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On the covers: Churches are highlighted in the 2018 annual historic preservation issue of *South Dakota History*. Pictured on the front is the steeple of Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church in Brown County. The interior of Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Saint Francis appears on the back.

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BRAD TENNANT

“In the footsteps of the pioneer”

Ethnic Settlers and Their Churches in Brown County

Early twentieth-century author Ole E. Rølvaag focused his writing on the Norwegian immigrant experience in South Dakota and the northern plains. In *America-Breve*, one of his novels based on his own journey as a Norwegian immigrant, Rølvaag illustrated the importance of religious faith in the lives of new settlers on the plains. “There was no force other than the church,” he claimed, “which could draw mind and thought away from the struggle for survival.”¹ Half a century after the publication of Rølvaag’s book, the United States Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, creating the National Register of Historic Places program as a means to “identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources.”² In South Dakota’s Brown County, four churches appear on the National Register for their significance in the settlement of the area: the Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of Savo Township, the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church, and the Welsh Presbyterian Church. As their names indicate, ethnicity played an important role in the establishment of each church, which in

This article is based on a paper originally presented at the forty-ninth annual Dakota Conference on the Northern Plains, held 21–22 April 2017 at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana University, Sioux Falls, S.Dak.

1. Quoted in [Lynwood E. Oyos], “Protestant Faith and Learning,” in *A New South Dakota History*, ed. Harry F. Thompson (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 2005), p. 335. Ole E. Rølvaag’s novel was later translated and published as *The Third Life of Per Smevik*. See Rølvaag, *The Third Life of Per Smevik*, trans. Ella Valborg Tweet and Solveig Zempel (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

2. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “What Is the National Register of Historic Places?” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/what-is-the-national-register.htm>, accessed 30 Nov. 2018. The National Park Service oversees the National Register of Historic Places, which in South Dakota is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. Among the office’s duties are evaluating properties

turn served important roles in the lives of the immigrants who settled Brown County.³

At slightly less than two thousand square miles, Brown County is one of the largest counties in eastern South Dakota. Located in the northeastern part of the state in the James River Valley, it abuts North Dakota's Dickey and Sargent counties on the north, with its eastern edge lying just over fifty miles from the Minnesota state line. The region's relatively flat topography resulted from glaciation during the Wisconsin Glacial Stage approximately ten to seventy-five thousand years ago. During the late nineteenth century, the treeless prairie appealed to settlers, many of whom were immigrants seeking land suitable for farming.⁴

The Dakota Territorial Legislature officially established Brown County in 1879, and surveying of its southern reaches began in earnest that summer. In 1880, territorial governor Nehemiah G. Ordway appointed John James, Clarence Johnson, and Don McKenzie to serve as the county's first commissioners. Once the gubernatorial appointees convened on 14 September 1880, they designated individuals to fill a variety of offices and named Columbia as its seat to begin the process of officially organizing the county. Settlers soon streamed into the area looking to secure land claims, causing the population to jump from 353 in 1880 to approximately 8,000 only three years later.⁵ The rapid settlement of the county coincided with the territory-wide growth in what

proposed for nomination for their significance in a number of areas, including ethnic history, religion, and architecture, all of which are especially pertinent to the churches explored here.

3. Two other churches in Brown County, Trinity Episcopal Church in Groton and First United Methodist Church in Aberdeen, are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places but are not closely associated with any single ethnic group.

4. *Brown County History* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Brown County Museum and Historical Society, 1980), p. 3; Edward Patrick Hogan and Erin Hogan Fouberg, *The Geography of South Dakota*, rev. ed. (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 1998), pp. 10, 17.

5. *Brown County History*, pp. 69, 71; Arthur L. Rusch, *County Capitols: The Courthouses of South Dakota* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2014), p. 22. As was a common practice, the territorial legislature named the county for one of its members, Alfred Brown from Hutchinson County. Whether he ever visited his namesake county is not known.

became known as the Great Dakota Boom of 1878–1887. During this “Dakota fever” period, the region witnessed substantial increases in railroad miles, townsites, land filings, and acres farmed. Brown County continued to experience growth, reaching 12,241 residents in 1885 and 16,855 by the year after South Dakota became a state.⁶

Those who came to Brown County had three legal options for acquiring land, all enacted by Congress to encourage western expansion. The first was the Homestead Act of 1862. The act required a person to file a claim through a land office and then improve 160 acres, also called a quarter section, by building a suitable house and cultivating a portion of the property. At the end of five years, the claimant “proved up” and received patent for the land. A second option came from the preemption clause in the Homestead Act. This article allowed a homesteader to purchase the land for \$1.25 per acre after six months’ residency, preempting the five-year waiting period in the process. The Timber Culture Act, as amended in 1878, provided a third option. Under its provisions, a settler could gain title to another quarter section by planting and maintaining ten acres of trees on the land over an eight-year period. Each option allowed early settlers to gain 160 acres of land for minimal cost. Individuals could also use a combination of these measures to add acreage beyond their initial quarter section. While some took advantage of the land acts only to turn around and sell the claims for a profit, many others, including a growing number of European immigrants, utilized one or more to start a new life.⁷

Because railroad lines did not reach Brown County until June 1881, many of the early settlers who came between 1879 and 1881 journeyed from Watertown, the location of the nearest land office. Beginning in May 1882 until late that summer, immigrant settlers regularly filled one

6. Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 4th ed., rev. John E. Miller (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2004), pp. 158–60, 165; U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, Part I* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 311. The census for 1890 showed a total population of 328,808 for the newly created state.

7. *Early History of Brown County, South Dakota* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Brown County Territorial Pioneer Committee, 1965), p. 13; Schell, *History of South Dakota*, pp. 170–73; “Homestead Act (1862),” in *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*, ed. Howard R. Lamar (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 492.



to six cars of each train that arrived in Aberdeen.⁸ This flood of people marked the beginning of the settlement of Brown County in earnest. A variety of ethnic groups, including significant numbers of Irish, Germans from Russia, Germans, Norwegians, Finns, Swedes, and Welsh, made up the majority of the county's new residents.⁹

European immigrants had found their way to Dakota Territory well before Brown County's founding. These pioneers created a diverse ethnic population. Historian Robert F. Karolevitz noted that from the territory's early history, it had become home to emerging "islands" of nationalities and ethnic settlements. In 1861, William Jayne, Dakota Territory's inaugural governor, arranged for the printing of his first official message to the legislature in English, Norwegian, German, and French. Jayne's action gives insight into the pattern of ethnic settlement in Dakota Territory, and later North Dakota and South Dakota, into the early twentieth century.¹⁰

As with most late nineteenth-century immigrant populations, ethnic groups tended to settle near others who shared the same language, customs, and religion. Churches followed a similar pattern and were among the first structures built in South Dakota's emerging towns and rural communities. Beyond serving as a place of worship, the local church became a center for social events. Because it often reflected the congregants' ethnic identity, it also served as a means of preserving their cultural heritage. By 1890, the first full year of South Dakota's statehood, 774 churches, with a comparable number of church halls, had already been established. As historians David Erpestad and David Wood stress, churches provided their members with "symbolic centers of religious, social, and ethnic identification."¹¹ In Brown County, the

8. *Early History of Brown County*, pp. 13–14. For more on the extension of railroad lines into Brown County, see *Brown County History*, pp. 383–91.

9. For more on early Brown County ethnic groups, see Brad Tennant, "A Gathering of Peoples: The Ethnicity of Early-Day Brown County," in *Papers of the Twenty-third Annual Dakota History Conference, May 30–June 1, 1991*, ed. Arthur R. Huseboe (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 1991), pp. 672–86.

10. Robert F. Karolevitz, *Challenge: The South Dakota Story* (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Brevet Press, 1975), p. 88.

11. David Erpestad and David Wood, *Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 1997), p. 59.



Gatherings like the Savo Township Finnish Lutheran Church picnic gave members of the ethnic community the opportunity to socialize with one another.

National Register of Historic Places recognizes the following four ethnic churches for their vital role in immigrants' religious and social lives.

Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church

More than 750,000 Norwegians entered the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with over 75 percent of them arriving after 1880. In 1882 alone, more than twenty-nine thousand Norwegians sailed to America, many of whom eventually found their way to Dakota Territory. After reaching the United States, most stopped at other established Norwegian settlements in the Midwest to work and make money before reaching their ultimate goal: land-rich Dakota Territory. While some nineteenth-century immigrant populations left their homelands to escape oppressive governments, military conscription, or hunger, most Norwegians emigrated because of the lack of available farm land in Norway and the subsequent economic struggles for those who did not have property. Many young Norwegians viewed the United States and its abundance of tillable land as a place of new beginnings. Looking to establish viable farms, Norwegian immigrants flooded the prairies of modern-day eastern South Dakota, becoming the state's largest foreign-born population by 1900.¹²

12. Karolevitz, *Challenge*, p. 89; James S. Olson and Heather Olson Beal, *The Ethnic Dimension in American History*, 4th ed. (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp.

Norwegian settlers first arrived in what became Brown County in 1877. With the eventual extension of railroad service into the territory in the 1870s and improved conditions after five years of drought and locust infestation between 1873 and 1878, increasing numbers of Norwegian immigrants staked their claims in the years leading to South Dakota statehood. Letters to family members in Norway and railroad company fliers promoting immigration caused a further influx. After arriving, Norwegian settlers continued to use their native language at home, when visiting neighbors, and, especially, at church, where Norwegian-language services remained common until around 1920.¹³

Although several Brown County townships had noteworthy Norwegian populations, a significant number settled in Richland Township, southeast of Frederick, where they established the Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church. Stories that those first Richland settlers—Norwegians and others—passed down reflect the experiences of many immigrants to the region. They recounted spending weeks at sea traveling from the old country to the United States, then arriving in Brown County by covered wagons or railroad cars. Until their homesteads became productive, many held second jobs. The search for employment often took them away from their families and new homes for extended periods of time, with some going as far away as the Red River Valley in present-day North Dakota. Once their property became more established, they returned permanently to their homesteads.¹⁴

Settling on the open prairie, a region far different from the mountains and fjords of their homeland, presented a variety of hardships for the newcomers. They suddenly faced new and unfamiliar challenges, including the construction of suitable shelter, plowing of previously uncultivated prairie sod, prairie fires, and blizzards. Ole Rølvaag remarked that it was difficult for those who had not lived on the frontier to “imagine how the church has followed in the footsteps of the pioneer, followed him through struggle and suffering into the wilderness, into the forest, and out over the endless prairie.”¹⁵

49–50; [Gary D. Olson], “Yankee and European Settlement,” in *New South Dakota History*, pp. 124–26.

13. *Brown County History*, p. 338; [Olson], “Yankee and European Settlement,” p. 125.

14. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 154.

15. Quoted in [Oyos], “Protestant Faith and Learning,” p. 335.

During the Great Dakota Boom years, Norwegian congregations built dozens of Lutheran churches throughout the territory. By statehood in 1889, there were 128 churches in South Dakota identified as Norwegian Lutheran. During the next quarter century, from 1890 to 1915, Norwegian communities built an additional 119 churches.¹⁶ The pioneers in Brown County's Richland Township took part in this movement when they organized as the Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church congregation in 1885, naming it in honor of their primary point of departure, the municipality of Aurland, Norway. Lacking a church building, the Aurland Lutherans initially held their worship services in a schoolhouse constructed in 1884 called the Christie (later Sumption) School or in members' homes.¹⁷

In 1897, twelve years after the Aurland Lutherans officially organized, construction of the church began. Seven years later, in 1904, church members from southern Richland Township joined with those in northern Brainerd Township to finish the structure. Materials cost a total of eight hundred fifty dollars. Men of the congregation donated their labor and much of the equipment to both construct the building and finish its interior. Because congregants donated their free time, completion of the interior proceeded in piecemeal fashion. The Ladies Aid Society contributed by raising money that went specifically toward the purchase of the altar and the pews. The Junior Ladies Aid, meanwhile, raised funds primarily for the organ and lamps.¹⁸ The congregation reportedly modeled their church's design on the one in Aurland, Norway, that dated back to 1202. Unfortunately, any similarities are difficult to confirm, as no images of the church from their homeland have been located, but it is not inconceivable that details, such as the pediments above the windows, may have been inspired by the earlier church.¹⁹

16. Rex C. Myers, "An Immigrant Heritage: South Dakota's Foreign-Born in the Era of Assimilation," *South Dakota History* 19 (Summer 1989): 151.

17. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 154–55.

18. *Ibid.*; *Brown County History*, p. 125. The interior was not completed until 1905, but the church is typically listed as being finished in 1908.

19. *Exploring Brown County: A Guide to Sites on the National Register of Historic Places* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Aberdeen/Brown County Landmarks Commission, 1989), pp. 9–10.



With its simple architecture and associated cemetery, the Aurland United Lutheran Church typified many prairie churches in eastern Dakota Territory.



The pediments crowning the windows of the Aurland Lutheran church may reflect those of the immigrants' home church in Norway.

The Richland Township church itself consisted of a simple framed structure presenting a modest exterior appearance common among many small rural churches. The interior, however, included several more elaborate features that made the building a beautiful place of worship. The white and gold colors of the altar make it stand out prominently in the sanctuary. An impressive canvas of Christ ascending to heaven that covers the Gothic reredos serves as the ornate backdrop. Additionally, a traditional semicircular communion rail fronts the altar. Aurland Lutheran also possessed many features typical of its contemporary Lutheran churches, such as a modest wooden baptismal font, a Gothic chair for the pastor, and a reed organ, which produced sound when the organist pumped a foot pedal.²⁰

The Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church served as an important community center for Richland Township residents throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Although socializing after the weekly Sunday services became a popular practice, three annual

20. Ibid.



The painting of Christ ascending provided a focal point for worshipers in the Aurland church.

events tended to draw the biggest gatherings of the Aurland congregation: one in connection with the Fourth of July, one for Christmas, and the annual Ladies' Aid Picnic.²¹

Ethnic food often played an important role in these social gatherings. Such events usually featured a fruit soup, known as *frukt suppe*, consisting of sago, prunes, raisins, and other available fruit ingredients. Occasions such as Christmas also featured the standard *lutefisk* dinner. According to one history of Richland Township, the congregants were "very fond" of its centerpiece, reconstituted dried cod. Coffee was the common drink, but, with real coffee in short supply, making it involved some creative measures on the worshipers' part. This process often involved combining parched barley with molasses and chicory, then baking or drying the mixture before grinding it by hand.²² Although established before the construction of the church, these occasions became commonplace and a standard part of the social aspect of the congregation.

By the late 1920s, demographic changes in Brown County, specifically fewer first-generation Norwegians, initiated the decline of Aurland's status as the central gathering place for the township and forced the congregation to adapt. The exclusive use of English in the weekly services became more frequent by the end of the decade. Eventually, dwindling membership caused the congregation to discontinue regular church services in 1953.²³

Despite Aurland's diminishing role in the community, the remaining members of the congregation and other locals took steps to memorialize its importance to Richland Township's early history. In 1961, the Ladies Aid Society arranged for the placement of a fieldstone monument in front of the church that included two memorial plaques and an enclosed display of items used in early church services. One plaque provides a brief church history, which is dedicated to the "memory

21. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 154–55.

22. *Ibid.*

23. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church, Frederick, S.Dak.," sec. 8, p. 3, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (hereafter SHPO), South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre; *Early History of Brown County*, p. 154.

of the Pioneer Members of the Aurland Congregation” and acknowledges those who contributed to the various interior fixtures. The second plaque includes a list of the church’s early pioneer members and founders. On 22 August 1993, community members dedicated a special service at the church to its forty-one original charter members from 1885.²⁴

The National Park Service recognized the church’s importance to the history of Brown County when it listed Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. In its nomination, the State Historic Preservation Office noted the church’s significance “in the areas of ethnic settlement, religion, and vernacular architecture.” The nomination further described the structure as a “well-preserved example of a simple, frame country church” that also “remains a symbol of Norwegian settlement in Brown County.” The nomination concluded, “Despite its simplicity, the church was well made and its furnishings reflect the spirit of its pioneer builders.”²⁵ As with many rural churches, the legacy of the local settlers who attended the Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church is still evident among the headstones found in the church’s cemetery.²⁶

Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church

Finnish pioneers represented a much smaller percentage of South Dakota’s early ethnic settlement, accounting for only 1,381 of the state’s residents according to the federal census in 1910.²⁷ In Brown County, Finns made up less than 5 percent of the population in 1930. Still, due to their concentration in Savo Township, the Finnish heritage remains evident and is represented on the National Register through the additions of Savo Hall (also known as Finnish National Society Hall) and the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church.²⁸ Similar to Aurland United

24. “Aurland Lutheran Church 1885–1953,” printed dedication service program, Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church, Frederick, S.Dak.

25. “Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church,” sec. 8, p. 3.

26. W. E. (“Gene”) Aisenbrey, *Monuments, Markers, Memorials of Brown County* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Aberdeen/Brown County Landmarks Commission, 1998), pp. 24–25.

27. This statistic may be misleading because it includes only “Finnish-born” residents and not all people of Finnish descent who lived in other parts of the United States before coming to South Dakota. See Myers, “Immigrant Heritage,” p. 138.

28. [Olson], “Yankee and European Settlement,” p. 141; John P. Johansen, *Immigrant*

Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Finnish Apostolic Church held a prominent place in the community's early history.

In 1881, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad advanced north from Aberdeen toward the site of what soon became the town of Frederick. At the time, Finnish-born Kustaa Frederick Bergstadius served as the official in charge of immigration and settlement for the railroad. He asked a close friend and fellow Finn, Erik Pikkarainen, to investigate the potential for agriculture and settlement in Dakota Territory. When Pikkarainen reported favorably, news spread quickly. From the newly founded town of Frederick (Bergstadius's middle name), Finnish settlers spread out to the north and east, establishing Savo Township, named for Bergstadius's home province in Finland.²⁹ Articles in Finnish-American newspapers, such as the *Amerikan Suomalainen*, further spread the news of the farming potential of the "Zim," or James,

Settlements and Social Organization in South Dakota, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin no. 313 (Brookings: South Dakota State College, 1937), p. 18; *Exploring Brown County*, pp. 11–12, 15–16. For more on Savo Hall and its preservation, see Tennant, "Gathering of Peoples," pp. 682–83.

29. *History of the Finnish Settlement in Brown and Dickey Counties of South and North Dakota, 1881–1955* (N.p.: [Savo Finnish Historical Society], 1955), p. 10.



These immigrant men were early members of the Savo Township Finnish Apostolic Lutheran congregation.

River Valley. With that promotion, almost eight hundred Finnish pioneers from Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Finland itself—mostly from the provinces of Oulu and Vaasa—settled in the territory’s newly created Brown and Dickey counties in the two years after 1881.³⁰

As with the Norwegian settlers in Richland Township, the Finnish population of Savo Township was primarily Lutheran. Unlike their Norwegian neighbors, however, the Savo Finns identified with an apostolic sect, founded in Calumet, Michigan, in the 1870s. This apostolic character, which emphasized modest churches and personal devotion, generally meant that the churches’ architecture was less ornate and the services were less formal, or non-liturgical, than other Lutheran sects.³¹ The Finnish Lutherans initially held services in homes that, in many cases, were nothing more than sod structures. Then, in 1884, community members constructed the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church about a mile south of the present-day border with North Dakota.³² The community located the church on land that a local farmer, Matt Henhela, offered to them. Henhela promised to provide ten acres of his land for the construction of a church and the placement of a cemetery on the condition that church supporters plowed fifty acres for him in return. The Finnish settlers agreed, and forty men with plows pulled by oxen and horses reportedly fulfilled the requirement in a single day. Community members worked quickly to complete the structure, laying the foundation on 3 June 1884 and dedicating the church on Saint John’s Day, 24 June. The congregation, however, did not officially become the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Savo until 1887.³³

Although several churches served Brown County’s Finnish population over the years, the apostolic church in Savo represents “the oldest

30. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “The Architecture of Finnish Settlement in South Dakota” sec. 7, pg. 5, SHPO.

31. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “The Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of Savo Township, Frederick, S.Dak.,” sec. 8, p. 3, SHPO; Arnold A. Alanen, “Finnish Architecture,” in *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*, ed. David J. Wishart (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), p. 79.

32. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 166; *Brown County History*, p. 123.

33. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 166; *Exploring Brown County*, p. 15. The death of



Built in 1884, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church has been well cared for over the decades.

and best preserved example of 19th century Apostolic Lutheran pioneer settlement in South Dakota,” according to the Pioneer Church Restoration Association, which has maintained the structure as an important legacy of the Finnish settlement of Brown County since 1972.³⁴ Architecturally, the building represents a basic nave plan with a central aisle dividing the pews into two sections.³⁵ According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination, the church embodies an

Henhela’s wife, Valborg, may have prompted his offer of land. She died during childbirth in June 1883, and, at the time, there was no church or cemetery in the area. She and her son were the first interments in the cemetery. Aisenbrey, *Monuments, Markers, Memorials*, p. 27.

34. “Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church,” sec. 8, p. 3.

35. “Nave” refers to the area of the church where the worshippers sit during services. Churches constructed on a nave plan are rectangular buildings with little to no additions beyond the nave. For a fuller description, see Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, p. 63.

“American vernacular tradition and clearly reveals the underlying philosophy of this religious group in its simple, unadorned architecture.”³⁶ The apostolic mindset is apparent from the exterior, as the structure is a simple rectangular building with three windows on both the north and south sides. Likewise, the interior has a semicircular communion rail in front of a raised altar area but possesses no formal altar. Instead, the congregation used a simple table during their services. The absence of a cross or any religious paintings further defined the church’s apostolic nature.³⁷ With construction that reflects its founders’ ethnic and religious heritage, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church has been listed on the National Register since 1984, the centennial of its construction.

Almost seventy years after the church’s completion, in 1952, the congregation decided it needed a new church and erected one across the

36. “Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church,” sec. 8, p. 3.

37. Ibid., sec. 7, p. 2.



The interior of the Finnish church lacks elaborate decoration, in keeping with its members’ beliefs.



This stone monument memorializes those whose wooden grave markers burned in an early prairie fire that swept the church cemetery.

state line in Dickey County, North Dakota. Although the congregation left the original building behind, locals in and around Savo Township continued to commemorate the church's place in the community's history. In 1989, the Pioneer Church Restoration Association dedicated a special memorial in the church cemetery.³⁸ Sometime in the church's early history, at least one prairie fire destroyed the wooden crosses that marked many of the gravesites. In remembrance, the cemetery memorial acknowledges "fifty-five souls whose wooden grave markers were destroyed in a prairie fire. Their names are recorded in the church, but their final resting places are known only to God."³⁹ Over the years, the list of unknown and unmarked graves increased to sixty-three; these names appear on a small, framed list inside the church. As with the building itself, the rather plain, simple roll seems an appropriate acknowledgment for some of the area's earliest Finnish pioneers.

38. Ibid., sec. 8, p. 3; Aisenbrey, *Monuments, Markers, Memorials*, p. 27.

39. Aisenbrey, *Monuments, Markers, Memorials*, p. 27.

Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church

The federal census in 1900 reported slightly fewer than nine thousand Swedish-born residents in South Dakota. As with other ethnic groups, many people of Swedish descent settled close to one another, creating enclaves in certain parts of the state. Historically, the first Swedes established communities in the southeastern corner of Dakota Territory, where many settlers entered through northern Iowa and Minnesota. From the late 1860s to the mid-1870s, a notable number of Swedish settlers began inhabiting Clay County. Gradually, Swedish immigrants moved north, eventually settling in eastern Brown County starting in the early 1880s.⁴⁰

In 1881, Louis Johnson and a group of approximately two hundred other settlers of Swedish lineage moved to northern Riverside Township. Many of them had previously settled in Chisago County, Minnesota, northeast of Minneapolis, before deciding to homestead in Dakota Territory. Uprooted from their homes in Minnesota, they established what became known as the Riverside Swedish Colony, based on the pillars of shared language, customs, and religion. Their strong Christian beliefs assisted the new settlers in forming a community, and the establishment of the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church exemplifies the religious aspect of their ethnic bond.⁴¹

Soon after the newcomers started settling in, they turned their focus toward organizing a church. They formally established the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church congregation on 25 July 1884, when twenty-four adults and thirty-seven children gathered in the home of Lot A. Linn for the first worship service. Because there were not enough chairs for the large group, many attendees sat on oat sacks. The baptism of seven young children highlighted the service. Like the Norwegian and Finnish worshippers, the Swedish congregation held services in various homes and a local schoolhouse, commonly known

40. [Olson], "Yankee and European Settlement," p. 129; U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church, Claremont, S.Dak.," sec. 8, p. 1, SHPO.

41. *Groton Centennial History, 1881-1981* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: North Plains Press, 1981), pp. 228-29.

as the Johnson School, until 1899, when construction of the church began.⁴² After its completion and dedication in early 1900, the Augustana Lutherans immediately started holding services there.⁴³

The rural setting of the congregation meant that formal church services depended on the availability of a pastor. One pastor, the Reverend A. Engdahl, traveled by train from Milbank every three weeks to lead worship services for an annual salary of one hundred fifty dollars. In 1897, two years before the church's construction began, the Reverend C. A. Carlson became the first regular pastor.⁴⁴ Until 1925, the pastors led services in Swedish. In that year, the congregation decided to begin transitioning to predominantly English-language services while still holding a Swedish service once a month. Eventually, the leaders ended the monthly services in Swedish.⁴⁵

Although the congregation first organized and worshiped in Riverside, additional Swedish settlers filed claims in neighboring townships, including Claremont to the north and Groton to the south. With the population expanding into neighboring villages, the Augustana Lutherans acquired land for a permanent church in neighboring Claremont when Karl Green donated five acres. Workers brought in building material from the surrounding towns on bobsleds. Granite boulders from the Langford area became the foundation. Lumber from Groton provided the frame and exterior siding. Before initiating the project, the building committee had hired William Carlson as the general contractor to oversee the church's construction. Carlson lived in Center City, Minnesota, the town from which many of the Riverside Swedes emigrated. The design of the Augustana church reflects Carlson's participation, as its tower and spire are similar to the larger Lutheran church in Center City. His craftsmanship is also found among many of the hand-carved interior furnishings, such as the altar and pulpit. Workers built a large barn as well, approximately one hundred feet in length, that could shelter up to fifty teams of horses while the

42. Ibid., p. 229.

43. "Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church," sec. 8, p. 1; *Early History of Brown County*, p. 156.

44. *Groton Centennial History*, p. 229.

45. "Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church," sec. 8, p. 2.

parishioners attended church services and activities. A tornado later destroyed the barn, which the worshippers never rebuilt; the need for it had already begun to wane with the rise of automobiles.⁴⁶

The Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church became an important social center and hosted a variety of community events, but none drew as large a crowd as the church's annual picnic, which usually occurred in July. Over the years, the picnic moved from the grove on John Benson's property northeast of the church to Charlie Falk's grove to the south and, eventually, to another grove north of the church. The picnic became a much-celebrated event and drew as many as two thousand attendees from as far away as Aberdeen.⁴⁷

46. Ibid; *Groton Centennial History*, p. 229; *Early History of Brown County*, p. 157.

47. *Groton Centennial History*, p. 229.



The Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church possesses more elaborate features, thanks to a larger congregation and the work of a professional builder.



The belfry and steeple of the Swedish church feature elements of the Gothic Revival style.

The State Historic Preservation Office nominated the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 as “an excellent example of ornate country churches once common to South Dakota and a particularly good example of Swedish-American vernacular church architecture. In addition, it is associated with the emigration of Swedes into Dakota Territory during the expansion years of the 1880s and displays many of the ethnic symbols they brought with them.”⁴⁸ Although the church no longer stands on its original foundation, resting on a more modern concrete one, most of the original Gothic Revival features, such as its steeple and belfry with louvered Gothic arches and its Gothic arched windows and entrance, remain. Likewise, the interior still has many original features, including the altar, communion rail, pulpit, and trim, which William Carlson largely designed and carved himself.⁴⁹ Of the four churches discussed here, the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church is the only one still used for services and remains in a well-kept condition.

Welsh Presbyterian Church

On 12 April 1880, a small group of Welsh immigrants arrived at Columbia, Dakota Territory, to file land claims in the James River Valley. As with so many other immigrant groups, the Welsh first settled farther east before making the move to Dakota Territory. This group came from Wisconsin, traveled by railroad to Jamestown in northern Dakota Territory, and then moved south along the James River to Columbia. More Welsh soon arrived and established Cambria Township, “Cambria” being the ancient name for Wales.⁵⁰

Like many of the Swedish settlers, the Welsh pioneers who followed did not come directly from Wales but moved from established settlements in Iowa and Minnesota in addition to Wisconsin. The first rush of Welsh settlers came to work in the quartzite quarries around Sioux

48. “Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church,” sec. 8, p. 1.

49. Ibid., sec. 7, p. 1; *Exploring Brown County*, pp. 14–15; *Groton Centennial History*, p. 229.

50. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “Welsh Presbyterian Church, Plana, S.Dak.,” sec. 8, p. 1, SHPO; *Early History of Brown County*, p. 9.

Falls. When Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad officials advertised rich, flat farmland in the territory, Welsh farmers seized the opportunity to relocate.⁵¹ By early September 1882, E. L. Williams, a reporter for the *James Valley Post* in Bath, informed readers that approximately one hundred fifty inhabitants resided in the “Welsh Colony.” He then reported that the Welsh pioneers occupied over 12,000 acres of land, 1,162 acres of which were already being cultivated for wheat and oats. Williams predicted that the number of acres farmed would increase annually, as additional “Welsh friends [were] coming in.”⁵²

The railroad had initiated Welsh settlement, and another rail line completed in 1887 brought a significant population influx. The Great Northern Railroad entered the territory from the northeast. The tracks ran diagonally through Cambria Township, which led to the founding of the town of Plana as more Welsh pioneers arrived. Plana soon pro-

51. *Brown County History*, pp. 338–39; [Olson], “Yankee and European Settlement,” p. 140.

52. *James Valley Post* (Bath, S.Dak.), 2 Sept. 1882.



The Welsh Presbyterian Church still stands on the open prairie, although the elements have taken their toll.

vided a variety of services, including a depot, several grain elevators, stores, a barbershop, and a Presbyterian church that became known as the Welsh Presbyterian Church.⁵³

As the Welsh population of Plana grew in the early 1880s, community members began organizing religious services. Similar to the Norwegian, Finnish, and Swedish congregations, members first held services and Sunday school in the homes of Plana residents before moving to the Bath depot. Twenty-seven students gathered for the first Sunday school session in April 1882 in a congregation member's home. Initially, Reverend J. W. Morgan served as the congregation's pastor. Being from Wisconsin, Morgan acted as a connection to many of the Welsh settlers' previous homes. Later, from 23 April 1882 to 25 June 1887, the Reverend Daniel L. Rowlands served as pastor. He kept a record of his weekly sermons, one of which reportedly lasted one hour and forty minutes. For many years, the congregation held two Sunday services—one in Welsh, and one in English. Even in the English service, however, worshipers sang in Welsh.⁵⁴ With a familiar pastor and the consistent use of Welsh in the services, the parishioners developed and maintained a strong sense of community through their church.

By the end of Rowland's tenure as pastor in 1887, the congregation had completed construction of a church building. Worshipers provided the time and money to erect the simple rectangular structure, which features three tall, narrow windows in both the north and south walls. They added some elaboration with a vestibule featuring a gable peak over the main entrance. Inside, the structure consists of a simple nave with wooden pews and a raised pulpit at the western end. The existing pulpit is most likely not the original, as the imprint of a previous fixture points to a larger one in the same area. The members added a parsonage—living quarters for the pastor—near the church in 1900. It was sold and moved in 1928.⁵⁵

53. *Early History of Brown County*, p. 9. The town was originally called Hadley, but another town in Dakota Territory already possessed the name, forcing a change.

54. "Welsh Presbyterian Church," sec. 8, p. 2; *Brown County History*, p. 131; Transcript of "The Brown County Centennial Minutes" aired 15 Aug. 1988, in Helen Bergh, *People, Place and Events: 100 Years in Brown County, South Dakota*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Dacotah Prairie Museum Foundation, Inc., 1989), 1:n.p.

55. "Welsh Presbyterian Church," sec. 7, pp. 1–2, sec. 8, p. 2. The vestibule refers to a



Congregation members hand-finished most of the interior features of the Welsh church, including the pews and wainscoting.

The removal of the parsonage from the grounds indicated changing times in Plana. After the town's general store burned in 1927, the community went into decline. Today, the only original reminders of Plana's existence are the community hall, now used as a garage; the Plana School; and the Welsh Presbyterian Church. On 22 November 1941, the church held its last regular worship service, but it remained available for descendants of the original members to use for special events. They held a commemorative service for the United States Bicentennial in 1976 and another in June 1981 to celebrate the church's centennial.⁵⁶ A wooden plaque on the church's exterior notes that a group of trees nearby had been planted in memory of twenty men who represented the "Founders of Plana Church."⁵⁷ Another sign next to the front door simply states, "Welsh Presbyterian Church, Plana, So. Dak., Built 1887, Closed 1941, In Memory of Our Pioneers."⁵⁸

small entryway between the main entrance and the door to the nave. A gable peak is triangular shaped, created where the two slopes of the roof meet.

56. "Welsh Presbyterian Church," sec. 8, p. 2; *Brown County History*, p. 131.

57. "Welsh Presbyterian Church," sec. 7, p. 2.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

In 1995, the Welsh Presbyterian Church became the fourth ethnic church in Brown County added to the National Register of Historic Places. According to the State Historic Preservation Office nomination, “a high degree of craftsmanship” went into the construction of the building, as seen in the hand-carved wooden pegs used for the window frames (as opposed to nails) and notable interior woodwork, which included hand-grained doors, pews, and wainscoting.⁵⁹ The fact that the building is the only known Welsh church in South Dakota adds to its significance.⁶⁰ Just as the other churches had done for the Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish communities, the Welsh Presbyterian Church helped the Welsh settlers of Brown County maintain their cultural and community identity.

Throughout South Dakota’s history, churches played a vital role in communities, serving as places of worship, centers of social events, and as a means of retaining ethnic identity.⁶¹ In his work on Protestant faiths in South Dakota, historian Lynwood Oyos noted that early settlers created more churches than South Dakota’s population could ultimately sustain. Outmigration from rural areas, which began in the 1920s and continues today, led to the closing of many churches.⁶² Like others, the Aurland United Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church, the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church, and the Welsh Presbyterian Church faced the common challenge of having small, ethnically oriented congregations. The mobility automobiles allowed made access to churches in more populous areas easier, tying congregants into larger religious communities and making rural churches less necessary. Inter marriage between people of different backgrounds created more diverse communities. As a result, churches oriented to specific ethnic groups became less important to an individual’s identity. Still, these four churches held an important

59. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

60. Carolyn Torma, “Welsh and Black Settlements; Concrete and Log Architecture Recorded in Summer Historic Sites Survey,” *History Notes* (South Dakota State Historical Society newsletter) 4 (Sept./Oct. 1988): 1.

61. Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, p. 59

62. [Oyos], “Protestant Faith and Learning,” p. 341.

place in the early history of Brown County. The preservation of the church buildings and their inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places serve as reminders of how immigrant settlers facing new and unique challenges created communities that could support them in trying times.

ROBERT J. COUSER

Burckhard's North Side Bakery of Aberdeen

A Community Staple for Four Generations

Aberdeen, South Dakota, like many communities, has a rich history of family-run businesses that have prospered over several generations. These local establishments include automobile dealerships, grocery stores, construction companies, restaurants, farming and livestock ventures, and wholesale drug companies, to mention a few. Burckhard's North Side Bakery was one of the city's most successful and noteworthy family-run operations, spanning four generations and eighty-seven years. Envisaged by Paul and Catherine Burckhard at the turn of the twentieth century and opened for business in 1906, the bakery and its history reveal how immigrant families influenced Aberdeen's development and how changing trends have tested the endurance of local businesses.

Aberdeen's establishment and early growth occurred amid the surge of settlement called the Great Dakota Boom of 1878–1887. The prospect of affordable land—made widely available after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act on 20 May 1862—initially brought a wave of non-Indian settlers to the southeastern corner of Dakota Territory. Conflict with the region's Indian tribes, years of severe drought, and a sharp economic downturn, however, slowed expansion into the rest of the territory. By the late 1870s, an improved financial outlook, favorable weather, and new treaties with the Lakota, or western Sioux, Indians led railroad companies to expand lines that had stalled in Iowa and Minnesota. The arrival of the railroads during

The author gratefully acknowledges Rhoda Berkley, Peter John Burckhard, Dawn Burckhard Jones, and John Zemlicka for their contributions to this article. Except where otherwise noted, the biographical information on Burckhard family members comes from interviews conducted with them in 2017.

the 1880s would help to make Aberdeen the “Hub City” for goods and services in northeastern South Dakota.¹

On 3 January 1881, Charles Prior, superintendent of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, platted a new rail center in eastern Dakota Territory. Prior named the settlement after Aberdeen, Scotland, the hometown of his superior, Alexander Mitchell. Prior's initial plat of Aberdeen consisted of an area measuring four blocks by four blocks, bounded today by Railroad Avenue on the north, Fourth Avenue on the south, First Street on the west, and Washington Street on the east. The first train arrived in Aberdeen on 6 July 1881, and the town remained the railroad's westernmost point until 1883. Railroads delivered the raw materials to build Aberdeen's homes and businesses, with those on Main Street south of the tracks being established first due to the town's initial layout.²

Meanwhile, Brown County's population grew rapidly, from 353 in 1880 to 12,241 in 1885. Many of these new residents settled in Aberdeen. By July 1882, a little over one year after the town's founding, its population had risen to one thousand. Shortly after South Dakota became a state in 1889, the city counted 3,182 residents, a number that would swell to 7,177 by 1903. By that point, railroad boosters had branded Aberdeen “the hub city of the Dakotas,” both for its potential as a center of commerce and a popular 1886 illustration that depicted Aberdeen as the hub of a wheel with the nine rail lines set to pass through town as spokes. Aberdeen surpassed its early rival Columbia to become the seat of Brown County in 1890, and soon a lively business district developed on South Main Street.³

1. *U.S. Statutes at Large* 12 (1862): 392; Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 4th ed., rev. John E. Miller (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2004), pp. 79, 170–74; *A Souvenir of Aberdeen: The Railroad Hub of the Dakotas* (1907; new ed., Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Aberdeen/Brown County Landmark Commission, 1992), p. viii.

2. *Early History of Brown County, South Dakota* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Brown County Territorial Pioneer Committee, 1965), pp. 36–38.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 37; Don Artz, *The Town in the Frog Pond: Stories of Builders, Buildings and Business in Aberdeen's Commercial Historic District* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: Memories, Inc., 1991), pp. 6–8. At present, the six blocks on Main Street located south of Railroad Avenue form a historic district.

Many of the newcomers to Aberdeen during its first decade came from Iowa, Minnesota, and the northeastern United States, bringing with them American culture and education. The town's rapid growth in the early 1890s, however, owed to an influx of immigrants from eastern Europe and Scandinavia, including the Burckhard family. The Burckhards hailed from Strassburg, a small German colony in what was then southwestern Russia, known today as Kuchurhan, Ukraine. Founded in 1808, Strassburg was one of hundreds of German agricultural settlements established in the wake of a 1763 manifesto issued by Catherine II that invited foreign settlers to Russia. Intended to populate and develop the area surrounding the southern Volga River, the manifesto promised settlers free land, freedom to exercise their religion, minimal taxation, and exemption from military service. Alexander I extended this invitation to include the Ukrainian lands north of the Black Sea in 1803.⁴

German immigrants weary from religious persecution, overtaxation, and forced military service soon poured into the area, forming settlements along sectarian lines. Strassburg, for instance, was predominantly Catholic. The immigrants maintained the customs and dialects of their homeland, opening schools and churches with minimal interference from Russian officials until 1871. That year, Alexander II, fearful of internal uprisings and seeking to stoke nationalist sentiment, demanded that all minority groups conform to Russian norms. If German settlers refused this order, the government would revoke their privileges.⁵

Amidst great unrest and suffering, many of the German settlers chose to immigrate to the United States and Canada. Those who made this journey joined an unprecedented surge in emigration from southern and eastern Europe during the late nineteenth century. While most of these newcomers sought work in the nation's burgeoning industrial cities, the promise of cheap land lured others further west. Many Germans from Russia looked to settle in agricultural areas throughout the Midwest and the Great Plains, which they believed resembled the flat

4. Michael M. Miller, comp., *Researching the Germans from Russia* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1987), pp. xvii–xx.

5. Ibid.

plains of the Russian steppes. The earliest German-Russian immigrants arrived in Dakota Territory in 1873 and settled in its southeastern corner, near the territorial capital of Yankton. Territorial officials had encouraged this immigration in hopes of boosting the population.⁶

In 1893, Paul and Katherine Burckhard, who married in Strassburg in 1878, joined other Germans from Russia in what by then had become the state of South Dakota. Paul Burckhard was born in Germany around 1854 and raised by his grandfather, a schoolteacher, and grandmother, a governess. It is unclear when the family moved to Strassburg. Katherine Miltenberger Burckhard, also known as Katie, was born around 1856 in Russia, as were both of her parents. Paul and Katherine's children, Egnaz, age fourteen, Philippina, age eleven, Peter, age five, and Barbara, age two, accompanied them to America. The Burckhards arrived in New York City on 14 April 1893 aboard the steamship

6. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, pp. 116–18. Many of the earliest German-Russian immigrants to South Dakota were Hutterites and Mennonites.



Paul and Katherine Burckhard posed with their children for this photograph in 1898, shortly after they moved to Aberdeen.

SS *Labn* after departing from Bremen, Germany.⁷ At some point after their arrival in the states, the family's surname changed from Burkhart to Burckhard. The reason for this change and the specific factors that inspired their move are unknown.

The Burckhards first settled in Leola, located northwest of Aberdeen in McPherson County, where they likely had family who had previously migrated. Both McPherson and its southern neighbor, Edmunds County, took in significant numbers of the Catholic German-Russian immigrants who surged into the territory following the railroad's arrival. Edmunds County was even home to a settlement called New Strasburg, just northeast of Ipswich. Immigrants from the same village also established Strasburg, North Dakota, not far north of the state line.⁸ In 1897, the family moved to Aberdeen and bought the house at 119 North Main Street. Two years later, they purchased the adjoining lot at 117 North Main Street. By that point, a sizable community of Germans from Russia called the city's north side home.⁹

While it is not clear whether any Burckhards had worked in bakeries before emigrating to South Dakota, they seem to have possessed a strong interest in the trade. Around 1903, Paul and Katherine sent their teenaged son Peter to work for the Ward-Owsley Company, a bakery and candy manufacturer regarded as one of Aberdeen's most successful businesses during the first decades of the twentieth century. The bakery began in the 1890s as part of the restaurant in the Ward Hotel, named for its owners Alonzo J. Ward, Sr., and Beecher Ward. The bakery soon expanded and moved to a new building. In 1903, Alonzo Ward asked William Owsley to join the management team, after which point the enterprise became known as the Ward-Owsley Company. The company soon became renowned throughout the region for its baked goods and sweets. Ward-Owsley used a fleet of delivery trucks

7. "Passenger Lists," *Heritage Review* 22 (Dec. 1978): 47–48.

8. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, p. 169; John P. Johansen, *Immigrant Settlements and Social Organization in South Dakota*, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin no. 313 (Brookings: South Dakota State College, 1937), p. 43. Strasburg, North Dakota, is the hometown of famed "champagne music" artist and television host Lawrence Welk, also a descendant of immigrants from Strassburg, Russia.

9. Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *A South Dakota Guide* (1938; new ed., Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2005), pp. 97–98.

to supply area grocery stores with its Golden Crust Bread and was the first bakery in Aberdeen to deliver bread in waxed wrappers, a practice that eventually became standard due to sanitary concerns. The company ground its own powdered sugar, supplied chocolate mints to railroad companies, and sold Chalet Caramels to stores as far away as Spokane, Washington, and Indianapolis, Indiana, before closing in the 1930s.¹⁰

During his time at Ward-Owsley, Peter Burckhard, also known as P. J., learned the fundamentals of baking and making candy. The North Side Bakery, meanwhile, was in its infancy. Though at least one article about the family business suggests that Katherine started the bakery in 1902, intending to pass it on to Peter, most accounts have the bakery opening in 1906. That year, Paul and Katherine hired Henry A. Schachte, a former railroad man who had built Saint Mary's Parish Church as well as several notable homes and businesses on Aberdeen's north side, to construct a building made of cement blocks and stones on the lot at 117 North Main Street, the bakery's location for the next eighty-seven years.¹¹ On 7 November 1908, the *Aberdeen Daily*

10. For examples of Ward-Owsley's early success and growth, see *Aberdeen Daily News*, 5 June 1918; *Aberdeen American News*, 3 Apr. 1927; and *Aberdeen Morning American*, 19 Aug. 1930. See also *Brown County History* (Aberdeen, S. Dak.: Brown County Museum and Historical Society, 1980), p. 298.

11. *Aberdeen Evening News*, 20 Dec. 1934. The ownership history of the bakery can be



Aberdeen's Ward-Owsley Company sold its confections throughout the region in elegant boxes and tins like these.

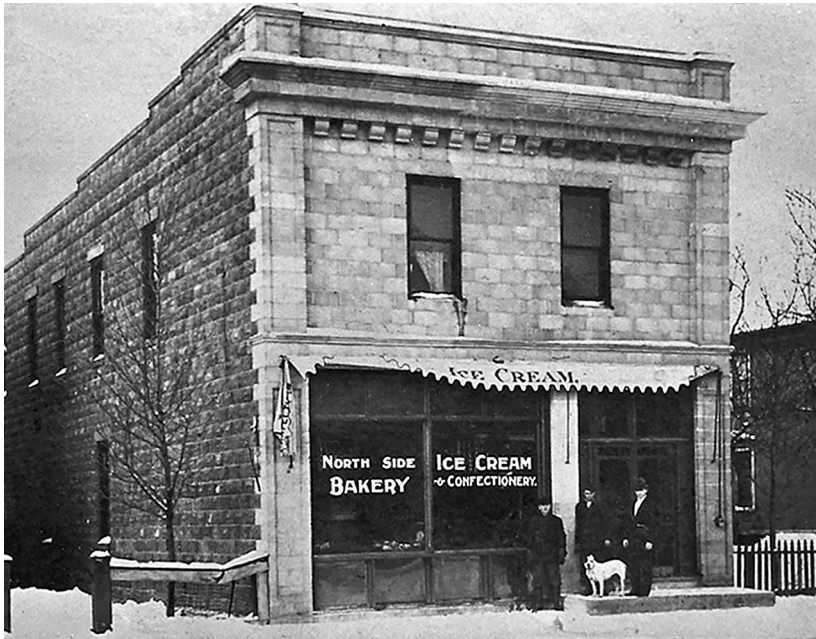
News reported that Peter had “bought” the bakery, noting, “He has been in the employ of the Ward Bros. bakery for a number of years and no doubt will do well in his new undertaking.”¹² Yet, property records indicate that Paul owned the building, meaning Peter likely managed the business. In March 1909, the *Aberdeen Democrat*, which described the bakery as “a very successful venture,” reported that Paul Burckhard had ordered the construction of a new two-story building, which still stands at 117 North Main Street.¹³ Regardless of when the bakery opened or who technically owned it, the business was a family affair from the outset.

By the summer of 1909, a slew of advertisements for Burckhard’s North Side Bakery began appearing in local newspapers. Advertise-

traced through various deeds recorded in the office of the Brown County Register of Deeds in Aberdeen.

12. *Aberdeen Daily News*, 7 Nov. 1908.

13. *Aberdeen Democrat*, 26 Mar. 1909.



This view taken around 1920 shows the North Side Bakery, along with three unidentified people, at its longtime location of 117 North Main Street.

ments and news items typically identified Peter as the proprietor, though family histories suggest that Katherine also ran the business during these years. The extent of Paul Burckhard's involvement in the bakery's day-to-day operations is unclear, but he may have been in ill health, as he died unexpectedly at his home on 6 March 1910. The *Aberdeen Daily News* described him as "one of the well known residents of the city, . . . prominent especially in the activities of the north side, which section he had aided in building up substantially."¹⁴

In the early years, Burckhard's North Side Bakery competed with larger enterprises like Ward-Owsley and the McDiarmid and Slater Store. The first floor of Burckhard's North Side Bakery accommodated a retail bakery with a confectionery store in front and the bakery equipment and production line in the back. The building's second floor had ten sleeping rooms, often rented by traveling railroad men, and one bathroom. Later, the family converted the rooms into three small apartments. By the time the bakery opened, the north side of Aberdeen, still known for its sizable population of Germans from Russia, had developed a robust shopping district, including a grocery store, hardware store, saloon, butcher shop, barber shop, livery stable, and hotel. From its inception, the North Side Bakery was a cornerstone of the community and a popular neighborhood gathering place, especially for those who hailed from the old country.¹⁵

While the community embraced the North Side Bakery, its success was not guaranteed. Small bakeries like Burckhard's had to convince locals to buy bread and baked goods rather than make them. As recently as 1890, women working at home produced 90 percent of the nation's bread. As the urban population grew and more women began seeking outside employment, buying bread became a common practice. A marked increase in bread sales led some observers to declare the period from 1900 to 1930 the "Golden Era" of bakeries in America.¹⁶ Still, small bakeries had to compete with the large industrial opera-

14. *Aberdeen Daily News*, 7 Mar. 1910.

15. *Aberdeen American News*, 17 June 1956; Federal Writers' Project, *South Dakota Guide*, p. 97; *Brown County History*, pp. 302–303.

16. William G. Panschar, *Baking in America*, vol. 1, *Economic Development* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1956), pp. 110–11.

tions that began proliferating thanks to developments in technology and transportation. By the early twentieth century, moreover, awareness of food safety spurred concern over how small shops prepared baked goods. Many assumed that food produced in industrial facilities, where machines did much of the work, was more hygienic than that made in smaller bakeries, where employees used traditional methods and worked with their hands.¹⁷ Burckhard's emphasized cleanliness in their advertisements to fight this stigma. As one of their 1909 ads put it, "All intelligent people want food that is pure and wholesome and we know that if you will inspect our bakery . . . you will become one of our regular patrons."¹⁸

The North Side Bakery's practices nonetheless stood in stark contrast to those of the high-capacity industrial bakeries that produced an increasingly large share of the nation's bread. In the beginning, the Burckhards used maple cases to store bread and bakery products. The family baked in an open-hearth oven located in the back portion of the first floor, using long-handled wooden peels to move goods in and out. To replace or repair a loose or damaged brick, one of the bakery's advertisements claimed, a baker often had to climb into the oven while it was still hot. The family also hand packaged and delivered their products using a horse-drawn wagon, whose jingling bell signaled to neighborhood families that fresh, hot bread was coming their way.¹⁹

The Burckhards made occasional improvements to the bakery's retail space to attract customers. In August 1909, they purchased a German silver soda fountain, which they mounted on an Italian marble countertop. Soda water came out of a spigot concealed within a huge stained-glass lamp that rested on a counter. The *Aberdeen Daily American* reported on the purchase, noting, "The North Side Bakery is growing with remarkable rapidity and yesterday a very impressive evidence of the prosperity being enjoyed by this enterprising establishment was the installation of a new soda fountain, the old one having been taxed beyond its capacity." Praising Peter Burckhard as "a baker of ability and

17. Aaron Bobrow-Strain, *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), pp. 17–50.

18. *Aberdeen Daily American*, 25 July 1909.

19. *Aberdeen American News*, 17 June 1956.

The Burckhards used this horse-drawn wagon to deliver bread and pastries in the bakery's early years.



enterprise,” the article continued, “the new fountain is of handsome design with a large plate glass back, marble top, while the draught-on is of Mexican onyx. It was purchased of the Ward-Owsley Co. of this city, and cost \$1,000.”²⁰

While the North Side Bakery continued to earn, as the *Aberdeen American-News* later put it, an “excellent reputation,” Peter Burckhard stepped down as manager in 1913.²¹ Despite this change, it remained a family enterprise. In October of that year, the *Northwestern Miller* reported that “Mrs. Kate Burkhard”—meaning Katherine, not Peter’s younger sister—had assumed full ownership of the business, having likely inherited it after Paul’s death.²² Frank B. Losacker, who married Peter’s sister Philippina in 1900, took over as manager. Peter’s role at the bakery during this period is unclear. He was, however, active in local athletics throughout the 1910s, participating in wrestling match-

20. *Aberdeen Daily American*, 8 Aug. 1909.

21. *Aberdeen Sunday American-News*, 3 Mar. 1921

22. “Bakery Notes,” *Weekly Northwestern Miller* 96 (22 Oct. 1913): 233.



An interior view of the bakery recorded around 1910 shows Peter Joseph Burckhard (wearing tie at right), Frank Losacker (behind the counter), and the business's famed soda foundation. The two workers are unidentified.

es in addition to pitching for and later managing the town's amateur baseball team.²³

In January 1917, the *Aberdeen Daily News* announced that Peter Burckhard had taken over the bakery's management once again. Later that year, Frank and Philippina Losacker left Aberdeen to purchase the Owsley Bakery in Watertown, changing its name to the Lake Kampeska Bakery.²⁴ After reassuming control of the business, Peter promised to "make any improvements that may be necessary to give his patrons the best quality of bakery goods combined with first class service."²⁵

23. *Aberdeen Daily American*, 21 Feb. 1912, 15 Aug. 1914.

24. *Aberdeen Daily News*, 4 Apr. 1917.

25. *Ibid.*, 15 Jan. 1917.

Peter served as the North Side Bakery's proprietor for decades, though the rest of the family, including his wife Luella, whom he married in 1910, and his mother, Katherine, who still owned the business, also made vital contributions.

By the early 1920s, the North Side Bakery's operations had become considerably more complex than in its early years. In 1921, the *Aberdeen American* described it as a "modern bakery" that ran both a day and night shift and sent out deliveries in a "Speed Wagon gasoline car."²⁶ The bakery had also purchased a Helm-Built oven with a baking capacity of five thousand loaves. The new oven exemplified how even smaller bakeries had gained access to modern technologies. As an advertisement for Helm-Built Ovens put it, "You need not to be big to be

26. *Aberdeen Sunday American-News*, 3 Mar. 1921.



Katherine Burckhard, pictured here around 1925, played an integral role in the bakery's success until her death in 1945.

modern.”²⁷ In 1929, Peter, at that time chairman of the South Dakota Bakers Unit’s northern zone, joined a group of like-minded professionals on a special visit to the Swander Bakery in Huron to see one of the most exciting innovations of the day in action: the bread slicer. The Chillicothe Baking Company in Chillicothe, Missouri, had produced the first automatically sliced loaves just a year earlier, and excitement over the recent invention spread quickly. Whether the North Side Bakery considered investing in a bread slicer is unclear, but the visit suggests Peter’s awareness of the baking trends of the day.²⁸

The North Side Bakery used its signature styles of bread to attract customers. In the early 1920s, it frequently advertised “Honey Health” and “Butter Crisp” loaves. The former was a sweet wheat bread, advertised as highly nutritious and well-suited for children. To promote the latter, described as “the superlative production of the baker’s ovens, the best bread that can be made,” the bakery held a “popularity contest,” awarding prizes that ranged from a furniture set to an electric percolator to the customers who turned in the most Butter Crisp bread wrappers and coupons.²⁹ Again revealing the proprietors’ awareness of consumer trends, by the late 1940s, Burckhard’s emphasized its Vitality Bread, a loaf enriched with vitamins. The practice of enriching bread originated in the years surrounding World War II, when concerns about vitamin deficiency in American youth sparked efforts to mandate the adding of vitamins—specifically thiamin, touted for boosting physical strength and mental stamina—to bread. Initially skeptical consumers embraced the concept, and by the 1950s most Americans considered enriched white bread a more nutritious product than the whole wheat bread previous generations had favored. Burckhard’s Vitality Bread was likely an altered version of one of its earlier loaves, for the bakery advertised the product as a fifty-year stronghold by 1956.³⁰

When Katherine, remembered as a “hub city pioneer,” died in 1945, Peter became the North Side Bakery’s sole owner. His children—Kathryn, Marie, Robert, and John—each contributed to the bakery during

27. *Baker’s Helper* 36 (1 Oct. 1921): 651.

28. *Evening Huronite*, 21 Aug. 1929; Bobrow-Strain, *White Bread*, pp. 55–56.

29. *Aberdeen Daily News*, 4 Dec. 1922.

30. Bobrow-Strain, *White Bread*, pp. 110–25; *Aberdeen American News*, 17 June 1956.

1906 — 1963



The "Oldest" Loaf Of Bread In Town
— BUT THE FRESHEST

BAKED RIGHT HERE IN ABERDEEN
FOR OVER 50 YEARS

VITALITY

IS OUR TRADEMARK

BURCKHARD BAKERS
Specializing In

● Pies	● Rolls	● Bread
● Birthday Cakes	● Wedding Cakes	● Special Orders

Wholesale Retail

"YOUR FRIENDLY HOME OWNED BAKERY"

BURCKHARD'S NORTHSIDE BAKERY

17 North Main Phone BA 5-7270 Aberdeen, S. D.

The bakery used its signature bread styles to attract customers, as seen in this advertisement for Burckhard's Vitality Bread.

his time as owner. Robert, who served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II, had become manager by the mid-1950s. The bakery hit its peak in those years, using four trucks to deliver baked goods to restaurants and groceries throughout Brown County and beyond. Bread from the North Side Bakery was sold in stores in Westport, Frederick, Houghton, Bath, Claremont, Langford, Pierpont, Groton, and as far away as Lemmon. During this period, the business employed over twenty individuals, including bakers, sales staff, and truck drivers.³¹ The bakery's increased reach reflected wider economic

31. *Aberdeen American News*, 3 Apr. 1945, 17 June 1956, 25 Mar. 1998.

trends. Bakeries that had managed to weather the Great Depression of the 1930s experienced a renewed boom beginning in the 1940s. Postwar declines in agricultural production, meanwhile, led to population losses in rural South Dakota, forcing small-town shops to close and funneling business to cities like Aberdeen. At the same time, improved transportation networks made long-distance deliveries possible. Though it expanded during these years, the bakery remained closely associated with the community, even receiving brief mention in a 1963 *Saturday Evening Post* article about a set of quintuplets born in Aberdeen.³²

When Peter Burckhard died in 1975, Robert, a member of the American Society of Bakery Engineers, assumed ownership of the business. On 25 January 1976, an advertisement in the *Aberdeen American News* marked the North Side Bakery's seventieth year by proclaiming, "We've Had a Positive Outlook for Four Generations." By that time, the North Side Bakery was the oldest wholesale-retail operation in the

32. Panschar, *Baking in America*, pp. 185–88, 213; Schell, *History of South Dakota*, pp. 329–36; Trevor Armbrister, "Our Town Is on the Map!" *Saturday Evening Post* 236 (16 Nov. 1963): 40.



Robert Burckhard posed alongside the bakery's delivery truck in 1948.



Peter and Luella Burckhard stand ready to serve customers at the bakery counter in this photograph from the 1940s.

area.³³ Several of Robert Burckhard and his wife Carroll's twelve children contributed to the bakery during their formative years and went on to careers in food service. Around the time of the bakery's seventieth anniversary, their son Peter—named for his grandfather—took over management of the business, though Robert maintained ownership. As Peter later explained his relationship to baking, "I've been doing it since I could see over the top of the sink."³⁴

Robert Burckhard received the Outstanding Private Employer Award from Governor George S. Mickelson in 1993, a testament to the bakery's high standing in the community and state.³⁵ The same year, however, the family business, described by the *Aberdeen American* as

33. *Aberdeen American News*, 25 Jan. 1976, 25 Mar. 1998.

34. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1993.

35. *Ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1993. The Burckhard family was highly active in their community. Carroll Burckhard, for instance, belonged to several local organizations and volunteered extensively, in addition to working as a journalist and a law enforcement officer in Aberdeen. See *ibid.*, 23 May 1991.



The façade and surroundings changed, but the bakery remained at its original location for four generations. The building is pictured here in the mid-1970s.

a “local landmark,” closed its retail operation. The bakery had been shrinking for years, and three employees—down from the twenty-plus that Burckhard’s counted at mid-century—lost their jobs when its retail business ended. The closure appeared on the *American’s* front page. Peter noted that the building’s silence brought back many memories. He recalled, for instance, how “the commissioners,” a group of regular customers noted for their habit of pondering the city’s problems over coffee, used to occupy the store’s now-empty chairs. He added, “I went downstairs and turned off the ice cream freezer, and I’m not a sentimentalist, but I nearly cried.”³⁶

For decades, the North Side Bakery had adapted to shifting consumer trends, but the gradual move of the city’s center of commerce away from North Main Street put it in a challenging position. Giving in to progress likely would have meant relocating the bakery to

36. Ibid., 2 July 1993.

an area where larger retail businesses were assembling, such as Aberdeen's Lakewood Mall, a change the Burckhard family decided not to attempt. While the bakery continued its wholesale operation and sold baked goods to restaurants and other area organizations for a few years, the development of large one-stop grocery stores and other changes in Aberdeen's retail landscape forced the nearly century-old business to shutter. The family sold the building at 117 North Main Street in 1996. Robert, who retired a few months after the bakery's storefront closed, died in 1998.³⁷

Over a decade after closing its doors, Burckhard's Bakery returned in 2008 as part of the Palm Garden Café at 602 South Third Street in Aberdeen. Peter Burckhard noticed the business was looking for a commercial baker and used the opportunity to resurrect the family's

37. Ibid., 25 Mar. 1998. On how changing cultural and economic trends in late-twentieth-century South Dakota affected small businesses, see Schell, *History of South Dakota*, pp. 357–60, 368–69.



Sitting amongst recently vacated tables, Peter John Burckhard reflected on the closing of the bakery's retail operation in 1993.

tradition of making bread and pastries.³⁸ Community members welcomed the bakery's return, and the *Aberdeen American* remarked that "bread and pastry lovers are saying 'how sweet it is' to have the Burckhard family bakery back on the scene in Aberdeen."³⁹ The revived bakery produced artisanal breads, cinnamon and caramel rolls, and assorted chocolates until Burckhard's retirement in 2015.

The community's lasting goodwill toward Burckhard's North Side Bakery reflects not only its distinctively fashioned baked goods, but also its management practices. Burckhard's was well known for its history of hiring individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities. The bakery also garnered praise for giving surplus bread and pastries to needy families in the community. According to Robert, the business had done so since its earliest years, when his father "gave bread to the hobos that came out of the Milwaukee (railroad)."⁴⁰ These traditions contributed to the bakery's success and bolstered its reputation.

Like other family-owned businesses in South Dakota, Burckhard's North Side Bakery faced numerous challenges over the course of its eighty-seven years. The enterprise envisioned by one family of German immigrants from Russia managed to navigate changing consumer trends and industry practices to become a community staple for four generations. Well regarded for its products and practices, Burckhard's bakery became a success story in the history of Aberdeen.

38. "Bread on the Rise; Palm Garden Café," *Aberdeen Magazine*, 8 July 2014, aberndeenmag.com/2014/07/palm-garden-café/, accessed 5 Dec. 2018.

39. *Aberdeen American News*, 28 Sep. 2008.

40. *Ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1993.

ROBERT W. SEBESTA

Book Excerpt

Early Churches in South Dakota: A Lasting Legacy

Although he did not realize it at the time, Robert W. Sebesta took on a monumental task when he began visiting rural churches around his former home of Yankton, South Dakota, in the early 2000s. His casual interest quickly became a mission to record their existence in photographs, and his collection of images grew as he returned numerous times to explore the entire state, with its varied people, religious denominations, and church architecture. The history of the congregations intrigued him as well, and he set out to create a book that related what he could discover about their past along with a visual record of those churches built before 1930 that survived into the first decades of the 2000s.

Published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press in 2018, Sebesta's *Early Churches in South Dakota: A Lasting Legacy* opens with an essay on South Dakota churches and their architecture by Elizabeth J. Almlie, historic preservation specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office. Sebesta then tells the story of the state's oldest surviving church, the Old Vangen Lutheran Church built near Mission Hill in 1869. His subsequent chapters are organized by decade, from the 1870s through the 1920s. Each begins with an historical overview of the period, followed by brief histories of selected churches along with Sebesta's color images.

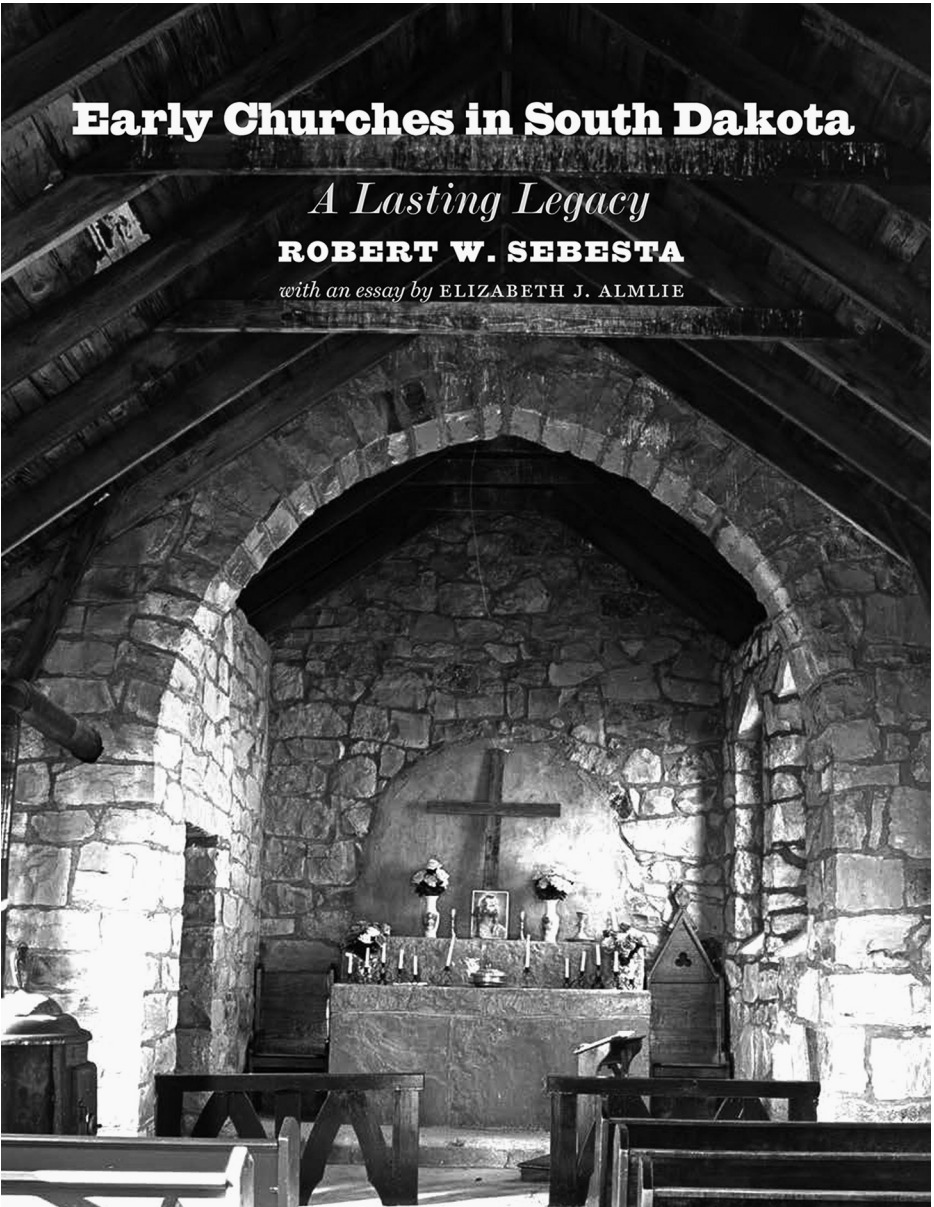
The final chapter—roughly half the book—is filled with photographs of every surviving church the author's research uncovered that had been constructed before 1930. That decade, when drought and the Great Depression prompted South Dakota's own exodus, left fewer people to attend the scores of churches built up to that time, and many buildings vanished. Sebesta's record of those that survive includes more than six hundred fifty images, organized by county and identified

Early Churches in South Dakota

A Lasting Legacy

ROBERT W. SEBESTA

with an essay by ELIZABETH J. ALMLIE



by name, location, year of construction, and the date the photograph was taken. Some are large structures still in their glory, while others are empty shells, ghosts of their former selves.

Highlighted here are churches that played roles in the lives of American Indians in South Dakota. Selected from the book's various chapters, they began as mission churches, both Protestant and Catholic, intended to convert and acculturate those who had known entirely different ways of life. Several remain in use as churches today.

First Presbyterian Church

Flandreau, 1873

In 1862, conflict between the United States government and the Dakotas, or Santees, in Minnesota erupted in what is now called the Dakota War of 1862.¹ Following the war, government officials held the Santees they arrested for trial in a prison in Mankato, Minnesota, while their families were sent to Fort Snelling. The Santee families were moved several times, including a forced stay at the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in Dakota Territory. Eventually, they were moved to the Niobrara Indian Reservation (later named the Santee Indian Reservation) in northern Nebraska. After military trials ended with the execution of thirty-eight warriors in Mankato, the remaining prisoners were eventually relocated to Niobrara, where they were reunited with their families after nearly three years of separation. On 21 July 1866, under the guidance of Rev. John P. Williamson, 382 Indians, including 225 who had been moved from Crow Creek, formed the Pilgrim Presbyterian Church.² Reverend Williamson had been working with the Santee prisoners during their captivity in Minnesota.

For the next two years, the Santees were uncertain of their future. The government had moved their agency several times, and they feared

1. For more on the Dakota War of 1862, see Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth, eds., *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), and Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson, eds., *Trail of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes Press, 2008).

2. Bruce D. Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840–1900," *South Dakota History* 7 (Spring 1977): 119.

they would be relocated to a more arid place. Some of the leaders were invited to participate in the negotiations of the Laramie Treaty of 1868, which they did. The treaty allowed any Indian who did not receive a tract of land on a reservation to homestead on public lands, provided they relinquished their tribal rights to government annuities. Successful homesteaders would be granted citizenship. Given the uncertainty of their lives, some Dakotas began to consider leaving the reservation and seeking homesteads. In October of 1868, several Santee families went north to hunt and to search for a suitable place for homesteading. They found such a place on a bend in the Big Sioux River, near the present-day town of Flandreau in Moody County. It was a fertile valley with trees along the river and plentiful game. In the last week of February 1869, one to two dozen Santee families, along with Reverend Williamson, began building log houses there. Because they had few horses, many of these travelers walked the one hundred and thirty miles from Niobrara to the “bend in the river.” During the difficult journey, they encountered a blinding Northern Great Plains blizzard and received rations from Fort Dakota, which was near the present site of Sioux Falls. On 3 October, forty-seven inhabitants of the new Santee village met and formed the Church at the River Bend, or River Bend Church.

In June of 1870, twenty-five Santee men signed a document in Yankton that forfeited their rights to annuities from the government and stated their desire to homestead on public land. During the summer of 1871, the Santee began to build a log meeting house to be used as a church. On 1 August, J. W. Edwards of Marquette, Michigan, contributed five hundred dollars for the construction of a church, followed by a bequest from the Second Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Ohio, for another two hundred dollars. The log construction was immediately halted, and plans were made to build a wood-frame meeting house. The Santees purchased lumber from Windom, Minnesota, eighty miles east of the new settlement, and hauled it by wagon to their building site.

The original frame meeting house soon became inadequate as more and more Santee people moved from Nebraska to the Bend in the River community. A new, larger church was a necessity. In August of 1873,



First Presbyterian Church, Flandreau, Moody County, 1873 [8/9/2006]

Reverend Williamson visited the new community from the Yankton reservation and offered to pay for some of the lumber to build a new church. The government bought the original meeting house for one thousand dollars and used it as a day school, first for Indian children and later for both Indian and white children. After its restoration in 1992, this meeting house stands today in the Moody County Museum grounds about six miles from its original location.

For the new church, the Santees purchased the lumber in Winona, in southeast Minnesota. Because of a lack of soft wood around Winona, white pine logs were shipped from Wisconsin and Minnesota to the lumber mill in Winona. Railroad cars carried the lumber to Marshall, Minnesota, where it was unloaded to oxen-pulled wagons, which hauled it the eighty miles to the church's building site, a journey that took several days.

The church design was for a twenty-four-by-fifty-foot building, with eight arched top windows, wainscoting, pine panels for the walls and ceiling, and a tall steeple. Francis and Anne Hawley purchased a fifteen-acre plot on a hill overlooking the river valley for fifteen dollars, and a local carpenter, P. A. Vannice, who was also the government schoolteacher, was hired to build the church. Men of the congregation helped. They used concrete, quartzite, and fieldstone to build the foundation. Church members donated \$175 for a four-hundred pound bell for the church, made in Troy, New York.

This structure is the oldest continuously used church in South Dakota. During the early years of the First Presbyterian Church, it was used by the non-Indian Second Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist congregations until they built their own churches. In 2003, the church was completely restored, including replacement of the steeple. One of the major accomplishments of this church congregation was the establishment of the first Indian school in Flandreau in 1879.³

Ascension Presbyterian Church

rural Peever, 1874

Ascension Presbyterian Church is the oldest church in both Roberts County and the northeast part of what became South Dakota. The congregation was formed in 1868 with forty-five members who built a frame church six years later in 1874. The Ascension Presbyterian Church is located five miles south and four miles west of the small town of Peever in Spring Grove Township. The town, with a 2010 population of 168, is about eight miles west of the Minnesota border and

3. *An Experiment in Faith: The Journey of the Mdewakanton Dakota Who Settled on the Bend in the River* (n.p., 2003), santeesioux.com; *History of Moody County* (Flandreau, S.Dak.: Moody County Historical Society, 1986), p. 18.



Ascension Lutheran Church, rural Peever, Roberts County [7/17/2007]

within the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. The Lake Traverse Treaty of 1867 created the reservation, which straddles present-day South Dakota and North Dakota. It was originally formed to be a home for parts of the Santee tribe, specifically the Sisseton and Wahpeton sub-tribes. Indian churches on reservations at that time were given forty acres of land.

The congregation, organized in 1868, did not name the church solely for the ascension of Christ during the first Holy Week. Instead, the church was built in a hilly area, and many members had to ascend at least one hill to attend services. The second minister of the church, Rev. John B. Renville, who was ordained in 1865, was the first Santee Indian to become an ordained Presbyterian minister. He served the church for thirty-three years, from 1870 until his death in 1903. The church is still in regular use.⁴

4. Roberts County Centennial Committee, comp., *Roberts County History* (Sisseton, S.Dak.: By the Compilers, 1961), p. 73.

Brown Earth Presbyterian Church

rural Stockholm, 1877

Not long after the establishment of the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation, the residents split into two opposing groups: the “church party,” members of which had converted to Christianity, and the “scout party,” whose members had served as scouts for the army in the Dakota War of 1862. The Homestead Act had been extended to Indians, providing that they relinquish their tribal rights to annuities. This factor, among others, induced about twenty-five families of the “church party” to leave the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation and establish a new settlement they named Brown Earth. In 1877, they built a Presbyterian church there, not surprisingly named the Brown Earth Church. The structure is located two miles north and two miles east of the small town of Stockholm (with a 2010 population of 108), in southwest Grant County.⁵

5. Information about the Brown Earth Church is found on the historical marker inside the church.



Brown Earth Presbyterian Church, rural Stockholm, Grant County, 1877 [7/16/2007]

Built from oak logs of local origin, the church is sometimes called the Old Indian Church. Although likely begun with great expectations, the settlement soon declined. In 1886, there were thirty-three families in the settlement, but only a dozen had received homesteads. When the Dawes Act in 1887 allotted each Indian head of a family the same amount of land on the reservation that white settlers were given on other government land, some of the people at Brown Earth chose to return to their original homes in Minnesota. Prior to this time, all reservation lands were owned by Indian tribes collectively rather than by individuals. The Brown Earth Church was abandoned after 1886.

Six years later, the Elim Covenant of Stockholm, South Dakota, bought the abandoned building; in 1901, they sold it to the Christian Church at Strandburg. In the late 1920s, American Legion Post No. 171 in Stockholm and Strandburg took responsibility for maintaining the building. They installed a concrete floor and replaced some of the original logs. The Old Settlers Society and Grant County Historical Association purchased the church in 1945, and in the next decade, the Peppy Pals 4-H Club planted trees near the structure. Since then, it has been the site of school and county picnics and an occasional worship service.

Oahe Chapel

rural Pierre, 1877

Congregational minister Rev. Thomas L. Riggs and his first wife, Cornelia Foster Riggs, established the Oahe Mission in 1874 to serve the Sioux Indians in what later became central South Dakota. The mission was located on the east bank of the Missouri River, about five miles upriver from Pierre at the former site of an Arikara village named Ti Tanke Ohe. The mission adopted the name, although it was soon shortened to Oahe. The first building at the mission was a log house, but by 1877, it had become too small to use as a meeting house. The Lakotas in the vicinity of the mission helped Reverend Riggs build the Oahe Chapel, using lumber brought by steamboat from Sioux City.

Like many such structures, the chapel served as both church and school in its first few years before the mission opened the Oahe Industrial School for Indian boys in 1883 and a second boarding school for Indian girls in the 1890s. The students of the original school, which



Oahe Chapel, rural Pierre, Hughes County, 1877 [5/25/2010]

included both children and adults, learned to read the Bible in Dakota first, and later in English. In the early years of the church, religious services were held in the Dakota language, but, by the 1930s, all were in English.

In the 1950s, Oahe Dam was built about five miles south of the mission, which would be inundated when the dam was completed. In 1957, the chapel was donated to the State of South Dakota to be maintained by the State Historical Society. It was temporarily moved to a location on higher ground and was moved again in 1964 to its present site near the east end of Oahe Dam. The Oahe Chapel Preservation Society and the State Historical Society, which now owns the building, restored the chapel in the late 1980s. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.⁶

6. U.S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Oahe Chapel," nps.gov/nr/travel/pierre_fortpierre/oahe_chapel_pierre.html.

Saint John's Episcopal Church

rural Oglala, 1888

Little is known about the origins of Saint John's Church, eight miles north of Oglala in what is now Oglala Lakota County. The Episcopalians had formed a mission near Pine Ridge Agency, which they named Holy Cross Mission in 1880, and Saint John's Church, built originally in 1888, was part of that mission complex and is most often referred to as Church of the Holy Cross, although it is also called Church of the Holy Fellowship.⁷ Situated near the current town of Pine Ridge, it played a significant role following the Wounded Knee Massacre on 29 Decem-

7. This building is called the Church of the Holy Fellowship in Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, *That They May Have Life: The Episcopal Church in South Dakota, 1859–1976* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), p. 61.



Saint John's Episcopal Church, rural Oglala, Oglala Lakota County, 1888 [9/9/2010]



Interior, Saint John's Episcopal Church

ber 1890. As a snow storm closed in, the United States Cavalry placed thirty-three wounded Indians, mostly women and children, in wagons and hauled them to the Pine Ridge Agency. For lack of a more suitable place, they were housed in the church. Before putting the wounded in the church, the staff and volunteers removed the pews and placed hay on the floor as padding, laying the patients on blankets and quilts atop the hay. The church had been decorated for Christmas, and a sign hung above the pulpit reading "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." In spite of the efforts of Dr. Charles Eastman and some agency charity workers, most of the injured Lakotas perished.⁸ Sometime after 1890, this church building was moved to its current location eight miles north of Oglala and renamed Saint John's Church.

8. In 1890, Eastman, who had received his medical training at Boston University, was the agency physician at Pine Ridge. Kay Graber, ed., *Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885–91* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp. 161–62.

Saint Ignatius Catholic Church

White River, 1899

In 1892, members of the Two Kettles band of Sioux Indians living in the White River area, which was still part of the Great Sioux Reservation, asked to be baptized as Catholics. Father Florentine Digmann, S. J., visited them and discovered that some of the Indians also wanted a church building. On 8 December 1897, forty acres of land on the Little White River were granted to provide space for a church. A cemetery had already been established on a hill on this property, a little more than a mile west of the eventual site of the town of White River. In July 1899, construction began on the church, using a donation of fifteen hundred dollars from Mother Katherine Drexel, a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament and a wealthy philanthropist in Philadelphia. The Jesuit Brothers of Saint Francis Mission, led by Brother Andrew Hartmann, built the church. They painted the church red, and it quickly became a landmark for the area. Father Digmann was the parish priest until 1905.

In 1921, the church was moved down the hill to the valley near the Little White River. This move was not without its costs. One of the men working on the move, Silas Standing Elk, injured his leg and died about a year later. While the church was in the valley, Grothe Hall was built near it. It was named for the parish priest at the time, Father Henry Grothe. The catechist, Francis Bordeaux, Sr., and his family lived in the hall for many years.

The church and the hall were moved to the town of White River in 1961. A local business in Winner managed the move. Soon after, the parish priest, Father George Stroh, did some remodeling of the building, including refinishing the floor himself. The donations continued. A parish in Fort Pierre brought in pews and a table; Saint Nicholas Church in Valentine, Nebraska, sent Stations of the Cross; the Roberts girls donated a statue of Mary; Tony Borszich of Mission built an altar and lectern. Buildings were also donated. A government-built house was brought to the site of the church from Spring Creek to be used as a rectory. A hall was moved in from Red Leaf, where it had been used as a church from 1955 to 1958 and in Norris before that.

A major remodeling of Grothe Hall and the church was done in

the spring of 1981. The new décor was chosen to emphasize the Indian roots of the congregation. Local people did most of the interior design. Christine Fogg designed and painted the decorations on the exterior. She also created the heads on the statues of Saint Joseph and Mary in the interior, which were designed to appear as Indians in form, complexion, and clothing. Fr. Bill Stolzman sculpted the statue of Jesus. Homer Whirlwind Soldier did the woodwork.

Controversy arose in 1966 when a new parish priest, Father Leon Rausch, decided to close the Sacred Heart Church in White River, which had a congregation that was nearly all white. His plan was for the congregation of Sacred Heart to join the congregation of Saint Ignatius. After a good deal of sometimes heated discussion, the bishop



Saint Ignatius Catholic Church, White River, Mellette County, 1899 [5/29/2010]

decided against the closure of Sacred Heart. Although separate churches for Indians and whites may have appeared scandalous, the decision was made to allow the two groups to have their own approaches to worship and to control the style of their worship spaces. On various occasions, the two parishes worshipped together.⁹ While Saint Ignatius Church is no longer in use, the building still stands in White River, near the center of Mellette County. The town's 2010 population was 581.

Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church

Saint Francis, 1922

In the early 1870s, the government assigned religious denominations to individual reservations to administer the agencies and educate the Indians. The Catholic church was largely left out of this process, possibly because several members of President Ulysses S. Grant's administration were Masons. However, some of the Teton Sioux had had contact with an early missionary, Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, a Jesuit priest who was born and educated in Belgium, and he had impressed them favorably. As a result, Chief Spotted Tail of the Rosebud Agency and Chief Red Cloud of the Pine Ridge Agency traveled to Washington in September of 1877 and met with President Rutherford B. Hayes to ask him to send Jesuit clergymen, whom they called Black Robes, to their reservations to educate their people. However, it did not happen quickly. After the death of Spotted Tail in 1881, Chief Two Strike of Rosebud directly invited the Jesuits to come to the reservation and establish a school. In response, Father Jutz and Brother Nunlist went to the Rosebud Agency and, with the help of a large donation from Mother Katherine Drexel, a rich nun from Philadelphia who later became a saint, built a forty-by-ninety-five-foot frame church in 1885 at the future site of the town of Saint Francis. Brother Henry Wissing served as architect and construction supervisor for the church, which they named Saint Charles Borromeo.

Father Florentine Digmann arrived at this mission in 1888. He brought with him three Franciscan nuns, Sisters Kostka, Rosalia, and

9. *75 Years in Mellette County* (White River, S.Dak.: Mellette County Historical Society, 1986), pp. 556–59.

Alcantara. These three established the Saint Francis of Assisi Mission School near Saint Charles Borromeo Church. Father Digmann went on to create thirty-seven mission stations around the reservation. Because many of the people on the reservation eventually moved to towns, the church gradually closed these missions, and most have disappeared. Only six parishes now serve the reservation. On 20 January 1916, the church and many of the mission buildings burned down.



Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, Saint Francis, Todd County, 1922 [8/16/2005]



Interior, Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church

The following year, the parishioners, led by Brother Andrew Hartman, began building a new church. To guard against another fire, he and his workers constructed the new building with eighteen-inch-thick concrete walls. The church, decorated with Sioux motifs, was completed and dedicated in 1922. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the church underwent renovation. The whole interior was redecorated. Artist George Hatcher accomplished this painstaking task. The twenty-four stained-glass windows were completely re-leaded. The exterior of the church is distinguished by its purple color.¹⁰

10. "Mission History" and "St. Charles Borromeo Parish," St. Francis Mission among the Lakota, sfmission.org; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 1:512, 516–19.

Chapel of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal)

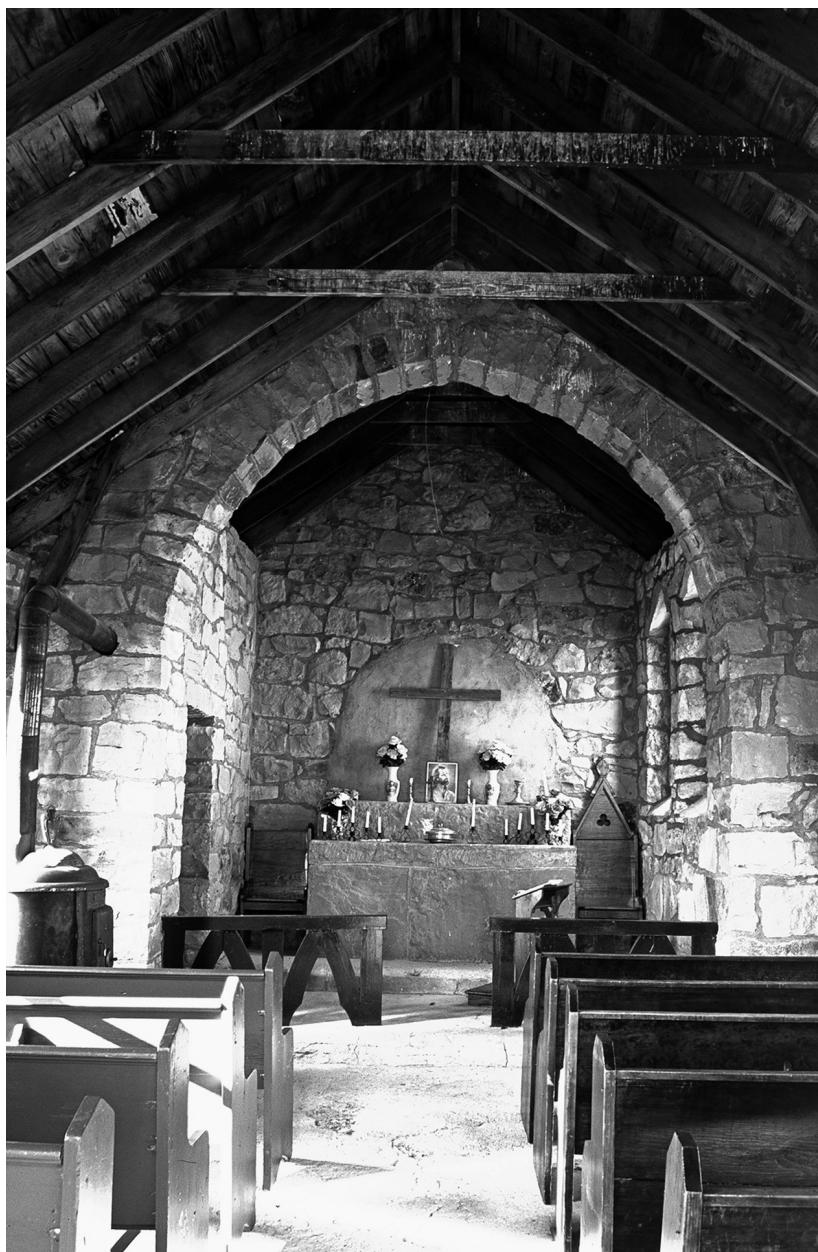
rural Firesteel, 1923

Firesteel is in the northwest part of Dewey County on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation (near its northern border). The town, established in 1910, was named after the nearby Firesteel Creek. In the late 1880s, Episcopalian missionaries built a small one-story wooden building as a preaching station along Firesteel Creek in Corson County on the southern border of Standing Rock, about ten miles north-northwest of Firesteel. As the wooden structure aged, the Indian congregation worked to put money aside for a new church.

In 1922, a surprise bequest made a new building possible sooner than expected. Mrs. George Cabot Ward of New York, a lifelong friend of Episcopal Bishop William Hobart Hare, had financially supported



Chapel of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal), rural Firesteel, Corson County, 1923 [8/18/2005]



Interior, Chapel of the Holy Spirit

his missionary work in the Northern Great Plains, in particular the building of churches on the reservations. The Society of the Double Temple in New York, which was also involved in philanthropy for the Indians of the Northern Great Plains, wanted to create a memorial to Mrs. Ward in South Dakota to recognize her many donations. They decided to build two memorial chapels in South Dakota. The northern chapel was to be built at the site of the preaching station on Firesteel Creek. The Society contributed the balance necessary to build the new church in Mrs. Ward's honor. Alfred Merton Githens, a New York architect, designed the architectural plans for the chapel for no fee. Friends of Mrs. Ward contributed the furnishings, altar books, a bell, and a communion service.

Construction began in the summer of 1922. Frank Waggoner of Keldron, a town in the northwest corner of the Standing Rock reservation, directed the construction of the chapel. Waggoner was a stonemason and building contractor. In 1890, he had built the coffin for Sitting Bull. His wife, Josephine McCarthy Waggoner, was a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Waggoner managed a crew of Indian volunteers, who quarried blue-gray sandstone blocks from a ridge above the site of the chapel. The blocks were rolled down the hill as far as they would go on their own. They were then loaded onto a stone boat (a flat sled without wheels), which a team of horses pulled to the construction site. Waggoner, with the help of volunteers, finished the rough stones there before they were placed on the walls of the building. The chapel was dedicated on 5 June 1923. The local people refer to it as the Old Stone Church. Two of the distinguishing features of the chapel are the large stone arch over the altar and the seven-foot-high Niobrara Cross embedded in the front wall above the doorway. Bishop Hare designed the Niobrara Cross in 1874, and small versions were given to Indians when they were confirmed to Christianity. The walls of the chapel are eighteen to twenty inches thick.

By 2000, the chapel needed serious restoration. For this project, the Mary Chilton Daughters of the Revolution Foundation donated seventy-five hundred dollars; the Deadwood Historic Preservation Fund donated ten thousand dollars; the descendants of Frank and Jo-

sephine Waggoner made a significant donation; an anonymous donor contributed ten thousand dollars; and numerous smaller donations were received. The two primary parts of the restoration were the complete replacement of the roof and the tuck pointing (removing and replacing mortar) of the stonework. Currently, the chapel is accessible only by several miles of travel through a private ranch. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The chapel sometimes is used for special events, such as weddings.¹¹

11. Jack Bickel, "Holy Spirit Chapel: 'The Old Stone Church'" and "Restoration Gave Chapel New Life," in *Timber Lake and Area Centennial History, 1910–2010* (Timber Lake, S.Dak.: Timber Lake and Area Historical Society, 2009), pp. 168–72.

BOOK REVIEWS

All communications regarding book reviews and review copies of books should be sent to Book Review Editor, *South Dakota History*, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217.

Converting the Rosebud: Catholic Mission and the Lakotas, 1886–1916

Harvey Markowitz. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 320pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$34.95.

When Sicangu Lakotas met Catholic missionaries, Harvey Markowitz argues, they willingly incorporated the “ceremonies that [Father Pierre-Jean] De Smet and other agents of Wakan Tanka” promoted into Lakota beliefs and practices. Tribal members on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, however, found it “unacceptable and absurd” to abandon their own traditions for the “ways and teachings of a *wanikiye* (lifegiver) named Jesus” (p. 182). Markowitz centers his analysis between these instances of Lakota acceptance of Christian elements and support for their own traditions on the northern plains.

The thirteen-chapter work places historical developments at Rosebud within a national historical context, examines the philosophical backgrounds and perspectives of Catholic missionaries and Sicangu Lakotas, and explores the challenges and complicated results of their interactions. The first three chapters connect missionary work and federal Indian policy, reveal emerging tensions between different Christian denominations in Indian country, and link the multiple federal efforts to push Sicangus and other American Indians from sovereign people to wards of the nation. Chapters four through six focus on the evolution of Catholic missionary work in Indian country, including the rise of Martin Marty, O.S.B., to bishop of Dakota Territory; pragmatic Lakota interests in working with “Sina

Sapa” (“Black Robes,” or Catholic priests); and the anti-Catholic programs of Otto von Bismarck in Germany that pushed many German priests to Buffalo, New York, and then the Dakotas. Markowitz’s chapters seven and eight then examine the early pragmatic challenges of setting up Saint Francis Mission in 1886 and the philosophical context of missionaries who promoted American “civilization” processes to lay the foundation for their main goal of religious transformation.

Markowitz’s most significant contributions come in the last chapters that more deeply consider Lakota psychology and philosophy, the pragmatic goals of Sicangu leaders in reaching out to Catholics, and the complications of religious syncretism. He explores the nature of Lakota spirituality when he examines how the “ontological chasm” between the natural and supernatural worlds of Judeo-Christian traditions did not exist in Lakota religious thought (p. 168). Rather, Lakota receptivity to religious emissaries, rooted in their own traditions, prepared them to engage with new spiritual traditions. Pragmatic realities of the era also led Lakotas like Spotted Tail and Red Cloud to work with Catholics to attain more secular goals for their people.

Intercultural communication created opportunities and left room for misappropriation and reshaping of each other’s traditions. Markowitz shows that to gain converts, Jesuit priests often highlighted “superficial similarities” at the cost of “blurring fundamentally different assumptions” about the sacred (p. 209). While priests would voice opposition to Lakota traditions like the *hanbleceya* (vision

quest), they might also appropriate the Lakota term to describe (problematically) their own Catholic retreats to parishioners. Lakota leaders also exerted agency in refashioning Catholic traditions to fit with their own. The annual Catholic Sioux Congresses, for instance, revealed several rituals and structures akin to the Sun Dance.

Markowitz concludes that rather than constituting a formulaic story of assimilation, Catholic work at Rosebud faced challenges on spiritual, social, and cultural levels. Lakotas and Catholics influenced each other. As we have just observed the centennial of the end of World War I, this work, which concludes just prior to the United States' entry into that conflict, provides us with valuable context for understanding the challenges, possibilities, and complexities of intercultural relations in our own time.

ROBERT W. GALLER, JR.
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The Commanders: Civil War Generals Who Shaped the American West

Robert M. Utley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 256pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$29.95.

Robert M. Utley ranks as the preeminent historian of the United States Army in the West after the war against Mexico while also standing tall among the present generation of scholars of the larger western experience. Drawing upon over fifty years of research and writing, Utley presents an intriguing assessment of the key commanders of western military departments following the Civil War: Christopher C. Augur, George Crook, John Pope, Oliver O. Howard, Nelson A. Miles, Alfred Terry, and Edward O. C. Ord. All fought with or commanded Union forces during the war, believed that national expansion advanced the cause of civilization, and oversaw campaigns against Indians after 1865. All save Miles (clerk) and Terry (lawyer) graduated from West Point.

Utley's approach to ranking these generals says much about the realities of the western military experience. Important, of course, was fighting Indians—whether leading from the field or overseeing operations from department headquarters. To do so, only Crook had developed unconventional tactics to deal with his unconventional enemies, most notably using pack mules rather than oxen on the campaign and employing large numbers of allied Indian auxiliaries. But his indifferent performance during the Great Sioux War in 1876–1877 and failure to defeat the Apaches in Arizona a decade later meant that his rival Miles, who saw victories in the Red River War, the Great Sioux War, and the Nez Perce conflict, ranks highest in this category.

Fighting Indians, however, took up only part of the responsibilities of a department commander. As Utley rightly observes, a good administrator could improve the lives of soldiers and promote regional development. After all, the army laid telegraphs, protected railroad construction, employed civilians, and offered lucrative contracts. In the process, it served as the federal government's largest deployable resource in a region that coveted federal dollars. With only tiny staffs to assist them, overseeing large and complex commands over a broad geographical area demanded a careful eye for tedious detail, an understanding of how best to cooperate with one's division commander and navigate War Department bureaucracy, and careful management of resources in an era that saw the regular army reduced from more than fifty-four thousand to less than twenty-five thousand men. Here the irascible and egotistical Miles fell woefully short.

The relatively unknown Augur thus earns Utley's highest overall rating, followed in descending order by Crook, Pope, Terry, Howard, Miles, and Ord. Utley's praise for Augur should surprise few specialists but will undoubtedly shock the general reader. Easily the best administrator of the lot, Augur worked hard, if with little fanfare, to promote civilian development and from his desk effectively supported Indian campaigns

in his departments of the Platte and Texas. We do not know much about what made the man, the only one of those under review who has not received at least one full biography. With a cache of Augur's papers available at the Newberry Library, a smaller collection in the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, letters scattered throughout the papers of other officers in the Library of Congress, and voluminous official documents at the National Archives, Utley's assessment sounds a clarion call for an enterprising author to fill this yawning gap in the literature.

ROBERT WOOSTER

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America's Best Female Sharpshooter: The Rise and Fall of Lillian Frances Smith

Julia Bricklin. William F. Cody Series on the History and Culture of the American West. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. 224pp. Illus. Notes. App. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$24.95.

In this carefully researched biography, the second book in the William F. Cody series, Julia Bricklin separates myth from fact in the life and career of sharpshooter Lillian Smith. Bricklin's biography provides a distinct perspective on how women navigated the "shooting and vaudeville world" (p. 9). To find fame in that world, Smith turned to the common act of "playing Indian," remaking herself as "Princess Wenona."

Lillian Smith learned to shoot through hunting game with her father in California in the 1870s. Before she was ten, her father advertised her abilities in exhibitions where she competed for money. In 1886, the teen-aged prodigy Smith signed on with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, as did Annie Oakley. Smith stayed with William Cody's production for two years before returning disappointed from England, a trip where Oakley proved more adroit at navigating society, gaining media attention, and obtaining sponsorships.

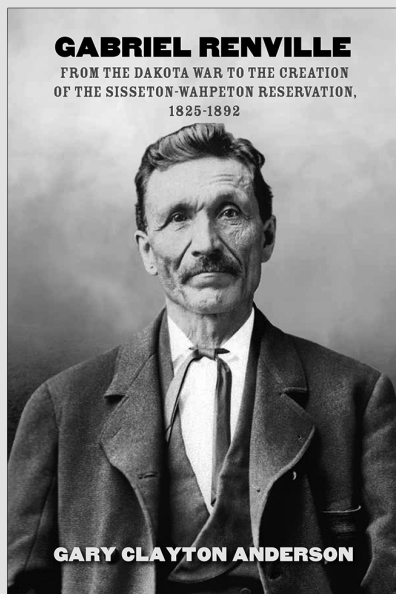
Oakley remains the more well-known and celebrated figure because, unlike Smith, she crafted a persona that followed norms of genteel white womanhood.

Smith continued to make her living as an exhibition shooter in competing Wild West shows. She worked under her father's mediocre management until her second marriage in 1900 to Charles ("Frank") Hafley, a much more effective agent. Bricklin speculates that Smith might have faded into obscurity had she not developed a winning promotional strategy around this time. She created the persona "Wenona," inspired by the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem "The Song of Hiawatha." Assuming the Wenona character played to then-popular cultural stereotypes of the Indian princess who would never fully assimilate and also allowed Smith greater latitude in her act. Over the next two decades, "Wenona" moved between vaudeville and various Wild West outfits.

Smith's career indicates that Wild West shows offered women limited release from restrictive gender norms as illustrated through the different career trajectories and reputations of Smith and Oakley. The biography would benefit, however, from more analysis of the gender dynamics of the business and context on other evolving forms of mass culture.

There are missed opportunities in Bricklin's handling of Smith's "Wenona." The author seems to marvel at Smith's trading of her privileged white femininity to "play Indian" yet is undecided on the implications of this "identity shift." Bricklin argues that this shift was more than a "professional passport" but enabled Smith to "distance herself from her biological family" and develop relationships in the ethnically diverse business (p. 7). Still, it is clear that however completely "Wenona" came to erase "Lillian Smith" on the marquee, Smith continued to capitalize on the privileges of whiteness.

Bricklin grapples with the politics of Smith's persona by noting her intimacy with prominent American Indians in the show trade, which she uses to conclude that



“This book captured me from the first page. It tells
the tale of the strength and courage of a man
determined to help his people.”

—*Lakota Country Times*



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"ethnocentricity simply was not a concern in the times she lived" (p. 132). This claim is poorly supported and troublesome because, as Smith's contemporary Luther Standing Bear observed, "We real Indians were held back, while white 'imitators' were pushed to the front" (p. 131). This otherwise fascinating history of an obscure Wild West entertainer would benefit from deeper analysis and contextualization of the gendered politics of race and ethnicity in Lillian Smith's long career "playing Indian."

SARA E. LAMPERT

University of South Dakota
Vermillion, S.Dak.

Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City: Re-creating the Frontier West

Kevin Britz and Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 280pp. Illus. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$32.95.

Few towns conjure up visions of the Old West as readily as Tombstone, Arizona; Deadwood, South Dakota; or Dodge City, Kansas. Tourists flock to these communities, hoping to find reminders of a violence-prone American frontier. To fulfill these expectations, residents of these towns have created historical identities based on their violent boomtown origins. "How and why these three communities . . . came to focus on their disorderly pasts" (p. 4) is the main point of *Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City*. This book got its start as Kevin Britz's dissertation. Regrettably, he died before it could be published, but his University of Arizona advisor, Roger Nichols, believed the research was "too good to remain virtually hidden" (p. xi). Nichols then revised, expanded, and rewrote it. Their combined efforts effectively demonstrate how each town transformed into "a living monument to Americans' perceptions of the Old West" (p. 7).

As a comparative study, the book analyzes the similarities and differences of the three communities, which all followed surprisingly

similar paths. The emergence of western characters drew early attention to the boomtowns. As readers of *South Dakota History* know, Wild Bill's death and dime novel dramatizations forever connected Deadwood to violence, giving the town "a wide popular reputation" (p. 30). Community leaders initially wanted to downplay the negative images, fearing they would deter modern development. Those attitudes changed after World War I, however, as Americans became nostalgic for the "Old West" with its seemingly simpler times and began visiting the former boomtowns. Seeing a way to solve economic problems, town promoters embraced their colorful pasts. In Deadwood, boosters opened the Pine Crest tourist camp, marked "Wild West" locations such as Saloon Number 10, and developed the Days of '76 celebration. These actions demonstrated that community leaders had come to accept their town's "special place in American history" (p. 128).

While western movies and television shows brought more tourists, when the "golden age" of Westerns came to an end, each town sought to have its historic importance validated nationally. Deadwood's Adams Museum, national historic landmark designation, and preservation movement, for example, contributed to that location's claim of legitimacy. According to the authors, all three towns received national affirmation of their historical significance by the 1990s. In the process, each had turned its violent past into a profitable "commercial venture" (p. 209).

The authors convincingly demonstrate how history and tourism overlapped and evolved in Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City. People interested in these towns and in tourism will find this book worthwhile, but it is not meant for readers who are looking for exciting shootouts. It is about how the "Wild West" became profitable. While the book is thoroughly researched and well written, several factual errors exist, at least in relation to Deadwood. For instance, 12 August 1876 is given as the day Wild Bill died (p. 38). In fact, he was murdered on 2 August, and there are

other mistakes. Although a cause for concern, these lapses do not outweigh the book's overall excellence.

DAVID A. WOLFF

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Spearfish, S.Dak.

Indians Illustrated: The Image of Native Americans in the Pictorial Press

John M. Coward. History of Communication Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. 228pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Paper, \$29.95.

This book analyzes images of American Indians in the late nineteenth-century illustrated press, primarily *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*, to expose the medium's influence on white Americans' perceptions. The results are impressive: eight chapters centering on topics ranging from American Indian portraits from the 1850s to Indian and African American cartoons from the 1890s. The images are both art and artifact of white America's ongoing need to categorize Indians. As art, these depictions began as field sketches that underwent multiple interpretations, and usually exaggeration, by professional illustrators tasked with producing commercial images. As artifact, they turned into press-ready engravings overnight and landed in the hands of 190,000 Americans in two weeks.

Most Americans came to know and remember American Indians based on these popular images, the focus of the initial three chapters. Illustrators routinely distinguished between civilized, "good" Indians and savage, "bad" Indians according to the national mood. Indian women were especially ripe subjects for interpretation and were variously drawn as either beautiful Indian princesses or degraded squaws. While no surprise to most modern readers, Coward ably shows how Indian women also became territorial symbols and exotic, romanticized images of ideal motherhood.

The author then examines the mechanics

of producing these illustrations in the popular press specifically for a white, urban, and eastern audience. In chapter four, Coward employs the career of Theodore Davis, special illustrator to *Harper's Weekly* best known for his after-the-fact illustrations of Custer's Last Stand, as a case study. In one of the book's most telling examples of image manipulation, Coward compares Davis's illustrations and first-person description of an 1865 attack on a stagecoach with two later accounts. At each step, there is a clear and easy falsification of the visual facts to meet audience expectations. Fifteen Indian attackers became hundreds, and illustrators conveniently dropped the attackers' white leader from later drawings. In another instance, Davis described but chose not to sketch the plight of a cowboy whom Indians had tortured to death. Subsequent accounts, however, graphically depicted the mutilated cowboy and made him the centerpiece of their chosen narrative. This casual progression of "facts" culminating in searing images of Indian savagery highlight the power of the popular press both to create and perpetuate Indian stereotypes.

Coward's final chapters describe a telling trajectory for these stereotypes within a national narrative. The greater the perceived Indian threat, the more negatively the popular press presented Indian subjects. These portrayals reached their expected crescendo just after the Little Bighorn and then again prior to Wounded Knee but declined rapidly as the Indian threat diminished. Coward proves his point in a novel way. He compares cartoons of Indians after Wounded Knee to cartoons of African Americans in the same journals. After Wounded Knee, American Indians were consistently portrayed more sympathetically than African Americans. Blacks were citizens with rights, and as they more effectively exercised those rights, they replaced Indians as the objects of national jest and ridicule.

In all, this book is an engaging example of "visual history" done well. It will appeal to readers broadly interested in the Great

Plains, as those tribes figure prominently in every chapter and are the subject of well over half of the sixty-two popular press images reproduced in the book.

DAVE GRETTLER

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Aberdeen, S.Dak.

Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian.

Directed by Jesse Heinzen. Dakota Eastman Productions, 57 mins., 2018. DVD. Home Version, \$29.95. Educational Version, with Study Guide, \$225.00.

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa) (1858–1939) is well known in the annals of American Indian history. His rise to prominence is truly remarkable. This documentary, *Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian*, covers many aspects of his career and life. Kate Beane, a Flandreau Dakota and public historian at the Minnesota Historical Society, serves as the film's principal narrator. Ohiyesa is her great-great granduncle, and his brother, clergyman John Eastman, is her great-great grandfather. Several of Ohiyesa's other descendants also appear in the documentary.

The documentary presents an overview of Ohiyesa's life, tracing his early years of training in traditional Dakota ways to his abrupt entrance into white educational schools at the age of fifteen, and, ultimately, receiving his medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine in 1890. Several aspects of his subsequent life are less well covered, however, including his professional career as a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employee. Ignored is his employment as an outing agent at Carlisle Indian School, as a government physician on the Crow Creek reservation, as director of a government project to rename Sioux Indians, and as an Indian inspector. In nearly all these positions, he had problems with his superiors. His first government job was at the Pine Ridge reservation in 1890, and his role there during the Wound Knee Massacre is covered well. Discussion of Ohiyesa's difficulties with the Indian agent,

however, leaves the impression that he was entirely correct in the dispute, ignoring the fact Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association and future president Theodore Roosevelt supported the agent in the controversy. The question that should be asked is: Could Ohiyesa have succeeded as an educated Indian working for the BIA during this time period? Additionally, he was not successful when he tried to open a medical practice in Saint Paul, Minnesota, after he left Pine Ridge. Ohiyesa's work with the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America is also discussed.

Ohiyesa's books and lecture engagements became the main source of income for him and Elaine Goodale Eastman, whom he met at Pine Ridge, and their growing family. Tensions between husband and wife increased as the years passed. Her roles as a major editor of his publications and manager of his lecture engagements could have been better emphasized. Financial problems continued to haunt the couple even after they opened a summer camp in New Hampshire in 1916. They separated after Ohiyesa had an affair that produced a daughter in 1919. More could have been mentioned on his life and activities in the 1920s and 1930s.

Beane stresses an indigenous perspective, oral tradition, and family reflections as ways to better understand Ohiyesa. To be complete, the program should have included comments by relatives of his daughter born out of wedlock, who called herself Bonno Hyessa. They, too, are proud of him. Additionally, the fact that Ohiyesa was an acculturated rather than an assimilated Indian who practiced syncretism (blending his spiritual and cultural beliefs with aspects of white society) could have been better emphasized.

Finally, the program is visually appealing. Those wanting a more thorough and balanced account of this fascinating individual can consult the publications of Theodore D. Sargent and this reviewer.

RAYMOND WILSON

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The New Deal's Forest Army: How the Civilian Conservation Corps Worked

Benjamin F. Alexander. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. 192pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Paper, \$19.95.

For me, one of the most fascinating programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal is the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), in particular because I worked as assistant director of a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) camp during the summer of 1977. The YCC is a direct descendant of the CCC; for a historian, the threads of time run deep.

The CCC was Roosevelt's favorite project. The preservation and rehabilitation of the nation's forested lands and extensive watersheds had occupied his attention as a landowner and as governor of New York. As president, he brought his interests in conservation to the White House and incorporated them into a national program that both improved America's lands and employed thousands of young men across the country during the worst economic depression it had faced.

Located across the nation, CCC camps operated under the authority of the United States Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture or the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior. The CCC's recruits followed military-style discipline and worked on a variety of projects while living in camps that provided hearty meals and educational opportunities.

Benjamin Alexander, who teaches American history at the New York City College of Technology, provides an informative history of America's "tree army." The book is divided into five chapters, with each one answering a basic question. These include "how the CCC came about," "how boys and men joined the CCC," "how enrollees labored and learned,"

"how enrollees spent their leisure time," and "how the coming of war spelled the end of the CCC." Alexander notes that not only did the corps employ young men, it also hired veterans and included African Americans and American Indians. Between 1933 and 1943, over three million enrollees took part in its programs.

Alexander does not ignore criticisms of the CCC. Labor unions worried about the wages paid to enrollees. Some people worried about the military overtones of the camps and the possibility that it thwarted individual freedoms. Still, Roosevelt persevered, and the program flourished. Enrollees not only carried out forest restoration programs, they built parks, visitor centers, museums, camp and picnic grounds, and roads and bridges. Many of the edifices are still utilized today, and the nation's parks, both state and federal, bear the mark of the CCC.

The author's organizational method is outstanding for general readers with little or no knowledge of the CCC as well as appealing to readers who have read extensively about the Roosevelt presidency. Photographs are scattered throughout the text. The notes make fascinating reading and reflect the author's extensive research in archives, use of published sources, dissertations and theses, academic journals, biographies, and primary sources including the CCC's own newspaper, *Happy Days*.

This volume will be of interest to all readers. The next time you visit a state park with a rustic lodge, take a long look at the bronze plaque noting that it was built by the CCC and be sure to say "Thank you."

PATRICIA ANN OWENS
Lawrenceville, Ill.

Book Notes

Brave Hearts: Indian Women of the Plains. By Joseph Agonito. Lanham, Md.: TwoDot, 2017. 344pp. Illus. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$24.95. Written for a general audience, this book illuminates the diverse experiences of twenty-two Plains Indian women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A Brief History of Nebraska. By Ronald C. Naugle. Lincoln: History Nebraska, 2018. 143pp. Illus. Map. Ind. Paper, \$14.95. In this slim volume, the author presents a concise overview of the environmental and human history of the region that is now Nebraska.

A Cycle of the West. By John G. Neihardt. Annotated by Joe Green. Introduction by Alan Birkelbach. Bison Classic Annotated Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 780pp. App. Ind. Paper, \$44.95. Neihardt, the first poet laureate of Nebraska, focused much of his writing on the land and historical figures of the American West. His five epic poems are presented here in a new edition.

Fort Meade: Peacekeeper of the Black Hills. By Roberta Sago and Lee Stroschine. Images of America Series. Mt. Pleasant, S.C.: Arcadia, 2018. 128pp. Illus. Biblio. Paper, \$21.99. Historical context accompanies the numerous images in this pictorial history of the former military post in western South Dakota.

Great Plains Literature. By Linda Ray Pratt. Discover the Great Plains Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 168pp. Illus. Map. Ind. \$14.95. Pratt explores the influential literature of the Great Plains to understand both the region's historical and modern issues.

Great Plains Politics. By Peter J. Longo. Discover the Great Plains Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 127pp. Illus. Map. Ind. \$14.95. The importance of community in Great Plains political history and culture are shown through the lives of six political figures from the region.

The Killing of Chief Crazy Horse. Edited and Introduced by Robert A. Clark. Commentary by Carroll Friswold. Bison Classic Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 150pp. Illus. Ind. \$19.95. The editor brings together three eyewitness accounts, each one providing a different perspective on the chaotic events surrounding the death of the famed Oglala Lakota chief Crazy Horse.

Out Where the West Begins, Volume 2: Creating and Civilizing the American West. Philip F. Anschutz with William J. Convery. Denver: Cloud Camp Press, 2015. 392pp. Illus. Sources. Ind. Cloth, \$34.95. This work highlights the influence of more than one hundred leaders in American military, political, and cultural history on the development of the American frontier.

Announcements

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society, provides financial support for the work of the society in preserving and interpreting the state's rich past. The foundation offers a number of giving opportunities for donors who wish to leave a legacy of history for future generations. For information on making a contribution or bequest, please contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone, (605) 773-6001.

The South Dakota State Historical Society will hold its annual history conference 26–27 April 2019 at the Ramkota River Center in Pierre. The society's State Archives is organizing the event, entitled "New Insights into Old Stories." For more information, call (605) 773-3458, or visit online at www.history.sd.gov.

The Northern Great Plains History Conference has issued a call for papers for its fifty-fourth annual conference to be held in Brandon, Manitoba, 25–28 September 2019. Proposals for individual papers and complete sessions in all fields of history are encouraged. The 2019 conference will be held in conjunction with the Western Canadian Studies Conference, and papers that explore indigenous and settler colonial experiences of the northern grasslands on both sides of the international boundary are especially encouraged. Proposals for papers or sessions must include a one-paragraph abstract and a one-page vita for each participant. Please email proposals to James Naylor, Naylor@BrandonU.ca, indicating "NGPHC" in the subject line, by 12 April 2019.

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Dakota Images

Harry E. Swander established a pioneering family-owned bakery in Rapid City that remained in operation for over a century. The Swander Bakery's historic building still stands as a testament to the vital role of small businesses in the area's development.

Born in Tiffin, Ohio, in July of 1863, Swander received little formal education, leaving school at the age of twelve to work on a local farm. At sixteen, he became a baker's apprentice in Bedford, Iowa. In 1885, with a meager thirty-seven-dollar investment, he co-founded a bakery in nearby Clarinda. After selling the business, Swander tried his hand at homesteading in Nebraska until financial difficulties drained his savings. He briefly worked as a railroad lineman and then opened a restaurant in Alliance.

Swander and his first wife, Viola, married in 1888. The next year they moved to Rapid City and started a small grocery and confectionery shop. Swander Bakery opened as an offshoot of the family business in 1892. The bakery weathered the economic bust that soon followed to become, as a 1915 autobiographical sketch of Swander claimed, "one of the best and largest of its kind in South Dakota." Following a divorce, he married Clara Patton, owner of the Patton Hotel, and began investing in and operating local hotels. While Swander retained ownership of the bakery, his oldest son Edward took over its management in 1917. In the decade that followed, Swander Bakery opened new locations in Deadwood and Huron. In 1928, the original plant moved into an eleven-thousand-square-foot building at 601 Twelfth Street in Rapid City. An advertisement declared that the new facility made it the state's largest and "most modern" bakery.

Harry Swander, whom the *Rapid City Daily Journal* remembered as a "pioneer businessman," died in Rochester, Minnesota, in 1935. Swander Bakery, however, continued to grow. Its Rapid City plant doubled in size after it joined the Quality Bakers of America, a national cooperative, in 1949. The Iowa-based Metz Baking Company bought out Swander Bakery in 1955, but Harry Swander's younger son Charles remained general manager until retiring in 1970. The building remained an operational bakery until the mid-1990s. In 2001, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, solidifying its reputation as a local landmark.