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# MORE THAN STATEHOOD ON THEIR MINDS

## SOUTH DAKOTA JOINS THE UNION, 1889

JOHN E. MILLER

“IT’S A GO,” read the jubilant headline in the *Huron Daily Huronite* on 21 February 1889, one day after Congress passed the Omnibus Bill admitting four new states into the Union—South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, and Washington.<sup>1</sup> The following day, despite speculation that he might veto the legislation, President Grover Cleveland signed the bill into law, setting into motion a process that formally conferred statehood on South Dakota on 2 November 1889. For almost a decade momentum had been building in southern Dakota for this day, and people’s frustrations with Congressional inaction had grown apace.<sup>2</sup>

No state had entered the Union since Colorado in 1876, and as long as Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, territories with heavy Republican complexions, such as

southern Dakota, were not likely to gain admission. It was the 1888 election replacing the Democratic Cleveland with Republican Senator Benjamin Harrison of Indiana and returning Republican majorities in both houses of Congress that turned the tide. Few doubted that the Republicans would push forward legislation to admit several new states, including South Dakota. With an estimated population of 400,000 and twenty-seven years as a territory, southern Dakota was in the forefront of the statehood drive and generally was considered the most deserving. During the 1880s Senator Harrison had been South Dakota’s most outspoken champion; now he would be in a position to act.<sup>3</sup> The lame duck fiftieth Congress, seeing the handwriting on the wall, moved ahead and at the end of the session passed an omnibus bill admitting four new states. South Dakota’s successful campaign for statehood had been the most important force in breaking the Congressional deadlock.<sup>4</sup> Along with it during 1889 and 1890 came five other Northern Tier states into the Union—North Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, and Wyoming.

Joyous as people were with the news that they were finally to become a state, South Dakotans had more than statehood on their

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minds in 1889. Severe challenges faced them and important decisions had to be made. Several issues carried significant implications for the future of the state and also illuminated the historical context in which statehood emerged—prohibition, women's suffrage, the location of the new state capital, the opening of the Sioux Reservation for settlement, and agricultural distress. All five of these questions generated controversy. Most were connected with broader national trends and developments. Most of them also are likely to be forgotten in all the hoopla connected with South Dakota's centennial, but a critical investigation of them provides useful perspectives and insights.

### PROHIBITION

On the Fourth of July, seventy-five delegates—fifty-two Republicans and twenty-three Democrats—gathered in Germania Hall in Sioux Falls to hammer out a constitution for the new state of South Dakota. For the most part their task was not all that difficult and they finished it in early August. They started with the Sioux Falls Constitution of 1885, which the voters had approved in May, as a framework then considered alterations and made slight modifications in order to satisfy the requirements imposed by Congress and to fill in gaps.<sup>5</sup>

One of the largest, most controversial questions was the liquor issue.<sup>6</sup> A prohibition clause had been a prominent feature of the 1885 constitution, but on this subject nothing ever seemed to be final. It was continuously debated and heatedly fought throughout the territorial period. The *Flandreau Enterprise* anticipated what lay ahead when it observed in May, "The hardest political fight that Dakota has ever experienced is now opening. It is the fight over the question of constitutional prohibition." A month later the *Pierre Free Press* commented, "The prohibition workers of South Dakota are preparing to make a big hustle to carry the day for their cause, and this issue bids fair to overtop the capital campaign before it is settled."<sup>7</sup>

During the legislative session at Bismarck at the beginning of 1889, prohibition advocates

flooded their representatives with petitions, and a prohibition bill passed, only to be vetoed by Governor Louis Church, who said he believed that the issue should be resolved by the people themselves through the constitutional process at the time of statehood.<sup>8</sup> Then in March, three weeks after President Cleveland signed the statehood law, prohibition workers met in convention at Huron for a two-day conference to organize for the coming struggle. They endorsed a constitutional prohibition clause, pledged more than \$6,000 to fund the campaign, and established a seven-member executive committee to run it. Its chairman was attorney V. V. Barnes of Yankton, a Republican with political ambitions.<sup>9</sup>

The Sioux Falls convention's inclusion of prohibition in the proposed constitution marked the first major victory of the prohibition forces. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, long dedicated to the elimination of liquor, stepped up their activities. On 11 September the eighth annual convention of the Dakota W.C.T.U. convened in Yankton with two hundred leaders present. All over the Territory, prohibitionists held meetings in halls, school houses, and other places. Petitions were signed, statements made, and letters sent.<sup>10</sup> Captain O. R. Van Etten of Highmore, widely reputed as a temperance orator, hit the trail for constitutional prohibition.

Most Republican politicians, from Arthur Mellette—who had been elected "governor" of South Dakota during the extra-legal elections held in 1885—on down, were either actively or passively on the prohibition bandwagon. Their state convention in Huron, meeting in the same opera house that just a day earlier had hosted an enthusiastic prohibition rally, approved a platform declaring in favor of constitutional prohibition. The Democrats, on the other hand, came out against it.<sup>11</sup> Two arguments were generally raised in opposition: first, that it unduly restricted individual freedom; second, that it would be impossible to enforce. The *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, convinced that no response would be forthcoming, demanded to know what success prohibition had ever

achieved in practice. Liquor dealers put together an active organization in June to prevent their own elimination. They noted that between 1880 and 1885 six of seven states voting on the issue had approved prohibition, while between 1885 and 1889 nine states voting on the issue had all rejected it.<sup>12</sup>

In approving a constitutional prohibition clause on election day, the voters were expressing a deep-felt desire prevalent among a large segment of the population to establish control over their situation and their environment. Temperance, which was a national—indeed an international—movement, had special appeal in a frontier environment where forces threatening chaos and societal breakdown seemed especially dangerous. Environmental conditions, economic stringencies, ethnic conflict, the Indian presence, even wild animals—all of these things engendered fear and concern. Liquor and its ally, the saloon, divided the community into imbibers who enjoyed a drink and thought there was nothing wrong with it and abstainers who deplored drunkenness and worried about the potential dangers posed by any amount of drinking. A yawning cultural gap split the two groups. South Dakotans, in approving prohibition in 1889, reflected both a profound pessimism about what society would become if liquor remained freely available and a naive optimism that drinking could actually be abolished by law. Several years later the experiment was abandoned and prohibition was repealed, but the controversy continued on into the twentieth century in communities all over South Dakota.

#### WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Closely linked to the prohibition issue was the question of woman suffrage. Many temperance advocates were also in the vanguard of the drive for the vote for women. Conversely, organized liquor interests mounted the most effective opposition to woman suffrage because they feared that, if women were given the vote, they would be able to block efforts to repeal prohibition in the state. Recognizing the danger of mixing temperance with suffrage, Susan B.

Anthony, for years one of the most visible national advocates of women's rights, argued for separating the two issues, although she was an ardent prohibitionist herself. But other women, such as Marietta Bones of Webster, a leading South Dakota suffragist, insisted on linking them. Internecine conflict over strategy unfortunately intensified personal acrimony and undermined the chances for success.<sup>13</sup>

Most decisive in the failure of women to get the vote in South Dakota was the refusal of the two major political parties to lend their support to the cause. Their stance became crucial when the constitution-makers at Sioux Falls inserted a clause scheduling a vote on women's suffrage at the first general election after the constitution went into effect. Almost before the statehood celebrations were over, therefore, South Dakotans confronted another big question—votes for women. The campaign began in November 1889, and continued throughout the following year.<sup>14</sup>

Susan B. Anthony arrived in South Dakota in early November and immediately set to work carrying her message to the public.<sup>15</sup> She had consented to come only if one of the major political parties gave its backing to the effort. When the South Dakota Farmers Alliance, which claimed to hold the balance of political power in the state, indicated its support for suffrage, she agreed to come. Several months later the state unit of the Knights of Labor, which was much less numerous and influential but considered to be equally radical, also endorsed woman suffrage. In June 1890 they combined to form an Independent Party. But both the Republicans and the Democrats evaded the issue in their 1890 platforms, which virtually doomed the crusade to failure, and even the Independents, once they became a party, failed to insert a suffrage plank in their platform. Among the Republicans, only John A. Pickler, the candidate for Congress, vigorously advocated the vote for women, but his was a lonely voice.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout 1890, the suffrage debate provided quite a spectacle for residents of the new state. Besides Susan B. Anthony, who spent

almost six months in South Dakota during 1890, several other prominent national figures in the suffrage movement crisscrossed the state, including Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie L. Chapman (later Catt). Controversy followed them everywhere they went. The *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* ridiculed Anthony upon her arrival there:

The *Argus-Leader* begins to feel a wild thrill of pleasurable expectation. Susan is coming. We shall see her own dear self and shall hear her dulcet tones declare the total depravity of man. We shall see displayed in all her entrancing loveliness the female ward worker, and shall, like St. John in the vision, feel the air warm around us with the heavenly effulgence of woman suffrage. Hail to thee, Susan, thou headlight of the elysium to come, our heart's ecstasy arises at thine approach.<sup>17</sup>

Had criticism come only from newspaper editors, spokesmen for the liquor interests, and other opponents of suffrage, the situation might have been easier to take. But much of the opposition to the movement came from women themselves, and one of the heaviest crosses they had to bear was internal bickering within the movement. In historical perspective, it is easier to understand why differences over strategy and organization emerged, but at the time it was particularly frustrating for all concerned to witness and experience conflicts that diverted attention from the more important subject at hand. Anthony and the other national leaders naturally wanted to insure the greatest efficiency and vigor in the campaign, so sought to establish some control over how the funds were spent. On the other hand, suffragists in South Dakota thought they knew better how to organize their own campaign.

Differences between Marietta Bones and Anthony began to surface in the newspapers. Bones wanted to promote prohibition along with suffrage, while Anthony knew from experience that commingling the two issues could only increase the opposition of the organized liquor interests. The other main conflict between the two was

over financial control, Bones contending that Anthony had misappropriated \$40,000 of funds placed in her hands for promoting the suffrage campaign. At times the controversy boiled over, as at a suffrage convention at Huron in July, which broke up in a row. Words like "false," "disgrace," and "untruth" flew back and forth, and the executive committee of the state organization finally was forced to resign.<sup>18</sup>

All of this dragged down the effort. If that were not enough, most of the churches in the state were actively or passively opposed to suffrage. The only denomination in South Dakota that had expressed support for suffrage was the Methodists, and they had ulterior motives in the matter, hoping to link the issue with prohibition. Once prohibition was written into the constitution, however, Methodist leaders remained silent on suffrage, although individual Methodists did promote it. An article in *Presbyterian Review* asserted the biblical basis of women's subordination:

Women's divinely appointed mission is one of love. And it is in exact conformity with the nature of that mission that the position given her by her Creator, in her relation to man, while not one of inferiority, should still be one of subordination and dependence. In accepting it she acquires her sweet and all-powerful supremacy of love, and in her legitimate empire influences man more powerfully than he controls her.<sup>19</sup>

The suffrage fight in 1889 and 1890 illustrated the power of controlling ideology and values in South Dakota. That woman's proper place within the family and the home precluded her participation in the public sphere seemed sensible to most men and, likely, most women at the time. On election day, woman suffrage lost by a two to one margin.

#### CAPITAL LOCATION

Interviewed in Omaha after the election, Susan B. Anthony attributed failure largely to the attention people gave to the capital location

fight.<sup>20</sup> Exactly what connection existed between the two questions is not immediately apparent, but about the magnitude of the capital question there can be no doubt.<sup>21</sup> The battle for designation as capital of the new state was, in a way, the frequently debated county seat question writ large. As in other states, many counties in South Dakota—both before and after statehood—experienced heated and sometimes violent conflicts over which town would get the county seat. Reading about these battles today often evokes chuckles, but at the time the combatants fought in deadly earnest. As well they should have, for much was at stake in the outcome. Today, at several decades' remove, it is obvious for all to see what people understood at the time: the winners prospered and the losers languished.

The derivative jobs and economic opportunities associated with county seats were multiplied several times over when it came to the state capital. No wonder there was a merry scramble to obtain it. In the end, the contest boiled down to two determined entries. Sioux Falls, Watertown, Redfield, Mitchell, Madison, and Aberdeen fell by the wayside as Huron and Pierre emerged as the main contenders.<sup>22</sup> Four years earlier, when southern Dakota residents had "elected" state officials and legislators in a bid to pressure Congress into granting statehood, they had narrowly chosen Huron as temporary capital designee over Pierre and three other contenders. This time, though, the vote was for real, and although the decision in 1889 was only preliminary and would have to be confirmed by another vote in 1890, everyone realized that the victor the first time around would probably win the permanent status.<sup>23</sup>

No one could miss what was at stake. The arguments advanced by both communities focused on their advantageous locations and the benefits the state would derive by choosing them. Clearly in back of their minds, however, were the economic benefits that would accrue to their city if they got the capital. The *Plain Talk* of Vermillion, a town too remote to consider contending for the prize, stated the situation plainly: "The matter of capital location is very much a

matter of business. There is no towering principle involved in it. A dozen towns, more or less, want it, for the money they fancy there will be in having it."<sup>24</sup>

A group of speculators got into the act when they met at Armour and set up the Woonsocket Investment Company (later renamed the Capital Investment Company) in order to exploit the process. They sold stock in their company to raise money to invest in property in the town they expected to win. They also contacted leaders in the major contending towns in an effort to obtain choice lots in return for throwing their support to the town that offered them the best deal. They stood to profit in two ways—first, by inducing residents in the leading contenders to buy stock in order to influence their decision, and, second, by profiting from the increased property values that would occur after the town that they picked won the election. When the Woonsocket schemers set up headquarters at the Depot Hotel in Huron during the Republican state convention in August, a number of Huronites seemed interested in working with them. But that attitude quickly changed on 2 September, when the Capital Investment Company announced its support for Pierre for the capital. Now people in Huron and other contenders were irate and denounced the group as a fraud, urging voters not to be swayed by it. "Bribery," "a crime against the ballot," and "barefaced corruption" were some of the terms used to describe the operation now.<sup>25</sup>

The capital contest in general invited exaggeration, dishonesty, and corruption. Exactly how much of this actually went on is difficult to determine, but the contending sides naturally assumed that their opponents, at least, were guilty as charged. The kinds of claims and accusations that flew around during county seat battles now grew to gargantuan proportions. Naturally each town claimed superiority and predicted great things for itself, while simultaneously accusing its opponents of misrepresentation, chicanery, and underhanded dealings. "Peerless Pierre," a town that counted 3,235 residents in the 1890 census, boasted that within twenty years it would have 30,000, 50,000,

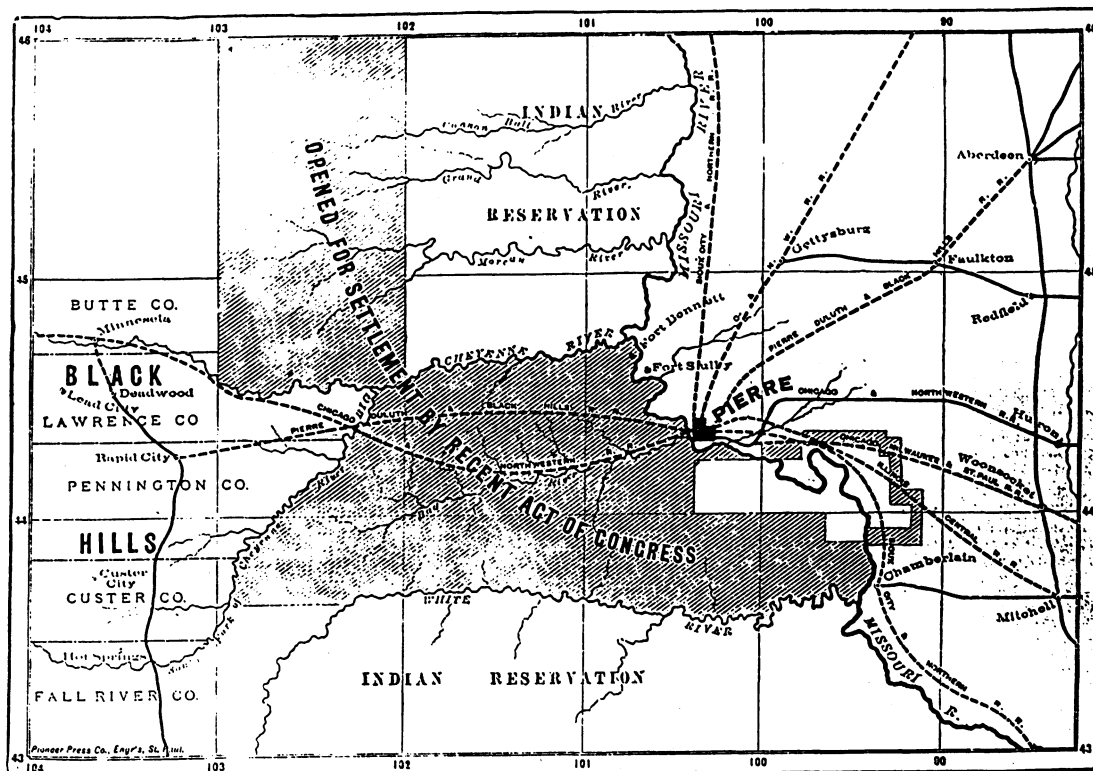


FIG. 1. This map produced by Pierre's boosters emphasized opportunities available in the West River region opened up for settlement by the Sioux Land Cession of 1889 and highlighted a myriad of projected railroads that they suggested would make Pierre into a "rail hub." *Pierre Free Press*, 4 July 1889.

maybe even more people residing there. Did Pierre claim that it would have 100,000 people by 1900? "Possibly so," retorted the *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, "but where are the extra 99,000 to come from?" Pierre businessmen had "Pierre for the Capital" embroidered in red letters half an inch high on their shirt fronts and carried around little boxes with soil from the area. They considered themselves destined to become "the Denver of Dakota or the Kansas City of the Upper Missouri."<sup>26</sup>

Maps designed to prove the superior locations of each town displayed great ingenuity. Pierre, of course, emphasized its central location in the state and many projected railroads radiating out from it (none of which ever came to fruition). Huron, meanwhile, displayed maps intending to show that in reality it occupied a

more desirable location because it was in the center of the population. The Sioux Reservation, bordering Pierre on the west, was a "vast and desolate wasteland," Huronites contended, and theirs was the "most accessible" town from every part of "civilized" South Dakota.<sup>27</sup> Folks in Rapid City guffawed at the results:

There are maps and maps. There is a much greater number of maps than there was a while ago. Each of the towns aspiring to the capital of South Dakota seems to have gone into the map business on its own account. Each has a particular map of its own, possessing peculiarities possessed by no other. Each indicates that the town in whose interests it is published is in the geographical and population center of South Dakota.<sup>28</sup>

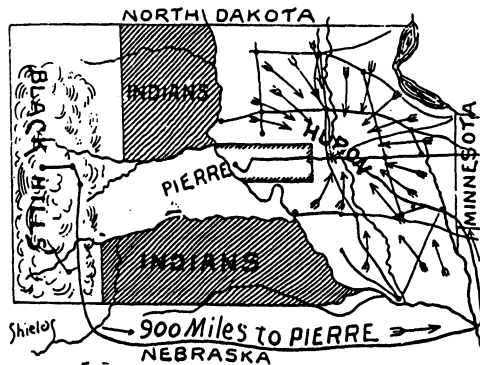


FIG. 2. This map promoting Huron's claims purported to show that Huron was the center of transportation in South Dakota and that travelers going to Pierre from the Black Hills would have to swing all the way around through northern Nebraska and Sioux City, Iowa, to get there. *Pierre Free Press*, 2 October 1890.

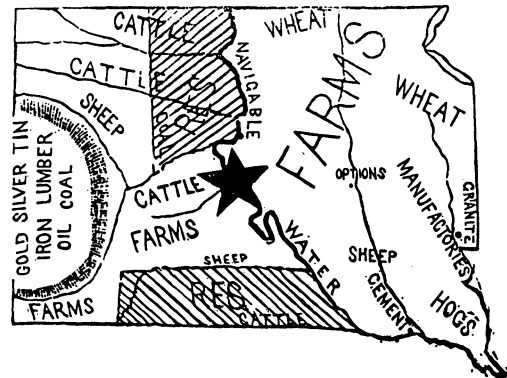


FIG. 3. Responding to Huron's claim of centrality, Pierre backers made their own claim to prominence with a map identifying their town as the center of the state. *Pierre Free Press*, 2 October 1890.

In the vote on 1 October, Pierre outpolled Huron two to one, with Watertown, Sioux Falls, Mitchell, and Chamberlain lagging behind.<sup>29</sup> As the results arrived at the telegraph office indicating that the town on the Missouri had prevailed, "the populace of Pierre seemed to go wild with joy." A procession formed, and escorted by the band, it paraded through the city carrying brooms and generally carrying on.<sup>30</sup> In the campaign for permanent designation as capital the following year, both towns spent huge amounts of money, resorting to questionable and sometimes illegal methods to raise the funds. Newspapers were subsidized, drinks and theatre tickets handed out, city lots given away, bets covered—anything to influence votes.<sup>31</sup> Once more the band tooted when Pierre emerged victorious: speeches were made, and songs were sung. The *Pierre Free Press* paid homage to the deity on its front page, quoting from the One hundred fiftieth Psalm: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in the sanctuary; praise Him in the affirmament [sic] of his Power." Huronites, on the other hand, termed the election a "fraud and a disgrace."<sup>32</sup>

The capital contest elicited both the best and the worst in small town South Dakotans. On one hand, it highlighted the booster spirit, the high hopes and expectations of people, their go-getting approach to things, and their competitive spirit. On the other hand, it underscored the frequent rivalries that divided them, the extremes to which they would go in besmirching each other, the underhanded deals that sometimes occurred, and the fact that in such battles some won and some lost.

#### THE GREAT SIOUX RESERVATION

Securing the state capital was a great victory for the citizens of Pierre, but many of them considered the opening of the Great Sioux Reservation, which lay just across the Missouri River, to be an ever greater prize. (Few saw the irony in using the term "opening" the reservation to mean severely restricting those for whom it had been reserved.) When the Chicago and North Western Railroad had arrived at Pierre in 1880, most settlers assumed that the river would soon be bridged and the tracks continued



west to Rapid City.<sup>33</sup> But the Great Sioux Reservation stood in the way, and until permission was granted or the Indians dispossessed of their land, no railroad could be built. Throughout the 1880s, as the statehood campaign heated up, demands for opening the reservation to white settlement also grew in intensity.<sup>34</sup> People in Pierre, who stood to gain most from it, were especially vocal about it. "The opening of the Sioux Reservation means more to Pierre than anything else," proclaimed the *Pierre Free Press* in 1885. The city financed trips to Washington by their mayor and other officials to lobby for legislation in Congress. By the summer of 1889, as the capital and the opening of the reservation became imminent realities, Pierre residents clearly linked the two developments in their minds. The *Pierre Free Press* commented in August 1889, "Pierre will soon come into possession of her heritage. Two important items in this are the capital and the Sioux Reservation." The *Yankton Telegram* observed that "the two events, the opening of the reservation and the location of the capital at Pierre, will do more to develop South Dakota than anything that has ever happened, and are next in importance to the division and admission of Dakota as two states."<sup>35</sup>

While the opening of the reservation to white settlement would benefit Pierre directly and substantially, it was widely wished for throughout southern Dakota. Whites did not think the Indians needed that much land. The feeling was that they had plenty of land as it was, they were too lazy to work what they had, and they did not deserve it all in any case. White folks could not understand why the natives refused to become industrious farmers like themselves. After driving across the reservation, one man complained upon his return, "I drove for four days through the finest of farming country and saw not one Indian the whole time. That reservation is an imposition on the people of Dakota."<sup>36</sup>

The obstacle that stood in the way of seizing the Indians' land was the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, which required that three-fourths of the adult male Indians agree to any signing away

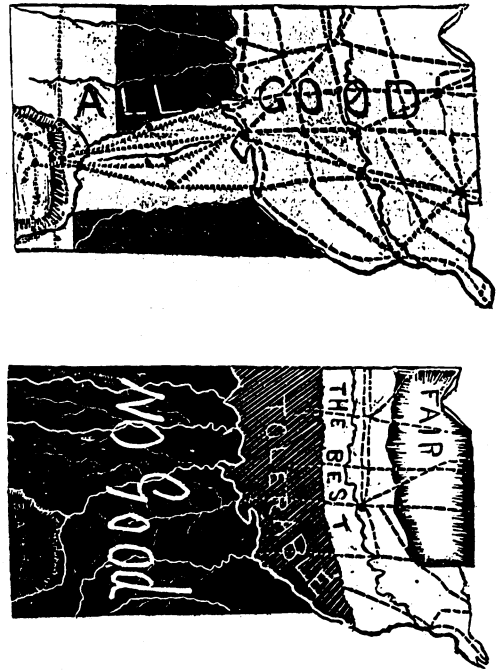


FIG. 4. Pierre backers suggested that their city would serve the entire state, while Huron cared only for the James River Valley. *Pierre Free Press*, 12 June 1890.

of their reservation lands. Momentum for opening the reservation built throughout the eighties. In 1888 Congress passed a law to open up eleven million acres if the Indians would sign, and a treaty commission was sent out to round up the signatures. When it failed in its attempt, responses in Dakota were outspoken. The *Rapid City Daily Journal* editorialized, "The Sioux will never again be asked what shall be done for them by the government. They will be treated as the irresponsible, irrational creatures that they are. Congress will legislate for them without asking their opinions. The reservation will be opened. It must be opened." The *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* opined that it looked as if a law might have to be passed to open the reservation "without the consent of these haughty government paupers." In its view, "You can't argue with an Indian any more than you can reason with a mule." The *Huron Daily Huronite* saw a

link between Democratic Congressional opponents (like Congressman William Springer of Illinois) to statehood and Indian opponents (like Sitting Bull) to the opening of the reservation. Both stood in the way of growth. "Bill Bull and Sitting Springer are evidently agreed in their Dakota policy."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the simultaneity of statehood and the opening of the reservation is significant and worth comment. The centennial of South Dakota's becoming a state coincided with the centennial of a process that dispossessed the Sioux Indians of their reservation land with very little regard for their interests or their thinking on the matter. One of President Grover Cleveland's last acts before leaving the White House in March 1889 was to sign a new Sioux Reservation Bill. Another commission was appointed, and this time South Dakotans wanted to make sure it did the job right. By early August the work was complete, the requisite number of Indians had "touched the pen" (being unable to write themselves), and the jubilation began.<sup>38</sup>

In commemoration of the occasion, the *Pierre Free Press* published a poem entitled "Sitting Bull is Matched":

And so at last the treaty's signed;  
Though Sitting Bull has done his best  
To thwart us in our great design,  
He could not quite control the rest,  
For names enough are now attached,  
And Sitting Bull for once is matched.

It won't be long before  
Industrious white men till the ground,  
Where ages upon ages gone  
The Indians have loafed around;  
Nor bettered self nor bettered land,  
Now let the pale face try his hand.

Our many people need the lands,  
And these few Indians worked them not,  
They'll never use what they have left;  
But are at best a shiftless lot,  
And blessed, indeed, will be the day,  
When every one shall pass away.<sup>39</sup>

The Ghost Dance movement and the murder of Sitting Bull the following year were both directly linked to the opening of the reservation. Being deprived of half of their land made many Sioux susceptible to the message of the Ghost Dance.<sup>40</sup> White attitudes toward Sitting Bull's death were reflected in the typical newspaper headline: "GOOD INJUN AT LAST." "A REPORT COMES THAT THE OLD DUSKY DISTURBER HAS CASHED IN HIS CHECKS," ran the headline in the *Pierre Free Press* in December 1890.<sup>41</sup>

The story of the opening of the reservation reminds us that the story of South Dakota pioneers, heroic and admirable as it was in many respects, was not all benign. It is necessary to look at the settlement process with a clear and unblinking eye.

#### AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS

One other story needs telling, which likewise points to the darker side of the pioneering process—the depression of the 1890s. In 1889 the full effects of drought in the region had not yet been fully felt, and economic depression would hit the state with its full force only after the panic of 1893. But portents were there for all to see.

One of Governor Arthur C. Mellette's greatest concerns during the summer and fall of 1889, as the statehood process worked its way to a final conclusion, was the suffering and hardship of many farmers who were hit by drought conditions and poor farm prices. Farm values declined and farmers were leaving the land. Mellette toured the hardest hit areas to ascertain the extent of the problem, but when he journeyed to Chicago to solicit donations for the distressed farmers, many South Dakotans criticized him for making the state look bad. "There is a wheel out of place somewhere in the governor's machinery," wrote the *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* early in 1890. "There was no earthly excuse for that junket he made last week." And it berated the "scandal mongers" with their stories of "destitution in South Dakota." People worried that potential settlers

might be discouraged if they thought that poverty and starvation would be their lot and that the eastern press would totally misconstrue the situation, as they often did. The *Pierre Free Press* indicated in December 1889 that it "does not believe that the wild, exaggerated stories now floating about in the east will deter many people from coming to this new Land of Promise, and does not believe that any permanent harm will result." Then, typically, it went on to describe how things were even worse in Kansas.<sup>42</sup>

The Independent Party that emerged at a conference in Huron and nominated candidates favorable to farm interests was an outgrowth of the Farmers Alliance and the forerunner of the Populists. Populism sank its roots deep in South Dakota soil and established a tradition of farm protest that carried on into the 1930s.<sup>43</sup> Thus, although conservative Republicanism would become the dominant force in state politics later on, it was grafted onto a tradition of farm revolt and reform politics.

#### CONCLUSION

Events in South Dakota during its inaugural year of 1889, therefore, help illuminate the character of the state. In celebrating their centennial, South Dakotans could benefit from reflecting on their interesting and complex past. One hundred years ago South Dakotans had more than statehood on their minds. They were trying to resolve the conflict between freedom and control—between the desire to allow individuals the greatest possible independence, whether in the drinking of liquor or in their property rights, and the effort to control deviant behavior perceived as threatening to the social fabric. They faced the question of women's rights and women's roles and postponed giving women the vote for another 18 years, although when they finally did do it in 1918, they beat the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment by two years.

In the contest over the capital location, South Dakotans reflected their persistent local boosterism and contagious optimism as well as the deviousness and trickery they sometimes stooped

to in order to gain the advantage over their rivals. In pushing for opening the reservation, white South Dakotans reflected their legitimate desires for opportunity and land ownership while at the same time betraying their willingness to run roughshod over the Native Americans who stood in their way. Finally, in responding to depression and drought, South Dakotans demonstrated generosity and resourcefulness and then resorted to something they would turn to time and again in the twentieth century—political action to solve their problems. The boom and bust economy that would plague and encourage South Dakotans over their history was presaged in their statehood year. Withal, the legacy for South Dakotans is a rich one—and an ambiguous one.

#### NOTES

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3. Howard R. Lamar, "Perspectives on Statehood: South Dakota's First Quarter Century, 1889-1914," *South Dakota History* 19 (Spring 1989): 5-6; *Pierre Free Press*, 28 June 1888; *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 13 November 1888; Homer Socolofsky and Allan B. Spetter, *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987), pp. 44-45.
4. James W. Hulse, "The Ironies of the Omnibus Experience: A Retrospective Interpretation," paper presented at Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, March 1988.
5. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 5 August 1889. On the process of constitution writing, see John D. Hicks, "The Constitutions of the Northwest States," *University [of Nebraska] Studies* 23 (January-April 1923).
6. The salience of the temperance issue in the Midwest is discussed by Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 67-84, 92-93, 181-84, and Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York: Free Press, 1970), pp. 77, 112, 114, 144, 343. See also Joseph C. Furnas, *The Life and Times of the Late Demon Rum* (New York: Putnam, 1965).

7. Quoted in *Huron Daily Plainsman*, 25 May 1889; *Pierre Free Press*, 27 June 1889.

8. *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 31 January, 12 March 1889.

9. *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 17 March 1889; *Pierre Free Press*, 14 March 1889; Barnes, who had resided for a time in DeSmet, was mentioned by Laura Ingalls Wilder in *Little Town on the Prairie* (1941; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 71.

10. *Pierre Free Press*, 11 October 1888, 27 June, 22 August 1889; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 19 October 1887, 13 August, 12, 24 September 1889; *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 17 May, 13 July 1889.

11. *Huron Daily Huronite*, 28, 29 August, 5 September 1889.

12. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 10 August 1889; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 1 July 1889.

13. Dorinda Riessen Reed, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in South Dakota* (Pierre: Commission on the Status of Women, 1975), pp. 20-47; Cecelia M. Wittmayer, "The 1889-1890 Woman Suffrage Campaign: A Need to Organize," *South Dakota History* 11 (Summer 1981): 206.

14. The 1879 Territorial legislature granted women the right to vote at school meetings. The 1883 session reversed the action, but four years later the legislature reinstated the privilege. Reed, *Woman Suffrage Movement*, pp. 5-6, 15-16, 114.

15. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 16 November 1889.

16. Reed, *Woman Suffrage Movement*, pp. 20, 22, 31, 33, 40.

17. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 16 November 1889.

18. Reed, *Woman Suffrage Movement*, p. 30; *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 10 July 1890.

19. Dennis A. Norlin, "The Suffrage Movement and South Dakota Churches: Radicals and the Status Quo, 1890," *South Dakota History* 14 (Winter 1984): 314-15, 320 (quoted).

20. *Huron Daily Huronite*, 17 November 1890.

21. On the capital contest see John Elmer Dalton, "A History of the Location of the State Capital in South Dakota," Governmental Research Bureau, University of South Dakota, Report No. 14 (January 1945); "Capital and Capitol History of South Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 5 (1910): 175-82.

22. *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 28 February 1889; *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 5 March 1889.

23. Dalton, "History of the Location of the State Capital," pp. 16-17. The vote in 1885 was Huron

12,695; Pierre 10,574; Sioux Falls 3,338; Chamberlain 3,170; Alexandria 1,374; and 602 for other candidates.

24. Quoted in *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 25 March 1889.

25. Dalton, "History of the Location of the State Capital," pp. 19-20; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 28 August, 3, 5 September 1889.

26. *Pierre Free Press*, 25 September 1884, 18 April 1889, 10 July, 6 November 1890, 24 December 1891; *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 6 January 1890. The capital contest stimulated a real estate boom in Pierre, and new additions with hundreds of lots were laid out for several miles around downtown Pierre. Harold H. Schuler, *A Bridge Apart: History of Early Pierre and Fort Pierre* (Pierre: State Publishing Co., 1987), p. 106.

27. *Huron Daily Huronite*, 28 September 1889.

28. *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 23 August 1889.

29. Dalton, "History of the Location of the State Capital," pp. 20, 23-39. The 1889 results were Pierre 27,096; Huron 14,944; Watertown 11,970; Sioux Falls 11,763; Mitchell 7,516; and Chamberlain 2,414.

30. *Pierre Free Press*, 3 October 1889.

31. Dalton, "History of the Location of the State Capital," p. 23-29; Schuler, *A Bridge Apart*, pp. 109-12; "Capital and Capitol History of South Dakota," p. 177.

32. *Pierre Free Press*, 6, 20 November 1890; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 4 October 1889; Pierre received 41,969 votes to Huron's 34,610. Dalton, "History of the Location of the State Capital," p. 33.

33. Robert J. Casey and W. A. S. Douglas, *Pioneer Railroad: The Story of the Chicago and North Western System* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948), pp. 164-65.

34. The opinion of white Dakotans that Indians were a barrier to progress and development paralleled opinions elsewhere. Lamar, *Dakota Territory*, pp. 103, 106, 189.

35. *Pierre Free Press*, 24 September 1885, 18 November 1886, 15 December 1887, 8 August 1889; *Yankton Telegram* quoted in *Pierre Free Press*, 22 August 1889.

36. Quoted in *Pierre Free Press*, 7 October 1886.

37. *Rapid City Daily Journal* quoted in *Pierre Free Press*, 1 November 1888; *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 3 August 1888; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 1 March 1888.

38. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 4 March 1889; *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 15 August 1889.

39. *Pierre Free Press*, 15 August 1889.

40. Lamar, "Perspectives on Statehood," pp. 15-17; Herbert T. Hoover, "The Sioux Agreement of 1889 and Its Aftermath," *South Dakota History* 19 (Spring 1989): 67.

41. *Pierre Free Press*, 18 December 1890.

42. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 28 May, 19 October,

17, 26 December 1889, 7 February, 10 March 1890; *Huron Daily Huronite*, 25 October 1889; *Pierre Free Press*, 24 October, 14 November, 12, 19, 26 December 1889, 30 January, 20 October 1890.

43. *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 6 June, 10 July 1889. The activities of the Dakota Farmers Alliance during the 1880s and its role in the statehood process, which established the background for the emergence of Populism in South Dakota during the 1890s, are developed by Larry Remele, "God Helps Those Who Help

Themselves': The Farmers Alliance and Dakota Statehood," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 37 (Autumn 1987): 22-33. See also Russel B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics: A Historical Study of Its Origins and Development, 1870-1958* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 61, 67, 118, 217-18; Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "Some Political Aspects of the Populist Movement in South Dakota," *North Dakota History* 34 (Winter 1967): 77-92.