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Review of *Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945* By David Erpestad and David Wood

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Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945. By David Erpestad and David Wood. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997. Photographs, selected bibliography, index. ix + 246 pp. \$60.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper.

South Dakota's architectural legacy bears close resemblance to that of other prairie and Plains states, with one colorful exception: the use of the region's reddish stones, quartzite and sandstone. These bright pink rocks bring a distinctive glow to communities in which they are concentrated, notably Dell Rapids, Sioux Falls, and Hot Springs. How fortunate that this material was locally available and affordable at a time of extensive building around the turn of the century when talented designers Wallace L. Dow and Henry Schwartz put their stamp on the region's architecture.

David Erpestad and David Wood begin their survey with several forms of American Indian architecture and building materials, both indigenous and manufactured, and then use building types as the organizing principle for the remaining chapters. Their descriptions of tipi construction explain that these wondrous mobile homes required about a dozen tanned buffalo hides and between fourteen and twenty poles ranging in length from fifteen to twenty-five feet. Large tipis such as these became commonplace on the Plains after 1800 when the acquisition of horses permitted large loads to be carried long distances.

Concurrent with the tipi era, frame and log buildings emerged on the eight reservations created by the federal government to contain the displaced Indian tribes. A federal presence was similarly felt along the Missouri River and its western tributaries as government forts and stockades joined the fur-trading outposts to protect commerce and travel for white settlers. When the Indian reservations were established, the federal government joined church missionaries—primarily Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Catholic—to build dormitories and school buildings for Indian children. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, these large structures, some frame and others stone, were architect-designed high-style buildings that moved beyond the catch-as-catch-can architecture of the early settlement period. The federal presence in South Dakota's built environment waned by about 1920, but reappeared during the Depression and World War II years as public works projects and federal military installations.

Building South Dakota describes in some detail those local materials available from the land: wood, stone, and the earth itself. Wood and stone occurred in some regions of the state but not in others. Cottonwoods and other deciduous trees lined rivers and waterways; western yellow pine grew widely in the Black Hills. On the treeless Plains, German-Russian and Czech immigrants built homes and barns of rammed earth, puddled clay, mud brick, and

surface stone mortared with mud. Sod, commonly used, offered immigrants a ready-at-hand, free material. Erpestad and Wood provide both quantitative details and construction methods for sod houses and other vernacular buildings.

This illustrated survey of South Dakota's architecture examines and depicts the evolution of national building forms that dominated construction after the coming of the railroad in the late 1870s. Regional influences waned as Euro-American styles from the East began to prevail. General economic prosperity on the Plains in the 1880s and into the early 1890s, and then in the decade or more following the century's turn, fueled the building of farmsteads and towns in eclectic Victorian and Richardsonian styles. By the 1920s, as the farm depression began, new construction lagged except for the significant building program underwritten by the federal government, especially through the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration in the 1930s.

Building South Dakota uses photographs effectively to show the state's rich variety of buildings. Historic preservationists, however, would have appreciated knowing which of the structures presented are still standing.

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