial year it is well to review some of the changes this century has brought. Some changes are good, some not so good. In the area of transportation we have come from the ox cart and horse drawn carriage to the automobile, from prairie trails to concrete highways. We have seen the rise and decline of the railroads. We have gone from Kitty Hawk to the moon, from the small biplane to jets, from horse power to huge tractors.

Our fields of communication have changed just as much. The town crier is long past history, telegraph has given way to telephone, radio and television. We've gone from Pony Express to Rural Free Delivery mail service, from the weekly hand printed newspaper to the electrically printed daily.

We've gone from small to big, from hand to machine, from simple to complicated. Much of our progress has been due to the increased use of electricity.

Politically women have achieved the right to vote and to own property. They have branched out into almost every area of work and endeavor.

Centennial Minute

Helen Bergh

Dacotah Prairie Museum

aired October 30, 1989 "The Dacotah Prairie Museum Building"

The Dacotah Prairie Museum building, known for many years as the Hagerty building, was erected by C. A. Bliss, an early Aberdeen banker. It is on the site of the original 1881 land office.

Pressed brick and Lake Superior sandstone were the materials used. Exterior walls are of brick, 20 inches thick. Foundations are of huge field stones and mortar. Three main supporting walls are of brick 16 inches thick.

There were three ambulatories, one on Main Street and two on First Ave. The one on Main Street led down to a barber shop in the basement of the building. Concrete vaults run from the first floor up to the roof. \$5,000 worth of red oak wood work and ornate brass hardware finished the inside. First floor ceilings were of pressed tin.

It was first known as the Northwest Bank building. That business soon folded and in 1906 Mr. Frank Hagerty bought the building. In 1916 Western Union Telegraph moved into the southwest corner of the first floor. The third floor was apartments. The rest of the building was given over to offices for doctors, dentists, lawyers, printing firms and a grocery store.

In 1970 the building was given to Brown County for museum purposes. The donors were Fred Hatterscheidt, Peter Bradbury and Herman Pickus.

This grand old building, erected in 1888 and 1889, is celebrating its one hundredth birthday along with the state of South Dakota. On Thursday, November 2, three days from now, South Dakota will be 100 years old.

We thank Radio Station KKAA for its courtesy in airing the "Centennial Minutes" from January 12, 1988 through our final broadcast today. These "Centennial Minutes" have been Dacotah Prairie Museum's salute to the South Dakota state Centennial.