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SOUTH DAKOTA POPULISM

by

Terrence J. Lindell

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
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T.J.L.

INTRODUCTION

Like every other subject in American history, Populism has seen major changes in historiography as historians from different perspectives have examined the farmers' movement that disrupted the politics of the Great Plains, South, and Rocky Mountain states during the 1890s. Each generation of scholars has added its questions, techniques, and talent to the work of its predecessors in assessing the origins, significance, and contributions of the Populists. Some of this scholarship entailed criticizing the weaknesses and oversights of earlier historians. Some has been devoted to asking new questions that have arisen in light of developments in the interpretation of American history. Some has concentrated on applying new methods to the study of old problems to determine what else can be learned about the past. The result of all this effort is an extensive body of literature that reveals how historians have thought about the Populist movement and each other for the last half century.

In 1931 John D. Hicks published his The Populist Revolt, what would soon become the standard--though not definitive, as one of his contemporaries was quick to point out--work on the Populist party. Still under the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, Hicks saw the agrarian radicals as farmers oppressed by corporations, heavy debt, and an unmerciful environment. Lacking the choice that farmers

had been afforded earlier in American history--that of moving on to the next frontier to escape--men resorted to a political solution to their problems. The Populist demands went back to the democratic heritage of the nation and foreshadowed many of the reforms of the twentieth century, particularly of the Progressive era.¹

This benign interpretation of Populism held the historiographical field for two decades. Then in the postwar years opinion on the Populists began to shift to a more critical stance. Stinging from attacks during the McCarthy era, intellectuals sought to trace the roots of such demagogery in American history. One of their targets was the Populist movement, a force that had also shown anti-intellectual tendencies, provincialism, and distrust of the cities. Some went so far as to see the Populists as the forerunners of fascists.²

The major statement of the revisionist school is that of Richard Hofstadter. In his Age of Reform Hofstadter saw the real problem of the American farmer not in the dominance of corporations, but the agrarians' participation in an international market for which they were not prepared. Though in prosperity the farmer considered himself a commercial operator, hard times forced him to retreat into an agrarian myth in which he saw himself as a yeoman farmer seeking to hold onto what was his. As industrialization and urbanization wrought sweeping changes in American society, American farmers

saw themselves left behind and turned to independent political action for help.

Hofstadter probed what has been termed the darker side of Populism. In analyzing the Populist character he isolated five traits that he felt were important strains in the agrarian radical mind. Populists looked back to a golden age of agriculture when the yeoman ruled society. They saw an essential unity of interests among all producers, farmers and laborers alike. Populists looked at things in terms of black and white, good and evil. History was the product of conspiracies against the common man, generally directed by a vast international money power. Money was of primary importance to the Populists and many of their reform ideas reflected their desires to boost the money supply. Such characteristics have led critics of the Populists to label them provincial nativists, fundamentally irrational, whose nationalism directed them into jingoism.³

Hofstadter's indictment of a political movement that had entertained the public's sympathy for decades spawned no small discussion. Hofstadter incited new interest in a field that had not received major scholarly attention since Hick's book was published. The result was reaction, reconsideration, and reinterpretation as historians poured through the evidence another time and sought out new information on the Populists.

The most persistent of these critics to Hofstadter's interpretation has been Norman Pollack. In a 1960 article Pollack challenged Hofstadter's contention that much of Populist thought and action was irrational, attacked his methodology and evidence, and offered explanations for the character traits Hofstadter examined. Two years later Pollack presented his full-scale defense of Populists in The Populist Response to Industrial America. The agrarian radicals were far from irrational, backward-looking men who wanted to turn back the clock. Rather, they represented a "progressive social force" that was willing to accept industrialism if it could be controlled to eliminate oppression. Much of their ideology resembled Marxism. Indeed, the Populists met a major defeat when organized labor repudiated the movement as being too radical. Three years later he again took up his pen to defend the Populists and the radical strain in American history as a whole. The consensus approach to history, according to Pollack, threatened to distort our view of the past.⁴

The critics have had their critics. In 1965 Agricultural History published a series of major articles on the problems of interpreting Populism. Irwin Unger defended Hofstadter against Pollack by pointing out the Populists' readiness to seize on simple and naive solutions to the complex problems of American society. J. Rogers Hollingsworth cautioned historians about accepting Populist rhetoric too

freely and urged them to seek further data about the social bases of Populism. Oscar Handlin was critical of both the defenders and detractors of Populism, feeling that they had wasted too much time haggling over minor points.⁵ The next year Theodore Saloutos, sympathetic to Hick's interpretation, questioned the commitment of farmers to labor and tried to place attitudes of the Populist movement into an historical background.⁶

One historian has taken a tack exactly opposite of Pollack. Karel Bicha has suggested that, far from being early representatives of the leftist movement in America, the Populists were ideologically conservative. Their philosophy was deeply rooted in the rightist tradition; their occasional reforms that might seem radical were merely a means to restore an earlier balance of power.⁷

Other historians have focused their efforts on particular aspects of Hofstadter's thesis rather than attacking the whole. In a study of Kansas Walter T. K. Nugent examined charges that Populists were nativistic and concluded that Populists made every effort to attract immigrants to their cause. Accusations of anti-Semitism had little basis in fact other than Populist condemnations of Jews in financial circles. Agrarian jingoism in 1898 came not from a desire to conquer territory, but from humanitarian motives to free Cuba. Nugent failed to perceive that, despite Populist entreaties, some groups like Germans viewed the Populists with suspicion be-

cause many of the movement's leaders had been involved with cultural reforms.⁸ A number of historians have exerted considerable effort in discussing the nature of Populists' attitudes toward the Jews, with some being ardent defenders against charges of anti-Semitism and others taking the more realistic approach of acknowledging that Populists felt much the same way as did other sectors of American society.⁹

Some historians have pointed out similarities between Populists and other groups and have called for a more searching analysis of Populism, particularly of its lower-level leaders and the rank and file, and comparisons with members of the old parties.¹⁰ Their colleagues have responded with a number of studies that attempt to assess the Populist party on the local level and to compare the traits of the agrarian reformers with those of their political foes.

Stanley B. Parsons took up this call in 1963 with an article that dealt with Populists in Nebraska. He found antagonisms between farmers and townsmen over local leadership which the latter were reluctant to surrender. The Populists drew much of their strength from the wheat belt where farmers were so dependent on wheat for a crop that they left themselves open for disaster. Protestants favored and Catholics opposed the new third party. He emphasized these points again in his book a decade later.¹¹

Walter T. K. Nugent found similar results in Kansas in that Republicans tended to have a far higher proportion of

urbanites among their local leaders than Populists did. Comparisons of rates of mortgaging and other transactions involving land showed that Populists were less speculative with their resources, preferring to invest their capital in farms. Populists did, however, have a higher involvement in corn and hogs than did their opponents.¹²

A recent study of the Farmers' Alliance in South Dakota confirms some of Nugent's findings. There the Allianceman--a member of the group most likely to join the Populists--was a farmer who was recently upwardly mobile. He had often invested heavily in his farm and could not afford to lose it.¹³

In a recent extensive study of Nebraska politicians during the Populist era Robert W. Cherny found that Republicans were most likely to come from urban occupations and from Protestant bodies, Democrats came from ritualistic backgrounds, might be professionals, and were more likely to be of immigrant stock. The Populists were far more likely than either of the other groups to be farmers and tended to be a composite of the other parties for other sociological variables.¹⁴

In the last decade and a half historians have applied the methods of the social sciences to the study of political behavior in the Populist era. Frederick C. Luebke, one of the first scholars using these techniques, found that the Germans of Nebraska shunned the Populists when they associated that party with cultural issues like prohibition, but

could show a bit more sympathy for it when they could react to the movement without such cultural values having a high saliency. Robert Cherny's more sophisticated study of voting trends in Nebraska revealed that during the first part of the 1890s a Populist's political choice was likely to be governed by economic factors while a Democrat was more likely to be motivated by cultural issues. During the latter portion of the Populist era when fusion was in effect, both cultural and economic factors can be isolated as sources of anti-Republican sentiment.¹⁵

One historian has recently attempted a major new interpretation of Populism. Lawrence Goodwyn has suggested that true Populism had its origins in the cooperative ventures of the Alliance and similar farm organizations and that it drew its ideology from the Greenback movement. Without the experience of cooperative economic ventures, no real Populist movement could exist in a state, for only that experience could radicalize agrarians sufficiently to create Populism. Any state party without such a genesis was nothing more than a "shadow movement," a term that he applies to Nebraska Populism. Goodwyn's expertise lies in the field of Texas Populism, where the scenario he paints holds true. He errs in believing that the entire Populist movement was nothing more than the Texas example written large. Indeed, the Alliance in South Dakota had already begun its political demands before its cooperative enterprises had a chance to fail.

Serious questions have been raised concerning Goodwyn's methodology and the quality of his research for Nebraska. He is also guilty of sloppy work in his documentation of the South Dakota Populists.¹⁶

Works specifically dealing with South Dakota Populism have generally followed in Hicks's trail in applying a progressive interpretation to the movement. Foremost among these historians have been Herbert S. Schell and his student Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr.¹⁷ Brian Jason Weed, taking Pollack's approach, has viewed the state's Populism as a progressive social force that grappled with problems and questions raised by industrialization, even though the Populists exhibited the traits Hofstadter discerns.¹⁸

Two historians have applied statistical techniques to South Dakota's agrarian radicals. Michael P. Rogin, in a study of the connections between McCarthy and earlier political movements in a number of midwestern states, including South Dakota, analyzed a variety of factors influencing politics. Although he found no ties between the Populists and the Senator from Wisconsin, he determined that the wealth of the counties was the best indicator of Populist strength, with the proportion of Populist votes going up with wealth until the top levels are reached, whereupon the support for the farmers fell off. Crop patterns were the second most important factor, according to Rogin, with Populism concentrated in the wheat counties. His third indicator was ethnicity,

which was sometimes strong enough to displace the correlations in wheat areas.

There are several problems with Rogin's study. He gives no indication of having considered settlement patterns when analyzing the wealth of the counties. If the eastern tiers of counties were among the richest--and they may well have been because they were settled early--the presence of many Scandinavians in that area would have thrown off his data. He lists so many exceptions to his dominant patterns due to the presence of certain ethnic groups that one wonders if the primary emphasis should not be on immigrant groups. His study is done on the county level rather than by precinct so he cannot discern important trends within counties. Thus he implies that Czechs opposed Populism, but that result was likely to be due to the presence of Russian-Germans rather than Czechs in at least one South Dakota county. He also suggests that there was such a thing as an Austrian county in the state at a time when the county with the highest proportion of Austrian-born immigrants in 1900 had only 1.94 % of its population in that group, most of whom were Slavs.¹⁹

John D. Dibbern's recent dissertation is a significant contribution to our understanding of the Farmers' Alliance in South Dakota, the organization that provided a good share of the earliest Populist strength. Using the membership roles of the Marshall County Alliance, Dibbern was able to produce a composite sketch of Alliance members in the 1880s. He

found them to be men who were recently upwardly mobile and who were heavily in debt, usually to improve their holdings. They were attracted to the Populist party, Dibbern suggests, in order to defend themselves against foreclosures and loss of status, although he can offer no proof that the Alliance men did join the third party. His study also showed that immigrants were disproportionately represented among Alliance ranks.²⁰

Like Joseph's coat, Populism was a thing of many colors. Elements within it can be taken as evidence for many interpretations. Some Populist editorials in the mining districts of the Black Hills warned of wage slavery and local Alliances expressed support for the Knights of Labor in strikes, but the movement as a whole seems to have been conservative in the state. There were occasional mentions of Jewish bankers that might be taken as anti-Semitism, but the condemnation was never hurled at the average Jew and the party made successful overtures to many of the state's immigrant groups. The Populists of the state called for war against Spain in 1898 but jingoism was not the motive, for less than two years latter the same Populists were agitating to have the state's contingent of troops returned from the Philippines.

South Dakota's Populist movement resembles Hicks' interpretation more than Hofstadter's. The Populists were commercial farmers, or soon hoped to be when rail lines came through, but the problems the state's agrarians faced with

drought and corporations were serious. Farmers moved out onto the Plains not fully prepared for the conditions they would meet there during dry seasons and had to learn through hard lessons. Railroad rates consumed a large share of the value of the year's crops and through their political influence the corporations exerted a degree of control over the state government. For some, debt was no doubt a serious problem and threatened newly-won status. One cannot say that the frontier had closed in South Dakota, for through the 1890s and early 1900s the Indian reservations west of the Missouri River were opened to white settlement, but most of the other elements of Hicks' interpretation were present.²¹

Of the chapters that follow, the first two set the stage for the Populist movement, dealing with the Great Dakota Boom, the bust that succeeded it, and the growth of the Farmers' Alliance. The next three chapters recount the course of the Populist movement during the 1890s, dealing with its rise, its long years of defeat, and finally fusion and its demise. Chapter Six is a study of the administration of South Dakota's Populist governor, focusing on the barriers to effective reform that he met during his two terms. The final chapter applies some of the techniques used by quantitative historians in an analysis of the reaction of several of the state's major ethnic groups to the political campaigns of the 1890s.

NOTES

1. John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961); James C. Malin, "Notes on the Literature of Populism," Kansas Historical Quarterly 1 (February, 1932): 160-164.
2. See for example Victor C. Ferkiss, "Populist Influences on American Fascism," Western Political Quarterly 10 (June, 1957): 350-373.
3. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Random House, 1955), chapters 1-3.
4. Norman Pollack, "Hofstadter on Populism: A Critique of 'The Age of Reform,'" Journal of Southern History 26 (November, 1960): 478-500; Pollack, The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Pollack, "Fear of Man: Populism, Authoritarianism, and the Historian," Agricultural History 39 (April, 1965): 59-67.
5. Irwin Unger, "Critique of Norman Pollack's 'Fear of Man,'" Agricultural History 39 (April, 1965): 75-80; J. Rogers Hollingsworth, "Populism: The Problem of Rhetoric and Reality," Agricultural History 39 (April, 1965): 81-85; Oscar Handlin, "Reconsidering the Populists," Agricultural History 39 (April, 1965): 68-74.
6. Theodore Saloutos, "The Professors and the Populists," Agricultural History 40 (October, 1966): 235-254.
7. Karel Bicha, Western Populism: Studies in an Ambivalent Conservatism (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1976).
8. Walter T. K. Nugent, The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
9. See Norman Pollack, "The Myth of Populist Anti-Semitism," American Historical Review 68 (October, 1962): 76-80, for an example of the arguments and evidence presented.
10. C. Van Woodward, "The Populist Heritage and the Intellectual," American Scholar 29 (Winter, 1959-1960): 55-72.

11. Stanley B. Parsons, "Who Were the Nebraska Populists?" Nebraska History 44 (June, 1963): 83-99; Parsons, The Populist Context: Rural Versus Urban Power on a Great Plains Frontier (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973). In a recent article James Turner has suggested that cultural isolation was a major cause of Populism. See Turner, "Understanding the Populists," Journal of American History 67 (September, 1980): 354-373.

12. Walter T. K. Nugent, "Some Parameters of Populism," Agricultural History 40 (October, 1966): 255-70. David Stephens Trask has pointed out the importance of corn to Nebraska's agricultural economy and the "double economic liability" of farmers trapped in the corn-hog cycle when their crops failed. See Trask's "Nebraska Populism as a Response to Environmental and Political Problems," in The Great Plains: Environment and Culture, eds. Brian W. Blouet and Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 61-80, especially pp. 67, 70.

13. John David Dibbern, "Grass Roots Populism: Politics and Social Structure in a Frontier Community" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1980) (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1980), p. 210.

14. Robert W. Cherny, Populism, Progressivism, and the Transformation of Nebraska Politics, 1855-1915 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), pp. 67-71.

15. Frederick C. Luebke, Immigrants and Politics: The Germans of Nebraska, 1830-1900 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969); Cherny, Populism, Progressivism, and the Transformation of Nebraska Politics, pp. 54-61, 90-97. For excellent studies of politics in the 1890s in the Midwest, see Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York: The Free Press, 1970) and Richard Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest, Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

16. Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Robert W. Cherny, "Lawrence Goodwyn and Nebraska Populism: A Review Essay," Great Plains Quarterly 1 (Summer, 1981): 181-194, has provided the most forceful corrective. See also Robert W. Larson's criticisms concerning Goodwyn's neglect of Populism in the mountain states in his "Populism in the Mountain West: A Mainstream Movement," Western Historical Quarterly 13 (April, 1982): 143-64. Goodwyn committed a number of errors in his citations of South

Dakota sources. In the most glaring example, he cited pages over the two hundred mark from a seventy-nine page thesis on the Populist movement in the state. See Goodwyn, pp. 629, note 19; 635, note 51; and 643, note 2, for examples.

17. Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed., rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975); Kenneth Elton Hendrickson, Jr., "The Populist Movement in South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1959); Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "Some Political Aspects of the Populist Movement in South Dakota," North Dakota History 34 (Winter, 1967): 77-92. Three other works deserve brief mention. Warren S. Tryon's "Agriculture and Politics in South Dakota, 1889-1900," South Dakota Historical Collections 13 (1926): 284-310, is an early attempt to show the relationship between agricultural distress and political events during the Populist era. Louis Y. Van Dyke examined a Republican newspaper in the 1890s and found in it the same characteristics for which Hofstadter condemned Populism. See Van Dyke, "Hofstadter and The Huronite: Prairie Punditry on the Jim River, 1894-1899," in Twelfth Dakota History Conference, ed. H. W. Blakely (Madison, S.D.: Dakota State College, 1981), pp. 604-28. Hazel Lucile Heiman, "A Historical Study of the Persuasion of the Populist Impulse in South Dakota" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University Microfilms, 1970) is primarily a study of the rhetoric and means of persuasion of the Populists rather than an historical analysis of the movement.

18. Brian Jason Weed, "Populist Thought in North and South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1970).

19. Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967), pp. 137-67.

20. Dibbern, "Grass Root Populism."

21. Charles Lowell Green, "The Administration of the Public Domain in South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 20 (1940): 29, 33-35, 164, 245-50.

CHAPTER I

DAKOTA BOOM AND BUST

The background for South Dakota's Populist era was the Great Dakota Boom, a period in the territory's history stretching from 1878 to 1887. These were years of tremendous growth in the area as speculators and settlers flocked in from the East and foreign countries. The population grew at fantastic rates. For the first time large scale settlement edged away from the southeastern quarter and eastern border of what would become South Dakota. It was an era of high hopes, great speculation, and, as the difficult years of the 1890s would prove, overextension of agricultural techniques designed for a more humid climate. It is in this context that the magnitude of the bust and the severity of the problems farmers faced can be understood. Many of the grievances and conditions that ignited the agrarian revolt of the 1890s had their origins in this earlier, more optimistic time.

Census figures give an indication of the extent of the boom. South Dakota's exact population on the eve of the Dakota Boom is not known. The area's population in 1870 had been 7,919. By 1880, two years after the boom began, Dakota's southern half claimed 64,708 residents. A decade later the new state of South Dakota boasted of 237,753 inhabitants, and this was after the harsh conditions of the

late 1880s had already forced some to flee.¹ The expansion of agriculture in the southern half of the territory during the Dakota Boom is equally impressive. In 1880 the entire territory had only 17,435 farms, nearly fourteen thousand of which were in the southern half, totaling about 3,800,000 acres. Ten years later South Dakota alone had over 50,000 farms comprising over eleven million acres.²

The gross totals tell only part of the story. Such figures indicate the size of the influx, but not where these people settled. A large proportion found new homes in the western and northern areas away from the more humid southeastern and eastern edges of Dakota. The settled counties of the southeastern tip of Dakota Territory also registered large gains in the 1880s--Clay County's population grew fifty percent. The most remarkable growth, however, took place farther west. By 1879 the Big Sioux River valley was filled and settlement was spilling over the prairie to meet with that coming up the James River valley.³ By 1890 the counties along the Missouri were being settled. For example, the population of South Dakota counties bounded on the west by the Missouri had exploded from about 1,400 residents in 1880 to nearly 30,000 in 1890.⁴

The Great Dakota Boom was the resurgence of immigration into Dakota Territory after westward movement had been stalled for several years due to depression, drought, and grasshopper plagues. Its course can be charted in the num-

ber of acres filed on in the southern part of the territory between 1878 and 1887. Land entries in 1877 amounted to only 163,739 acres, but the total for the following year topped 940,000. Claims climbed steadily to a peak of nearly five and a half million acres in 1883 (though 1884 was the high for the territory was a whole), and declined to 1,123,233 acres in 1887.⁵

A variety of factors lay behind this rapid growth. Foremost among these was the renewed construction of railroads in Dakota. The first lines reached the fringes of southern Dakota in 1872, but by the next year, when building ceased because of the Panic of 1873, less than 100 miles of track had been laid.⁶ When improving conditions in the East permitted investment in western railroads again, a web of rail lines spread across the territory. A major impetus for this construction was a rivalry between the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul and the Chicago & North Western roads, both of which decided to extend their lines into the area in the late 1870s.⁷

Secondly, increased rainfall after the drought of the early 1870s convinced many settlers that South Dakota offered a more humid climate than was actually the case.⁸ This was particularly true for central and northern South Dakota where settlement moved onto the Great Plains proper. Here conventional agriculture as practiced further east was suitable during wet seasons, but as the rainfall cycle

entered a dry phase in the mid-1880s many farmers found themselves unable to cope with the changing conditions.

A third factor in the Dakota Boom was the promotional efforts of a variety of sources, all extolling the glories of the territory. Boomer literature was by no means limited to the years of the actual boom, but there was a profusion of it in the 1880s and soon after. The railroads were primarily responsible for such advertisement in the 1870s and early 1880s, although other private sources like townsite companies, newspapers, and steamship lines contributed their share.⁹ The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul was particularly active in promoting migration to Dakota, but other roads were also responsible for pamphlets, special excursion rates, emigration agents, and exhibition cars that toured eastern states.¹⁰

Dakotans were not willing to leave the task of informing the outside world of the region's benefits to private hands. In the mid-1870s a territorial immigration bureau operated for a time, sending out literature in English, German, and Norwegian. This was revived in 1885 and distributed thousands of pamphlets, reports, maps, lithographs, and books.¹¹

Other factors in the Dakota Boom included the availability of capital for investment in the West and advances in agricultural technology. As economic conditions improved after the Panic of 1873 capital flowed westward to

lucrative markets. Part of it went into railroads and Black Hills mines, but much of this money--especially that coming from small investors--found its way into farm mortgages.¹² This was welcomed by settlers who were just starting farms and needed capital from the outside to make necessary improvements and to buy the machinery required for prairie agriculture.

Progress in agricultural techniques and tools helped make possible the boom. Better plows and reapers aided in working large tracts of ground. Changes in flour milling allowed the commercial cultivation of hard spring wheat, a crop much more suited to Dakota's climate than soft winter wheat, and contributed to the development of the wheat belt of northern South Dakota. The danger present in this new technology was its cost. Many farmers went into debt to purchase machinery and were caught short when the boom broke.¹³

The boom could not last forever; something had to break. In Dakota in the 1880s what broke was the stretch of wet years. Localized drought struck in 1886, hitting small grains in particular. Widespread drought came in 1887, though it was only spotty in 1888. Severe drought returned in 1889 and, with some exceptions, a shortage of rainfall plagued the state until the mid-1890s.¹⁴

The effect of the drought was devastating, particularly in the western areas. Eastern and southeastern southern

Dakota fared better than the counties in the northern and central portions. The sections settled earlier received more rain than those settled during the boom and their farm economy was more diversified, thus able to absorb the shock better.¹⁵ Wheat in the entire territory averaged less than ten bushels per acre in 1889, and some areas harvested considerably less. Many were faced with destitution in an era when state government was too limited to provide substantial assistance. In Miner County crops were so poor that starvation was imminent for thousands.¹⁶ John B. Streng, a German farmer living a few miles south of that county, wrote to H.T. Helgesen, commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and Labor, whom he had heard was collecting funds for Dakota's needy, "We have 4 little children and nothing to eat and no shoes for our children and no feed for our horses [W]e shall perish with hunger, all my neighbors are as badly circumstanced."¹⁷

The course of the boom and bust has been ably chronicled in one wheat belt county. Brown County, situated on the edge of the Great Plains in northern South Dakota, had only 353 residents and 28 farms in 1880. In the next years the boom overtook it and by 1885 Brown had 12,011 inhabitants and 2,441 farms.¹⁸ By 1890 the population reached 16,855 and the number of farms totaled 2,527.¹⁹ In 1882 Brown County farmers harvested a bumper wheat crop, a success that insured the crop's prominence in future plant-

ing. In 1883 over three times more land was devoted to wheat than any other crop. Good harvests continued through 1885, but the beginning of the drought in 1886 damaged the small grain crops. Some areas in the county averaged only three to four bushels an acre that year. Furthermore, the price of wheat in Aberdeen ranged from only \$.45 to \$.62 a bushel. Despite a poor showing in 1886, settlers continued to come to the county and farmers continued to plant wheat. The next year increased rainfall brought some relief, but it did not last. The severe winter of 1887-1888 presaged continued drought and yields were low in 1888. Prices reached \$1.27 per bushel for wheat in Aberdeen, but only under the artificial stimulus of an active local board of trade. Such high prices may have done the county more harm than good because it only reinforced farmers' tendency to stay with a single crop rather than diversify. Even with the risk, the chance of a large crop at that price was a potential bonanza that was hard to pass. Hence, over a quarter of a million acres in Brown County were planted with wheat in 1889, more than five times the acreage devoted to oats, King Wheat's closest competitor. The dry weather continued in 1890 and was complicated by prairie fires and low market prices.²⁰ Brown County farmers eventually turned to more diversified crops to protect themselves against losing everything with a poor wheat crop, but it was a lesson learned through hardship.

Census returns can be used to measure the bust as well as the boom. Between 1890 and 1895 twenty-seven counties in South Dakota lost population, most of them located in the region east of the Missouri River, but north and west of the counties settled before the boom.²¹ Between 1890 and 1900 drought and other factors caused a drop in the population of sixteen South Dakota counties, all of which lay on or west of the James River. Most of these lay between the James and the Missouri, the area that received the greatest influx of settlers during the boom and that is the eastern edge of the Great Plains in the state.²² Furthermore, the counties that lost population often had urban sites that were growing, a fact that conceals the true loss in rural districts.²³ Most of those regaining population losses between 1895 and 1900 were situated east of the Great Plains or in the Black Hills.

Other factors contributed to the end of the boom. Railroad construction dropped dramatically in 1888.²⁴ During the good years farmers had been too willing to mortgage their land in order to get established or to expand. The result was that they had too much debt and not enough capital to survive a series of bad years.²⁵ In 1890 South Dakota ranked ninth in the nation in the percentage of families living in owned but mortgaged homes, following only Kansas of the Plains states.²⁶ The farmers' inability to secure additional capital was compounded by a tightening

money market due to a slump in business in the East and eastern reluctance to invest because of fraud and failure in speculative ventures in the West.²⁷

Many of the seeds of the Populist movement were sown during the Dakota Boom between 1878 and 1887. That is when settlers moved out into a region for which they were not prepared. That is the era when railroads stretched through the future state, making commercial agriculture on a large scale feasible, but also binding the farmers' fate to them. That is when farmers shouldered a mortgage burden too heavy for them to carry during hard years. These were seeds that would come to fruition in the 1890s. The organization that harvested those seeds was the Dakota Farmers' Alliance.

NOTES

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10. Hallie Farmer, "The Economic Background of Frontier Populism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 10 (March, 1924): 408-409; Hammer, "Come to God's County," pp. 301-307.

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13. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 160; Fite, Farmers' Frontier, p. 104

14. Herbert S. Schell, "Drought and Agriculture in Eastern South Dakota During the Eighteen Nineties," Agricultural History 5 (October, 1931): 164-65; Briggs, "Great Dakota Boom," p. 99; Fite, Farmers' Frontier, pp. 106-108; Farmer, "Economic Background," pp. 416-17.

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16. Fite, Farmers' Frontier, pp. 108-109.

17 John B. Streng to H.T. Helgesen, March 21, 1890, Arthur C. Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

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CHAPTER II

THE DAKOTA FARMERS' ALLIANCE

When Dakota farmers found themselves in hard straits during the nineteenth century their response was organization to act against a common threat. This was first seen in the Grange in Dakota Territory in the 1870s. As farmers faced difficulties in the late 1880s and 1890s they again flocked to a farm order to seek relief, turning this time to the Farmers' Alliance.

In the years just prior to South Dakota's statehood in 1889, the agrarians in the region were confronted by serious problems. The Great Dakota Boom ended, leaving many farmers poorly prepared for hardships and deeply in debt. Sagging prices due to deflation and overproduction made wresting a living from a stubborn climate more difficult. Located far from adequate markets, South Dakota's farmers depended heavily on elevators and railroads to buy, store, and ship their crops to eastern cities. These corporations were, however, powerful institutions that were accused of exploiting helpless farmers.

The Farmers' Alliance offered embattled farmers a tool to combat such barriers to agricultural prosperity. Part of the farm order's solution to these problems lay in cooperative enterprises that would allow agrarians a chance to overcome some of the sources of oppression. Hence the Alli-

ance gave rise to a host of business operations such as insurance companies, purchasing cooperatives, and elevators. In addition, the Alliance appealed to sources outside agricultural circles for support against its enemies, petitioning particularly to laborers, whom it saw as common members of a great producing class that was endangered by those who would seek to enrich themselves from the labor of others.

The problems Dakota farmers encountered in the eighties and nineties were not new to the region. During the early 1870s the Patrons of Husbandry, a farm order that had been organized by Oliver Kelley in Washington, D.C., in 1867, gathered some strength among settlers in southeastern Dakota Territory who were suffering under an oppressive credit system. The Grange, as the organization is more commonly known, first began in Dakota Territory in late 1872 and quickly grew to about 2,000 members in fifty-six lodges. Although the Dakota State Grange made efforts to eliminate middlemen who siphoned farmers' profits, it met with little success. A brief foray into politics in combination with the Democrats by a portion of the Grange as the Anti-Monopoly Party in 1874 was also a failure and the organization faded into obscurity.¹

A few years later farmers turned to another organization to replace the Grange. Milton George, the Illinois editor who started the National Farmers' Alliance, issued the first charter to a local alliance in Dakota in 1881.² The

first few years of the Northern Alliance, as the National Farmers' Alliance is generally known, were marked by slow progress in the territory. By 1884, however, difficulties with credit, railroad and elevator abuses, and declining wheat prices convinced many farmers of the need to organize more thoroughly.³

The forerunner of the Dakota Territorial Alliance was the Beadle County Farmers' Protective Association, an organization formed by farmers on the edge of the Great Plains in 1884 in search of a means of obtaining higher prices for their crops and lower prices for their purchases.⁴ In December 1884 a meeting of all granges, alliances and other agricultural groups was called by W.F.T. Bushnell, the editor of the Dakota Farmer, to gather in Huron, the county seat of Beadle County. Although many of the territory's sixty local alliances were not represented, the convention effected an organization and adopted a platform calling for the equal taxation of all property, an end to railroad passes to government officials, the regulation of transport rates by law, and legislation in the interest of farmers.⁵

In February 1885 the farmers again met in Huron to elect a new slate of officers, adopt a constitution, and formally become the Dakota Territorial Alliance. Only forty-three delegates, mostly from central South Dakota and none from the northern half of the territory, attended.⁶ The following January the Alliance convened in Watertown where

Henry L. Loucks was elected president.⁷

Henry Langford Loucks was inseparably bound to the Dakota Alliance and South Dakota's Populist movement. Born in Canada in 1846, Loucks lived in the United States briefly during the mid-1860s before returning to his homeland. He re-emigrated in 1879. After a few years in Missouri he located on a farm in Deuel County, Dakota, in 1883. In 1884 Loucks organized a farm club in Deuel that later became an alliance. His election to the presidency of the Dakota Alliance in 1886 was only the beginning of his rise in agrarian politics. In 1889 he became the president of the Northern Alliance, but soon led the Dakota farm order into the Southern Alliance where he was elected vice-president. When the president, Leonidas L. Polk, died in June 1892, Loucks succeeded him and was elected president in his own right in November of that year. He also made several bids for major office in South Dakota politics before his death in 1928. Condemned as an unprincipled schemer and office seeker by his enemies and hailed as the "Moses" of the Alliance and the "patron saint of South Dakota populists" by friends, Loucks left a large imprint on the state's political scene in the 1890s.⁸

The Alliance grew rapidly under the adverse conditions the farmers faced in the 1880s. In December 1884 only about sixty local alliances existed in Dakota. In two years the number quadrupled. By December 1888, 744 suballiances dotted

the territory with approximately 28,000 members. By the end of July 1889, over one hundred thirty more charters had been issued.⁹ The order's early strength was concentrated in the in the wheat belt counties of southern Dakota and in the Red River Valley of northern Dakota, but it eventually spread to cover all settled sections of the territory.¹⁰

As commercial farmers, Dakota's agricultural settlers depended heavily on the various aspects of the marketing system for their success. Abuses in this system and the problems inherent in a frontier area drew farmers into the Alliance as a means of meeting their problems with a united front. Difficulties with railroads and elevators were part of the problem. Carrying a heavy burden of debt that was a constant drain on the scant resources of the region was another element in the Alliance's rise. The disillusionment caused by the end of the boom, the hardships created by the drought, and the frustration experienced when it took larger crops to bring the same return as prices spiraled downward all combined to fuel the Farmers' Alliance. When their own institution proved incapable of solving their problems and when the two major parties showed themselves unresponsive to the needs of farmers, the agrarians took the promising road of independent political action.

The farmers' heavy dependence on the railroad made it a particular point of concern for the Alliance. Extensive commercial agriculture was possible in large sections of

South Dakota only because of the ready access to markets afforded by railroads. The roads could literally decide the life or death of a community by where they laid the tracks as they expanded across Dakota. A bumper wheat harvest was meaningless unless it could be moved to market economically. Settlers viewed these giant corporations with hope, for only the steel rails could bring prosperity and growth, yet with fear and suspicion of the power they could exert. That alarm was justified. The railroads in South Dakota, in the eyes of agrarians, abused their unbridled power and had to be checked.

Their first complaint was that freight rates were too high. Farmers found that excessive rates, especially as the prices they received for their produce declined, could easily gobble up one-third to one-half of their year's profits.¹¹ The actual effect of railroad rates on farmers in the 1890s has generated some controversy among historians, but recent scholarship suggests that farmers, particularly those west of the Missouri, were indeed laboring under high rates.¹²

The railroads contended that such rates were justified because the low volume of traffic in the state was carried over long distances, which meant a high fixed cost of operation. Severe winters also added to the costs of running the roads. Furthermore, most of Dakota's railroads had been recently built. Rates had to be high enough to earn sufficient revenue to pay debts from construction, especially in

areas where there was little business.¹³

This was an era when stock watering was common and the fact that new railroads were often over-capitalized meant higher rates were necessary to pay expected dividends. In addition, the valuation of the track and railroad equipment was often undervalued to escape state taxes. Farmers paid higher rates at the depot and higher taxes at the courthouse because of such practices.¹⁴ The issue of raising the assessments on railroad property later became a major point in Populist Governor Andrew E. Lee's program.

Various other aspects of the railroads' service worked hardships on the farmers. Competition among lines in some areas forced prices down and the common practice was to make up such losses in areas where a road held a monopoly. This often resulted in higher prices for a short haul to a large center than for the much longer distances between large cities. It could be cheaper to ship a bushel of grain from Chicago to England than from Dakota to the millers of Minneapolis. Railroads also sold transit between Dakota and Milwaukee rather than for the shorter route to the Twin Cities to prevent the transfer of grain to a competing line. The farmer could sell his wheat at a point closer than Milwaukee, but he still had to pay the full rate although he might be able to sell his remaining mileage at a discount.¹⁵

Discrimination between large shippers and small ones was another point of aggravation. Customers who shipped in

bulk frequently received rebates and special prices for which individual farmers could not qualify. Major shippers were accorded better service by the railroads. Elevators had few problems getting enough cars to ship their grain while individuals and small companies went begging for means of transporting their crops. When parties did wish to build elevators or flathouses in competition with established elevator companies the railroads were often reluctant to grant space on the right of way for construction or otherwise hindered them.¹⁶

Farmers and reformers found that the power of the railroad corporations was an obstacle to redress through the political process. The railroads had the organization and the money to field strong lobbies and hire attorneys to protect their interests in the legislature and the courts. The custom of issuing free railroad passes to prominent officials and molders of public opinion also infuriated farmers. Henry Loucks railed against the practice, "The system [of passes] is a damnable lever of corruption, by which the press, the politicians, and the people's representatives are influenced against the interests of the people We, the victims, are charged enough extra to make up for the free travelling, railroad lobbying, etc."¹⁷

Farmers also had grievances against the grain elevators they normally had to deal with while marketing their crops. Like the railroads, the elevators were frequently monopolis-

tic institutions in small towns. Seldom did farmers have a wide range of grain buyers with whom to do business, hence the prices offered for their products were easily manipulated. Line elevator companies--those operating a string of elevators along a particular railroad--had good relations with railway officials and both companies were hesitant to allow other competitors in. Some of these elevator chains were huge affairs. In 1889 an English syndicate purchased 78 elevators of the Van Duzen Company in Dakota and Minnesota and was negotiating for a dozen more.¹⁸ Even when local elevators were willing to pay good prices, grain dealers in the major terminals worked to keep the prices down. In 1889 there were reports that Minneapolis dealers were exaggerating the size of the Dakota wheat crop to suppress prices.¹⁹

Local elevator agents controlled the grading of grain as well, so a man's crop might receive a low grade at the elevator, but be sold to a miller in Minneapolis at a higher one, with the elevator operator pocketing the extra profit.²⁰

Lacking adequate storage space on his farm, the typical South Dakota farmer usually had to sell his grain as soon as possible, taking whatever the local elevator would offer. Consigning the crop to the elevator was an alternative, but the farmer had to pay storage fees and still could not be certain of a higher price at a later date. Often settlers had no choice but to sell because they had to satisfy debtors.

Farmers with initiative might try to ship their wheat themselves, but they generally encountered problems getting cars.²¹

Even when a farmer's prices were not manipulated, he often found little return in the marketplace. Agricultural prices were on a downward slope in the years following the Civil War for two reasons. One was the general decline in the level of prices in the deflation that occurred as the economy wound down from its wartime rate. A second cause was the vast increases in production that characterized American and worldwide agriculture in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As the government retired the greenbacks that had circulated during the Civil War, price levels dropped to match the subsequent appreciation of the currency left in the economy. Between 1865 and 1870 alone the money in circulation dropped 25 percent. According to one authority, the general price index between 1865 and 1895 fell from about 185 to less than 75, with agricultural commodities below that.²² The effects of this can be seen in the prices paid to farmers in South Dakota. In the early 1890s wheat dropped below a dollar per bushel in Dakota and proved a major impetus to the formation of the farmers' organizations.²³ Using the average price for July 15 of each year, wheat brought \$0.72 per bushel in 1890 and 1891, but fell to \$0.60 in 1892. In 1893 and 1894 the price was under fifty

cents a bushel. After a slight rally in 1895, the price dropped to \$0.40 in 1896. The remaining years of the decade brought prices near or over the \$0.60 mark, but only after years of privation on South Dakota farms.²⁴

As agriculture spread westward onto the huge tracts of the Great Plains, farm production climbed, depressing prices through the natural consequences of an increased supply. Improvements in transportation in the United States and in other countries expanded the markets of American farmers, but also placed them in competition with agriculturalists elsewhere.²⁵

Another burden upon the farmers was the tariff, which made the price of goods they bought artificially high but which did not offer much protection for the goods they sold. As one of the most heatedly debated issues of the Gilded Age, the tariff was defended by the Republicans as the means of encouraging native industries. It was attacked by Democrats who looked upon it as an unwarranted aid to a favored few at the expense of the many. Although many Alliance men, reflecting their Republican roots, favored the tariff, the arguments of its critics had some merit. Otto Anderson, a Pennington County Alliance member, was a persistent enemy of the "tariff robbers" who kept prices high on twine, but low on cattle hides that the farmer marketed.²⁶

The money lending institutions that had been so welcome during good years became enemies during the bad ones. In-

terest rates were high before the end of the boom, but loans were available. Declining prices made it more difficult to pay off mortgages contracted during years of expansion; poor harvests made it almost unbearable. Farmers had to refinance their mortgages or face foreclosure, and, due to the poor business conditions in the East, interest rates jumped because there was less capital at hand. When real estate mortgages were unavailable hardpressed farmers turned to chattel mortgages on their equipment and livestock for ready cash, even though it entailed interest rates that could reach 36 percent. One of the ironies of this alternative was that many families could not flee during difficult years because their only means of transportation--their wagon and team--was mortgaged and could not be removed.²⁷ Bankers who had been looked upon as friends during prosperous years began to be viewed as usurers and symbols of exploitation.

The men most likely to join the Farmers' Alliance were precisely those farmers who had the most to lose from drought and agricultural depression. A recent study of the membership of the Alliance in one South Dakota county has indicated that the order drew most of its members from farmers who had recently improved their status and were heavily mortgaged. These men were most vulnerable to hard times, for they had gone into debt to establish farms and did not yet have the resources to weather financial difficulties. ²⁸

An example of how the Alliance used adverse conditions to recruit new members can be seen in the attempts it made to boost grain prices. In 1889 when wheat was bringing only \$0.50 to \$0.60 a bushel, the Dakota Ruralist, official organ of the Territorial Alliance, urged farmers to hold their crops as long as possible in hopes of higher prices. "In the meantime look about and investigate the Alliance movement which seeks to combine the farmers, and in this way meet combination with combination."²⁹

Part of the Dakota Alliance's response to these adversities was a range of cooperative enterprises. The basic thrust of these programs was to save money and to give the farmer more control over his affairs. Henry Loucks viewed cooperation as the means to break trusts that monopolized the markets in which farmers operated. A cooperative store could sell products for less than the traditional stores or force local businessmen to lower their prices.³⁰

These various operations benefited the Alliance by boosting its membership. The historian of the Southern Alliance credits the cooperative portion of the organization's activities with being a major lure to farmers.³¹ The personnel in these businesses served as recruiters for new members. In 1889 the 273 insurance agents operating in Dakota helped start 103 new alliances in the territory.³² Indeed, the desire to coordinate the efforts of various buying and selling operations had been one of the reasons why the Dakota Alli-

ance had been formed in the first place, with the price of twine and coal being early concerns.³³

The first major undertaking by the Alliance was the Alliance Hail Association, formed in December 1886 and incorporated the following February. The Association was able to insure farmers against one of the environmental hazards they faced at a significantly lower rate than traditional insurance companies. In its first year the hail insurance program paid its claim in full out of an assessment that was forty to fifty cents per acre lower than its competitors. Over 152,000 acres were covered in 1887, 566,000 the second year, and nearly 460,000 the third year.³⁴

The hail insurance proved such a success that the Alliance authorized the formation of a life insurance department at its December 1888 meeting. The Alliance Aid Association began operations in early 1889, offering a \$2,000 policy to members between the ages of 18 and 50 for a \$5.00 membership fee. Whenever a member died, all other members were assessed a fee of \$1.00 to \$2.00 to cover the costs.³⁵ The Alliance also offered fire insurance for a time.³⁶

The man in charge of the Alliance insurance efforts was Alonzo Wardall, a Grant County farmer, a long-time agrarian leader, and one of the most powerful men in the Dakota Alliance. Born in Wisconsin in 1845, Wardall saw service in the Civil War before he moved to Iowa where he was a leader in the state's Grange movement. He was one of the organizers

of the Dakota Alliance after his removal to that territory. He also served as a member of the executive board of the Southern Alliance. In the early 1890s he started the Alliance Aid Degree, the national counterpart of the Alliance Aid Association.³⁷

Perhaps the most ambitious cooperative venture by the Alliance was the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company, a joint stock company created as a purchasing operation. Authorized by the Alliance's executive committee in July 1887, this concern began business in January 1888 with George C. Crose as president. Its original capital of \$200,000 was to come from the sale of 20,000 shares of stock, with no member allowed to take more than fifty shares to insure that no individual could control it. It originally functioned through a large network of some five hundred local agents, but in 1889 switched to county purchasing agents to improve efficiency.³⁸

The purchasing cooperative faced severe problems in its early years. Many wholesalers, particularly agricultural implement dealers, were reluctant to deal with it. Furthermore, it lacked the necessary capital to buy in the quantities it had hoped.³⁹

Despite these obstacles, the company managed to do over \$353,000 in business in its first year, about half of which was in twine. In 1888 it sold around 75 carloads of twine,

2,000 cars of coal, and 11 cars of barbed wire. As the cooperative gained momentum it offered more products. It secured a contract with a plow company, and offered miscellaneous farm implements, sewing machines, oil and other items. It even had its own illustrated catalog.⁴⁰

A third Alliance business struck directly at an old enemy. In early 1888 a farmers' elevator company was incorporated in Minneapolis with Henry Loucks as president. Only by controlling a terminal with ready markets could farmers defeat the power of the line elevators. British investors were willing to put up half of the projected two million dollars in capital in order to guarantee getting pure hard wheat.⁴¹

One of Louck's associates in the firm was C.C. Wolcott, the owner of a chain of 32 elevators. When Wolcott lost badly in wheat speculation he had to borrow heavily from the company and one of its officers. Milling interests in Minneapolis seized this opportunity to discredit their new competitor and managed to frighten away English capital. This affair and the enmity of the traditional commercial channels for handling grain brought on the failure of the Alliance elevator plans.⁴²

Not all cooperative enterprises of the era were the work of the Territorial Alliance. A number of local alliances and other groups made efforts at cooperation to cut their costs and improve their conditions. By 1888 there were 42 farmers'

elevators in the territory, eleven of them under the auspices of alliances.⁴³ For example, the White Farmers' Alliance Elevator Company and a farmers' elevator at Alpena, South Dakota, were praised for the savings they produced.⁴⁴ In Grant County a stock company consisting mostly of farmers ran a cheese factory.⁴⁵

The large scale cooperative businesses of the Alliance were not successful in the long term. As was the case with the Alliance's elevator company, the hostility of older businesses and the lack of capital seriously hindered the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company. The Alliance Hail Association fell on hard times when it could not pay all of its claims. It was later denied a certificate to operate in the state when the insurance commissioner reported finding evidence of favoritism in the manner the company paid claims.

Recent historians have seen the problems the Alliance faced in economic cooperation as having "a discernible radicalizing effect on the Dakota leadership, particularly on Loucks himself."⁴⁶ This is true in some cases, but the failure of cooperation did not become the sole wellspring for the Populist party or for future agrarian radicalism. Loucks and Wardall became leaders in the Alliance crusade against trusts and in the Independent movement, but not all of the top Alliance men reacted in the same fashion. Don C.

Needham, once secretary of the Farmers' Alliance Company, and A.D. Chase, formerly a director of the hail association, remained in the Republican party rather than turn to independent action.⁴⁷ Those early leaders who did turn to radicalism often had reformist backgrounds to begin with. Wardall had been a Granger in Iowa. He and Loucks had given support to temperance and woman suffrage.⁴⁸

Even though some leaders in the Alliance were "radicalized" from their experiences in the cooperative movement, this did not always apply to local leaders and the rank and file. Not all of the Alliance followed Loucks and his associates into the Independent party with its controversial proposals and the Populists alone never drew a majority of South Dakota's electorate. The state, despite occasional bursts of agrarian reformism and a cooperative movement that has been part of the farm economy since the 1880s, remains conservative.

The cooperative efforts incurred the displeasure of the business community, especially local merchants whose income suffered because of the competition.⁴⁹ In defending the cooperative movement from those who attacked it as an appeal to man's baser instincts, Loucks retorted that it was a positive good. The movement instilled a spirit of cooperation, gave the profits to the men who earned them rather than to trusts, and developed wholesome qualities like "self-reliance, thrift, economy, knowledge, and independence."⁵⁰ In two

editorials in 1889 the Alliance leader disclaimed any desire to foster antagonism between the town and country. He assured townsmen that he had no intention to destroy the cities, but, foreshadowing Bryan's famous statement about the dependence of urban areas upon rural ones, he pointed out that the prosperity of the city depended on the prosperity of the farm. He warned town leaders that the farmers would readily turn to cooperatives if the profits of middlemen got too high.⁵¹

The Alliance made one half-hearted gesture to overcome such hostility and formally enlist town dwellers in its cause. Such people were urged to form a chapter of the National Citizens' Industrial Alliance, an order open to everyone but "stockholders, officers or salaried attorneys of railway, express, telegraph or national banking corporations."⁵² The idea never caught on in South Dakota, although there was at least one such organization in the state, located in Parker with sixty members.⁵³

The Alliance also solicited the support of laborers, seeking to demonstrate that there was a unity of interest between farmers and laborers as members of the producing class against the corporations and trusts that oppressed both of them. Hugh J. Campbell, a speaker at the Farmers' Alliance meeting in June 1889, talked of the great battle in which they would soon engage, a battle that would decide who would govern the state, "the great producing class" or "the

great corporations, the corruptionists, the boodlers and the political rings."⁵⁴ Some of those attending the 1889 convention were Knights of Labor, who had been invited to join the farmers' assemblage by Loucks and the Knights' Grand Master Workman in the state, Frank Wilder.⁵⁵

The columns of the Dakota Ruralist give evidence of support among Alliance men for the problems of labor, a sentiment that seems to go beyond a simple appeal for labor votes to achieve farm ends. One might expect an agrarian leader and politician such as Loucks to show his sympathy for a labor dispute involving the Knights of Labor, but resolutions by local alliances favoring the cause of the labor group against companies that had discriminated against the workers' order were common. The Walworth County Alliance voted to boycott the Grand Detour Plow Company, the Henderson Shoe Company, and the Rochester Clothing Company. The Huffton Alliance in Brown County added the Globe tobacco combine to the list of targeted businesses and Rose Alliance, No. 74, of Spink County pledged not to buy from "any other company that refuses to hire union labor."⁵⁶ Other local alliances criticized the government for allowing the Pinkertons to interfere in the Homestead steel strike and for harsh treatment of Coxey's army. One alliance even endorsed T.V. Powderly, the national leader of the Knights of Labor for president.⁵⁷

The Knights of Labor do not seem to have played a significant role in the politics of the 1890s. The organization had little strength in South Dakota, numbering only 36 assemblies.⁵⁸ The president and business manager of its official organ opposed the independent movement and placed his paper and himself--in his capacity as a delegate to the Alliance convention that voted to form a third party--at the disposal of the Republican governor.⁵⁹ Nor does it appear that other labor organizations or laborers as a whole heeded the Alliance siren.

Confronted by a diverse set of agricultural hardships in the late 1880s and early 1890s, South Dakota farmers turned to the Farmers' Alliance for solutions to pressing problems. Many agricultural settlers had over-extended their resources and abilities and were hard put to cope with the end of the Dakota boom. Poor prices made the returns for even bumper crops insufficient. Elevators and railroads, upon which farmers depended for marketing, seemed to be draining away the meager profit from South Dakota farms. In response, the Alliance developed a series of cooperative ventures to alleviate some of the difficulties and bid for the support of laborers against those interests perceived as inimical to the wellbeing of the producing class.

The Alliance recognized early that only part of its program could be achieved through cooperation and appeals

for unity to others. It quickly turned to political pressure, although at first in a non-partisan form. The farm order tried to work within the structures of the existing parties, but it was political action nevertheless. Such items as railroad reform, new mortgage laws, and a greater money supply could only be had by taking demands to the polls and to the legislature.

NOTES

1. Herbert S. Schell, "The Grange and the Credit Problem in Dakota Territory," Agricultural History 10 (January, 1936): 59-83. A brief summary of the Dakota Grange may be found in Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed., rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), pp. 123-24.
2. Robert C. McMath, Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 78; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 224.
3. McMath, Populist Vanguard, p. 83; Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 223-24; Elwyn B. Robinson, History of North Dakota (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 203.
4. Glenn Lowell Brudvig, "The Farmers' Alliance and Populist Movement in North Dakota (1884-1896)" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1956), pp. 41-42.
5. Ibid., pp. 41-43.
6. Ibid., p. 46; Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 224-25.
7. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," p. 46.
8. "Loucks, Henry Langford," Dictionary of American Biography 11: 426-27; Yankton Press and Dakotan, October 3, 1890; Kenneth Elton Hendrickson, Jr., "The Populist Movement in South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1959), p. 10; Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 180-81; McMath, Populist Vanguard, pp. 139-145; Dakota Ruralist August 29, 1891; April 6, 1893.
9. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 44n, 50; Dakota Ruralist, February 12, July 27, 1889.
10. Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 224-25.
11. Hallie Farmer, "The Railroads and Frontier Populism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 13 (December, 1926): 388.

12. Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897, The Economic History of the United States, vol. 5 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1945; reprint ed., White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1973), pp. 295-299, finds marked differences between rates on the east side and the west side of the Missouri River on some lines. Recently economists have examined the question using sophisticated statistical techniques. Robert Higgs, "Railroad Rates and the Populist Uprising," Agricultural History 44 (July, 1970): 291-97, argues on the basis of average ton/mile data that the real cost of freight rates remained about the same between 1867 and 1896 but that the relative cost of transport increased as the farmers' own economic condition worsened. Mark Aldrich, "A Note on Railroad Rates and the Populist Uprising," Agricultural History 54 (July, 1980): 424-32, contends that a closer look using published rates reveals declining transport costs between 1870 and 1880, but climbing rates thereafter.

13. Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 2; John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 64-65.

14. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 65-66; Farmer, "Railroads and Frontier Populism," pp. 389, 397.

15. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 61-64.

16. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 67-68; South Dakota, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Second Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of South Dakota, 1891 (Pierre, 1893), pp. 42, 46-47; South Dakota, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Third Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of South Dakota, 1892 (Pierre, 1893), pp. 35-43.

17. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 69-71; Dakota Ruralist, April 13, 1889.

18. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 75-76; Dakota Ruralist, August 3, August 10, 1889.

19. Dakota Ruralist, August 24, 1889.

20. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 76-78.

21. Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 5-7; Shannon, Farmer's Last Frontier, p. 179.

22. Shannon, Farmer's Last Frontier, pp. 184, 294.
The price index uses 1926 as the base year.
23. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 224.
24. J. L. Orr, Prices Paid to Producers of South Dakota Farm Products, 1890-1930, Bulletin No. 291 (Brookings, S.D.: Department of Agricultural Economics, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, 1931), p. 15.
25. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 57-59.
26. Ibid., p. 80; Dakota Ruralist, June 8, July 20, August 3, 1889.
27. Hallie Farmer, "The Economic Background to Frontier Populism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 10 (March, 1924): 419-420; Gilbert C. Fite, "Agricultural Pioneering in Dakota: A Case Study," Great Plains Quarterly 1 (Summer, 1981): 177, offers insight into the credit situation of one Dakota farmer in the late 1880s and early 1890s.
28. John David Dibbern, "Grass Roots Populism: Politics and Social Structure in a Frontier Community" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1980; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1980), pp. 119, 199, 205, 210.
29. Dakota Ruralist, September 7, 1889.
30. Dakota Ruralist, April 27, June 15, 1889; Nelson A. Dunning, editor-in-chief, The Farmers' Alliance History and Agricultural Digest (Washington, D.C.: The Alliance Publishing Co., 1891; Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976), p. 366.
31. McMath, Populist Vanguard, p. 84.
32. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," p. 88.
33. McMath, Populist Vanguard, p. 84; Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," p. 76.
34. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 86-88; Dakota Ruralist, January 12, 1889; Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 14, 1890.
35. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," p. 90; Dakota Ruralist, December 22, 1888; Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 14, 1890.

36. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," p. 90.

37. Annie L. Diggs, "The Farmers' Alliance and Some of Its Leaders," Arena 5 (April, 1892): 594-96; McMath, Populist Vanguard, pp. 84, 147.

38. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 78-79, 81; Goodwyn, Democratic Promise, pp. 155-56; Dakota Ruralist, January 26, February 12, 1889.

39. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 79-80; Robinson, History of North Dakota, p. 205; George W. Kingsbury, History of Dakota Territory, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 2: 1538.

Kingsbury's work is often cited as a five volume set, with George Martin Smith's South Dakota: Its History and People and two biographical volumes included as the remaining volumes. The five volumes are numbered sequentially. However, for purposes of clarity, in all future references Kingsbury's and Smith's books will be considered separate works. Martin's first volume will be listed as Volume 1 of a three volume work.

40. Dakota Ruralist, January 26, 1889, September 5, 1891; Robinson, History of North Dakota, p. 205.

41. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 94-95; Dakota Ruralist, September 7, 1889.

42. Brudvig, "Farmers' Alliance," pp. 96-99.

43. Ibid., p. 93.

44. Dakota Ruralist, January 12, May 11, 1889.

45. Dakota Ruralist, June 1, 1889.

46. Goodwyn, Democratic Promise, p. 156. See also McMath, Populist Vanguard, p. 85.

47. Frank Crane to Arthur C. Mellette, April 22, 1889; S. J. Conklin to Mellette, October 26, 1889, Arthur C. Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

48. Diggs, "Farmers' Alliance and Some of Its Leaders," pp. 594-96; Ida Husted Harper, The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill Co., 1898), 2: 684.

49. For examples of this reaction in Nebraska, see David Stephens Trask, "Formation and Failure: The Populist Party in Seward County, 1890-1892," Nebraska History 51 (Fall, 1970): 285-287, and Frederick C. Luebke, "Mainstreet and the Countryside: Patterns of Voting in Nebraska During the Populist Era," Nebraska History 50 (Fall, 1969): 264.

50. Dakota Ruralist, May 11, 1889.

51. Dakota Ruralist, June 15, August 24, 1889.

52. Dakota Ruralist, June 30, 1892.

53. Dakota Ruralist, August 1, 1891.

54. Dakota Ruralist, July 13, 1889.

55. Dakota Ruralist, June 1, 8, 1889.

56. Dakota Ruralist, May 4, 1889; April 7, April 21, 1892.

57. Dakota Ruralist, August 25, 1892; June 7, 1894; May 19, 1892. For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between farmers and laborers during the Populist era, consult Norman Pollack, The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 43-61, 65-67.

58. Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 31, 1890. For the story of one local assembly that apparently had no effect politically, see Herbert S. Schell, History of Clay County, South Dakota (Vermillion: Clay County Historical Society, Inc., 1975), p. 92.

59. Frank Wilder to Arthur C. Mellette, May 28, June 10, 1890, Mellette Papers. The official organ of the Dakota Assembly of the Knights, the Dakota Knights of Labor, is evidently no longer extant. In late 1891 the paper changed its name to the Industrial Republic. In mid-1892 the paper merged with a Populist daily, the Aberdeen Star, and the publication continued as the Star. Dakota Ruralist, December 24, 1891; June 9, 1892.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

Cooperative enterprises formed only part of the Alliance response to agrarian problems. The organization's members understood from the beginning that some of their goals could not be accomplished without political action. Business ventures could free farmers from dependence on middlemen who drained off profits, but other objectives required political remedies. Indeed, the first platform of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, adopted in December 1884, called for a number of items that could be achieved solely by legislation.

In 1884 the farmers' demands were rather limited. In the course of the next six years, however, the Alliance platforms grew in length and scope. By the end of the decade, Alliance men called for a sweeping exercise of governmental authority. The reforms they desired became more specific. The Alliance found that its early goals were too limited and that a stronger role for government--particularly the national government--would be necessary. In these years the Alliance discovered that their opponents exercised too much control over the government and that changes were needed to protect the power of the common man.

The farmers also made an effort to broaden their appeal by including changes called for by other groups. By 1889 the

Alliance began to look to other economic interests--especially labor--that shared their disadvantages in order to establish a common front.

The farmers first sought to reach their goals by working through the existing party structure. They believed that in an agrarian state such as South Dakota, where farmers formed the bulk of the voting population, they could easily compel both of the major parties to meet Alliance demands. This proved a false hope, for old party leaders, although they attempted to placate agrarian protests, followed their own goals and listened more intently to other interests. In 1889 the Alliance could claim that the final session of the territorial legislature was a farmers' legislature because a majority of the members espoused agricultural principles, but even with such strength, the farmers could not push through their demands.

By the end of the decade, some South Dakota farmers had concluded--reluctantly by their own claims and eagerly according to their enemies--that the old parties could not serve as vehicles to Alliance success in the political arena. From this dissatisfaction and disillusionment sprang the Independent party. The new political venture achieved surprising success in its maiden effort at unseating the old parties. Although the state slate went down in defeat, many legislative districts polled a majority for the Independents. With the aid of the Democrats, the farmer's party was able

to elect a U.S. senator during the 1891 session of the state legislature.

Farmers' clubs began forming in 1884 to start cooperative enterprises. Representatives of some sixty of these local bodies gathered in Huron in December 1884 to discuss their problems and needs. These men recognized that their objectives would necessitate political action. There was no waiting period during which the cooperative ventures were tried and found wanting before the farmers took the first steps toward involvement in the territory's public affairs. That first meeting adopted a platform calling for the equal taxation of all property, an end to the practice of giving railroad passes to government officials, the regulation of transportation rates by law, and legislation in the interests of the farmers.¹

In the next few legislative sessions, the farm element made its voice heard, even if it was not always strong enough to force legislators to heed its cries. In 1885 the farmers were able to achieve passage of a law establishing a railroad commission, although the regulatory body proved ineffective. In 1887 the Alliance managed to get a law licensing grain warehouses.²

By 1889 the demands of the Farmers' Alliance had become much more elaborate. This reflected the continuing problems of South Dakota farmers, the realization that a more active exercise of governmental authority would be

necessary, and bids for the support of other interest groups. Meeting in Huron that year, the Alliance accepted a platform calling for government ownership and operation of all public necessities, particularly railroads; a national monetary system with the power to issue legal tender directly to the people without going through private banks, equal taxation, and courts of arbitration. To reduce the power of corporations and bosses, the Alliance proposed the secret ballot and the direct election of U.S. senators. Perhaps reflecting the early interests of some leading Alliance men and the desire to garner support from all quarters, the platform demanded state and national prohibition. As a concession to the Knights of Labor and as a recognition that all independent producers of wealth must stand united, the convention included several issues beneficial to the labor movement. Child labor and the hiring out of convict labor were to be ended. The contract system was no longer to be used by national, state, and city governments.³ These constituted calls for political involvement--albeit in a non-partisan fashion--before the business operations of the Alliance came to grief in the early 1890s.

Political interest was present in the local alliances as well. The Dakota Ruralist recorded the resolution of a number of individual alliances that demanded action on one subject of concern or another. In some counties, farmers established organizations specifically intended to keep a

close eye on doings in the 1889 territorial legislature and to appraise their representatives of the agrarians' desires on legislation.⁴

Organizations apparently not connected to the Alliance also sprang up to agitate for demands similar to those of the farm organization. In Aberdeen a body called the Brotherhood of Purpose was established in early 1890. It sought a number of the planks of the Alliance platform as well as government loans on real estate, free silver, and laws against usury. In Lincoln County a group called the Farmers' Grader was founded to prevent class legislation.⁵

On the local level farmers sometimes were so frustrated with the old parties' unresponsiveness that they turned to independent political action. In Brookings County, a people's ticket was fielded in 1884, but with no success. Similar tickets ran elsewhere in Dakota that same year. In Grant County, Territorial Alliance treasurer Z.D. Scott gained office as an independent later in the decade.⁶ The correspondents of Republican Governor Arthur C. Mellette exhibited concern over the strength of these unorganized efforts to make the farmers' voice heard when the old parties proved deaf. Such independent slates made inroads in Republican vote totals and sometimes turned out county office holders.⁷

The official line of the Farmers' Alliance, however, was that it would work for the interests of its members from within the structures of the existing political parties. The

early Alliance had no expressed intention of establishing a third party, but neither did it propose to stand idly by while other groups dominated the political process. To make this point in October 1888, Henry Loucks cited the constitution of the Dakota Alliance:

The object of this organization shall be to unite the farmers of Dakota for their protection against class legislation, and the encroachments of concentrated capital, and the tyranny of monopoly. To oppose in our respective political parties THE ELECTION OF ANY CANDIDATE TO OFFICE, COUNTY, TERRITORIAL OR NATIONAL, WHO IS NOT THOROUGHLY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE FARMERS' INTEREST. The [sic--To?] demand that the existing political parties shall nominate farmers or those who are in sympathy with them, for all offices in the gift of the people, and to do anything in a legitimate manner that may serve to benefit the producer.

The constitution made no mention of action outside of the parties then operating, but Loucks went on to warn the Republicans and Democrats that if they failed to name men acceptable to the Alliance, it would be the farmers' "plain duty to call conventions, nominate independent candidates, and elect them."⁹

The zenith of the official Alliance policy of working within the limits of the existing parties came with the legislature of 1889. This final session of Dakota's territorial legislature was dominated by men who professed allegiance to the Alliance. The fact that the House actually adopted a rule allowing any Alliance matter to be voted on at any time if a majority of the members favored such action,

regardless of the regular order of bills, speaks of the strength of the farm order in this session.¹⁰ Indeed, the official organ of the Alliance had to remind over-eager legislators that the lawmakers were assembled to provide legislation beneficial to all of Dakota, not just its farmers.¹¹

The Alliance majority notwithstanding, the 1889 session did not produce the legislation clamored for by the agriculturalists. Part of this problem lay in poor organization and inadequate leadership.¹² The old party politicians also seem to have provided a roadblock to Alliance goals. In one case a bill that had been passed by both houses was stolen before it reached the committee of engrossed and enrolled bills. Without proper action from this committee, the bill could not become law.¹³ An additional obstacle was the governor, Democrat Louis K. Church, who used his veto power liberally against the Republican legislature. This obstruction moved the House to consider a memorial to President-elect Harrison complaining of Church's attitude.¹⁴ The results of the 1889 legislature--termed an "astonishing defeat" by one historian of Dakota¹⁵--did not speak enthusiastically for the official Alliance line of using the old parties to achieve agrarian ends. The farmers of Dakota, however, were not willing to abandon their old party loyalties just yet.

Loucks, as the president of the Dakota Alliance, publicly followed the non-partisan policy in the early months of 1889. The Alliance was willing to work within the bounds of the old parties, but only as long as those parties could serve as vehicles to agricultural ends. There were times when the carrot of Alliance support or the stick of independent action might be emphasized more than the other, but the basic message remained the same.¹⁶

As the annual Alliance convention in late June approached, Loucks took pains to quiet fears among old party politicians that the organization would strike an independent course. The farm leader assured the suspicious that the Alliance would maintain its current position of working through existing parties. This line became one of Louck's recommendations to the convention in his presidential address.¹⁷ Similarly, Hugh J. Campbell, a Republican politician sympathetic to the agricultural body, assured the convention that independent action was unnecessary, for "the Republican party comprises four-fifths of the people. The farmers comprise four-fifths of the Republican party. A word to the wise is sufficient."¹⁸

The farmers convened at Huron agreed. The body resolved "that it is the sentiment of this Alliance that our object can be best obtained through the machinery of our respective parties as we are, in the majority, [sic] in both of them,

and we have only to make a systematic effort to possess ourselves of them."¹⁹ The Dakota Ruralist noted that "certain would be advisors" had sought a call for a third party but that the convention was hostile to the idea.²⁰

Republican leaders did have reason to be wary of the political intentions of Alliance leaders. Governor Mellette received several warnings in 1889 that men high in the farm order's circles were plotting for office. In April, Codington County politician Frank Crane informed Mellette that A. D. Chase, territorial lecturer for the Alliance, had divulged details of a plan whereby some aspiring Republicans would support Loucks and others for state office if the Alliance leadership would back them for congressional seats. Chase was a bitter rival of another Alliance leader, Alonzo Wardall, and was willing to come over to Mellette's side.²¹ In July Mellette received word from two of his correspondents that the Alliance leaders were putting together a slate to run in the fall election. C.H. Van Tassell, present at a meeting of the Alliance's Executive Board, reported that the organization was considering putting forward John M. Patten for governor, Abe Van Osdel for lieutenant governor, and Loucks and J.W. Harden for the U.S. Senate. There was disagreement about the wisdom of such a move from three members present--Don C. Needham, George Crose, and Van Tassell. A few weeks earlier, Mellette had been told of a different slate that was being considered.²² Although none of these

letters mentioned the possibility of an independent party, Mellette and other prominent Republicans--men who coveted the offices on which farm leaders had their eyes--would understandably be alarmed by such rumors.

In the months ahead Loucks carried on an aggressive defense of farmers' rights, including using the threat of independent action. In late August he warned Republicans that their party must respond to Alliance demands. His tone, probably designed to influence the nominations of the upcoming party convention, was ominous. Warning that farmers would tolerate only so much, Loucks informed Republicans that "that limit is almost reached."²³

The Republican convention could be considered by many to be an Alliance victory. The last territorial governor, Arthur C. Mellette, won his party's nomination for governor. Candidates with the Alliance's blessing were selected for the positions of lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, auditor, and one supreme court justice. The treasurer had been endorsed by the Knights of Labor. The platform included planks calling for a warehouse law, elected railroad commissioners with adequate power, laws against trusts, aid for irrigation, and constitutional prohibition.²⁴

Although the Ruralist expressed its satisfaction with the nominees and platform of the convention, Loucks cautioned South Dakota's dominant party that there had been a "very strong sentiment" at the last meeting of the Alliance for

independent political action, a sentiment that would have been carried out had it not been for the moderating influence of the leaders. While the convention of farmers in June had agreed to work through the old parties, Alliance men were not bound to support the nominees of the regular parties.²⁵

There were elements within and without the Alliance that disagreed with Loucks's stance. George Crose, president of the farmers' purchasing cooperative, argued that the June convention had determined the organization's action and that Alliance men were obligated to stand behind the old parties, particularly the Republican party, which had incorporated many Alliance measures into its platform.²⁶ Loucks's editorials indicate resistance on the part of the Republican leaders who feared the farmers' movement would threaten their power. Such politicians spread rumors that the Alliance proposed to ally with the Democrats and that farmers seeking office did so because they wanted to force class legislation upon Dakotans.²⁷

The legislature--with Republicans in the majority--met briefly in October to elect two U.S. senators. The four top candidates were R.F. Pettigrew, the leading Republican politico; Gideon C. Moody, attorney for the Homestake mine and popular in the Black Hills; A. J. Edgerton, who had some Alliance support; and Alonzo Wardall, an Alliance official. The Republican caucus chose Pettigrew and Moody and the two

were elected, much to the chagrin of Wardall. Edgerton had not pressed for his own victory and Loucks suspected him of remaining in the contest just long enough to prevent Wardall from obtaining sufficient votes to win a seat. Edgerton's reward for the ploy allegedly was to be a federal judgeship, a position to which he was appointed shortly after the election. Loucks's charges seem borne out by a letter Mellette received a little over a week before the senatorial election. D.F. Royer pointed out that the Alliance and the Democrats would oppose Pettigrew and Moody and urged Mellette to work on the prohibitionists in the legislature to back Moody and Pettigrew so that a temperance man like Edgerton could be appointed to the federal bench.²⁸

Meeting again in January, the lawmakers enacted a number of measures in the interests of the farmers. Most important was a law for the regulation of grain warehouses. Other legislation allowed county commissioners to distribute seed grain to the destitute, provided for the taxation of corporate property, and made illegal certain trusts and combinations. Some more substantive reforms long sought by the Alliance were not enacted, however. A bill to prohibit legislators from accepting railroad passes was defeated before it could even be printed. A measure to regulate telephone and gas companies failed in the House. A bill requiring the taxation of mortgages held by non-residents evoked fear that it would drive away needed capital. The House op-

posed a bill that would have set railroad passenger rates.²⁹

By the time of the next Farmers' Alliance annual meeting, set for early June, strong sentiment for independent action had developed. The old parties had not responded to the needs of the farmers. Efforts to dominate the existing political parties had failed. Political bosses had foiled farmers' attempts to force their will on the old line politicians. The only recourse, if the interests of the farmers were to be safeguarded, was to take possession of the government as a new party.

By a vote of 413 to 83, the farmers assembled in Huron voted to blaze an independent trail. Citing the failure of the Republicans and Democrats to deliver the state from "great evils which, if not removed, will bring retribution," the convention felt the formation of a new party was justified. The "wealth producers" of the nation were being impoverished while a plutocracy was reaping a fortune from the misery of others.³⁰ One participant who disfavored the move wrote of the decision, "The feeling was very strong for independent action and it was no use to oppose it. It must have its run."³¹

South Dakota farmers were not alone in their discontent. Throughout the northern and central Great Plains during that hot summer, Alliance meetings resolved for independent political action. The earliest efforts to that end seem to have been made in Kansas in March, although the first state Alli-

ance gathering to issue a call for a convention was South Dakota's.³²

Although the Alliance men deferred nominations for state offices until July, the convention did put together a platform. Their first demand was for a flexible amount of currency issued by the government directly to the people without the intervention of private banks. Second, the farmers called for government ownership and operation of the railroad, telegraph, and telephone companies and for the provision of those services at cost. Third, the new party wanted the free and unlimited coinage of silver. Fourth, the men in Huron sought the secret ballot in state and national elections. Next, the farmers demanded "the most rigid economy consistent with the safety of our state and nation." Last, the independents wanted laws prohibiting the ownership of land by aliens, legal action against the land then held by aliens and syndicates, and the repossession of all land held by corporations but not being used.³³

Two individuals of national reputation addressed the convention. One was Ben Terrill, National Lecturer for the Farmers' Alliance. Terrill's presence normally would not raise suspicion, since he was attending a meeting of a strong state organization of the farm order. However, Terrill had been making a tour through the state prior to the convention, a tour that can be followed through the pages of the Yankton Press and Dakotan, a Republican sheet. In late May the paper

reported that Terrill received hearty applause from the Brown County Alliance when he spoke against bringing politics into the Alliance. In early June, in contrast, the Press and Dakotan recorded that Terrill called for independent action in a speech to the Minnehaha County Alliance. Shortly after the convention that gave birth to South Dakota's Independent party, Terrill again talked in favor of the new party. The question that remains unanswered--and unanswerable from the resources available in this study--is what was Terrill doing in the state? Was his presence in South Dakota a mere coincidence, or was his purpose to sound the sentiment for a third party.?³⁴

The second personage of renown was Susan B. Anthony, the national leader of the woman suffrage movement. Anthony had been in the state campaigning for suffrage when she received word that the Alliance convention was considering forming a new party. The year before Loucks and Wardall had convinced her to tour South Dakota to work for suffrage. She had done so on the assurance that the Alliance stood behind the reform and that the farm order controlled state politics. Anthony rushed to Huron to try to dissuade the convention from an independent course, something she feared would make suffrage impossible. Not only did the convention choose its own direction, it refused to include suffrage in the platform. The most the suffragettes received was a resolution endorsing the right to vote for women. The women

working for the franchise felt betrayed.³⁵

The July convention adopted a slightly different platform for the fall election and nominated candidates. The convention called for an end to national banks, the direct issue of legal tender notes to the people, taxes on income and real estate, the ownership and operation of the railroads by the government, and the secret ballot.³⁶

There was an undercurrent of support for Governor Mellette for the Independent nomination for the top executive slot, although it is unlikely that he was seriously tempted by the possibility of an Independent candidacy.³⁷ The nod for the governorship instead went to Henry Loucks. Loucks faced a serious challenge from A.E. Van Osdel, a leader in the Yankton County Alliance. Although reports of the exact vote of the convention vary, Loucks edged Van Osdel by a margin ranging between three and sixteen out of nearly 250 votes. Van Osdel received the nomination for lieutenant governor instead.³⁸

The reactions from the old parties, especially the Republicans, came quickly. The most common tactic was to accuse the leaders of the Independents of being nothing but office seekers. They were just "blatent [sic] political wolves in the clothing of agricultural sheep," according to one Republican editor. Deprived of preferment by the old parties, argued party heads, these men were willing to prostitute the Alliance for their own political ends.³⁹

Nor were all of the charges levied against the Independents limited to simple office seeking. Loucks was portrayed as a demagogue and as a man who lacked enough sense to be trusted with public office. In the words of a prominent Republican speaking to his party's state convention, Loucks was an immigrant "whose ignorance of the character of American institutions is only equaled by his impudence and insincerity" and was a "public nuisance" who "ought to be abated."⁴⁰ It was rumored that one of the Independent candidates for Congress, Fred Zipp, was an atheist and anarchist.⁴¹

More seriously, Republicans attacked Loucks's citizenship. Investigation of courthouse records in Loucks's county proved that he did not take out final papers for naturalization until August 11, 1890, over a month after his nomination. This left him open to charges that he lacked sufficient background in American ways to be awarded office.⁴²

Another scare tactic commonly used by Republicans was claiming that the entire Independent movement was nothing but a plot of the Democratic party to oust the GOP from state office. By identifying the third party with the old foe, Republicans hoped to activate traditional loyalties. Any votes for Independents would only sap the strength of the Republicans, thus allowing Democrats to take the laurels in elections. Loucks was condemned as a "valuable and inexpensive annex to the democratic party." After there were in-

dications that Democrats and Independents were fusing in some localities, Republican fears seemed confirmed and the Independent party was accused of being a "democratic aid society."⁴³ Six months before he was nominated, the Yankton Press and Dakotan predicted that Loucks would run for governor in 1890 with the financial aid of the Democratic national committee.⁴⁴

Moreover, the Republicans claimed there was no need for independent action. The GOP had offered the farmers virtually anything they had asked for. The Republicans could point to a number of achievements on the state and national levels--the opening of the Sioux reservation, laws against trusts, a warehouse law, and prohibition among them--for which the Alliance should be thankful. The agrarians had the numerical strength to control the Republican party so there was no justification for a new party.⁴⁵

Not all of the opposition was the work of the old parties. Some Alliance men expressed their dissatisfaction with the bid for office on the part of their leaders. The Turner County Alliance allegedly "repudiated" the Independent ticket, while many Clay County farmers felt the Alliance should stick to agriculture. A number of Alliance officers were willing to cooperate with the Republicans rather than go with the new party.⁴⁶

The pattern of attack that the Republicans used against their opponents in 1890 was virtually identical to the methods

the party had used in the 1870s against Grangers who considered independent action. Then, too, the leaders of the movement were accused of being nothing but office seekers who would deliver the state to the Democrats even though the farmers controlled the Republican party and could force their will upon it.⁴⁷

The Democrats met in convention a few days after the Alliance made its decision for an independent course. Like the Independents, the Democrats called for a graduated income tax and sought the remonetization of silver. They also opposed the current tariff and the McKinley bill. On cultural issues, the Democrats condemned woman suffrage and asked for resubmission of the prohibition amendment. The convention found Governor Mellette abhorrent for giving the state a bad image in his efforts to collect aid for drought sufferers.⁴⁸

Meeting in Mitchell in August, the Republicans also adopted several planks similar to the Independent platform. The convention called for an increased circulation of currency, the coinage of silver, and the secret ballot. To appease the groups to which the Independents appealed, the Republicans endorsed aid for artesian irrigation and acknowledged labor's right to organize. The delegates also recommended legislation to control combinations, a protective tariff, adequate pensions, the protection of school lands, and the enforcement of prohibition.⁴⁹

This last issue proved divisive. The platform committee reported a prohibition plank reaffirming the party's support for the reform, acknowledging it as the will of the people, and pledging faithful enforcement. Sol Star, speaking for the Black Hills, immediately protested the plank and warned the convention that it could cost the party his section of the state. Star preferred a substitute motion pleading that enforcement was impossible. The convention chose to compromise with an acknowledgement of prohibition as part of the state's fundamental law and a statement promising enforcement.⁵⁰

The Republicans recognized that holding their own in the fall elections would require hard work. A third party based on Alliance numbers would be a serious challenge to Republican hegemony. Several of Mellette's correspondents counseled swift and thorough organization. Some argued in mid-June for founding Republican Leagues in every precinct. A Republican State League soon followed.⁵¹

By the end of July, Republicans felt more confident about the November contest. By then, it seemed that the Independents were losing their appeal and that as the election approached the farmers were returning to their traditional parties. In October, one of Mellette's confidants predicted, "The Independent movement has passed high-water mark, and is now on the downgrade."⁵²

The Republicans were concerned about the behavior of

some of South Dakota's ethnic groups in 1890. To some nationalities, the Alliance seemed to have a special appeal. To the people of other lands, issues like suffrage and prohibition touched on cultural nerves. Scandinavians often supported the reforms offered by the Independents and Republicans exhibited some anxiety for that ethnic group. The Germans and Russian-Germans felt threatened by prohibition and woman suffrage, issues that challenged their notions about personal behavior and the home. To these latter groups, the personal liberty of the Democrats and that party's stand for resubmission of the prohibition amendment held out the hope of defending their cultural values.

The Scandinavians--primarily Norwegians in South Dakota--formed a substantial proportion of the state's population. Usually they supported the GOP, but in 1890 the Independents began to make inroads in this traditionally Republican bloc. One of Mellette's correspondents warned him that the Scandinavians had largely deserted the GOP at Flandreau. In some areas of the state, a large portion of the group abandoned their old political ties at election time.⁵³

The Scandinavians had generally supported prohibition in the state. Suffrage was a different matter. Women appealed to the group in vain. In Clay County the townships that gave the highest votes against the amendment were the ones dominated by Scandinavians.⁵⁴

The Germans and Russian-Germans also furnished large number of voters, although most of their votes, with the exception of Russian-German Protestants, went to the Democrats. The Germans were anxious to safeguard their cultural traditions and treated threats to those traditions with hostility. At the Democratic convention a delegation of Russian-Germans had appeared wearing badges printed with "Against Woman Suffrage and Susan B. Anthony." In one case, Russian-Germans refused to allow a suffragette to speak in a local school house. The presence of a plank favorable to prohibition in the Republican platform proved burdensome in the counties settled by the Germans from Russia. Mellette's image as a suffragist and prohibitionist caused some concern among party members because of the effect upon ethnic groups.⁵⁵

Germans had also been wary of the Alliance's militant stance for prohibition. When the prohibition amendment was before the people in 1889 the farm order had demanded its acceptance and rigorous enforcement. In response, a German farmer had advised the Dakota Ruralist to leave the reform to women, for it would only hurt the Alliance.⁵⁶

Nor were the Czechs in South Dakota enthused about the reforms the Independents advocated. In Tabor, the state's Czech center, the Independents did not receive a single vote in 1890 and suffrage drew a single ballot.⁵⁷

At the polls in November the Republicans maintained their hold on the state government. Mellette received 34,487

votes out of 77,562 cast--44.5 percent. In their first try at office, the Independents drew 24,591, for 31.7 percent of the electorate. The Democrats dropped to third place, getting just 18,484 ballots in the governor's race, 23.8 percent of the total vote. In 1889 Mellette had received 53,964 votes while his Democratic opponent attracted 23,840. Suffrage was defeated by a two to one margin.⁵⁸

The Republicans swept the executive seats, but the legislature was a different story. In the Senate the GOP had a tenuous one vote lead over the Independents and Democrats if the latter parties acted in unison. In the House, these two parties had a single seat more than the Republicans. This margin allowed the Independents and Democrats to cooperate in organizing the lower house. With this, the opposition forces were able to gain control of the elections committee and deny seats to six Republicans on the basis of election irregularities.⁵⁹

A task that took much of the session was the election of a U.S. senator. In 1889 one of the senators chosen had been elected to a short term; now Gideon C. Moody had to stand for re-election before a legislature in which his party held a minority of all seats. Victory proved elusive for Moody. The Republicans could not muster enough votes of their own and they could not attract the needed ballots from their opponents. The opposition, for their part, could not unite on a candidate to replace Moody. Their leading candi-

dates in the early ballots were Bartlett Tripp, the Democrats' leader; J.W. Harden, a Democratic Alliance man; and George Crose and Alonzo Wardall, both high ranking Alliance officers. Neither the Independents nor the Democrats seemed willing to give up the chance of sending a man of their own affiliation to the Senate.

The ballots continued for nearly four weeks. When it was apparent that he could not garner sufficient support, Moody released the legislators pledged to him. Most of the Republicans switched to A.B. Melville, a proponent of artesian irrigation, but others scattered their votes. The Independents put their strength behind Wardall, then Harden, but neither succeeded. They then turned to Hugh J. Campbell.⁶⁰

Behind the official votes, there was a good deal of maneuvering. A number of office holders with positions in the national government remained in Pierre to exert their influence for the Republicans, to the ire of the Democrats and Independents.⁶¹ There was a rumor that the Democrats would give their votes on the senator in return for a Democratic representative and presidential electors in 1892. Some Republicans schemed to give their party's vote to George Crose rather than see the opposition pick another candidate. W.T. LaFollette, brother of Wisconsin's Robert LaFollette, counseled Mellette to strike a bargain with Independent James H. Kyle and send him to the Senate with Republican votes. Another Republican warned Mellette in late January that the

Independents would throw their weight behind Kyle and hope for Democratic support.⁶²

For the Republicans, this last prediction proved sadly accurate. In the thirty-first ballot Kyle received the Independent vote and the Republicans switched back to Moody. The Democrats continued to stand by Bartlett Tripp. In mid-February the Republicans tried out Thomas Sterling as a candidate, but he was unable to do better than Moody. Then, on February 16, enough Democrats turned to Kyle to give him the margin of victory. It had been rumored that the Democratic support was the result of a bargain between legislators in Illinois and South Dakota. The Democrats in South Dakota were to back the Independent choice while the Independents in Illinois were to vote for the Democrats' man. The rumor was fueled when the Speaker of the House traveled to Illinois in early February. Three days before the final ballot a Republican resolution condemning any interstate agreement with Illinois affecting the election was defeated by a strictly partisan vote. The Republicans also charged that the Democrats received a pledge that resubmission would be passed if Kyle was elected.⁶³

Kyle's election was something of a fluke. Kyle, a Congregationalist minister, had been asked to speak at a Fourth of July gathering in Aberdeen the previous summer when the planned speaker could not attend. The farmers in his audience were so impressed with his presentation that they nomi-

nated the clergyman for the state senate at the Independent convention the following day.⁶⁴

The question of resubmission to the people of the prohibition amendment was an important issue that surfaced periodically during the session. The Democrats had pledged to work for resubmission and the first bill providing for it came on January 9. The measure succeeded in the House and the majority report of the committee considering it in the Senate recommended that it pass there. In the closing hours of the session, the upper house turned the bill down "after a warm discussion."⁶⁵ Governor Mellette had been under pressure by ardent prohibitionists not to let their prized victory be undermined before it had been tested.⁶⁶

Among its other actions, the 1891 legislature established the Australian ballot in the state, allowed townships to finance the construction of artesian wells for irrigation through the sale of bonds, and memorialized Congress for the free and unlimited coinage of silver as legal tender and the direct election of senators.⁶⁷

From its inception, the Dakota Farmers' Alliance realized that some of its goals were possible only through political action. These objectives were limited in the beginning, but as the decade of the 1880s wore on, farmers experienced more problems and more obstacles to solving those difficulties.

South Dakota's farmers originally believed that the

existing political parties could serve as means to agrarian ends. Such hopes proved illusory, for the Republicans and Democrats would not act on agricultural problems as the Alliance demanded. Therefore, in June 1890 the annual convention of the Farmers' Alliance chose to strike a new course independent of the old parties. Thus was born the Independent party. Although not powerful enough to loosen the Republican grasp on the state's executive branch, the new party polled nearly a third of the electorate and displaced the Democrats as South Dakota's second strongest party. In cooperation with the Democrats in the 1891 legislature, the Independents were able to unseat a Republican U.S. senator and replace him with a man of their own party.

NOTES

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2. Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed. rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 225; Kenneth Elton Hendrickson, Jr., "The Populist Movement in South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1959), pp. 11-13.
3. Dakota Ruralist, June 22, 1889; George W. Kingsbury, History of Dakota Territory, 2 vols. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 2: 1884-85.
4. Dakota Ruralist, February 12, 16, 1889; December 22, 1888; January 12, 1889.
5. Dakota Ruralist, May 30, 1890; February 23, 1889.
6. C.O. Sandro, "A History of Brookings County Prior to 1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1936), p. 91; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 225; Dakota Ruralist, June 15, 1889.
7. Jno. J. Cushing to Arthur C. Mellette, April 9, 1889; C.T. McCoy to Mellette, July 29, 1889; W.T. LaFollette to Mellette, August 10, 1889; J.P. Megrew to Mellette, January 8, 1890; Arthur C. Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, S.D.
8. Dakota Ruralist, October 24, 1888. The use of upper case letters is Loucks's.
9. Ibid.
10. Kingsbury, Dakota Territory, 2: 1563; Springfield Times, January 17, 1889; Dakota Ruralist, January 12, 1889; Howard R. Lamar, Dakota Territory, 1861-1889: A Study of Frontier Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 277. The rule was subsequently repealed.
11. Dakota Ruralist, January 26, February 12, 1889.
12. Dakota Ruralist, January 26, February 23, 1889.
13. Dakota Ruralist, April 20, 1889.

14. Kingsbury, Dakota Territory, 2: 1566; Dakota Ruralist, February 16, 1889.
15. Elwyn B. Robinson, History of North Dakota (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 207. See also Lamar, Dakota Territory, 1861-1889, p. 278.
16. For example, see the Dakota Ruralist, March 16, April 13, 1889.
17. Dakota Ruralist, June 1, 22, 1889.
18. Dakota Ruralist, July 6, 1889.
19. Dakota Ruralist, June 22, 1889; Kingsbury, Dakota Territory, 2: 1885.
20. Dakota Ruralist, June 29, 1889.
21. Frank Crane to Mellette, April 22, 1889; April 20, 1889, Mellette Papers.
22. C. H. Van Tassell to Mellette, July 24, 1889; E. T. Cressey to Mellette, July 7, 1889, Mellette Papers.
23. Dakota Ruralist, August 24, 1889.
24. Dakota Ruralist, September 7, 1889; Kingsbury, Dakota Territory, 2: 1906-1907.
25. Dakota Ruralist, September 7, 14, 1889.
26. Dakota Ruralist, September 14, 1889.
27. Dakota Ruralist, September 14, June 1, 1889.
See also Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The Public Career of Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, 1848-1926," South Dakota Historical Collections 34 (1968): 178.
28. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 188-190; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 227; D. F. Royer to Mellette, October 7, 1889, Mellette Papers.
29. South Dakota, Legislature, Laws Passed at the First Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota (Pierre, 1890), passim; George Martin Smith, ed., South Dakota: Its History and Its People, 3 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915): 1: 222-23; Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 27, February 13, 24, March 4, October 24, 1890.

30. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 227; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 25; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 655; Vermillion Dakota Republican, June 19, 1890.

31. Fred F. B. Coffin to Arthur C. Mellette, June 6, 1890, Mellette Papers.

32. John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 155-58.

33. Vermillion Dakota Republican, June 19, 1890; Yankton Press and Dakotan, June 7, 1890.

34. Hazel Lucile Heiman, "A Historical Study of the Persuasion of the Populist Impulse in South Dakota" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1969; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970), p. 69; Yankton Press and Dakotan, May 28, June 4, 11, 1890.

35. Ida Husted Harper, The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, 2 vols. (Indianapolis and Kansas City: Bowen-Merrill Co., 1898), pp. 684-87; Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, eds., The History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4: 1883-1900 (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902; reprint, New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 555-56; Alma Lutz, Susan B. Anthony: Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 253; Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement (New York: Charles Scribners, 1923; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), pp. 115-116. For the best published account of the suffrage issue in South Dakota in 1890, see Dorinda Riessen Reed, The Woman Suffrage Movement in South Dakota, 2nd ed. (Pierre: South Dakota Commission on the Status of Women, 1975), pp. 20-45. For the suffrage issue in one county in 1890 see Mary Kay Jennings, "Lake County Woman Suffrage Campaign in 1890," South Dakota History 5 (Fall, 1975): 390-409.

36. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 227; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 25.

37. Frank Wilder to Mellette, June 10, 1890; J. L. W. Zietlow to Mellette, June 9, 1890, Mellette Papers.

38. Springfield Times, July 17, 1890; "Robinson" (possibly Doane Robinson, a prominent Republican editor) to Mellette, July 10, 1890, Mellette Papers.

39. Yankton Press and Dakotan, June 7, 1890; Springfield Times, September 18, 1890; Deadwood Black Hills Daily Times, November 1, 1890. Some historians have agreed with this judgement. See Lamar, Dakota Territory, 1861-1889, p. 276, and Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 177.

40. Salem Special, July 30, 1890; Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 5, 1890; Springfield Times, September 4, 1890.

41. Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 12, October 17, 1890.

42. Gary Inter-State, August 29, 1890; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 2, 1890; Yankton Press and Dakotan, October 7, 1890.

43. Salem Special, October 25, 1890; Titus E. Corkhill to Arthur C. Mellette, September 14, 1890, Mellette Papers; Gary Inter-State, July 25, 1890; Dakota Ruralist, March 10, 1892.

44. Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 8, 1890.

45. Salem Special, September 17, 1890; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 9, 1890; Springfield Times, August 28, 1890; Yankton Press and Dakotan, July 9, 1890.

46. Salem Special, September 13, 1890; Vermillion Dakota Republican, July 17, 1890; Don C. Needham to Arthur C. Mellette, July 30, 1890, Mellette Papers.

47. Herbert S. Schell, "The Grange and the Credit Problem in Dakota Territory," Agricultural History 10 (January, 1936): 77-78.

48. Yankton Press and Dakotan, June 12, 1890; Springfield Times, June 19, 1890; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 655-56.

49. Springfield Times, September 4, 1890; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 657-58.

50. Yankton Press and Dakotan, August 29, 1890; Gary Inter-State, September 6, 1890. For Deadwood's attitude toward prohibition, see Alvin John Brunn, "The History of the Temperance Movement in South Dakota to 1917" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1948), pp. 49-50. Sol Star was the mayor of Deadwood.

51. Richard F. Pettigrew to Arthur C. Mellette, July 16, 1890; W. C. Arnold to Mellette, June 12, 1890; John E. Diamond to Mellette, June 14, 1890, Mellette Papers; Springfield Times, June 26, 1890.

52. P. E. Higgins to Arthur C. Mellette, July 27, 1890; S. W. Kidder to Mellette, July 28, 1890; Robert Buchanan to Mellette, October 9, 1890, Mellette Papers.

53. T. E. Blanchard to Arthur C. Mellette, August 7, 1890, Mellette Papers; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 228.

54. Anthony and Harper, History of Woman Suffrage, 4: 556-57; Reed, Woman Suffrage Movement, pp. 41-43; Herbert S. Schell, History of Clay County, South Dakota (Vermillion: Clay County Historical Society, Inc., 1975), p. 90.

55. Reed, Woman Suffrage Movement, pp. 33, 41-44; Harper, Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, 2: 690; Jennings, "Lake County," p. 402; L. T. Boucher to Arthur C. Mellette, September 11, 1890; D. E. Collins to Mellette, July 31, 1890, Mellette Papers.

56. Dakota Ruralist, July 6, 27, August 31, 1889. Alliance support for cultural issues, however, may not have deterred Germans from joining the organization. John David Dibbern, "Grass Roots Populism: Politics and Social Structure in a Frontier Community" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1980; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1980), pp. 88-93, 100, found that farmers born in Germany had higher rates of membership than any other group in Marshall County, South Dakota. Dibbern concedes that Germans might not have supported the Independent party after the Alliance formed a political organization and suggests that immigrants might have viewed the agrarian order as a means of establishing a sense of community and a way to learn American agricultural methods.

57. Springfield Times, November 13, 1890.

58. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota by Counties from October, 1889, to November, 1912 (Aberdeen, 1912), pp. 4, 9; Anthony and Harper, History of Woman Suffrage, 4: 557.

59. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 228; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 27-28.

60. The best secondary account of the balloting for senator is Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 28-30. See also Smith, South Dakota, 1: 659-660. The actual tallies for most of the ballots may be conveniently followed in a clipping from the Pierre Daily Capital, February 14, 1891, located in the Senator James H. Kyle Papers (microfilm) housed in the South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

61. Springfield Times, January 15, 1891; Dakota Ruralist, July 21, 1892.

62. H. A. Humphrey to Arthur C. Mellette, January 30, 1891; A. D. Chase to Mellette, January 19, 1891; J. B. Hirt to Mellette, February 3, 1891; W. T. LaFollette to Mellette, February 4, 1891; Rev. Ira D. Clark to Mellette, January 30, 1891, Mellette Papers.

63. Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 30; Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "Some Political Aspects of the Populist Movement in South Dakota," North Dakota History 34 (Winter, 1967): 85; Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 228-29; Pierre Daily Capital, February 14, 1891, Kyle Papers; Springfield Times, February 19, 26, 1891; [W. T.] LaFollette to Arthur C. Mellette, February 15, 1891, Mellette Papers; Yankton Press and Dakotan, February 12, 1891; Gary Inter-State, February 20, 27, 1891; C. B. Chambers to Mellette, February 27, 1891, Mellette Papers. Heiman, "Persuasion of the Populist Impulse in South Dakota," p. 73, argues unconvincingly that there was no bargain.

64. "Kyle, James Henderson," Dictionary of American Biography, 10: 515-516; Carl J. White, "James H. Kyle," The Wi-iyohi 21 (December, 1965): 1-3; Harold Quinion, "James H. Kyle. United States Senator from South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 13 (1926): 311-321.

65. Doane Robinson, "A Century of Liquor Legislation in Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 12 (1924): 289-90; Springfield Times, January 15, February 26, March 12, 1891.

66. W. G. Dickinson to Arthur C. Mellette, February 21, 1891; I. R. Spooner to Mellette, February 21, 1891, Mellette Papers.

67. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 226; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 228.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPUBLICAN YEARS, 1891-1895

The 1891 election of Kyle proved to be the Populists' sole significant victory during the first half of the decade. Although the new party would gradually boost its share of the electorate in the coming years, the Republicans continued to hold a plurality--and, by 1894, a majority--of the state's voters. Despite these years in the wilderness, however, the Populists remained the state's second strongest party. By contrast, the Democrats lost steadily until their 1894 share of the votes comprised less than twelve percent of the ballots cast.

By the mid-nineties, in spite of a poor record in its early contests for office, the fortunes of the Populist party appeared to be waxing. It had been able to retain the loyalties of a substantial share of the state's voters and conducted vigorous educational campaigns. R.F. Pettigrew, the leading Republican politico, adopted important points of Populist doctrine--a fact that set him apart from the sentiment of his own party and marked him as a likely candidate for conversion. The Democrats, stunned by a disastrous showing in 1894, were more open to fusion in the future. The Republican administration, rocked by a scandal that imperiled the state's solvency, gave the Populists a weighty issue for the 1896 election.

The Farmers' Alliance did not fare as well as the Populist party. Some of its vital leadership was lost when Henry Loucks and Alonzo Wardall took positions with the national alliance. The men succeeding to the highest positions in the Alliance opposed the direct involvement of the order in the world of politics and worked to separate the organization from public affairs. The Alliance was further discredited by the continuing problems of its cooperative enterprises.

The Independents received another chance at office in 1891 when a special election was called to fill a congressional seat left open by the death of the incumbent. The fall campaign was marked by calls from all parties for an increased money supply and by efforts to resubmit the constitutional clause on prohibition. While the Independents endorsed the prohibitory law, the Democrats opposed it and the Republicans sidestepped the issue. Republican R.F. Pettigrew, however, advised Germans that the best hope for a representative unsympathetic to prohibition lay with the GOP.¹

This election was the first in which the subtreasury plan was advocated in South Dakota. The subtreasury was a proposal whereby farmers could store their crops in government warehouses and borrow eighty percent of the value of those crops at one percent interest per year. Such a scheme, claimed the Southern Alliance, would allow farmers to avoid

selling their crops when the market was glutted and prices were depressed. It could also curtail speculation in commodities, establish a system of short-term rural credits, and provide a means of making the nation's money supply more flexible in times of need. One of South Dakota's Congressmen, John A. Pickler, introduced the bill to implement the subtreasury in the House of Representatives, although Republican Senator R.F. Pettigrew derided the measure as "'the most absurd piece of legislation I have ever seen presented.'"2

When the votes were counted in November, the Republicans carried the day with 17,614 votes, for 44.5 percent of the electorate. The Independents captured 14,687 votes, for 37.1 percent of the vote. The Democratic candidate polled only 7,299 votes, just 18.4 percent of the votes cast.³ The Republicans had managed to attract the same proportion of votes as they had in the 1890 contest, while the Independents were able to gain slightly over five percent more of the votes. The Ruralist attributed the loss to the fact that Republican townsmen could turn out for the election with little trouble, while many farmers were not willing to lose the time it took to go to the polls and support the Independents.⁴

Although the Republicans often maintained that prosperity would destroy the Independent movement, the 1891 election showed that agrarian unrest had become strong enough for

a third party to hold the support of a significant share of the state's voters--and even increase its proportion of the vote--in a year when conditions showed some improvement in the farm economy. In 1891 corn and wheat production increased substantially and wheat prices rose slightly, although corn prices dropped fifteen cents a bushel.⁵

Undaunted by the defeat, the Independents recognized that they would have to convince South Dakotans that the old parties were unwilling and unable to cope with the state's needs and that a third party was the answer. Therefore, the party mounted an intense campaign to educate the voters about the issues troubling the farmers.

Newspapers espousing Independent doctrine were a large part of this campaign. By late 1891 there were about forty such newspapers being published in the state and the editors had formed a reform press association.⁶ The leading paper continued to be the Dakota Ruralist, but a number of other papers achieved prominence in the reform movement. Freeman Knowles's Deadwood Daily Independent and William E. Kidd's Aberdeen Star furnished Independents with their first two urban daily papers. A host of new papers began and many small country papers abandoned the GOP to join the new movement.⁷ The Ruralist expanded its size and offered its readers joint subscriptions to other reform and agricultural papers, including German and Norwegian publications.⁸

Through the winter of 1891-1892 and on into the fall campaign, the Independent party kept up its efforts to convert men to new ways of thinking and voting. The reform press urged the formation of local circulating libraries stocked with literature of the new movement, and newspapers offered such books and pamphlets at low cost. For example, on the eve of the 1892 election, the Deadwood Daily Independent advertised a list of reform books that included James B. Weaver's A Call to Action, Ignatius Donnelly's Caesar's Column, Hamlin Garland's Jason Edwards, and articles reprinted from Arena.⁹ The Alliance sponsored farmers' institutes with pre-planned topics designed to stimulate thought and gain Independent votes. Some of the issues dealt with included the abolition of the national bank system, the volume of the money supply, the subtreasury, free silver, and government ownership of the railroads.¹⁰ As the election approached, Independent newspapers carried advertisements for campaign songs such as "The Coal Baron's Song" and "The Worker's Battle Hymn of Freedom," devices geared toward stirring voters' enthusiasm.¹¹ Such methods of campaigning, particularly the educational drive that was carried on through the winter months, were respected by the opposition, one representative of which compared this quiet campaign to "'old fashioned Methodist experience meetings.'"¹²

The state's Independents were the first party to convene in the 1892 election year. Gathering in Redfield in

June, the agrarian party endorsed the St. Louis platform and the record of Senator Kyle. To aid debt-ridden farmers, the platform favored reducing the legal rate of interest to eight percent and taxing the holders of mortgages rather than the ones mortgaged for the value of those mortgages. In an appeal to labor, the convention adopted resolutions opposing the use of Pinkertons against workers and demanded work safety and compensation laws. The delegates recognized veterans in resolutions praising their sacrifices and attacking the old parties for favoring bond holders over soldiers. The convention opposed the sale of any more of the state's school lands and endorsed an amendment making initiative and referendum part of the fundamental law. In the only issue that brought dissent, there was a move to include a statement calling for the resubmission of prohibition. The assemblage instead chose to include a statement opposing repeal of any of the state's criminal laws.¹³ For governor the convention picked A.E. "Honest Abe" Van Osdel, the candidate for lieutenant governor in 1890. The Scandinavians received at least one spot on the ticket in the person of S.G. Mogan, candidate for secretary of state. Mrs. R. B. Hassell, the first woman in the state's history to be accorded nomination to state office, was selected for superintendent of public instruction.¹⁴

The Republicans congregated in Madison in late July for their convention. The platform, a lengthy document, endorsed

the national platform and Harrison's administration, high tariffs, and reciprocity agreements. Reflecting the Republican effort to retain the farm vote, the convention adopted a series of planks that overlapped the demands of agrarians. The party pledged support for bimetallism, government aid to irrigation, postal telegraph and postal savings bank systems, rural free delivery, equitable taxation, the regulation of the rates of express companies, and an elected railroad commission with the power to set rates. The Republicans opposed speculation in agricultural commodities. They appealed hesitantly to labor in a plank supporting working men and opposing both Pinkertons and the "agitation of demagogues" that promoted unrest between labor and capital. The party endorsed better roads and proper recognition of the nation's veterans.¹⁵

The party's nominations also exhibited concern for various interest groups. For governor the convention selected Charles H. Sheldon, a Day County farmer, who, as an Alliance man, had served in the territorial legislature. The Republicans hoped the farmers would be satisfied with "Farmer Sheldon," as the gubernatorial candidate was sometimes known. Sheldon and the congressional nominees were all Civil War veterans. Norwegian-born Thomas Thorson was chosen to run for secretary of state against a Populist candidate who had also come from Norway. J.E. Hipple was nominated for auditor to please the Germans and Russian-Germans.¹⁶

The Democrats met in Chamberlain in early September. The platform that was adopted included support for resubmission and a moderation of the current laws enforcing prohibition, a call for tariff reform, and a resolution against the use of Pinkertons to break strikes. The convention opposed fusion with the Independents and nominated a complete slate, but authorized the state central committee to remove the names of some candidates if fusion could be effected.¹⁷

The third party's opposition to the Republicans in 1892 took several courses. During the campaign, the Populists--as the Independents began to be called that year--attacked the tariff as a sham issue promoted by the old parties to distract the voters from more serious problems.¹⁸ In the Black Hills, where Populists appealed to wage earners rather than to farmers, newspapers concentrated on labor issues. The Deadwood Daily Independent warned miners that a vote for the Populists could help prevent the use of militia and Pinkertons against strikers. Sheldon's criticisms of Loucks's ethnicity in 1890 left him open to charges of nativism. The Dakota Ruralist characterized him as the "know-nothing candidate for governor."¹⁹ Reform editors showed themselves as adept at underhanded political tricks as their foes when they ensnared a number of their Republican colleagues in a scheme to sell editorial space to a fake Chicago firm that desired to run anti-alliance articles. During the spring of 1892 the Ruralist gradually revealed the details of the trap and the

of the Republican papers that had fallen into it.²⁰

The Populists' inexperience in the world of political campaigns and the loose nature of bonds to the third party were revealed by some of their methods. Lacking the support of large businesses that would contribute to their canvass, the Populists sought to obtain money at the grass roots level. The Dakota Ruralist tried to raise \$1,000 through \$1.00 pledges and local alliances agreed to plant wheat, the proceeds of which would be used in the fall campaign.²¹ As the election approached, Populist newspapers took pains to remind the farmers how necessary it was for people to take time to vote during a busy harvest season.²²

The Republicans counterattacked by using some of the same objections to the Populists as they had against the third party at its birth. Former Republicans who had turned their backs on their old party were called office seekers. Editors concerned about the state's public image cautioned the electorate that support for the Independents might "engender a popular suspicion that the state was the abode of a dissatisfied, disgruntled, revolutionary and possibly famishing people."²³ Voters were warned that a ballot for the Populists could prevent Benjamin Harrison's re-election and give the presidency to the Democrats. The decision of the Democratic convention to leave open the possibility of fusion with the Populists led to rumors that secret negotiations were being conducted that could deliver the traditionally

Republican state over to the opposition.²⁴

Pettigrew was particularly interested in retaining the loyalties of South Dakota's ethnic groups. Hence, he fielded a number of agents to cultivate those segments of the state's population. He exhibited special concern for funding the Norwegian paper in Sioux Falls, the Syd Dakota Ekko, and solicited money for it from the national party committee.²⁵

Election day brought a resounding victory for the Republicans. They swept the state executive offices and both congressional seats. The Independents took only six places in the senate and eleven in the lower house of the state legislature. In the gubernatorial race, Sheldon won by nearly 11,000 votes over Van Osdel and by nearly 20,000 over the Democratic candidate. The Republicans took 47.5 percent of the total vote, a gain of three percent over their 1890 share. The Independents made a slight gain in terms of their proportion of the vote, but obtained 2,000 fewer votes, possibly because some of the farmers who had supported the third party in 1890 had been forced out by drought in the intervening years. The Democrats slipped about three percent from their tally in 1890. Weaver ran about four thousand votes ahead of Van Osdel as South Dakota Democrats chose the People's party candidate for president over Cleveland even though they remained loyal to their party on the state level.²⁶ This may have been due to dissatisfaction with Cleveland over such issues as veterans' pensions or it might

have been because state Democrats were the only party in 1892 to support resubmission of prohibition.

The Dakota Ruralist laid blame for the defeat on two factors. First, the Independents were split over who should guide the party, the old Alliance leaders or men less connected with the farm order. Second, the party had failed to take a firm stand on prohibition. This alienated Republican prohibitionists who saw little reason to leave their old party, but was not enough to entice resubmissionists to switch to the Independents. The Independents' past record on the issue demonstrated that party's support for prohibition, even if it had not emphasized the reform in the campaign.²⁷

Analysis of the voting patterns in 1892 has shown that the towns of the state were the strongholds of the Republican party. The population of towns of three hundred or more people cast over 55 percent of their ballots for the GOP, but under a quarter of their votes for the Populists. The Populists drew the bulk of their support from the rural sections of the state, particularly those areas specializing in wheat production and those inhabited by farmers of native or Scandinavian origins. The ranching counties of the northern Black Hills also turned to the Populists. The areas of the state characterized by corn and swine production, the regions settled by Russian-Germans, and the mining counties of the central Hills tended to vote Republican. Democrats were

slightly more successful in the towns than were the Populists. The Democracy gained a larger share of the vote in the German Catholic counties in the central and southern portions of the eastern half of the state. They also fared better in the western counties than elsewhere.²⁸

In addition to the preponderance of townsmen who backed the Republican party, the inclusion of a number of Populist reforms in the Republican platform and promises of aid to the agricultural economy probably helped keep farm voters in the GOP fold.²⁹ The fact that 1892 was a presidential election year may also have contributed to the decision of many voters to remain in the party of Lincoln.

Unlike the 1891 legislature, the body that convened in Pierre in January 1893 was predominantly Republican. The session brought no major changes, although it enacted several measures concerning railroads and the problems of debtors.

The issue that attracted the most attention in the legislature seems to have been the state's railroads. A series of bills were introduced both by Republicans and Populists that would have achieved some degree of regulation over railroads, but many of these were defeated. Moreover, much of this legislation constituted only piecemeal attacks on the roads' power. Efforts to set a flat passenger rate and to give the board of railroad commissioners the power to fix rates met staunch Republican opposition. Nor was a res-

olution to prosecute the railroads for bribery for distributing railroad passes among lawmakers any more successful.³⁰ Even minor regulations often failed to succeed, such as ones calling for spark arresters on locomotives and establishing railroad liability for injuries to persons and livestock.³¹ The session did provide for the popular election of the board of commissioners and gave that body power to order the construction of side tracks, connections with competing lines, fireguards along the right of way, and the construction of a certain kind of switch.³²

In other actions aimed at defusing Populist demands, the Republican legislature enacted measures to aid debtors, limited elevators and monopolies, promoted irrigation, and amended the state's secret ballot law. The body also appropriated \$60,000 for South Dakota's exhibit at the World's Fair.³³

The legislature narrowly rejected a bid to resubmit prohibition, but this was accomplished only when a member who had favored the proposal changed his mind after intense lobbying.³⁴ The men in Pierre also turned down requests by Black Hills interests for an anti-Pinkerton law and defeated a bill calling for initiative and referendum, a reform that had been one of the planks of the Populist platform.³⁵

As the Populist party grew more and more a part of South Dakota's political scene in the early 1890s, the Farmers' Alliance--the organization that had given birth to the third party movement--began to decline. The business concerns of

the agrarian order continued to meet opposition from elements outside the Alliance. The character and quality of the leadership changed as the old warhorses who had led the farmers into the Independent movement were replaced by men of the second rank who sought to divorce the farm order from politics.

In the early nineties the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company was taken over by the National Union Company, a firm that had been formed from the National Cordage Company. This latter business had been part of a trust controlling jute and twine prices. The purpose of the National Union was to create a national wholesale firm that would cater to the various state alliances and assume control of the local stores that belonged to the state cooperative purchasing companies. Opponents of this idea assaulted the takeover as a scheme to defraud the Alliance and as gross hypocrisy for conniving with a trust.³⁶

Republican papers had a field day when the state insurance inspector found fault with the manner in which the Alliance Hail Association was paying claims. After the inspector charged that the association favored some claimants over others, the state auditor refused to grant the company a certificate to continue operations. Although the AHA was destroyed, the Alliance organized the Union Hail Association to replace it. When an insurance firm unconnected with the farm order went bankrupt in 1891, the Alliance also drew

criticism because Alonzo Wardall, a prominent Alliance officer, was involved in the defunct company.³⁷ The failure of the Alliance Hail Association appears to have contributed to the termination of contracts to build an Alliance office building in Huron, an incident that hurt the Alliance and the Populist party in that city.³⁸

Failures such as these gave the opposition plenty of ammunition. The Republicans charged that Alliance leaders were bilking the farmers through poorly organized cooperative ventures. Not only were these leaders skimming off a profit for themselves through high wages and expense accounts, charged Republicans, but they were also using the farm order to boost their own political purposes.³⁹

During the early nineties the Farmers' Alliance lost its two most noted officers. Upon the death of Leonidas L. Polk, president of the Southern Alliance, Loucks succeeded to that order's top position in 1892. In late 1893 Alonzo Wardall moved to Topeka, Kansas, to head the Alliance Aid Association.⁴⁰ In 1892 J.R. Lowe was elected to replace Loucks as the president of the state organization. Lowe, who had been serving as the associate editor of the Dakota Ruralist, was joined by two vice presidents and a secretary-treasurer, all of whom were new to their positions. The Alliance thus lost the continuity of leadership that had characterized it for the previous several years. The 1892 Alliance convention also decided to end the free subscription

to the Dakota Ruralist that had been sent to all the state order's members. Thus both the Alliance and the third party lost a major source for promulgating their doctrines.⁴¹ By 1894 the Alliance experienced another turnover in leadership. H.W. Smith, who had been the Independents' standard-bearer in the 1891 special election, was chosen president and a Mrs. Anderson from Manchester was elected vice president. Furthermore, Smith pledged to keep the Alliance out of politics.⁴² In 1895, although Smith was re-elected, new individuals filled all of the lower offices. That convention decided the state alliance had declined so far that it had to be reorganized and county meetings were called for that purpose.⁴³

The involvement of the Alliance in politics against the better judgement of some of its members, the loss of major leaders, and the continuing problems of its business operations all combined to undercut the organization's strength. The order's officers eventually decided to remove it from politics and to reorganize it. This experience was similar to the course of the North Dakota Alliance, which was disrupted by every election until 1892 when the damage caused was too great for the farm group to recover.⁴⁴

The judicial elections of 1893 proved another defeat for the Populists. Of three supreme court seats and eight circuit court positions, the Republicans won all but one, which went to an Independent from Deadwood. In the races for the

supreme court, the Republican candidates all topped 20,000 votes while their Populist foes drew less than 13,000 apiece and the Democrats attracted under 8,000. Victory was elusive for the opponents of Republicanism despite a degree of fusion in at least one and possibly several circuits.⁴⁵

Loucks charged this loss to the failure to wage an aggressive campaign--something the Dakota Ruralist had clamored for in September--and the burden of fusion. Other Populists blamed Loucks for the defeat, claiming his opposition to the state central committee was a major cause. T.M. Simmons, chairman of the state committee, allegedly attributed the Populist defeat to the Alliance leader, maintaining that Loucks had been too interested in his own political future and had tried to manage the campaign even though he was not officially connected with it.⁴⁶

The 1894 political season opened with the Populist convention at Mitchell. Displaying their grass roots origins, some of the county delegations made the journey to the city in farm wagons.⁴⁷ The convention affirmed its support for the Omaha platform, the 1892 document that had become the foremost statement of the Populist creed. The remainder of the state platform reads like a hodge-podge of likes and dislikes. The platform criticized the Sheldon administration for "reckless and extravagant mismanagement and maladministration" and sought the removal of the state's institutions of higher education from politics. To aid the farmers, the con-

vention wanted mortgage holders to be taxed for the value of the mortgage and those with mortgages on their property to be exempted from such taxation. To benefit laborers, the platform included a plank calling for laws to improve working conditions and to compensate injured workmen. As a means of better regulating the consumption of alcohol, the delegates favored nationalizing the traffic in liquor. The gathering also endorsed woman suffrage, although a resolution to that effect apparently was not officially added to the platform. Other portions of the document advocated the initiative and referendum, opposed the sale of state school lands, demanded federal ownership of all coal fields and endorsed veterans' pensions.⁴⁸

The Dakota Ruralist offers few insights into the convention and the struggles for control by various factions. The Republican press alleged that there were elements that had opposed Loucks's management of the convention but that the farm leader had been able to stave off these threats. Robert Buchanan, the unsuccessful aspirant for the gubernatorial nod, was portrayed as the major figure opposing Loucks and the issue on which the two men were divided was fusion. The convention, however, chose to stick to the middle of the road between the old parties and avoid combining with the Democrats, an action that would have risked compromising the party's principles in the pursuit of office. The Sioux Falls Press, a bitter opponent of the Ruralist, charged that

Loucks had been able to prevent the re-election of T.M. Simmons as the state central committee chairman.⁴⁹ The Press also claimed that reform papers were split over the issue of suffrage and that some editors refused to print the resolution endorsing it.⁵⁰

To head their ticket, the Populists named Isaac Howe of Spink County. Howe, a Vermonter who had trained in medicine and law before coming to Dakota Territory in 1882, had been a Republican judge before joining the Independents. He converted in 1890 and was elected to county office under the banner of the new party that year. In the 1894 convention, he was Loucks's choice for candidate at the top of the Populist slate. It was an unfortunate selection. Already in his seventieth year, Howe's health was not equal to the task, although that may not have been apparent at the time of the nomination. By November there were rumors that he was seriously ill and before that month was out he was dead.⁵¹

The Republicans gathered in Yankton in late August for their convention. Aware of the growing importance of the silver issue and in favor of an increased money supply, Pettigrew had come out in support of the free coinage of silver in 1893. In the months prior to the convention the senator worked to start Republican bimetallic clubs that would boost the reform, and he tried to convince Republican leaders in the state of the necessity of a strong silver plank to steal the Populists' thunder. His efforts were partly rewarded,

for one of the major elements in the platform was a declaration favoring the coinage of all American-mined silver at a ratio to gold of sixteen to one.⁵² The remainder of the platform endorsed a protective tariff and reciprocity, immigration restriction to keep out "pauper and criminal classes," legislation to limit the power of trusts, laws to give the railroad commissioners authority to prevent discrimination, and the recognition of veterans. The document pledged support for an orderly labor movement and backed courts of arbitration to settle disputes. The convention also praised "the admirable manner in which the present administration had conducted the affairs of the state, maintaining the public credit at all times." Although the Republicans accorded a suffragette a seat on the rostrum, the platform was silent on voting rights for women and on prohibition.⁵³

The gathering nominated Sheldon for re-election to the governorship and put forward the names of John A. Pickler and Robert J. Gamble for U.S. representatives. The candidates for the major state offices of lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, and attorney general were the incumbents, but Kirk G. Phillips was named for treasurer in place of W.W. Taylor, who had been the party's choice in 1892.⁵⁴

Meeting in Sioux Falls in early September, the Democrats endorsed Cleveland's administration (with the exception of his action on soldiers' pensions) and favored free trade, the

coinage of silver and gold, the direct election of senators, proper treatment of Civil War veterans, and state aid to irrigation. Aiming to reduce the influence of corporations, the convention called for legislation prohibiting members of the cabinet and Congress from owning stock in companies that were affected by national laws, legislation to control trusts, and a measure forbidding politicians from accepting railroad passes. The platform denounced the state Republican party for heavy taxes, excessive salaries, the deposit of state funds in banks for partisan purposes, the failure to regulate railroads, and unjust taxation of farmers and laborers while the rich avoided taxes. The delegates derided the Republicans for catering to prohibitionists while hypocritically failing to enforce the law on the matter. The Democrats continued their support for resubmission. An effort to get the convention's approval of a plank for free silver and the direct issue of paper money to the people was not successful. The delegates rejected fusion with the Populists.⁵⁵

The most striking feature of the 1894 election in South Dakota was R.F. Pettigrew's strenuous efforts to be returned to the U.S. Senate. With the attention that a master craftsman devotes to his work, Pettigrew initiated an intense and well-organized campaign that would assure his re-election. During much of 1894 the senator gave his time to contacting various Republican leaders throughout the state and to developing an organization of supporters in all of the counties.

His aim was to see that enough Republicans sympathetic to his political goals would be in the next session of the state legislature to give him another six years in Washington, an objective that much of the Republican press shared.⁵⁶

Senator Pettigrew exerted himself and his resources to see that interest groups throughout the state would be reached in his canvass for re-election. Among the state's largest ethnic groups the senator hoped to cultivate support through the immigrant press and prominent speakers. He requested the editors of the Norwegian Syd Dakota Ekko and the German Dakota Freie Presse to translate and publish an article that had first appeared in the Sioux Falls Press that enumerated the benefits he had already gained for the state while in office.⁵⁷ Pettigrew tried unsuccessfully to get national committee funds to subsidize the Presse during the campaign. He did, however, order that 250 to 300 Germans in his home country receive six month subscriptions to the paper at his expense, hoping that these traditionally Democratic voters could be swayed to his cause.⁵⁸ Pettigrew's correspondence included evidence of his attempts to send speakers and campaign workers among the state's Scandinavians, Germans, Russian-Germans, Finns, Czechs, and Indians.⁵⁹

Pettigrew apparently had important support among religious groups. A number of clergymen actively backed his candidacy, including the influential Catholic Bishop Martin Marty. Marty asked a number of priests under him to use their in-

for an easy route to office. Indeed, there were rumors in the spring of 1894 that James Kyle and Robert Buchanan were in Washington bargaining with state and national leaders of the Democracy.⁶² Loucks was not adverse to Democrats supporting the Populists, however, and counseled them to join ranks with the reform party as the only means of defeating Sheldon. Pettigrew was much concerned that fusion might occur in the legislative races, an event that might deprive him of re-election.⁶³

By 1894 some of the men who had joined the Independents in 1890 were drifting back to their old parties, disillusioned about the Populists' inability to effect reform, lured back by concessions in the old parties' platforms, or disgusted with the willingness of some Populists to fuse with the Democrats. The Republican press seized this opportunity to discredit their opponents and recounted the stories of these disaffected reformers. The GOP often put these men to work on the campaign trail to convince other Republicans of the futility of the third party.⁶⁴

In some cases resubmission became an issue in the legislative races, for the men who convened in Pierre in January would have to deal with that question. By the mid-nineties many in the state questioned the practicality of prohibition. The Republicans and Populists, both of whom had once vigorously defended prohibition, hedged on the issue in 1894 while the Democrats kept up their strong opposition

fluence to help elect legislators sympathetic to Pettigrew, a move that apparently stirred some degree of anti-Catholicism. Pettigrew noted the bishop's action in a letter to a GOP leader in Davison County, but disavowed any foreknowledge of the endorsement, explaining, "I was a very liberal subscriber to the fund to build the Bishop's house at this place [Sioux Falls] and I presume he feel[s] kindly towards me." In the same letter Senator Pettigrew related that he also had Lutheran support "because I gave the grounds upon which their school stands and several hundred dollars in money besides."⁶⁰

Pettigrew also relied on the railroad corporations doing business in the region. The Great Northern apparently contributed \$5,000 to his campaign. The senator asked various favors from the roads, including intervention to influence the political behavior of employees and changes in train schedules to permit crews to vote in selected precincts. In Brown County, where the Republicans expected a close race, Milwaukee road officials assured the senator that "they would do everything they can" to aid him among their workers there.⁶¹

The perennial issue of fusion surfaced again during the 1894 campaign. Prior to the convention Loucks had preached against any combination with the Democrats that could split the reform party and prompt droves of former Republicans to return to their old political fealty. His great fear seems to have been that there might be an arrangement between Democratic leaders and men among the Populists who were looking

to the measure. In Clay County the Populists claimed that the Republican legislative nominees were willing to approve resubmission and the Republicans replied by making the same charge against Populists.⁶⁵

Caught in the backlash against Cleveland's administration following the Panic of 1893, the Democrats lost heavily at the polls. Of over 75,000 ballots cast in the gubernatorial contest, the Democrats captured less than twelve percent, substantially less than their 1892 total and less than half of their 1890 strength. The Populists, although doing poorly compared to the Republicans, drew nearly thirty-five percent of the state's electorate, its best performance yet. Prohibitionists, fielding a separate ticket for the first time in the 1890s, attracted about 1,000 votes. The Republicans returned to their status as the state's majority party, with 52.6 percent of the vote. The GOP swept the state races and obtained a firm hold on the next legislature. In Clay County, where fusion on the legislative slate managed to give those seats to the GOP's opponents, the Republican editor said somewhat enviously, "The whole wide world went Republican Tuesday--with the exception of Texas and Clay County."⁶⁶

The Republican success extended to the county level as well. One GOP newspaper tallied the results of county elections in fifty-one organized counties and found that the Republicans had won an overwhelming victory. Counting eight

"fairly lucrative" offices in each county, the Republicans took nearly eighty percent of the positions, the Populists slightly over eighteen percent, and the Democrats less than two percent.⁶⁷

The 1895 legislature, dominated by Republicans, easily gave Pettigrew the re-election for which he had labored. He was unanimously selected the choice of the Republican caucus and won by a large margin in the legislature.⁶⁸

The 1895 session considered legislation that would have enacted Populist reforms, but, in the end, chose to avoid such changes. One of the major issues was the regulation of the railroads, particularly to allow the railroad commissioners the power to set rates. The Republicans, despite the advice of Pettigrew who had begun to see the need for such a law, turned back efforts to strengthen the regulatory body in an significant fashion. The lawmakers did pass a memorial to Congress calling for free silver, but on reconsideration the Republicans decided to rescind the measure and to expunge all mention of it from the official journals. Nor did a bill establishing initiative and referendum succeed.⁶⁹

As the culmination of several attempts in the sessions of the 1890s, the proponents of resubmission finally were victorious. The legislature approved a joint resolution to place the question of prohibition on the 1896 ballot.⁷⁰

One issue that required much of session's attention came quite unexpectedly. In his message to the legislature, Governor Sheldon praised the former state treasurer in glowing terms:

Mr. W.W. Taylor, our efficient and faithful outgoing treasurer, is entitled to the thanks of the people for the zeal and energy which he has at all times displayed in the management of his offices, and it is a matter of pride to him...that he leaves the public service carrying with him the unbounded respect of those who have known his business methods and his desire to preserve the credit of the state.⁷¹

These words came back to haunt Sheldon, for Taylor also left public service carrying with him the state treasury. His accounts were short some \$367,000.

During his term as treasurer, Taylor had handled the state's money unwisely. He made loans to a number of Republican politicians, only some of whom could repay him on time. Other funds had gone into bad investments and to prop up banks owned by members of his party--banks that went under during the economic stresses of the Panic of 1893. As his tenure of office came to a close, Taylor realized he could not produce the state's funds and so absconded. He eventually returned, but only, according to charges made by both Republican and Populist newspapers, after a deal promising leniency. With the funds he brought back, his own property, and the holdings of some of his bondsmen, Taylor was able to reimburse the state for all but about \$98,000. In punishment,

he was sentenced to five years in prison, a term that was reduced to two years by the state supreme court--upon which sat a judge to whom Taylor had loaned money.⁷² Among those hurt by the defalcation was former governor Arthur C. Mellette, one of the treasurer's bondsmen. Mellette lost heavily when the state attached the property of those who had offered surety for Taylor, his health failed, and the ex-governor died the following year.⁷³

Such a disaster demanded action from the legislature. The lawmakers enacted legislation appointing a committee to investigate the scandal, established a reward for Taylor's capture, and authorized the attorney general to begin proceedings against the ex-treasurer's property and that of his bondsmen. To save the state from financial disaster, the legislature allowed the new treasurer to issue bonds to replace money taken from the school funds and levied a deficiency tax to raise additional revenue. To prevent such a fiasco in the future, the legislature passed laws to ensure the safety of public funds and to tighten standards of accountability from state officers.⁷⁴

The first half of the 1890s held few successes for the Populists in South Dakota. With the exception of mustering enough strength through fusion with the Democrats to elect a U.S. senator, the new party was unable to place any of its candidates in major office. The party proved tenacious, for it increased its share of the electorate between 1890 and

1895 despite its string of defeats. The Republicans, however, were able to retake ground lost in 1890 and by 1894 had re-established themselves as the state's majority party. The GOP was victorious in its quest to regain its old glory because of strong efforts to solicit the farm vote through concessions in its platforms and candidates, the traditionally Republican orientation of the state's townsmen, through vigorous campaigning, and by benefiting from the nation-wide repudiation of Cleveland's administration. The Democratic party, never dominant in South Dakota politics to begin with, was a shadow of its former self by 1894.

The early 1890s were also characterized by the decline of the Farmers' Alliance. Deprived of its old radical leadership through the assumption by Loucks and Wardall of national alliance office, the farm order was taken over by men from a different cut of cloth--men who sought to divorce the organization from politics. Furthermore, the Alliance was shaken by the difficulties or failure of a number of its business operations.

The second half of the decade held some promise for the Populists. The leading Republican politician in the state, Richard F. Pettigrew, had embraced free silver as the solution to the nation's economic woes and was advocating more stringent regulation of railroads. Such positions estranged him from the majority of his party and made possible his movement into the sphere of opposition leaders by 1896. The

1894 disaster left the Democrats with little choice other than to throw their diminished numbers behind the Populist party through fusion. The Republicans, although they had returned to majority control in 1894, would have to carry the onus of the Taylor defalcation into the next election, a burden that proved heavy indeed.

12. Yankton Herald (Democratic), as quoted in the Dakota Ruralist, July 14, 1892.

13. Dakota Ruralist, June 30, 1892; Yankton Press and Dakotan, June 24, 1892; Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 257-58.

14. Dakota Ruralist, June 30, October 6, September 29, 1892.

15. Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 20, 1892.

16. Yankton Press and Dakotan, July 28, 1892; Salem Special, July 23, 1892. For a short biography of Sheldon, see Will G. Robinson, "Charles H. Sheldon," in South Dakota's Governors, Charles J. Dalthorp, ed. (Sioux Falls: Midwest-Beach Co., 1953), pp. 5-7. For the reaction of a gubernatorial aspirant whose hopes for office were ruined by the convention's decision to appease the farm interest, see Robert Dollard, Recollections of the Civil War and Going West to Grow Up with the Country (Scotland, S.D.: The Author, 1906), p. 290.

17. George Martin Smith, ed., South Dakota: Its History and Its People, 3 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 1: 664.

18. Deadwood Daily Independent, October 14, 17, 25, 29, 1892.

19. Dakota Ruralist, July 21, 28, 1892.

20. Dakota Ruralist, March 31, April 14, May 26, June 2, 1892.

21. Dakota Ruralist, May 26, April 21, May 19, 1892.

22. Dakota Ruralist, October 20, November 3, 1892.

23. Yankton Press and Dakotan, September 10, 1892; Deadwood Black Hills Weekly Times, November 5, 1892; Yankton Press and Dakotan, November 4, 1892. On this urban concern for public image, see Martin Ridge, "The Populist as a Social Critic," Minnesota History 43 (Winter, 1973): 299.

24. Yankton Press and Dakotan, October 24, 1892; Salem Special, November 5, 1892; Yankton Press and Dakotan, October 1, 1892; Deadwood Black Hills Weekly Times, October 29, 1892.

NOTES

1. Dakota Ruralist, October 10, 22, 29, 1891; R.F. Pettigrew to A. Schatz, October 23, 1891, R.F. Pettigrew Papers, Pettigrew Museum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The microfilmed version of these papers, available at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, were used in this study.
2. John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 187-88, 192-94, 196.
3. Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed., rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 230; South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota by Counties from October, 1889, to November, 1912 (Aberdeen, 1912), p. 13, offers slightly different voting totals.
4. Dakota Ruralist, November 5, 1891.
5. Warren S. Tryon, "Agriculture and Politics in South Dakota, 1889-1900," South Dakota Historical Collections 13 (1926): 292.
6. Dakota Ruralist, July 18, October 15, 1891.
7. Springfield Times, August 28, 1890; Dakota Ruralist, April 4, 1891; January 21, 23, February 4, 1892. See also Stanley B. Parsons, The Populist Context: Rural Versus Urban Power on a Great Plains Frontier (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973), p. 71.
8. Dakota Ruralist, January 1, 1892; August 29, 1891; December 29, 1892.
9. Dakota Ruralist, December 10, 1891; Deadwood Daily Independent, October 28, 1892.
10. Dakota Ruralist, December 17, 1891. See also Hazel Lucile Heiman, "A Historical Study of the Populist Impulse in South Dakota" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1969; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970), p. 102.
11. Dakota Ruralist, September 1, 1892.

25. R. F. Pettigrew to Thomas Thorson, August 6, 1892; Pettigrew to J. S. Clarkson, September 5, 1892, Pettigrew Papers; Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The Public Career of Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, 1848-1926," South Dakota Historical Collections 34 (1968): 222-23. Hendrickson erroneously identifies the Ekko as "the leading German paper."

26. Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 231-32; South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, p. 17; Tryon, "Agriculture and Politics," p. 294.

27. Dakota Ruralist, December 15, 1892.

28. Kent V. Frank, "An Analysis of the Vote for the Populist Party in South Dakota in 1892" (M.A. Thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1965), pp. 69-81, 83-84. Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967), pp. 140-43, agrees with Frank's analysis on some points, but suggests that the wealth of a county was the most accurate explanation for its vote, with the Populist vote increasing with wealth except in the richest counties. Nor does Rogin perceive the urban-rural split that Frank discerns. In this, Frank had the advantage of using a compilation of the state vote on a precinct level rather than at the county level. Rogin concurs with Frank on the tendencies of Scandinavians and Russian-Germans and on the influence of crops.

29. The Vermillion Dakota Republican, November 17, 1892, claimed in a retrospect on voting patterns in Clay County that 90% of the businessmen of Vermillion backed the Republicans, although the Independents had gained among discontented workers. For a state study illustrating the attachment of businessmen to the GOP, see Frederick C. Luebke, "Main Street and the Countryside: Patterns of Voting in Nebraska During the Populist Era," Nebraska History 50 (Fall, 1969): 257-75. On the Republican platform, see Tryon, "Agriculture and Politics," p. 294.

30. Dakota Ruralist, March 2, January 26, June 8, 1893.

31. Springfield Times, February 2, 9, 1893.

32. Springfield Times, March 9, 1893; South Dakota, Legislature, Laws Passed at the Third Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota (Pierre, 1893), pp. 226-28, 286-87.

33. Springfield Times, January 5, March 9, 1893; Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 10, 1893; Dakota Ruralist, January 19, July 6, 1893; South Dakota, Legislature, Laws Passed at the Third Session, pp. 97, 137-141, 168, 182-89, 235-39, 282-83, 287, 291-93.

34. Springfield Times, March 2, 1893; Doane Robinson, "A Century of Liquor Legislation in Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 12 (1924): 290-92; Alvin John Brunn, "The History of the Temperance Movement in South Dakota to 1917" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1948), pp. 53-54.

35. Deadwood Daily Independent, November 21, 1892; Springfield Times, January 19, 1893; Burton Ellsworth Tiffany, "The Initiative and Referendum in South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 12 (1924): 348; H. Roger Grant, "Origins of a Progressive Reform: The Initiative and Referendum Movement in South Dakota," South Dakota History 3 (Fall, 1973): 400.

36. Robert C. McMath, Jr., Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 121; Dakota Ruralist, February 25, March 17, 1892.

37. Yankton Press and Dakotan, April 27, May 13, 1892; Dakota Ruralist, April 28, 1892; June 2, 1896; Salem Special, July 3, 1891.

38. Stephen B. Plummer, "Huron, South Dakota, 1880-1900: Economic and Political Determinants" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1970), pp. 98-99.

39. Gary Inter-State, April 3, 1891; Yankton Press and Dakotan, May 13, 16, 1892; Sioux Falls Press, December 29, 1893.

40. McMath, Populist Vanguard, p. 139; Springfield Times, October 26, 1893.

41. Dakota Ruralist, June 30, 1892.

42. Dakota Ruralist, July 5, 1894; Sioux Falls Press, June 28, 1894.

43. Dakota Ruralist, June 27, 1895.

44. Glenn Lowell Brudvig, "The Farmers' Alliance and Populist Movement in North Dakota (1884-1896)" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1956), p. 114.

45. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 21-24; Springfield Times, August 24, 1893; Dakota Ruralist, August 31, 1893.

46. Dakota Ruralist, September 14, 28, November 16, 1893; Sioux Falls Press, November 24, 1893; Springfield Times, December 7, 1893.

47. Dakota Ruralist, June 7, 21, 1894.

48. Springfield Times, June 21, 1894.

49. Dakota Ruralist, June 14, 1894; Sioux Falls Press, June 15, 16, July 10, 1894; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 666.

50. Sioux Falls Press, June 27, July 18, 1894.

51. Dakota Ruralist, June 14, July 5, December 6, 1894; Robert W. Haire to Isaac Howe, November 12, 1894, Isaac Howe Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

52. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 230, 232; R. F. Pettigrew to L. T. Boucher, March 24, 1894; Pettigrew to Robert Dollard, May 18, 1894; Pettigrew to Charles N. Herreid, May 17, June 30, 1894; Sioux Falls Press, August 25, 1894.

53. Springfield Times, August 31, 1894; Sioux Falls Press, August 25, 1894.

54. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 667.

55. Sioux Falls Press, September 6, 1894; Smith South Dakota, 1: 668.

56. Sioux Falls Press, October 25, 27, 28, 1894; Springfield Times, August 7, 1894.

57. R. F. Pettigrew to G. B. Ravndahl (editor of the Ekko), April 12, 1894; Pettigrew to John Krause (editor of the Freie Presse), April 12, 1894. The content of the article Pettigrew wanted published is probably the list of the senator's achievements that he sent to the editor of the Sioux Falls Press in late March. See Pettigrew to E. W. Caldwell, probably March 27, 1894, Pettigrew Papers. The Freie Presse was the recognized paper of the Russian-Germans in the state and had a large circulation. See Anton H. Richter, "'Gebt ihr den Vorzug': The German-Language Press of North and South Dakota," South Dakota History 10 (Summer, 1980): 195.

58. Pettigrew to John Krause, September 7, 1894; Pettigrew to "Dakota Freier [sic] Presse," October 8, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

59. Pettigrew to John Lind, September 29, 1894; Pettigrew to Knute Nelson, September 29, October [exact date unknown], 1894; Pettigrew to Solomon Wenzloff, October 4, 15, 1894; Pettigrew to John Mayer, October 23, 26, 1894; Pettigrew to J. T. [or J. C.] Simmons, October 23, 26, 29, 1894; Pettigrew to J. D. Elliot, October 26, 1894; Pettigrew to David Eastman, October 24, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

60. Sioux Falls Press, November 1, 3, 1894; Deadwood Black Hills Weekly Times, November 3, 1894; R. F. Pettigrew to D. A. Mizener, November 1, 1894. Such a political orientation on the part of Bishop Marty helps explain why he and one of his priests, Father Robert W. Haire, fared badly. Haire was a Knight of Labor leader, a Populist, and a utopian socialist who eventually supported the Socialist Party. See Heiman, "Persuasion of the Populist Impulse in South Dakota," pp. 176-77, and Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 241.

61. R. F. Pettigrew to F. E. Ward, October 24, 1894; Pettigrew to John McDonald, October 20, 1894; Pettigrew to Roswell Miller, October 20, 1894; Pettigrew to E. W. Winter, October 25, 1894; Pettigrew to G. W. Holdredge, October 26, 1894; Pettigrew to O. W. Jewett, October 26, 1894; Pettigrew to A. J. Earling, October 30, 1894; Pettigrew to E. W. Winter, November 1, 1894; Pettigrew to Charles T. McCoy, September 27, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

62. Dakota Ruralist, April 12, 1894; March 29, 1894; Springfield Times, April 19, 1894; R. F. Pettigrew to N. C. Nash, April 3, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

63. Dakota Ruralist, October 18, 1894; R. F. Pettigrew to Dave Mizener, September 10, 1894; Pettigrew to Frank Adams, September 13, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

64. Sioux Falls Press, August 4, 14, September 23, October 11, 1894; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 5, 19, 26, 1894; Deadwood Black Hills Weekly Times, October 27, 1894.

65. Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 12, 19, 1894; R. F. Pettigrew to Ole Hokenstad, October 20, 1894, Pettigrew Papers.

66. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 25-32; Herbert S. Schell, History of Clay County, South Dakota (Vermillion: Clay County Historical Society, Inc., 1975), p. 93; Vermillion Dakota Republican, November 9, 1894.

67. Springfield Times, December 21, 1894.

68. Springfield Times, January 29, 1895; Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 235.

69. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 232; Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 235-36; Springfield Times, February 12, 19, 1895; Dakota Ruralist, March 21, 1895; Tiffany, "Initiative and Referendum," p. 349.

70. Robinson, "Liquor Legislation in Dakota," p. 293; Brunn, "Temperance Movement," p. 54.

71. Springfield Times, January 11, 1895.

72. Springfield Times, June 25, 1895; Deadwood Daily Independent, July 1, 9, October 15, 1895; Sioux Falls Press, October 13, 1895; Dakota Ruralist, October 17, 1895; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 233.

73. "Mellette, Arthur Calvin," Dictionary of American Biography, 12: 518; Wright Tarbell, "Arthur Calvin Mellette," in South Dakota's Governors, Charles J. Dalthorpe, ed. (Sioux Falls: Midwest-Beach Co., 1953), p. 3.

74. South Dakota, Legislature, Enabling Act and Constitution and the Laws Passed at the Fourth Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota (Huron, 1895), pp. 29, 32, 142-45, 168-70, 180-83, 213-14.

CHAPTER V

FUSION, VICTORY, AND DEFEAT

By 1896 events made fusion possible among those political groups discontented with the Republican party. Richard F. Pettigrew, estranged from his party over the issues of silver and railroad regulation, bolted the national Republican convention with other Silver Republicans. When the state convention also turned down a silver plank, his followers walked out to form their own party. In the Populist ranks a fusion element finally gained sufficient power to commit that party to union with other pro-silver interests. The Democrats, seizing on the opportunity to defeat the Republicans, joined the reform coalition without even bothering to hold a convention. Under the leadership of Andrew E. Lee, the fusionists managed to win a narrow victory in the fall election.

Victory at the polls, however, did not bring the success for which the silver coalition had hoped. Their hold on state government was incomplete, for the Republicans retained most of the executive machinery. The reformers' unity was weak. Although they controlled a majority of the legislature, the fusion forces failed to elect a U.S. senator, allowing James H. Kyle to be returned to Washington with Republican votes instead. Nor were the reformers able to unite on all of the measures Lee deemed vital.

As disappointing as this was, it was the climax of fusionist success. In 1898 the Republicans regained control of all but the governorship, and Lee could do little by himself. The 1900 election swept the reform coalition from every position in the executive branch and left them with a mere handful of seats in the legislature.

By 1900 the spark that had ignited the Populist revolt had gone out. Farm prosperity returned as prices edged upward, as normal rainfall resumed, and as agrarians developed better methods for farming the Plains. The Republicans had been able to counter much of the Populist threat by concessions in their platforms and choice of candidates. When Populists did gain power, they did little to further their goals. New issues diverted the electorate's attention from conditions in the state to affairs of the world. This combination destroyed any further hopes for Populist success. With the circumstances that had provoked rebellion in the first place gone, voters returned to their traditional voting patterns and the Republican party resumed its dominance.

Pettigrew gradually moved out of the mainstream of his party over the issue of silver. Convinced that popular sentiment was going in the direction of free silver and his own fortunes badly hurt in the Panic of 1893, the senator took up the cause of the financial reform by that year. This stance and his attempts to persuade the 1895 legislature to enact strong regulatory measures alienated him from powerful

elements within the South Dakota GOP. Although Pettigrew managed to get elected a delegate to the national Republican convention in St. Louis in 1896, his opponents in the party forced upon the delegation a pledge to support the national ticket and platform. When the national convention overwhelmingly rejected a minority report calling for endorsement of free silver, Pettigrew joined other silverites in walking out of the convention.¹

The state Republican convention in Aberdeen in July was the scene of a showdown between silverites and those who chose to abide by the national convention's decisions. When the gold forces defeated a silver plank in the platform by a wide margin, a number of the delegates--principally from Pettigrew's home county--withdrew from the convention. The remaining delegates condemned Pettigrew and resolved that he "has ceased to be in touch with the Republican party of this state and has forfeited its political respect and esteem."² The convention adopted a platform endorsing the actions of the St. Louis convention and commending the Sheldon administration. The state Republicans also asked for arbitration to end strikes, a more powerful railroad commission, strong efforts against trusts and combines, and better regulation of grain elevators. For governor the Republicans nominated Norwegian-born A.O. Ringsrud.³

The Populist state convention was held in Huron in mid-July. The party's platform called for inflationary measures

such as free silver and the issue of legal tender notes, government ownership through purchase or construction of enough railroad mileage to lower rates through competition, government ownership of the telegraph and telephone, postal savings banks, initiative and referendum, direct election of senators, tariffs set by a nonpartisan commission, free homes for settlers, a tough railroad bill, and repossession of all idle land held by corporations and land owned by aliens. The delegates condemned the present administration, commended the work of James H. Kyle and Pettigrew, and backed William Jennings Bryan for the presidency. This last item caused some dissention among the men in Huron, as did an abortive attempt to place a prohibition plank in the platform. The convention chose instead to endorse the resubmission amendment and called upon voters to consider the issue without reference to parties. For governor the Populists offered Andrew E. Lee, a Vermillion merchant and reform mayor who had been born in Norway.⁴

The 1890s marked the inauguration of a new era for South Dakota's immigrant groups. Prior to this decade the state's politics had largely been the province of the native-born and the political position of ethnic groups had been determined by attitudes on cultural issues. With the advent of Populism, economic issues began to take precedence and neither of the old parties could take for granted the continued loyalty of some significant blocs of immigrant votes. The result of

this development was an increased awareness by politicians of the importance of some foreign-stock groups. This led to the nomination of foreign-born men to state office in an effort to attract certain ethnic voters. The trend reached its peak in 1896 when both the Republicans and the Populists selected Norwegians as their gubernatorial candidate. The choice of Lee may have been crucial for the Populists' victory, for it split the Scandinavian strength in the election.⁵ Scandinavians, one of the state's two largest ethnic groups, continued to occupy a favored position in South Dakota's political circles for some time to come. In 1898 the fusionists renominated Lee and in 1900 both the Republicans and the reform coalition offered men of Norwegian stock for the governorship.

The Silver Republicans met in Huron at the same time as the Populists and chose to cast their lot with the reform party. For their support, the Pettigrew followers were allowed one place on the state ticket, which went to W.T. LaFollette, who was nominated for railroad commissioner. The Democratic state committee, seeing an opportunity to create a coalition strong enough to displace the Republicans, cancelled the party's convention and joined the fusion forces, thus becoming the third leg in a tripod of silverites.⁶ State-wide fusion, a specter that had haunted Republicans and old-line Populists alike during the first years of the decade, had finally been accomplished, although there was some oppo-

sition to it among reformers.⁷

For the few remaining Democrats, fusion with the Populists should not have presented major problems with readjustment. The issues that separated the Democrats from the other parties in 1890 no longer occupied a position of immediate importance. Prohibition and personal liberty had been supplanted by economic problems. Resubmission of the prohibitory clause of the constitution, while still before the public in 1896, was no longer opposed by any major party. Furthermore, Democrats would not feel alien in the reform coalition, for many former Democrats had joined the ranks of the Populists since 1890. While the Republicans gradually regained voters lost in the first election of the 1890s and the Populists increased their share of the electorate, numbers of Democratic voters fell precipitously. Ideologically unsuited for the Republican party, many of these Democrats must have turned to the reform party. South Dakota fits the patterns established in two Plains states to the south. In Kansas and Nebraska the new party drew most of its support from Republicans in 1890. After that year, when cultural issues no longer sharply divided them from the other parties, Democrats began to filter into the Populist party. At the same time, Republicans who had flirted briefly with the third party in 1890 returned to their former affiliation.⁸

The fusion forces in South Dakota were by no means in complete agreement on all issues. By 1895 the division be-

tween those who wanted to stand by the Omaha platform in its entirety and those who sought to trim the platform to a few basic issues was becoming acute. Some elements believed that a broad platform could bring in more voters even though some might disagree with particular features of the program. Others felt the emphasis should be on the financial plank, specifically on free silver. The Panic of 1893 and the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act had brought new life to the silver issue, with many new converts to the Populists maintaining that it must precede all other reforms. The fusion of 1896 was based on free silver and the South Dakota state Populist platform did not endorse the Omaha platform as had the 1894 document.⁹ The division in the Populist ranks in 1895 was evident in Senator Kyle's decision to withdraw from the board of directors of the Aberdeen Star, one of the leading Populist dailies, because he favored free silver as a primary objective and could not endorse some of the radical features of the Populist program.¹⁰

In the fall campaign the fusionists emphasized the primacy of silver. It was the foremost issue in the contest for them and was the necessary prelude to other reforms. To Populists the demonetization of silver--the "Crime of 1873"--had been a conspiracy on the part of the monied interests to saddle the nation, particularly debtors, with dear money based solely on gold. Now the same monied interests--personified in the financial leaders of New York and London--stood behind

McKinley to beat back the threat of free silver. The men of Wall Street and Lombard Street--particularly the Rothschilds and other European Jews--were again involved in a conspiracy against the American people. Silver was the weapon with which to fight back. South Dakotans were aided in their advocacy of silver when William Jennings Bryan made a brief tour of the state in October on behalf of the free coinage issue and the leading fusion candidates.¹¹

With the Taylor defalcation still relatively fresh in the minds of the voters, the fusionists had an issue upon which the Republicans were vulnerable. The corruption that had characterized the previous administration was an easy target for the opposition to use against particular individuals and the Republican party as a whole.¹²

The Republicans charged voters not to let the minor issue of silver draw attention from the important matters of the tariff and restoring the Republicans to national power. As the fusionists placed more emphasis on silver, the Republicans shifted their attacks to the dangers and difficulties of the white metal. Such a move would, contended the Republicans, benefit mine owners and harm laborers. The issue also frightened away badly needed capital and settlers.¹³ The Populists had maintained that there was a direct connection between the price of silver and wheat and that as long as the price of the first commodity was depressed, the price of the latter would be as well. When wheat prices began to edge up

in the fall of 1896 while silver dropped, the Republicans capitalized on the opportunity to show the falsehood of their opponents' argument.¹⁴ Some Republican newspapers, particularly those in areas settled by Russian-Germans, pointed out that silver sentiment was low among that nationality because of unhappy experiences with the metal in Russia.¹⁵

The Republican press also found fault with Andrew Lee. An astute businessman, Lee had amassed a fortune by the time he entered state politics. Republicans attacked him as a "millionaire plute candidate" who could hardly represent the average farmer and queried how he could have gained such wealth if economic conditions were as dismal as the Populists portrayed them.¹⁶ The Republican editors also accused Lee of being a poor public speaker, implying that he was handicapped by a poor command of the English language.¹⁷

The 1896 election marked the peak of Populist success. When the votes were counted they found that the reform coalition had narrowly carried the major races. Bryan edged William McKinley by fewer than 200 ballots. Lee defeated Ringsrud by a margin of 319 out of over 82,000 votes cast. The fusion forces also managed to elect the attorney general, both congressmen, and the three railroad commissioners. The bulk of the state's executive offices, however, remained under Republican control. The legislature went to the fusionists by a majority of nineteen. The Black Hills, badly shaken by the depression, swung to the fusionists, a factor

that provided the margin of victory.¹⁸

Resubmission of the prohibition question, an issue in the state's politics in some fashion for most of the decade, was temporarily settled when the electorate, despite the strenuous efforts of prohibitionists, chose to repeal the prohibitory clause of the state constitution. Prohibition was defeated by a margin of nearly 7,000 votes and balloting on the issue ran over ten thousand votes ahead of the other amendments put to the people. The Prohibition party candidate for governor drew about seven hundred votes away from the other parties.¹⁹

One of the first orders of business when the legislators convened in Pierre in January was the election of a U.S. senator. Kyle's term was about to expire and a legislature controlled by fusionists would again have the opportunity to fill a Senate seat. The problem that plagued the lawmakers of 1891 was present again; the fusion forces could not agree on a candidate. The Republicans united behind John A. Pickler in mid-January, but the reform caucus could not settle on a single man and four fusionist candidates divided the field. Kyle, F.M. Goodykoontz, A.J. Plowman, and Henry Loucks all aspired to the position.²⁰ Lee and Pettigrew opposed Kyle, although other factions in the party stood behind the clergyman.²¹ The balloting continued for weeks before the Republicans suddenly switched to Kyle. With the aid of a small number of Populists and Democrats, the Republicans

were able to return Kyle to Washington. The circumstances of his re-election moved him closer to the Republicans during his second term.²²

Governor Lee pushed for effective railroad regulation in the 1897 legislature. With both parties pledged to such legislation in their platforms, a regulatory law was enacted relatively early in the session with overwhelming bipartisan support. The Palmer-Wheeler bill widened the investigatory powers of the railroad commission, prohibited rate discrimination and combinations in restraint of trade, ordered railroads to furnish cars whenever requested, and empowered the commissioners to set maximum rates. The right to control rates was vigorously contested by the various railroads in the state. Sympathetic courts granted injunctions to the roads to prevent the imposition of rates until the U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled in 1901 that such commissions could not establish railroad rates.²³

Prohibition having been repealed, the legislature was left with the task of providing some means of regulation of the liquor trade in the state. The legislators enacted a high license bill to serve as a temporary measure and submitted an amendment to the people that would establish a state dispensary system for alcohol. The new law also permitted local option.²⁴

In other actions the legislature dealt with a variety of problems and minor reforms. The lawmakers revised some

of the state's executive machinery and added an oil inspector and an insurance inspector. This latter position was created to take the distribution of insurance statements to newspapers out of the hands of the Republican auditor. A measure that would have revised the Board of Charities and Corrections so as to give the fusionists control of the state's penal and charitable institutions failed. Still pursuing the Taylor defalcation, the legislature established a three member committee to re-examine the evidence from the previous investigation and to look for corruption elsewhere in the state government. To ensure that anyone who bilked the state of its treasury would receive tougher treatment in the courts, the legislature stiffened penalties for embezzlement of public funds. At the request of Governor Lee the lawmakers required the treasurer to produce the state funds to be counted. Unlike his predecessor, treasurer Kirk G. Phillips was able to account for all of the money in his care. Other acts passed by the legislature that touched on traditional farmer and Populist concerns included laws dealing with ballot reform, mine safety, irrigation, and combination to limit competition. In addition to the dispensary measure, the legislators submitted to the voters at the next election amendments dealing with woman suffrage and the initiative and referendum.²⁵

The 1897 legislature was at best a qualified success. The fusion forces--although holding a majority of the seats

--were unable to unite on some basic measures. The reformers could not generate enough support to break the Republican hold over some of the state's major institutions. The Republicans seized the initiative and elected a U.S. senator. Although the legislators enacted a railway regulatory act, it was a measure to which both parties had pledged themselves. As one Republican editor summed up the fusionists' success in Pierre, the record upon which they would have to run in 1898 "is not an enviable one."²⁶

The judicial elections of 1897 also proved disappointing to the fusionists. Of the eight circuit court positions to be filled, the fusionists managed to capture only three. Nor were the groups opposing the Republicans able to maintain even the degree of unity they had achieved the preceding year. In one of the races the Populists and the Democrats nominated different candidates.²⁷

A major task for reform leaders in 1898 was preserving the fragile bond among the fusion forces. To that end Pettigrew labored diligently in the months prior to the first conventions of the various anti-Republican parties. The senator was concerned that the mid-road Populists--those who wanted to keep the reform party in the middle of the road between the old parties and who believed that any combination with either the Republicans or Democrats was tantamount to heresy--would succeed in turning the Populist party back to its independent stance. Furthermore, Pettigrew worried that

a gold wing of the state's Democrats might scuttle an attempt at fusion. To prevent this he sought to convince other reform politicians that the Democrats should be accorded four positions on the next ticket.²⁸

Pettigrew's effort was successful. When the Populist state central committee met in March to set a date for the party's convention, a resolution favoring fusion received wide support. Henry L. Loucks and Robert W. Haire opposed the measure, but to no avail.²⁹ The three parties held separate conventions in Aberdeen in July and settled upon a single ticket, which was headed by Governor Lee. The parties then adopted individual platforms which were similar to one another, and a series of resolutions that were common to all of the parties. The common features included calls for free coinage of silver at sixteen to one, initiative and referendum, government ownership of public utilities, election of Supreme Court justices, and an end to federal court injunctions. The resolutions also supported the war with Spain. Planks in the separate platforms included demands for more regulation of trusts, postal savings banks, direct election of senators, an income tax, labor legislation, and more equitable taxation.³⁰

The Republicans, convening in Mitchell the following month, chose Kirk Phillips to oppose Lee. Following Republican principles, the delegates endorsed the gold standard and protection for American products. The party also favored the

annexation of Hawaii, postal savings banks and a postal telegraph, and the Nicaraguan canal. The convention also condemned illegal trusts and supported the railroad commission in its struggle to set rates. The convention was pleasantly surprised when Henry Loucks announced his return to the GOP in a letter he asked to be read to the convention. Loucks stated that he could not countenance the takeover of the Populists by the Democrats. He also urged the Republicans to include a plank favoring the initiative and referendum in their platform, although the convention obliged him only to the extent of suggesting that voters study the matter. Before the November election Senator Kyle joined Loucks in converting back to the Republicans.³¹

In the course of the campaign, Pettigrew continued his courtship of the state's ethnic groups, especially the Germans. He was particularly concerned with converting the Germans from Russia to free silver and offered to send literature to circulate among that group. He was also interested in persuading the Dakota Freie Presse to take up the cry for silver and was approached by a silverite who hoped to obtain sufficient funding to purchase that Russian-German organ. However, Pettigrew could not raise the money.³² One of the Democratic nominees on the fusion ticket was a German from Hutchinson county, a Russian-German area, a choice that Lee hoped would help swing that ethnic group into the fusion column.³³

Lee attempted to undermine his opponent by inquiring at various banks around the state whether or not Phillips as treasurer had been pocketing interest received on deposits of state funds. Naively, Lee simply asked bank officers if Phillips had received any interest or other consideration for doing business with their banks. Phillips, a banker by profession, certainly would not have made such transactions with men whom he did not trust. Lee's efforts before the election were rewarded by an indignant letter from one cashier who hinted that Lee was propelled by political motives rather than concern for the state's treasury.³⁴

The Cuban crisis gave the fusionists an issue with which to condemn the McKinley administration. Before American intervention Populist newspapers castigated the president's weak policy. America's duty, they claimed was to free the Cubans from the clutches of Spain on humanitarian grounds. Such newspapers charged that McKinley was conciliatory because the "money power of the world" dictated that Cuba must remain under Spanish misrule because financiers like the Rothschilds held Cuban bonds that would only be paid if Spain controlled the island.³⁵

Governor Lee also supported military intervention in the Caribbean but wanted it go no further. Lee argued that American action against Spain after the sinking of the Maine was necessary both to liberate Cuba and to defend American honor. The territories gained from Spain, moralized the

governor, must not be returned. Rather, the U.S. should dedicate itself to uplifting the struggling peoples and to protecting them from foreign nations as well as from American capitalists. When the First South Dakota Volunteer Infantry was sent to the Philippines and deployed against the native rebellion in 1899, Lee demanded their return, maintaining that the regiment's term of enlistment had expired with the end of the war and that any further use of the troops would only benefit capitalists.³⁶

Pettigrew also favored intervention to alleviate Cuban suffering and saw a money power plot behind the president's actions. Such was the work of "the Roth[s]childs and Drexel-Morgans." However, there was danger, too, in a war of conquest, for such would only aid the plutocrat and war contractor. Furthermore, the tropical islands were inhabited by "inferior races" that might endanger American institutions.³⁷

Republican papers often agreed with their opponents on the need to rescue the Cubans from Spain, but they differed with fusionists over the disposition of conquered lands. Territorial acquisition was the prerogative of the victor. Having freed these lands, it was the duty of America to protect and govern the territories until they were capable of caring for themselves or were fit to be admitted as states. The time had come for the United States to expand overseas and open new markets; the nation should retain the former

Spanish possessions and raise a larger army to guard them.³⁸

Other Republican tactics in the 1898 campaign included publicizing fissures in the fusion ranks and criticizing Lee for corruption in his administration. Republican papers took delight in pointing out unrest at the fusion convention and in enumerating the old-line Populists and Democrats who found the tri-partisan combination unpalatable. Republican editors charged that Populists in office under Lee were as guilty of misusing public funds as had been their Republican predecessors, and indictment that bore some truth. Some also claimed that Lee had covered up such graft.³⁹

The November election proved disastrous for the fusionists. Lee barely held onto his office, winning by a margin only slightly larger than he had had in 1896. Every other reform candidate for state office met defeat. The Republicans gained a solid majority in the legislature. For a time Lee was threatened by a contest from Phillips, but the former treasurer decided to drop the matter. Lee was still pressing for an investigation of Phillips' transactions and the Republican may have chosen not to go farther in hopes that Lee would do likewise. When the governor did seek action he found the legislature and the attorney general uncooperative.⁴⁰

The amendments on the ballot encountered mixed success. The voters approved the measures allowing initiative and referendum and a state dispensary system to control liquor sales. The woman suffrage amendment, however, was defeated 22,985 to

19,698. The campaign for suffrage in 1898 was far more reserved than it had been eight years earlier. This time the National Suffrage Association sent in only one lecturer for an extended tour and a few other speakers of some note appeared briefly.⁴¹

Lee found plenty of factors to blame for the Populist loss. He claimed to various correspondents that the defeat was due to voter apathy, the intense effort of the saloon element in the Black Hills, poor management, the absence of many silver supporters from the mining counties because they were overseas in military service, and voting fraud.⁴² Apparently he did not seriously examine the possibility that South Dakota's electorate simply did not believe the fusionists could solve all of the state's problems or that the Republicans presented a more attractive alternative.

Pettigrew attributed the defeat partly to voting fraud and heavy spending on behalf of the Republicans by the railroads. A more important cause, according to the senator, was the breakdown of fusion on the county level. Without that grassroots unity, the election of reform candidates was impossible. Nor had the fusion forces sufficiently emphasized the vital national issues of free silver and public ownership of railroads.⁴³

After 1896 other factors combined to reduce fusionist voting, both in the state and in the nation. Financial problems, a major impetus to the formation of the Independent

movement, seemed less pressing as the economy began to improve during McKinley's administration. An increasing gold supply due to new finds and better processing techniques enlarged the money supply. The Spanish-American War sparked a wave of patriotism and diverted attention to foreign affairs. Some Populists could not abide with fusion with the Democrats and the dilution of old principles. For these, the Republican party offered a more appealing solution.⁴⁴

The 1899 legislature did little to further the reforms the fusionists had sought. The lawmakers did enact legislation to put the initiative and referendum into effect, made some changes in voting laws, allowed taxpayers to pay their taxes in two semi-annual installments, and passed a pure food act. Presented with three different bills to establish a state dispensary system, the legislature chose to act on none of them, deciding instead that such a system would be too expensive. Instead the lawmakers decided to refer the dispensary amendment back to the voters in 1900. The Republican dominated legislature also refused to pass a measure that would have given Lee the power to remove his own appointees.⁴⁵

Nor did fusionist fortunes fare any better in the judicial elections later that year. This time the fusion forces managed to maintain their unity and offer a single candidate for each of the three state supreme court positions in contention. The highest court in the state, a bulwark of Republicanism and suspected of protecting corruption among GOP of-

ficials, was an important target for the reform groups. The Republicans, however, easily held on to their control of the court.⁴⁶

The 1900 political season began early in South Dakota when the Populists who were amenable to fusion held their national convention in Sioux Falls in early May. The body nominated William Jennings Bryan and Charles A. Towne for its presidential and vice presidential candidates. Towne's selection came only after a protracted struggle between extreme fusionists who wished to leave open the second position for the Democratic national convention to fill and a faction who felt the Democrats must concede a place on the ticket. The latter group won the skirmish but lost the war, for Towne was unacceptable to Bryan and the Democrats, who replaced him with Adlai E. Stevenson. The platform adopted in Sioux Falls called for the free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, a reduced tariff, public ownership of railroads, postal savings banks, direct election of senators, initiative and referendum, and immigration restriction. The attendance was far short of what city and party planners had hoped for, and probably fewer than two thousand delegates and spectators appeared.⁴⁷

Two weeks later the Republicans convened in Sioux Falls. The platform lauded the McKinley administration, acknowledged the contributions of Civil War veterans, and praised the heroism of South Dakota's contingent in the Spanish-American War and in the Philippines. The delegates approved of the free

homestead bill, endorsed strict action against trusts, and expressed their satisfaction with sound money. To appeal to the groups who had supported the Populists, the convention encouraged widening the powers of the railroad commission to the regulation of telephone, telegraph, and express companies, and endorsed rural free delivery. The delegates also pronounced their support of national Republican policy toward the territories taken from Spain.⁴⁸

The convention continued the trend of recognizing the state's ethnic population in its choices for office. The Republicans picked Norwegian-stock Charles N. Herreid as its gubernatorial candidate. Herreid was joined on the ticket by a fellow Scandinavian, O.C. Berg, who ran for Secretary of State. A representative of the state's Dutch population joined the slate as a candidate for railroad commissioner.⁴⁹

The Populists and Democrats gathered in convention in Yankton in mid-July. There were not enough Silver Republicans on hand for them to hold a separate convention, but the other two legs of the reform coalition met individually to formulate their respective tickets. The Democrats announced their support of Lee, Pettigrew, Bryan and Stevenson, and the national party platform. The party denounced McKinley's policy on the Philippines, but commended the state's soldiers for bravery in the insurrection. The delegates called for a federal income tax and better railroad regulations, and decried the actions of the 1899 legislature and the Republican controlled

board of assessment and equalization. The convention also supported the South African republics in their fight against British imperialism.⁵⁰

The Populists endorsed the Sioux Falls platform, Lee, Pettigrew and Bryan. On foreign affairs the delegates demanded Philippine independence under an American protectorate, lauded South Dakota's men in the Philippines, criticized corruption in the administration of Cuba, demanded full U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans, and sympathized with the South African republics. On economic and business issues the convention opposed trusts and sought public ownership of the "means of production and distribution" whenever necessary, the direct issue of money by the government, postal savings banks, and silver at 16 to 1. In addition, the platform included planks condemning the board of assessment and equalization, praising the railroad commissioners, calling for liberal pensions, and deploring the use of troops against striking miners.⁵¹

The Democrats demanded a larger share of the state ticket than they had received during the past two major elections. They received the secretary of state, the commissioner of public lands, the treasurer, the auditor, and two presidential electors. The gubernatorial selection was Burre H. Lien, a businessman and former mayor of Sioux Falls. Lien's nomination continued the practice of ethnic politics; he was of Norwegian stock and had been instrumental in forming the state's most

important Scandinavian newspaper. Lee reluctantly accepted a nomination to the U.S. House of Representatives.⁵²

The fusion coalition in 1900 tried to make an issue out of American imperialism, particularly with Russian-German voters. These people, reasoned the fusionists, had left Russia to avoid militarism. McKinley's policies overseas meant a large army that must be supported with high taxes and would lead to war. Russian-German attachment to the Republican party, however, was too firm.⁵³ The fusionists also directed blows at the leading Populists who had returned to the Republicans, charging that Kyle had been bought by the Republicans in 1897 and that Henry Loucks--the man who had led the Independent movement in 1890--was a political traitor who was seeking to replace Pettigrew as senator when the legislature met in 1901.⁵⁴

The 1900 campaign was marked by speaking tours by several important politicians. In late September William Jennings Bryan sped across the state, making a dozen stops in a single day.⁵⁵ In October Mark Hanna conducted a tour of western states that included some forty-four speeches in South Dakota. Hanna and Pettigrew were the bitterest of foes. The South Dakotan believed that Hanna was responsible for the 1896 Bryan defeat and vituperatively attacked him in the Senate. The feud on the Senate floor between the two men climaxed in early June when Pettigrew accused Hanna of bribery in 1898. Though Hanna never publicly used Pettigrew's name, his tour

was aimed in part at ensuring a Republican victory in South Dakota in 1900, a victory that would place the question of Pettigrew's re-election in the hands of a hostile legislature.⁵⁶

The 1900 election was complicated by the presence of two minor parties. One was the Prohibition party, a common feature in several of the major state elections of the 1890s. The other billed itself as the Populist party, in contrast to the People's party of the reform coalition. The miniscule Populist party claimed to be the true mid-road portion of the original Populist party. The fusionists derided it as a Republican ploy to split the opposition. Whatever its purpose, the Populist party of 1900 was a failure. Neither of these factions was important in the campaign--the Prohibitionists received less than 1,400 votes and the Populist party slightly over three hundred.⁵⁷

The 1900 election was the death stroke for the fusion movement in South Dakota. Every candidate on the state ticket went to defeat. Lien lost by nearly 14,000. Lee led the fusionist candidates, but by any standards his loss was a landslide. In the legislative races, only fifteen fusionists were elected compared to 117 Republicans.⁵⁸

The 1900 election did not kill the Populist party immediately; the victim lingered on for some time before finally succumbing. In 1902 the Democrats and Populists fused again, this time with results even more discouraging than the preceding election. In 1904, the Populists fielded a separate

ticket that attracted a mere 1,114 votes--far less than either the Socialists or the Prohibitionists received.⁵⁹

By this time only minor leaders of the old reform coalition were left. Loucks and Kyle had both returned to the Republican fold, although Kyle died in 1901. Lee, Pettigrew, U.S.G. Cherry, and W.T. LaFollete moved into Democratic ranks. William E. Kidd, Father Robert W. Haire, and H.W. Smith became Socialists. Freeman Knowles, who had been one of the Populist Congressmen elected in 1896, ran for Congress in 1902 and for governor in 1904 and 1906 on the Socialist ticket. As late as 1924, opposition politicians of the Populist era were still involved in the state's public affairs. That year an aged Henry Loucks ran as an Independent for the U.S. Senate. Two of his opponents were U.S.G. Cherry, a former Silver Republican, and Thomas Ayres, once Lee's personal secretary.⁶⁰

Many of the conditions that had spawned the Populist party had been remedied. A large share--though by no means all--of the state's farm population had taken the angry path of the Independent movement in 1890 because of financial troubles and the belief that the old parties were unwilling to listen to agricultural demands. Low prices, drought, and a heavy burden of debt had made success precarious to men who were often overextended and unable to cope with the exigencies of the environment. When the old parties seemed more interested in irrelevant issues and to be under the domination of corporations, many farmers throughout the Plains states took

matters into their own hands, converting the organization of the Farmers' Alliance into a political party.

By 1900 farm conditions were improving. Crops had fared well in the state during 1890 and 1891, although prices were mixed. From 1893 to 1894 yields fell, and farmers, expecting prices to rise as a result, were dismayed when prices dropped even further. Growing conditions were a bit better in 1895, but the market was worse. In 1896 South Dakota farmers harvested large crops and the price of wheat edged upward, though corn prices sagged further. The worst was over, however. From 1897 on, prices tended to climb and drought no longer ruined hopes of a good harvest. A new period of agricultural prosperity was in the making.⁶¹

Nor were farmers so ill-prepared for the circumstances of farming in Dakota by 1900. A major problem in the late 1880s and early 1890s had been the emphasis on a single cash crop, the failure of which left unfortunate farmers in desperate straits. Through the course of the nineties there was considerable effort on South Dakota farms to build a hedge against just such a disaster through various means. One solution that flourished briefly was the use of artesian irrigation as a way to avert the destruction of drought.⁶² Others took the more practical route of learning to farm in the environment in which they lived. New methods of dryland farming were developed in South Dakota to suit the conditions found there. In Brown County Hardy Webster Campbell devised

new techniques of working the soil to preserve its moisture. The state established sub-experiment stations to test irrigation procedures and to try out new crops. Agricultural scientists travelled abroad to find new strains of plants that were better suited to the dry climate found on the Plains.⁶³ Most importantly, farmers began to diversify their operations so as not to rely too heavily on a single crop. Sometimes this entailed switching to livestock in areas where rainfall was too undependable. In other places diversification might mean growing a variety of crops rather than just one. This was the era when the dairy industry boomed.⁶⁴ It required a major drought to convince farmers that their methods must change to accomodate the land.⁶⁵

The major political parties--particularly the Republicans--threatened by the Populist upstart in 1890, began to realize that they could not always take the farm vote for granted. The result was a series of platforms in the nineties that included many of the Populists' major demands and candidates who were identified with the farm element. This was a means of defusing agrarian discontent until conditions improved, other issues distracted the voters, and minor reforms could satisfy farmers. The fact that the Republicans managed to hold on to so much of the state government attests to the efficacy of this tactic. In a decade of major unrest, the Populists never won an important office without the aid of the Democrats. The few victories the Populists did have

were often won by slim margins; nor were they lasting victories.

As the nation recovered from the Panic of 1893, as the state's agricultural economy climbed out of the depths of drought and depression, as fusionists proved themselves no more successful at significant reform than the Republicans had been, and as new issues far removed from local concerns demanded the attention of South Dakota's electorate, the Republican party returned to unassailable power in the state. That was the party to which the bulk of South Dakota's voters were tied through old loyalties. The disruption of the 1890s may have weakened the bonds between party and voter, but it did not sever them. As the circumstances that had given rise to the Independent movement in 1890 disappeared, voters drifted back to their old parties.

The Populists passed from the scene with many of their goals unmet. Serious financial reform and public ownership of transportation were beyond their power on the national level. On the state level much of the credit for what regulatory legislation was passed during the 1890s belongs to the reformers, either directly or indirectly. The laws, however, were all too often ineffective or were struck down by hostile courts. Lasting rate regulation, for example, would have to wait for another era. The Populists did provide the impetus for the initiative and referendum in South Dakota. Businesslike Andrew Lee brought a measure of honesty

and integrity to state government at a time when those qualities were sorely needed. However, many of the Populist goals were left to a new generation of leaders, working within the structure of the Republican party to achieve.

NOTES

1. Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The Public Career of Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, 1848-1926," South Dakota Historical Collections 34 (1968): 230, 237-39, 242-43; Elmer Ellis, "The Silver Republicans in the Election of 1896," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 18 (March, 1932): 526; Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed., rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), pp. 234-34; Springfield Times, March 27, June 19, 1896.

2. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 246; Springfield Times, July 10, 1896; Gary Inter-State, July 17, 1896.

3. Huron Huronite, July 9, 1896; Springfield Times, July 17, 1896; Kenneth Elton Hendrickson, Jr., "The Populist Movement in South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1959), pp. 43-44; George Martin Smith, ed., South Dakota: Its History and Its People, 3 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915): 1: 673.

One historian has seen the capture of the Populist party by an element favoring fusion as "the establishment of a new party ideology with new leadership." See Brian Jason Weed, "Populist Thought in North and South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1970), p. 30. Weed's analysis is overstated. The fusionist element had existed before, although it had not been able to gain dominance. Moreover, many of the leaders of second rank continued in positions of prominence. John E. Kelly and Freeman Knowles, both congressional candidates in 1894, ran again in 1896 and 1898. A. L. Van Osdel ran for lieutenant governor in 1890, governor in 1892, and lieutenant governor again in 1900. J. E. Kidd, one of the most radical of the state's Populists, served as the state chairman in 1900.

4. Huron Huronite, July 14, 1896; Springfield Times, July 24, 1896; Salem Pioneer Register, September 4, 1896; Herbert S. Schell, "Andrew E. Lee," in South Dakota's Governors, Charles J. Dalthorp, ed. (Sioux Falls: Midwest-Beach Co., 1953), p. 9; R. F. Pettigrew to Arthur Linn, February 15, 1897, R. F. Pettigrew Papers, Pettigrew Museum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The microfilmed version of these papers available at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, were used in this study.

6. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 248.

7. Salem Pioneer Register, August 14, 1896.

8. Peter H. Argersinger, Populism and Politics: William Alfred Pepper and the People's Party (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), pp. 184-190; David Stephens Trask, "A Natural Partnership: Nebraska's Populists and Democrats and the Development of Fusion," Nebraska History 56 (Fall, 1975): 419-438; Robert W. Cherny, Populism, Progressivism, and the Transformation of Nebraska Politics, 1885-1915 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), pp. 65-67.

9. For evidence of the quarrels over which direction to pursue, see the Dakota Ruralist, April 10, May 9, 16, July 13, 25, August 8, 22, September 12, 1895. On the increasing importance of the silver issue in the 1890s see John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 301-20, 340-45, 349.

10. Sioux Falls Press, June 23, 1895; Dakota Ruralist, July 4, 11, 1895.

11. Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 301-305; Springfield Times, August 28, 1896; Salem Pioneer Register, August 14, September 11, October 23, 1896; Deadwood Evening Independent, November 22, 1895; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 15, 1896; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 236; William Jennings Bryan, The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896 (Chicago: J. B. Conkey Co., 1896), pp. 534-35.

The anti-Semitism and belief in conspiracy seen in the Populist view of the financial problems of the late nineteenth century have been interpreted as portions of the darker side of Populism, most notably by Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 70-81, especially pp. 77-81. Need, "Populist Thought," pp. 35-37, detects a rising sense of anti-Semitism in the columns of the Dakota Ruralist and associates this with the addition of W. E. Kidd to the editorial staff. The fact that the remainder of the Populist press in the state showed no signs of revulsion at this nativism, Need argues, implies that other Populists shared the same attitudes.

South Dakota Populism contained a degree of anti-Semitism. Almost invariably, however, anti-Semitic references in the Populist press and those found in Richard F. Pettigrew's papers were directed neither at the Jewish immigrant in America nor at the Jewish people as a whole. Rather, the object of the attack was the wealthy Jewish banker, particularly Rothschild, who was seen as an ally of

Wall Street. The Jew in this sense was feared and hated as the "Shylock" to whom farmers were deeply in debt, to whom Cleveland had appealed to stop the gold drain, and who sought to prevent the silver standard. For examples of this type of anti-Semitism, see the Dakota Ruralist, August 10, October 19, 1893, May 24, 28, 1895; Salem Pioneer Register, August 14, September 11, 1896, R. F. Pettigrew to Otto Anderson, probably May 28, 1897; Pettigrew to J. O. Andrews, December 9, 1897, Pettigrew Papers. On the other hand, the Dakota Ruralist could report matter-of-factly that "quite a colony of Russian Jews has arrived in Clark county, bought lands, and are preparing to farm." Dakota Ruralist, March 3, 1892.

Some of the above references simply mention the term "Shylock," which in itself does not prove an overt anti-Semitism. Others just mention Rothschild, sometimes in connection with "Shylock." Others speak more directly of "Jewish money-lenders" and the "European Jew power." The significant feature is that the reference is to someone whom Populists feared because of financial power, not because of race or ethnicity. Yet it may also be significant that the writers found it important to include the fact that Rothschild was Jewish. Sometimes the reference is to Lombard Street, which has been taken as a sign that Anglophobia played a part in the Populist anti-Semitism. For a discussion of the term "Shylock," see Walter T. K. Nugent, The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 114. On Anglophobia, see Nugent, pp. 115-116, and John Higham, "Anti-Semitism in the Gilded Age: A Reinterpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 43 (March, 1957): 574. There seems to have been fewer references to England in South Dakota than there were in Kansas. A larger proportion of Kansas land may have been held by foreigners.

It should also be noted that the Populists were not the only ones who exhibited some signs of anti-Semitism. Indeed, a study of one GOP newspaper in South Dakota demonstrates that Republicans were also guilty of anti-Semitism and of believing in conspiracies in the work of trusts and in the demonetization of silver. See Louis Y. Van Dyke, "Hofstadter and The Huronite: Prairie Punditry on the Jim River, 1894-1899," in Twelfth Dakota History Conference, H. J. Blakely, ed. (Madison, S.D.: Dakota State College, 1981), pp. 617-18. Other segments of American society--notably urban workers and some eastern intellectuals--expressed ethnocentrism toward Jews in the late nineteenth century. John Higham places this into the context of ethnic tensions and "status rivalries" that characterized American society in the last century. Jews were only one of a number of groups that faced discrimination as America

adjusted to various changes. See John Higham, Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 102-137.

Some historians have gone to great lengths to minimize any anti-Semitism among the Populists. For examples, see two of Norman Pollack's articles, "The Myth of Populist Anti-Semitism," American Historical Review 68 (October, 1962): 76-80, and "Handlin on Anti-Semitism: A Critique of 'American Views of the Jew,'" Journal of American History 51 (December, 1964): 391-403. This second article is a reaction to Oscar Handlin's "American Views of the Jew at the Opening of the Twentieth Century," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 40 (June, 1951): 323-44. Handlin argues that the Populists provided the basis for a later strain of anti-Semitism.

12. Springfield Times, July 24, 1896; Salem Pioneer Register, October 9, 23, 1896.

13. Springfield Times, April 17, July 28, October 9, 1896; Gary Inter-State, August 21, 1896; Huron Huronite, August 14, September 8, 9, October 9, 1896.

14. Huron Huronite, October 6, 20, 1896; Springfield Times, September 29, October 6, 9, 16, 23, November 13, 1896; Gilbert C. Fite, "Republican Strategy and the Farm Vote in the Presidential Campaign of 1896," American Historical Review 65 (July, 1960): 797-801.

15. Springfield Times, January 28, February 19, September 11, 1896.

16. Huron Huronite, July 21, August 3, 1896; Gary Inter-State, August 14, 1896; Springfield Times, August 28, 1896.

17. Huron Huronite, August 24, September 1, 1896. After the election the Huronite printed an item from an exchange concerning a conversation Lee allegedly had about a cat: "'A baen look at that Tam cat, where you gate hame?'" Huronite, December 3, 1896.

18. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota by Counties from October, 1889, to November, 1912 (Aberdeen, 1912), pp. 33-43; Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 249; Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 236-37.

19. On the campaign to save prohibition, see the Springfield Times, August 7, 1896, and the Salem Pioneer Register, September 4, October 17, 1896. On the vote, see Doane

Robinson, "A Century of Liquor Legislation in Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 12 (1924): 293, and South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, p. 39.

20. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 249-50. Loucks was interested in the position and had inquired of Pettigrew whether or not the Canadian-born farm leader would be eligible for the office. Pettigrew argued that Loucks was eligible because he was a South Dakota citizen when it became a state. R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks, December 11, 1896; January 2, 1897, Pettigrew Papers.

21. Andrew E. Lee to F. W. Cox, February 13, 1897, Andrew E. Lee Papers, Richardson Archives, I. D. Weeks Library, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota (hereafter Lee Papers, USD); R. F. Pettigrew to C. A. Jewett, December 14, 1896; Pettigrew to F. M. Goodykoontz, December 22, 1896; Pettigrew to Joseph B. Moore, January 15, 1897, Pettigrew Papers; Salem Pioneer Register, September 16, 1898.

22. Springfield Times, February 26, 1897; Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 250-51; James R. Turner, "James H. Kyle, Unrepresentative Populist" (History Honors Paper, Oberlin College, 1960), pp. 32-33. Turner's paper is located in the Hazel Abbot Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

23. Deadwood Daily Independent, July 1, 1897; Springfield Times, September 16, 1897; Gary Inter-State, February 9, 1900; Arthur F. Brooks, "The Administration of Andrew E. Lee, Governor of South Dakota, 1897-1901" (Master's Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1939), pp. 37-41; Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 237-38. For the text of the railway law, see South Dakota Legislature, Enabling Act and Constitution and the Laws Passed at the Fifth Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota (Pierre, 1897), pp. 268-89.

24. Robinson, "Liquor Legislation in Dakota," p. 293; South Dakota, Legislature, Laws Passed at the Fifth Session, pp. 203-216.

25. South Dakota, Legislature, Laws Passed at the Fifth Session, passim; Brooks, "The Administration of Andrew E. Lee," pp. 25-26; "Count Your Money," The Wiyohi 6 (October, 1952): 1-3; H. Roger Grant, "Origins of a Progressive Reform: The Initiative and Referendum Movement in South Dakota," South Dakota History 3 (Fall, 1973): 403-404.

26. Gary Inter-State, March 19, 1897.

27. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 44-47.

28. R. F. Pettigrew to E. T. Miller, April 22, 1898; Pettigrew to J. A. Bowler, probably May 20, 1898; Pettigrew to Charles A. Towne, probably June 8, 1898; Pettigrew to C. O. Bailey, probably June 14, 1898, Pettigrew Papers.

29. R. F. Pettigrew to Andrew E. Lee, probably January 11, 1898, Pettigrew Papers; Salem Pioneer Register, March 18, 1898.

30. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 678-79; Brooks, "The Administration of Andrew E. Lee," pp. 43-44; Gary Inter-State, July 1, 1898; Vermillion Dakota Republican, June 30, 1898.

31. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 679-80; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 63; Salem Pioneer Register, September 2, 1898; Gary Inter-State, September 2, 1898.

32. R. F. Pettigrew to Jno. A. Lockhart, March [probably 21 or 22], 1898; Pettigrew to H. P. Lason, April 22, 1898; Pettigrew to Thomas H. Ayres, January 5, 1898; Pettigrew to Dr. V. S. Ross, July 4, 1898. This latter problem of not being able to fund reform newspapers evidently proved troublesome following the 1896 election. Pettigrew's papers contain a number of requests from editors for money to start a newspaper or to save one that was failing. For examples, see Pettigrew to H. G. McKee, December 11, 1896; Pettigrew to Victoria Connors, probably April 3, 1897; and Pettigrew to H. P. Lason, April 22, 1898. Pettigrew also tried to raise enough funds to buy the Dakota Ruralist from Loucks in late spring, 1898, but was apparently unsuccessful. See Pettigrew to H. W. Sawyer, May 20, June [exact date unknown], 1898, Pettigrew Papers.

33. Andrew Lee to R. F. Pettigrew, June 27, 1898, Lee Papers, USD.

34. Andrew Lee to Kirk G. Phillips, October [exact date unknown], 1898, Lee Papers, USD; Andrew Lee to First National Bank, Pierre, October [exact date unknown], 1898, Lee Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota (hereafter Lee Papers, SDSHS). Micro-filmed copies of this collection are available at the I. D. Weeks Library, University of South Dakota. See also the Vermillion Dakota Republican, November 3, 1898.

35. Daniel Simundson, "The Yellow Press on the Prairie: South Dakota Daily Newspaper Editorials Prior to the Spanish-American War," South Dakota History 2 (Summer, 1972): 215-16; Deadwood Independent, April 16, May 19, 1897.

36. Andrew E. Lee to the New York World, March 17, 1898, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to the Chicago Tribune, July 16, 1898, Lee Papers, SDSHS. On American troops in the Philippines, see Lee to William McKinley, April 10, 1899; Lee to M. L. Fox, April 18, 1899; and Lee to the New York Herald, April 20, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS; The South Dakota regiment returned to the U.S. in September, 1899.

37. R. F. Pettigrew to Louis McLouth, March 18, 1898; Pettigrew to Robert Lowry, probably April 19, 1898; Pettigrew to George E. Hopkins, April 2, 1898; Pettigrew to Andrew Lee, June 10, 1898; Pettigrew to Arthur Linn, June 16, 1898; Pettigrew to M. F. Greeley, May 16, 1898. Pettigrew informed one correspondent, "I believe that in order to maintain a Constitution like ours, the population must live where they are required to wear woolen clothes a part of the year, and feel the frost in their blood at least once in twelve months." Pettigrew to Z. A. Church, April 15, 1898, Pettigrew Papers. See also Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 259.

38. Gary Inter-State, January 1, 1897; July 8, September 2, 1898; Vermillion Dakota Republican, June 23, October 20, 1898.

39. Gary Inter-State, July 1, October 28, November 4, 1898; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 6, 13, November 3, 1898.

40. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 48-57; Andrew Lee to Maris Taylor, November 25, 1898; Lee to J. E. Kidd, November 25, 1898, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 62-63.

41. Grant, "Origins of a Progressive Reform," p. 405; Robinson, "Liquor Legislation in Dakota," p. 293; Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, eds., The History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4, 1883-1900 (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 557-58.

42. Andrew E. Lee to John B. Fairbank, December 16, 1898, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Lee to T. H. Russell, November 18, 1898, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to Col. A. S. Frost, November 18, 1898, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to Joseph B. Moore, December 10,

(Madison, S.D.: Dakota State College, 1979), pp. 139-150; Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 4, 1900.

56. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 281-83; Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna: His Life and Work (New York: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 288-90, 332-37, 340-41.

57. Yankton Press and Dakotan, October 5, 9, 17, 1900.

58. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 65-75.

59. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 688-89, 692-93, 696.

60. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 241; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 687-89, 693, 702; Ralph R. Tingley, "The Crowded Field: Eight Men for the Senate," South Dakota History 9 (Fall, 1979): 316-36.

61. Warren S. Tryon, "Agriculture and Politics in South Dakota, 1889-1900," South Dakota Historical Collections 13 (1926): 284-310; Marc M. Cleworth, "Twenty Years of Brown County Agricultural History," South Dakota Historical Collections 17 (1934): 159-61. For South Dakota farm prices, see J. L. Orr, Prices Paid to Producers of South Dakota Farm Products, 1890-1930, Bulletin No. 291 (Brookings: Department of Agricultural Economics, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, 1931), pp. 12-20. For crop production, see South Dakota Farm Production and Prices, 1890-1926, Bulletin No. 225 (Brookings: U.S.D.A. Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Department of Farm Economics, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1927), pp. 45, 50, and passim.

62. Lowell E. Whiteside, "A History of Irrigation in South Dakota" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1955), pp. 30-42; Marc M. Cleworth, "Artesian Well Irrigation: Its History in Brown County, South Dakota, 1889-1900," Agricultural History 15 (October, 1941): 195-201; Herbert S. Schell, "Drought and Agriculture in Eastern South Dakota During the Eighteen Nineties," Agricultural History 5 (October, 1931): 165-72. Artesian irrigation in the 1890s failed for a number of reasons, including inadequate capital, improper terrain, high salinity, and the return of normal rainfall.

63. Cleworth, "Twenty Years of Brown County Agricultural History," pp. 172-73, 176; Herbert S. Schell, "Adjustment Problems in South Dakota," Agricultural History 14 (April, 1940): 67-69; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 345n.

1898, Lee Papers, USD; and Lee to A. H. Olson, December 16, 1898, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

43. Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," p. 274.

44. Ibid., pp. 274-75; Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 387-91.

45. Brooks, "Administration of Andrew E. Lee," pp. 48-52; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 67-72; Smith, South Dakota, 1: 236-241.

46. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, p. 61; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 72.

47. Orland A. Rothlisberger, "The Populist National Convention in Sioux Falls," South Dakota History 1 (Spring, 1971): 155-65; Hendrickson, "Richard F. Pettigrew," pp. 276-79. The mid-road Populists convened in Cincinnati and nominated Wharton Barker and Ignatius Donnelly. See Hicks, Populist Revolt, pp. 399-400.

48. Gary Inter-State, June 15, 1900.

49. Smith, South Dakota, 1: 681; Gary Inter-State, June 8, 1900; Gerald DeJong, "The Coming of the Dutch to the Dakotas," South Dakota History 5 (Winter, 1974): 29. The opposition press claimed that Herreid was ashamed of his ethnic background and for that reason had changed his name from Karl Nelson. See Gary Inter-State, October 26, 1900.

50. Yankton Press and Dakotan, July 12, 1900.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.; Gary Inter-State, October 19, 1900; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 240.

53. Yankton Press and Dakotan, January 25, 1900; Andrew E. Lee to James Kerr, August 11, 1900, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to M. R. Ihmsen, September 24, 1900; Lee to Rev. Joseph Waldner, October 1, 1900; Lee to A. Parkratz, October 2, 1900, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

54. Yankton Press and Dakotan, March 12, April 23, July 23, 1900; Gary Inter-State, December 21, 1900.

55. Ralph R. Tingley, "William Jennings Bryan in South Dakota: The Campaign of 1900," in Papers of the Tenth Annual Dakota History Conference, H. W. Blakely, ed.

64. Gilbert C. Fite, The Farmers' Frontier, 1865-1900 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 131; Schell, "Drought and Agriculture," pp. 174, 176-79; Cleworth, "Twenty Years of Brown County Agricultural History," pp. 69, 87-88, 112-16, 124, 147-49, 153-57; Elwin E. Rogers, "'Creamery Fever' Among the Scandinavians in Grant County Before WWI," South Dakota History 9 (Winter, 1978): 27; A. H. Wheaton, "South Dakota Dairy and Creamery Industry," The Monthly South Dakotan 1 (June, 1898): 1-2.

65. Schell, "Adjustment Problems," p. 67; Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897, The Economic History of the United States, vol. 5 (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1945; White Plains, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1973), pp. 170-71.

CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS OF POPULISTS IN POWER:

THE ANDREW E. LEE ADMINISTRATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 1897-1901

When the Populist party captured the governorship of South Dakota in 1896 it had great hopes for reform. After three unsuccessful bids for major state office, the Populists had managed to form a coalition that could muster enough votes to defeat the dominant Republican party. The newly elected governor, Andrew Lee, was a sound businessman who promised, among other things, honesty and economy in government, more equitable taxation, and railroad regulation. With fusion forces in control of the legislature, these goals seemed within reach. The high hopes, however, were soon dashed. Although they achieved some reforms, the fusionists made few lasting changes. This chapter focuses on three major barriers that prevented the success fusionists sought.

First, Lee and his allies faced the problem of incomplete success. They never gained full possession of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Although the reformers won the governorship, most other elected state officers were Republicans, some of whom used their positions to obstruct Lee's plans. Fusion forces held a majority in the 1897 Legislature, but could not act in unison to accomplish some of the measures Lee sought. In 1899 the governor had to contend with a Republican legislature. The fusionists

were never able to gain control of the elected judiciary, so their reforms often faced hostile courts.

Second, the very nature of the fusionists militated against united action. They were composed of three separate parties, each of which had to be satisfied from an insufficient pool of appointments and offices. They often did not work well together, as was evident in 1897 when a U.S. senator was elected by a combination of Republican and Populist votes. Consequently, leaders had to devote much time to keeping the alliance intact. Moreover, the Populists themselves were seriously split over the question of fusion with the Democrats and Silver Republicans. The Populists were also divided by personal rivalries, notably that between Lee and his attorney general, Melvin Grigsby.

Third, Lee experienced embarrassing troubles with his own appointees. Because of the loose nature of the reform coalition and Lee's own inexperience in state politics, he lacked adequate knowledge about some of his officers. Subsequently, some of them proved to be as corrupt as the Republican officials Lee had replaced. Others were disloyal to the governor.

The 1896 election in South Dakota stands as one of the most hotly contested political battles in the state's history. In July of that year Senator R.F. Pettigrew led a faction of Republicans out of their party over the issue of free silver. This force joined the Populist convention a

few days later and the combined groups adopted a platform and ticket acceptable to each. Andrew Lee headed the ticket. The South Dakota Democrats endorsed the action of the Populist-Silver Republican convention and effected fusion among the three parties, with the free coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one being the major issue binding the old political enemies.¹

Andrew E. Lee, a Norwegian-born merchant in Vermillion, first came to political prominence for his stand opposing a local water company, even though he owned stock in the firm. His support for the taxpayers against his own economic interest earned him a position on the city council in Vermillion and later two terms as its mayor. His reputation for this incident spread beyond the boundaries of Clay County. In 1896 Lee's background as a reformer, his support for the regulation of corporations, and his endorsement for free silver garnered for him the Populist nomination for governor.²

The results of the 1896 election were hardly an overwhelming endorsement for the People's party, as the fusionists were called. Lee carried the state by only 319 votes out of over 82,000 cast. The only other state officers the reform coalition captured were the attorney general and the railroad commissioners. The U.S. representatives went to the People's party and South Dakota gave its electoral votes to William Jennings Bryan.³ As difficult as this situation may have been for an executive who wished to make reforms,

affairs only worsened in 1898. After the election of that year, only Lee remained to represent the fusion forces against the Republicans. Lee's own margin of victory was so slim that his opponent threatened a contest.⁴

The consequence of such victories was that the reformers faced the problem of incomplete success. So many Republicans continued to hold office that Lee always felt the threat of obstruction by his political enemies. The governor had no mandate from the people with which to cow the Republicans who stood in his way; nor did he have enough of his own officers to give him all the support he needed.

A number of the positions in the executive branch were controlled by elected Republican officials who used their powers to hinder Governor Lee. H.E. Mayhew, in his capacity as auditor, managed to delay investigations into state affairs by a special tripartisan investigating committee created by the legislature. Mayhew refused to recognize the legality of the commission, which wanted to examine his conduct in office and that of other state officials as part of the aftermath of a major defalcation with state funds two years earlier. Lee urged the members of the committee to begin operations even though Mayhew threatened to turn down their vouchers. The governor hoped that the commission would find enough evidence of wrongdoing in its first month to insure that Mayhew would not risk the political consequences of blatantly covering up for corruption in public office.

Mayhew's tactics were successful. The commission did not make any investigations, although Lee used the public examiner, Maris Taylor, in much the same fashion he had hoped to employ the commission.⁵

The state Board of Equalization at the time was composed of elected state officers, most of whom were Republicans during Lee's tenure. Although equal taxation of individual and corporate property had been one of Lee's major goals, the members of the board chose to ignore most of his recommendations. Lee secured some readjustment of the assessments of railroad property, but his correspondence reflects disillusionment with the board. He termed the results of the 1898 meeting of the board to examine rates as "grand stand play" by his political opponents, a situation that only grew worse by 1900.⁶

Some appointive positions in state government remained in Republican hands until the current appointee's term of office expired. These also served as a point of aggravation for Governor Lee. Lee evidently sought to replace the superintendent of the insane asylum in Yankton whom he considered "rank and abusive to our party" and whom he believed was simply using his office to serve his own political ends. C.W. Ainsworth, the superintendent of the reform school, had benefited financially from his capacity, warned the children in the institution that they would be mistreated under new

management and encouraged them to run away. Lee was forced to demand the early resignation of the state oil inspector, a GOP holdover, after a Standard Oil agent complained that the man was neglecting his duties.⁷

Another headache for Lee arose when the former Board of Regents refused to step down. The board has been reconstituted by means of an amendment on the ballot in November 1896, but the old regents sued to keep their positions on the basis of a technicality concerning how the ballots were printed. Lee believed the motives behind the contest were to maintain control of the state school treasury, to keep Republican friends on the faculty of the schools, and to embarrass the new administration.⁸

A major portion of the 1897 legislative session was spent wrangling over the election of a U.S. senator. James H. Kyle, the incumbent, had been elected by a combination of Independent and Democratic votes in 1891, but was alienated from various segments of the fusionist forces. Both Lee and R.F. Pettigrew, the leader of the Silver Republicans and South Dakota's other senator, opposed Kyle's re-election. The fusion forces, however, were unable to unite on a single candidate and Kyle was elected through a combination of votes, mostly coming from Republicans.⁹

Karel Bicha has viewed Populists as conservatives whose ideology differed little from that of their opponents. He terms the 1897 Legislature in South Dakota a "reformer's

fiasco" that wasted much of its time on investigation while achieving few reforms. Bicha fails, however, to note the long struggle over Kyle's election and deep rifts in the anti-Republican forces, factors that militated against reforms that did not have widespread support. The Populists could not muster enough votes to control the legislature themselves and the reform coalition did not have enough unity to elect a U.S. senator, much less accomplish any major changes. Perhaps the lack of party discipline explains the paucity of results more than any deficiencies in ideology.¹⁰

In the 1897 session Lee and his allies were particularly anxious to revise portions of the state's administrative structure to insure fusionist control of most of the state's patronage. Part of their plan called for the creation of the office of insurance commissioner whose responsibility entailed examining the insurance companies operating in the state and designating the newspapers in which the companies must publish legal statements. The insurance patronage, which was considered a lucrative political plum by partisan newspaper editors who could prosper if their party controlled it, was under the management of the state auditor, a Republican, until the 1897 Legislature established a separate insurance commissioner in what was seen by friend and foe alike as a blatant move to secure patronage for the fusionists.¹¹ Another important part of the action to secure the state's patronage was the revision of the Board of Charities

and Corrections. Lee confided to a Populist that if the present board could not be altered "there will be but little patronage for our boys who have worked so hard in our party."¹² The failure of this reform--through the defection of several Populists and Silver Republicans--left the control of institutions like the insane asylum, penitentiary, and reform school temporarily in Republican hands.

Governor Lee was convinced that there was a plot among the Republican legislators in 1897 to keep the state's revenues down and its expenditures up to embarrass his administration financially. Lee had promised a businesslike and economical approach to state affairs and one means of attaining this was a high liquor license law to replace the constitutional prohibition that had been repealed in November 1897. Lee feared that the Republicans opposed this measure because they did not want the new administration to function any better than their own party had. Although the high license bill succeeded and helped raise badly needed revenue, Lee exhibited the same fears with the 1899 Legislature, which was under Republican dominance. The apprehension was justified, for the legislature appropriated about \$400,000 more than it provided revenue for.¹³

Lee accepted the fusionist loss of the legislature in the 1898 election with resignation. As he bemoaned the defeat to a Black Hills Populist, "there is no great fun in being elevated to the Governor's chair with a hostile legis-

lature and state house to train with, but that seems my fate."¹⁴

Lee's fears for 1899 were well placed, for the legislature attempted to hinder his control of the state's administration in several ways. During his first term Lee had managed to gain some measure of control over the Board of Charities and Corrections through the appointment of new members to it. One bill in the legislature that failed to become law would have reduced the board to three members, a move that would have left the Republicans in control of it and the institutions it governed. Only Lee's veto prevented the abolition of the office of Insurance Commissioner, which would have returned the insurance patronage to the Republican auditor.¹⁵

Lee experienced some problems with his own appointees during his first term and was hopeful that this legislature would enact legislation allowing him to remove appointed officers for cause. Although such a bill passed the House, it died in the Senate. Lee mourned the defeat, "I am therefore at the mercy of my appointees during my term of office."¹⁶ The Senate also rejected two of his appointees and threatened to turn down others.¹⁷

Even if the People's party had been able to gain secure control over both the executive and legislative branches, the state's judiciary was generally controlled by the Republican party. This Republican dominance constituted another obstacle to the fulfillment of Lee's goals.

A major portion of Lee's efforts in his first term was aimed at the investigation and prosecution of corruption among state officials. In 1897 the governor helped finance a case against H.E. Mayhew, the state auditor, for withholding fees paid to him. Lee felt so strongly about the matter that he was willing to pay the attorney's fees out of his own pocket if necessary. The case, however, came before a hostile Republican judge and was dismissed. Lee complained bitterly that "the court made the rankest ruling I ever heard. . . . He [the judge] showed his malice from begin[n]-ing to end and is so bitter agains[t] populists that he could not conceal it."¹⁸

One of the outstanding issues in the 1896 campaign was the regulation of railroads, but legal action against the corporations was useless without the cooperation of the judicial system. The legislature gave the state railroad commissioners power to regulate freight rates in 1897, but the law did not stand up in court. The major railroads in South Dakota managed to get injunctions in U.S. district court to prevent the enforcement of the new rates, and, after years of legal battles, the U.S. Supreme Court held the law unconstitutional. In December 1897 the state supreme court ruled unconstitutional a railroad litigation fund the proponents of the legislation had hope to use to defend the rates.¹⁹

When Lee was trying to oust the old Board of Regents to replace it with one of his choosing, he did so with trepidation, knowing that he faced a court that opposed him politically. He conveyed this pessimism to a correspondent, "The Supreme Court being radically republican we can expect no mercy from them if there is any way for them to find an excuse to go against us."²⁰

The reformers recognized the need to control the courts to insure success in their programs. They understood that Republican judges could not be depended on to stand against the interests of railroads and other corporations, nor would they be sympathetic to prosecutions of Republican officeholders. Some believed that W.W. Taylor, the state treasurer who had embezzled over \$350,000 and left the treasury virtually empty, would have received more than a light sentence of two years had not his party controlled the bench.²¹ The difficulty was that the Populists had problems mobilizing their voters for judicial elections. Lee saw part of the problem as the timing of the elections. Held in the years between gubernatorial elections, farmers felt their time was better spent on the farm than at the polling place. An embittered Lee wrote of the problem after the Mayhew decision, "...the populists will stay at home and husk corn and let such men [as the hostile judge in the case] be re-elected to domineer on them"²² Lee tried to arouse support for the 1899 campaign by writing letters asking help at

election time, but after the defeat mused that the 150 he did send out should have been fifteen or twenty thousand instead.²³

The fusionists' tenuous control of the state government was further complicated by the fact that much of the state's patronage remained outside of Lee's control. The Republicans were often able to reap the advantages of office-holding while the Lee administration was saddled with the responsibility of seeing that the government was run in the interests of the people. Lee was left without enough positions at his command to satisfy the normal demands on any elected official, such as the claims of ethnic groups for recognition in public office.

Lee's complaints about not having enough control over the state's appointive positions were common. In 1897 he informed an office-seeker that he could promise nothing as all of the institutions were controlled by the Republicans but the Soldier's Home at Hot Springs, even though his administration was charged with the proper management of them. He viewed the situation as untenable and dangerous to the future welfare of the reformers' party. The abuses, however, continued and tried Lee's patience. In 1899, after learning of graft at the state penitentiary, he snapped at one of his political allies, "It is the same old story. Everything belongs to the Republican machine. They can steal the State blind and the people will laud them all the more for it."²⁴

He deeply regretted his inability to place L.T. Norman, whom he called "the man to whom I owe my election" for an article in a Norwegian paper in Chicago. He tried to get him jobs at the penitentiary and the asylum but failed because those institutions were dominated by local interests. The Board of Regents seemed more interested in giving spots to the Republicans than to Lee's recommendations. He finally asked his public examiner to give the man a position as a deputy.²⁵

Many of South Dakota's ethnic groups placed demands on Lee for proper recognition for their nationality for support rendered during his campaigns. His own countrymen, the Norwegians, who formed a large segment of the state's voting population, were particularly insistent on recognition and critical when they felt they had been slighted.³⁶ The Germans, another sizeable bloc in voting strength, also felt they were due more than they received. Lee sought to soothe ruffled feathers, compliment the Germans for their contributions, and explain that he had given that nationality one position but could not do more for them from his insufficient pool of appointments.²⁷ The Irish and Czechs also laid claim to jobs under the governor's control.²⁸

Moreover, the reform forces found they were unable to control the federal patronage in the state. Pettigrew cut himself off from the Republican party when he joined the bolt of Silver Republicans at the national GOP convention in 1896.

Kyle's re-election to the Senate in 1897 with Republican votes made certain the fact that whatever patronage a U.S. senator could affect would go through an opponent of Lee and Pettigrew.²⁹

The second major obstacle to the success of the People's party was the fact that they were a loosely joined coalition of forces, bound by the silver issue and the desire to replace the Republican party as the controlling force in the state's politics. As such, they were composed of a variety of groups whose allegiance to the old parties had often been rooted in strong philosophic or cultural ties and who could easily be persuaded to return to old patterns of voting behavior. The leaders of these diverse groups were old political opponents who were sometimes hesitant to abandon their earlier differences. Nor were the leaders always ready to give up their own personal political ambitions for the sake of party unity.

The tri-partisan nature of the reform forces complicated an already difficult situation with regard to patronage because each group needed to share in the spoils of office for the union to survive. Lee was aware of the trying task before him. Senator Pettigrew, an experienced hand at dealing out patronage, warned him early in his administration of the problems involved. He counseled Lee not to neglect the Populists although he felt most of the patronage should go to the Democrats and Silver Republicans because the Populists had gotten

most of the elected officials.³⁰

Lee made strong efforts to please the different parties, but inevitably drew criticism that indicated dissent within the coalition. His major error seems to have been giving too much to the Democrats. That party's share of offices included appointments to the wardenship of the penitentiary and a portion of the administration of the insane asylum. Lee objected to the degree of control his Democratic appointees sought to establish over these institutions, even to the point of rejecting Lee's suggestions for minor positions under them.³¹ Some Populists were angry over this apparent neglect by Lee for his own party. A disappointed office-seeker complained, ". . . I deplore the fact that the majority of the honors justly earned by our party, should be relinquished to the Democrats."³²

One group in particular that felt alienated because of the distribution of patronage was the old Alliance leadership that had been the core of the independent movement in the first place. Lee was especially concerned that Henry Loucks, who had headed the Independent movement in 1890, was disappointed because men who had been fighting for the party for years were not receiving their just reward.³³

Leaders of the fusionists found it nearly impossible to weld the separate parts of their party into an effective political unit. They lacked the leadership, discipline, and cohesiveness of a regular party. Often caring more for their

own political futures than for the good of the coalition, some politicians worked at cross purposes from others.

This weakness was best illustrated in the 1897 Legislature when splits in the reform forces became prevalent in key issues. Although the fusionists were in the majority, they could not combine to elect a U.S. senator without the aid of Republican votes. The balloting for senator dragged on for nearly a month with the Republicans united behind one candidate and the fusionists split among four main ones. When the Republicans suddenly switched to James H. Kyle, he retained enough supporters among the Populists and Democrats to get elected. He received the votes of fifty-two Republicans, ten Populists, and three Democrats. Leaders of the new party saw the lack of unity among the reform forces, the political ambition of several of the candidates who refused to withdraw from the race, and the unreliability of the Democrats as the major causes of the defeat.³⁴ Lee viewed the event with discouragement. He termed Kyle's election the "foulest and dirtiest piece of work" he had ever seen, and informed Pettigrew, "I feel at this writing as though our whole administration is going to be a failure."³⁵

The failure to elect the senator without Republican support contributed to the disunity among the reform forces. Up to that point Pettigrew had planned to join formally the Populist party, but Kyle's victory convinced him that he could serve best by further organizing the Silver Republicans

and keeping them as a separate entity for the time being.³⁶

Lee's hopes for a new Board of Charities and Corrections were defeated when several members of the reform union opposed his plan in the senate. This defection disgusted Lee, who felt the loss left all of the important state patronage with the Republicans.³⁷ Lee's major complaint was against C.S. Palmer, a Silver Republican from Minnehaha County, who evidently voted against the governor's wishes as a protest to the way some of the Populists who had voted for Kyle were lured back into the party with favors rather than being castigated.³⁸

A substantial portion of party leaders' efforts was devoted to healing the rift between the reform forces and making them into a viable political force that could attract enough votes to stay in power. Pettigrew spent about two months in mid-1897 trying to reconcile the differences between Lee and Palmer. He sought to arrange a deal whereby Lee would lend his support to Palmer's choice for the penitentiary warden and Palmer would endorse Lee's candidate for the commandant of the Soldier's Home. It was a complicated arrangement and Pettigrew privately believed that Palmer's choice would be unacceptable to the Board of Charities and Corrections that would consider his choice anyway. He also had to contend with the stubbornness of both Lee and Palmer. Palmer was too resentful of his treatment and Lee was too interested in punishing the state senator for easy

compromise. The two opponents eventually came to terms and Pettigrew was hopeful that the political trading had healed old wounds.³⁹

Apart from these major quarrels, politicians still saw handicaps in the effective performance of fusionists in the legislature. The observations of R.F. Pettigrew, one of South Dakota's most experienced politicians, were perhaps most insightful. Although he complimented them on their overall quality, he still saw the need for better leadership in their ranks. He termed them an "unorganized mob" and pointed to the jealousies that divided them, as well as their wariness of being bossed about.⁴⁰ Nor was this problem missed by Populists. Lee complained of the legislators during the midst of the senatorial election that they were "worse than a lot of sheep." One Populist editor lamented the fact that the legislators accomplished little because they were so split by factions.⁴⁴

The three parties had been able to combine their strength in the 1896 election, but that was no guarantee they would be able to duplicate the feat in 1898. With each party having an interest in preserving its own identity to a degree, this was no mean task. Pettigrew spent a considerable amount of his time in the first half of 1898 to insure cooperation among the parties. He was of the opinion that the parties could draw more votes by maintaining their distinct bodies rather than by fusing outright, and that the Populists should place the names of four Democrats on their ticket and let the

other party endorse it. He recommended that the Democrats be given the treasurer, auditor, superintendent of schools, and either the secretary of state or the lieutenant governor, while the Silver Republicans would be recognized with two offices. He even suggested to a leading Democrat that the central committee chairmen of the Silver Republicans and Democrats meet prior to the state convention and choose their candidates for the combined state ticket, hardly a method acceptable to Populists who had opposed slates made in back-rooms.⁴²

The actions of the conventions, which met at the same time in Aberdeen, closely followed Pettigrew's suggestions, although the Republican press claimed there was dissent in the Populist convention over the issue of distributing some of the offices to the other elements of the anti-Republican forces. Each settled on the same ticket after consultations through conference committees. Although each party adopted a platform that was slightly at variance with the others, the bodies formulated a single fusion platform they could all stand by.⁴³

Not all members of the parties opposing the Republicans supported the combination with old political enemies and the endorsement of new principles. This dissatisfaction manifested itself in a series of defections to the Republicans by prominent leaders of the reform forces. Several had returned to the Republican fold in 1896 when fusion was first

accomplished, but the number increased in 1898 as politicians found the union unpalatable. Republican papers had a heyday with such embarrassing incidents to the fusionists. The Gary Inter-State published a lengthy interview with Bartlett Tripp, formerly a leading Democrat, who turned to the Republicans in 1898. Just before the election of that year, the Vermillion Dakota Republican listed the major opposition leaders who had come into the Republican fold in protest over the combination of the other parties.⁴⁴

The Populist party in particular suffered from some severe divisions during the late 1890s. The most pronounced of these was over the issue of fusion itself. Many old-line leaders had opposed fusion with the Democrats for years for fear of destroying the Populist party or of diluting the principles for which it stood. This eventually led to Henry L. Loucks's return to the Republican party. Moreover, the Populists were split by personal rivalries, especially one between Lee and his attorney general.

Loucks was willing to work with the reform coalition at first, though he was not wholly in favor of it. In December 1897 Pettigrew saw him as the leader of the middle-of-the-road Populists, those who felt the best policy for the third party was to remain clear of both of the old parties, but still was optimistic for Loucks's support for the union in 1898 and claimed the agrarian reformer was a friend. In early 1898 Pettigrew urged his correspondents to treat Loucks with care,

believing the man would join the fusionist ranks fully after the Populist convention endorsed union. Pettigrew's position on Loucks hardened after the latter opposed fusion at the meeting of the Populist state central committee in March, but he still hoped the Alliance leader would fall into line when the nominating convention met. During April 1898 Pettigrew became more suspicious of him and more defensive about the need for fusion. By April 29, the senator was ready to confide to one of Loucks's old foes that the man was "an infernal old scoundrel."⁴⁵ Though Pettigrew was careful to speak cautiously of Loucks to other early Populists, he hinted to members of his own party that the man might be planning a move to the Republicans or that he was already in their pay. Whatever Loucks's course, Pettigrew believed more firmly as the summer wore on that the old reformer would do little damage to the party if he left it.⁴⁶

Although his drift away from the fusion camp was evident, Loucks's renunciation of the Populist party came as a surprise to many. In a letter addressed to Doane Robinson with the request that it be read at the Republican state convention, Loucks rejoined the party he had fought for so many years and asked the gathering to endorse initiative and referendum to draw other middle-of-the-road Populists.⁴⁷

Lesser lights in the old Populist ranks shared Loucks's distaste for fusion. C.B. Kennedy and W.E. Kidd expressed some opposition to fusion in 1898 and Kidd's allegiance to

the reform coalition was questioned in 1900.⁴⁸ In 1900 a small convention in Yankton in October by middle-of-the-road Populists fielded a formal Populist ticket in opposition to the fusionist People's ticket. The Yankton Press & Dakotan, a Silver Republican paper, criticized the new party as nothing but a Republican trick to defeat the reform union. Whether it was because the new party was seen by voters as such a scheme or because it entered the race too late is uncertain, but the candidates it offered drew only a handful of votes.⁴⁹

No party is free of rivalry among its leaders, but the Populists in the 1890s were plagued with a particularly acrimonious feud between Governor Lee and Melvin Grigsby, the attorney general. Grigsby had been a gubernatorial aspirant at the 1896 Populist state convention, but had placed third in the balloting. Grigsby received the nomination for attorney general instead and carried the state by a slightly larger margin than Lee's own.⁵⁰

The new administration had not even taken office before party leaders voiced suspicions of the new attorney general. Pettigrew predicted that he would side with the railroad corporations against any new regulations.⁵¹ In the course of Lee's first year in office Grigsby proved himself such an irritation that Lee addressed a lengthy letter to him in late October 1897 setting forth his complaints against the man. The governor accused him of attempting to prevent investigations of Republican officeholders suspected of misconduct,

trying to sabotage Lee's railroad program by crippling the legislation intended to regulate the corporations and by helping the railroads escape just taxation, and obstructing the prosecution of government officials being tried for diverting funds to their own purposes.⁵² Grigsby sought to further his political fortunes by securing the command of a regiment of cowboys during the Spanish-American War. Raised under the same law that authorized Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, Grigsby's Cowboys, as the unit was known, never saw combat, but still proved a useful tool for developing a political base. Grigsby's bid at replacing Lee at the head of the Populist ticket in 1898 failed, however, and he never again posed a serious threat to the governor.⁵³

A third barrier to Lee's administration was the trouble he experienced with his own appointees. This problem, though less serious than the other obstacles examined earlier, proved a constant source of irritation for the Populist governor. Because of the loose nature of the reform forces and Lee's own inexperience in state politics, he lacked sufficient information about some of his appointees. As he surveyed his administration in 1900, "I have had many things to contend with and one of the greatest troubles of all was we were almost all strangers to on[e] another and worked to great disadvantage."⁵⁴ Part of this was because the members of the reform coalition had recently been political foes and many did not know each other until 1896. Another part was prob-

ably because Lee had never held state office before and did not have the ties to people around the state that other politicians could rely on.

The inevitable result of these deficiencies was that Lee made errors in his appointments. He regretted his mistakes, for the failures of his appointees reflected on his own performance.⁵⁵ In some cases, ill-planned appointments proved embarrassing when Republicans noted that Lee's own men were guilty of the same offenses of which he accused his political opponents. In other instances, blunders severely crippled aspects of his control over state affairs.

One of the most troublesome offices at Lee's disposal was that of the insurance commissioner. His first appointment to the position was J.H. Kipp. H.E. Mayhew, the auditor who had previously conducted the insurance business, charged Kipp and a deputy with the same corrupt practice of overcharging for examinations for which Lee was prosecuting Mayhew. Lee eventually removed Kipp, but still had problems with a temporary replacement in the position.⁵⁶

In April 1898 Lee asked for the resignation of another appointee, R.E. Dowdell, the oil inspector. Dowdell had been guilty of failing to turn in all of the fees he received for his work, a complaint that Lee had made against many of the Republican state officials. Dowdell was not prosecuted, but had to reimburse the state for the funds he retained. Republican newspapers seized on such opportunities to embarrass Lee.

Shortly before the 1898 election the Vermillion Dakota Republican brought up the issue of Dowdell's seemingly favored treatment and speculated that the reason might be Dowdell's support for Lee at the Populist convention at Aberdeen.⁵⁷

The most serious of Lee's mistakes with appointments involved his selection of the Board of Regents. A constitutional amendment passed in 1896 cleared the way for Lee to appoint a new board to replace the one formerly in charge of the state's educational institutions. A number of the appointees to the new board, however, showed themselves to be incompetent or disloyal to the governor. Lee found his choice for the Republican member of the board, C.N. Herreid, was determined to use his office for his own political ends. He viewed two other members as occasional allies of Herreid and possibly dishonest. A fourth was incompetent. Only one member was reliable, and he became so disillusioned with the difficulties of dealing with the other members that he submitted his resignation to the governor--a resignation that Lee refused to accept because he could count on him "to help keep them [the rest of the board] straight and prevent them disgracing my administration."⁵⁸ Lee's inability to manage his Board of Regents cost him badly needed patronage as well, since he had great difficulty getting the regents to accept any of his recommendations for positions.⁵⁹

The three hindrances to Lee's administration enumerated here were by no means the only difficulties the Populist gov-

ernor met during his two terms in office. Lee took office as the state and nation were recovering from years of drought and depression. South Dakota was still suffering the consequences of the theft of state funds two years earlier. In keeping with the dominant economic philosophy of his day, Lee sought retrenchment in state expenditures to provide tax relief during the lean years. Lee also served during the Spanish-American War, a time when America had to make decisions about the role the nation should play in the world and how it should view the territories it received from Spain. Lee, along with many other Populists, supported the war against Spain to liberate Cuba for humanitarian reasons, but opposed the annexation of any of the lands taken from the defeated power. When a South Dakota regiment was sent to the Philippines to quell the native rebellion, Lee strenuously protested the use of the state's troops for reasons other than those for which the men had enlisted. This employment of South Dakota soldiers, the question of bringing them home, and the value of foreign territories to the United States were all issues that sidetracked the normal affairs of the state for a time.⁶⁰

Andrew Lee's administration cannot be called one of great reform. Too many obstacles stood in the way of success. The reform coalition was never able to gain control of the entire state government so bulwarks of Republicanism stood in its way. The diverse backgrounds and aspirations of the

elements of the coalition made cooperation difficult and cohesion impossible. Lee's own misfortune at selecting the wrong men to fill the offices within his grasp compounded the difficulty, especially since he had too few places to give out in the first place. These were some of the problems that a Populist could face when trying to capture and control a predominantly Republican state with an untried and sometimes uneasy union of forces tied together by the issue of silver and the hope of defeating the GOP.

But Lee's years in office can not be called a complete failure either. He did not achieve many of his major goals such as lasting railroad reform, but he managed to bring a degree of honesty to a government that had seen too much graft in the preceding years. Lee has been criticized for wasting too much of his time pursuing corruption and petty policies rather than using it to bring about lasting reforms, but, given the barriers to a more successful administration, the governor may have done the best he could.⁶¹ His own popularity outstripped that of his party, as was evident in the 1893 election, but mere popularity could not achieve tangible results. Perhaps the most noted historian of the Populists expressed the dilemma best, "Evidently their genius lay in protest rather than in performance."⁶²

NOTES

1. Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, 3rd ed., rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), pp. 235-36.
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3. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota by Counties, From October 1889, to November, 1912 (Aberdeen: News Printing Co., 1912), pp. 33-43.
4. Ibid., pp. 48-57.
5. Lee to Dighton Corson, October 12, 1897, Andrew E. Lee Papers, Richardson Archives, I.D. Weeks Library, University of South Dakota (hereafter Lee Papers, USD); Lee to Maris Taylor, June 12, 1897, Andrew E. Lee Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society (hereafter Lee Papers, SDSHS); Kenneth Elton Hendrickson, Jr., "The Populist Movement in South Dakota, 1890-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1959), pp. 56-58.
6. Lee to H.A. Humphrey, August 8, 1898, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to Arthur Linn, August 18, 1900, Lee Papers, SDSHS.
7. Lee to B.H. Lien, April 26, 1899, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to John L. Pyle, January 7, 1900, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Lee to C.W. Stafford, April 15, 1897, Lee Papers, USD.
8. Lee to T.H. Null, May 29, 1897, Lee to H.H. Blair, June 15, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 49-51.
9. Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 53-55.
10. Karel D. Bicha, Western Populism: Studies in an Ambivalent Conservatism (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1976), p. 86.
11. R.F. Pettigrew to Lee, [February, 1897], R.F. Pettigrew Papers, Pettigrew Museum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The microfilmed version of these papers available at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, were used in this study. For the reaction of a Republican newspaper, see the Springfield Times, January 26, April 16, 1897.
12. Lee to C.B. Kennedy, February 27, 1897, Lee Papers, USD.

13. Lee to R.F. Pettigrew, February 2, 1897, Lee to F.E. Jones, February 9, 1897, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to R.F. Pettigrew, January 30, 1897, Lee to Dr. R.W. Warne, March 7, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

14. Lee to Joseph B. Moore, November 18, 1898, Lee Papers, USD.

15. Lee to Robert W. Haire, January 17, 1899, Lee to W.E. Kidd, January 19, 1899, Lee Papers, USD; Lee to W. H. Roddle, March 4, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

16. Gary Inter-State, March 10, 1899; Lee to D. F. Connor, March 6, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

17. Lee to Arthur Linn, February 27, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 72.

18. Lee to John L. Pyle, February 25, 1899, Lee to Arthur Linn, November 1, November 27, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

19. Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 59-61; Lee to W.T. LaFollette, December 13, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

20. Lee to Dr. O.E. Haugen, May 29, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

21. R.F. Pettigrew to Otto Anderson, July 16, 1897, Pettigrew Papers; Deadwood Independent, July 15, October 26, 1897.

22. Lee to A.H. Olson, November 9, 1897, Lee to Arthur Linn, November 27, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

23. Lee to Edmund Smith, December 1, 1899, Lee Papers, USD.

24. Lee to Soren C. Nelson, November 29, 1897, Lee to Gilbert Stevenson, May 23, 1899, Lee to B.H. Lien, May 11, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

25. Lee to Maris Taylor, January 17, 1900, Lee Papers, USD.

26. Lee to Otto Anderson, April 16, 1897, Lee to H.W. Smith, December 10, 1898, Lee Papers, USD.

27. Lee to H. Butikofer, July 19, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

28. See M.T. DeMoody to Thomas Ayres [Lee's secretary], March 18, 1897, and J.V. Tiebel to Lee, December 22, 1896, Lee Papers, SDSHS, for examples.

29. Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The Public Career of Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, 1848-1926," South Dakota Historical Collections 34 (1968): 249.

30. Pettigrew to Lee, January 15, 1897, Pettigrew Papers.

31. Lee to H.W. Sawyer, June 10, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

32. C.W. Tabor to Lee, March 10, 1897, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

33. Lee to H.L. Loucks, February 15, 1898, Lee to Arthur Linn, February 17, 1898, Lee to George B. Daly, February 24, 1898, Lee Papers, USD.

34. Lee to Pettigrew, February 2, 1897, Lee Papers, USD; Pettigrew to H.L. Loucks, February 22, 1897, Pettigrew to Lee, March 11, 1897, Pettigrew Papers; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 53-55.

35. Lee to Pettigrew, February 19, 1897, Lee Papers, USD. Kyle had been re-elected the day before.

36. Pettigrew to S.L. Tate, March 10, 1897; Hendrickson, "Richard R. Pettigrew," p. 251.

37. Lee to Pettigrew, March 9, 1897, Lee Papers, USD.

38. Pettigrew to C.S. Palmer, April 19, 1897, Pettigrew Papers.

39. Pettigrew to Lee, April 22, 1897 (On April 3, Pettigrew had told Lee he had no preferences for the wardenship, so he and Palmer probably agreed on the arrangement between then and the date of this letter), Pettigrew to U.S.G. Cherry, [probably May 11, 1897], Pettigrew to C.S. Palmer, June 23, 1897, Pettigrew Papers.

40. Pettigrew to John Diamond, January 19, 1897, Pettigrew to U.S.G. Cherry, March 17, 1897, Pettigrew to Lee, March 17, 1897, Pettigrew Papers.

41. Lee to Pettigrew, February 2, 1897; Grant County Review, date unknown, as cited in the Springfield Times, March 19, 1897.

42. Pettigrew to H.L. Loucks, January 7, 1898, Pettigrew to Abraham Boynton, [probably January 11, 1898], Pettigrew to John A. Bowler, April 19, 1898, Pettigrew Papers.

43. Gary Inter-State, July 1, 1898; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 61-62; Arthur F. Brooks, "The Administration of Andrew E. Lee, Governor of South Dakota, 1897-1901" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1939), pp. 43-44.

44. Gary Inter-State, October 28, 1898; Vermillion Dakota Republican, November 3, 1898.

45. Pettigrew to R.E. Dowdell, [probably December 13, 1897], Pettigrew to Stacey Cochrane, [probably January 4, 1898], Pettigrew to U.S.G. Cherry, March 23, 1898, Pettigrew to H.L. Loucks, April 6, 1898, Pettigrew to S.J. Conklin, April 29, 1898, Pettigrew Papers.

46. Pettigrew to C.B. Kennedy, May 17, 1898, Pettigrew to H.W. Sayer, May 12, 1898, Pettigrew to Charles A. Towne, June 1, 1898, Pettigrew to U.S.G. Cherry, June 20, 1898, Pettigrew Papers.

47. Gary Inter-State, September 2, 1898. For examples of the reaction to Loucks's return to the GOP, see Lee to W.G. Scott, September 13, 1898, Lee Papers USD, and Salem Pioneer Register, September 2, 1898.

48. Pettigrew to Lee, [probably January 11, 1898], Pettigrew to C.S. Palmer, April 7, 1898, Pettigrew Papers; Yankton Press & Dakotan, August 8, 1900.

49. Yankton Press & Dakotan, October 9, 19, 1900; Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota, p. 67. The Populist Party's gubernatorial candidate drew only 316 votes.

50. Springfield Times, July 24, 1896; Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota, p. 35.

51. Pettigrew to A.M. Allen, December 14, 1896, Pettigrew Papers.

52. Lee to Grigsby, October 29, 1897, Lee Papers, USD. Lee also accused Grigsby of "the grossest immorality," his "scandalous conduct on board of a sleeping car on a trip from Pierre to Huron not long since having been brought to my knowledge by the husband of the woman involved."

53. Robert Lee Mattson, "Politics Is Up!--Grigsby's Cowboys and Roosevelt's Rough Riders, 1898," South Dakota History 9 (Fall, 1979): 303-15; Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," p. 61.

54. Lee to Johnson Brothers, Armour, South Dakota, January 13, 1900, Lee Papers USD.

55. Lee to J.E. Erickson, February 11, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

56. Lee to Maris Taylor, January 17, 1898, Lee to Stock Journal, Ft. Pierre, South Dakota, Lee Papers, USD: Lee to Maris Taylor, June 10, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

57. Lee to R.E. Dowdell, April 29, 1898, Lee Papers, USD: Vermillion Dakota Republican, October 13, 27, 1898.

58. Lee to Pettigrew, December 18, 1897, February 4, 1899, Lee to Robert W. Haire, May 7, 1900, Lee Papers, SDSHS; Lee to Haire, May 15, 1900, Lee Papers, USD.

59. Lee to B.H. Lien, May 25, 1899, Lee Papers, SDSHS.

60. See Hendrickson, "Populist Movement," pp. 63-66.

61. Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 241

62. John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 299.

CHAPTER VII
SOUTH DAKOTA'S ETHNIC GROUPS DURING THE POPULIST ERA:
A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The use by historians of social science techniques during the past two decades has opened up a new frontier in the study of the past. It is now possible to study in detail the grassroots electoral behavior of masses of individuals. This frees historians from heavy dependence on the writings of the leaders whose views of society and history found their way into the written records while the common man stood mute.

This chapter involves a statistical study of ethnic groups in six South Dakota counties. Its goal is to determine how various ethnic groups--and subgroups within those bodies--acted during the political campaigns of the Populist era. This is possible by the isolation of select counties with strong ethnic communities and bivariate analysis of the precincts within those counties.

Several factors determined the choice of the half dozen counties included in the study. Foremost among these factors was the ethnic mix of the county. An effort was made to include all of the major foreign stock groups in the state in 1900 if a county could be found with a large enough element of that group to make analysis feasible. Population stability through the decade was also necessary. Within the confines of that restriction an attempt was made to sample ethnic groups in various regions of the state. For example, of

the four sample agricultural counties in which Scandinavian settlements were found, two were in or near the wheat belt of the northern half of the state and two were in the corn belt of the southeastern section.

Secondly, election statistics on the precinct level had to be available for the Populist era or a large portion thereof. This restriction forced the selection of Campbell County for the Russian-German representative in the northern section of the state because no precinct level returns have been preserved in McPherson County, the most Russian-German of those counties in 1900. Nor were complete returns available in Edmunds County. Instead, Campbell County was substituted, although it was settled later, had a smaller population, and had less stable precinct boundaries.

Shifting precincts caused some difficulties in all of the counties under study. Hardly a decade old as a state when the Populist era drew to a close, South Dakota was yet too young to be confined by immovable boundaries. The typical problem was the separation of towns from townships as separate voting precincts sometime during the 1890s as these towns grew in size. This situation was commonly met by simply reaggregating the data for town and township to produce a stable voting district for the entire period. This was the method followed in Clay and McCook counties. In Deuel County a town was created along the border between two townships so those two districts were aggregated into a single

unit of analysis. In Bon Homme County large-scale changes were made between 1892 and 1894 when a number of new precincts were organized. Since the exact boundaries of the 1890 precincts were not available, the first two elections of the Populist period were simply eliminated from the study. In Campbell County the creation of a new precinct between 1890 and 1892 took place, but the exact boundaries in that area of the county was omitted from analysis. In Lawrence County the presence of many very small precincts, the lack of precise boundaries, and suspicions of shifting precincts led to the inclusion of only the mining centers of Lead and Deadwood in the analysis.

Clay County in the southeast was chosen because of its large population of Scandinavians. Deuel County in the north provided a second large Scandinavian settlement in addition to offering a German community. McCook County in the corn belt was one of the most German counties with a stable population in the decade and proved a Scandinavian group as well. Bon Homme along the Missouri in the southeastern quarter of the state contained precincts of Czechs, Russian-Germans, and Germans. Campbell County represented the Russian-German counties of the north central portion of the state and contained a Scandinavian settlement in several precincts. Lawrence County was the center of the Black Hills mining region with its wide range of ethnic groups.

The technique selected was Spearman's rank-difference correlation, a method that produces a coefficient of correlation based on the degree of relationship between the ranks of two variables. If the rank of one variable increases at the same time the rank of the second variable does, the relationship between the two variables is positive. This is expressed by a coefficient that ranges from 0.0 to +1.0, the latter figure indicating a perfect match in the changes of rank. If the rank of one variable decreases as that of the other increases, the relationship is negative and can range as high as -1.0. Simple to compute, the Spearman correlation offers the additional advantage of reducing the distortions in the data caused by changes in the ethnic composition of the county. The 1900 Federal census was used to determine the ethnic base of each precinct in the study. Although the exact percentage of ethnic voters within small districts over the course of a decade may have changed through in- and out migration or through differing rates at which young men of various groups enter the potential voting population, the rank of a group is less likely to change.¹

The correlation coefficients that are presented in the pages to follow are generally those correlations that produced a positive correlation with the group in question. When negative coefficients appear strong enough to reveal something about a group's behavior, this will be noted. For the first three elections of the decade coefficients were computed for

all three major parties. With the fusion of the Populists and Democrats in 1896, only two parties of note appeared on the ballot and only two correlations were computed. The two variables involved in each computation were the proportion of adult males--defined as men aged twenty-one or older--of the ethnic group in question in each precinct of the county and the proportion of votes for a particular party in those precincts.²

Clay County

Clay County, located along the Missouri River in the second tier of counties west from the Iowa border, was one of the first counties in South Dakota to be settled. Among the earliest settlers into the area in the summer of 1859 were a number of Norwegians who took up residence in the vicinity of what would today be Meckling.³

These first Norwegians set the tone for future settlement. Scandinavians from Norway, Sweden and Denmark filled the county during the coming decades. By 1900 over seventeen percent of the county's population had been born in Scandinavia and over forty-five percent of the adult males of Clay County were of Scandinavian stock.⁴

The Swedes, the most numerous of the Scandinavian peoples in the county, were concentrated in the Dalesburg settlement in the eastern townships of Glenwood and Garfield.⁵ The Danes were scattered throughout the county, but had their

greatest numbers in the northern two-thirds of Clay. These people were a spillover from the large Swan Lake settlement in Turner County to the north.⁶ The highest proportions of Norwegians in Clay County were located in the townships west of the Vermillion River.⁷

The next largest foreign stock group in Clay County were the Irish, who composed nearly eight percent of the adult males of the county. They made up over thirty percent of the potential voters in Star township in the northwest corner of the county, and nearly fifteen percent of the voters of Bethel township in 1900.⁸

The county's native stock population had its greatest concentration in the southern townships of Fairview and Vermillion and in the city of Vermillion. Only in this area did the proportion of native stock adult males exceed the county average of 30.8 percent. The natives of Fairview township shared their region with a community of French-Canadians that had its locus in Union County to the east.⁹

During the latter part of the nineteenth century Scandinavians, particularly Norwegians and Swedes, showed a strong attachment to the Republican party. Many of the Scandinavians had opposed slavery and had fought for the Union or had benefitted from the Homestead Act. This Republican loyalty remained firm until the last part of the century when other factors intervened. The 1830s had been marked by heavy emigration from the Scandinavian countries, which

brought to America many who had no old ties to the GOP. The wave of agrarian radicalism of the 1890s appealed to many Scandinavians in the Great Plains, a large proportion of whom were farmers adversely affected by agricultural conditions.¹⁰

Scandinavians also had a tradition of reform-mindedness that could affect their voting behavior. These northern Europeans were predominantly Protestants with a pietistic orientation. Such pietists saw the key to salvation in a personal conversion experience and proper moral behavior. Willing to use government as a tool to enforce morality, pietists were drawn to the Republican party, which advocated a positive state that would intervene to direct the course of society. Hence, pietists supported prohibition as a means of imposing their own moral codes on others.

The religious viewpoint opposing pietism was ritualism. Comprised largely of Roman Catholics and German Lutherans, ritualists stressed the importance of form and proper belief. The path to salvation was orthodoxy rather than conversion and morality was the affair of the church rather than of the state. Thus ritualists were drawn to the Democratic party with its philosophy of the negative state that governed as little as possible. To pietistic Scandinavians the Democratic party was an anathema that drew only a small fraction of their votes. The Populist party, however, with its insistence on a variety of moral, social, political, and economic changes that appealed to the plight and the reformist bent of many

Scandinavians, was often greeted warmly.¹¹

During the 1880s Clay County was strongly Republican, with some precincts, particularly ones inhabited by Scandinavians, being virtually solid for the GOP. For example, in the 1889 gubernatorial race the Republican candidate overwhelmed his Democratic opponent 1311 to 249. In the Swedish townships of Garfield and Glenwood the Democrat garnered a total of three votes, and in Norway township only six.¹²

The advent of agrarian radicalism into the political arena, however, substantially altered voting patterns among the county's Scandinavians. The Republican majority of 1889 was reduced to a plurality in 1890 as former centers of Republican strength cast large numbers of votes for the new Independent party. This situation continued in 1892, although in 1894 the Republicans were able to gain a near majority. That year, however, four county offices and the legislative seats went to the Democrats and Populists, who had fused on the county level. Republicans regained firm control of the county and legislative offices in the final elections of the decade, although Andrew Lee, a Vermillion businessman, carried the county for the fusionists in the gubernatorial contests of 1896 and 1898.¹³

The course of the Populist party among Clay's Scandinavians may be seen in Figure 1, which graphs the Spearman correlations for the county from 1890 to 1900.¹⁴ During the first three elections of the 1890s, the Scandinavians showed a strong

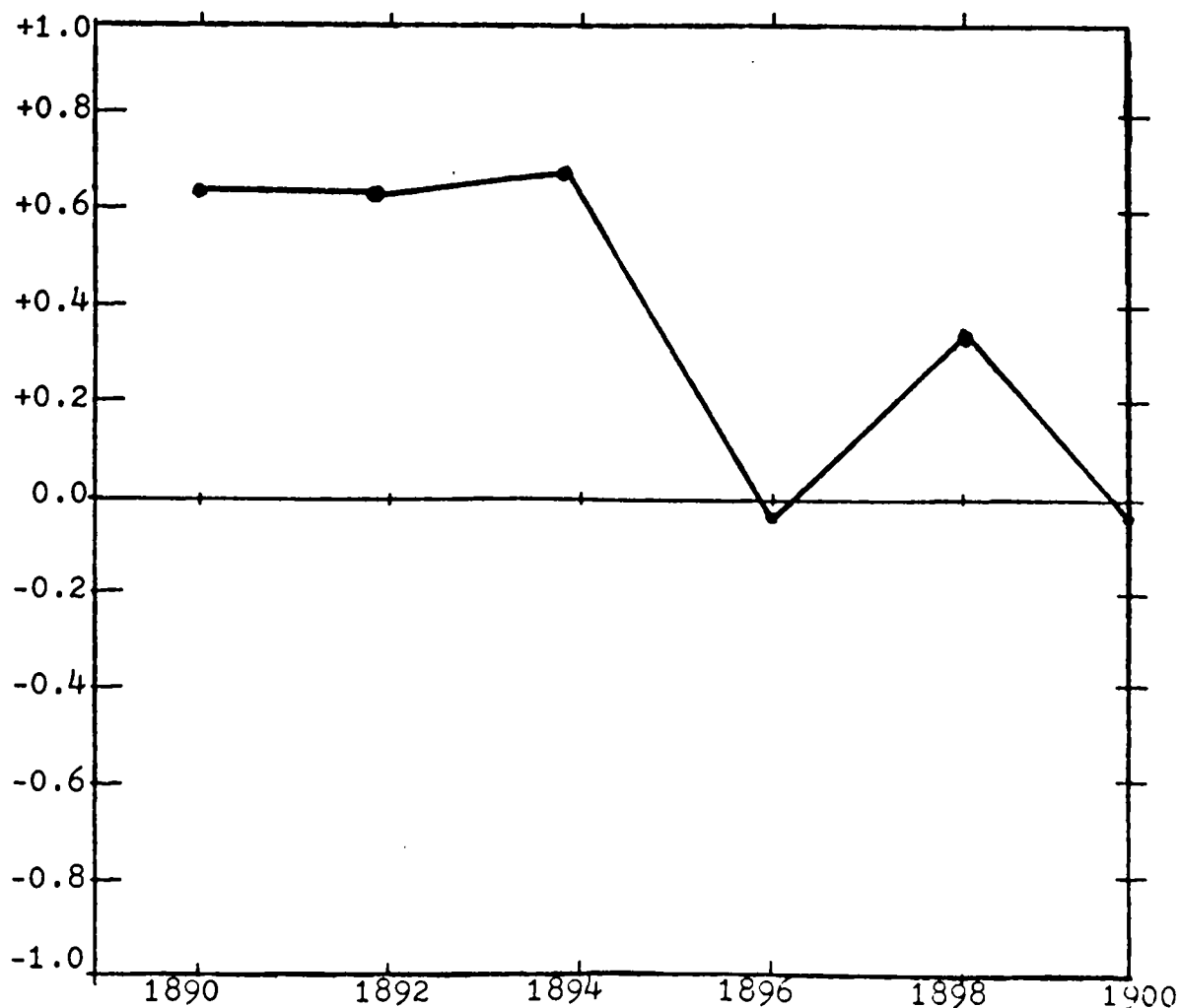


FIGURE 1. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Scandinavian voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Populist and fusion candidates for governor in Clay County, South Dakota, 1890-1900.¹⁶

affinity for the Populist party, with coefficients ranging from +0.6485 to +0.6830. At the same time, correlations with both the Democrats and Republicans were negative.

The election of 1896, however, abruptly ended this relationship with the Populists, with the coefficient dropping to -0.0035. Two reasons may be noted for this sudden change.

Scandinavians were strongly anti-Democratic and, though evidently willing to cooperate on a county level, many were not agreeable to statewide fusion with the Democrats. Furthermore, 1896 marked the inauguration of a new era in South Dakota politics, during which the state's political parties would seek the support of major ethnic groups by nominating gubernatorial candidates of immigrant origins. That year both the Republicans and the fusionists put forward Norwegians at the head of the state ticket. This choice among two of their own ethnic origin probably contributed to the division among Scandinavian voters that destroyed the former attachment to the Populists.¹⁵

For 1898, when only the fusionists offered a Scandinavian candidate for governor, the correlation between the percentage to fusionist votes rises to $+0.3257$. While this figure indicates some interest for the fusionists among the Scandinavians, the relationship was far weaker than it had been in 1894. The relative strength of a correlation is indicated by the square of the coefficient. Hence the 1894 correlation of $+0.6830$ reveals a relationship between the Scandinavians and Populists over four times greater than the 1898 coefficient. It seems that Lee's presence on the ticket was an important drawing point for Scandinavians. For 1900, when both parties again ran Norwegian gubernatorial candidates, the correlation drops to nearly zero.

One of the characteristics of the Spearman correlation is that the coefficient is reduced by the presence of another group in the county who show similar voting behavior. In Clay County, Fairview township--with less than thirteen percent of its adult male population Scandinavian--was consistently one of the most Populist precincts. The township's French-Canadian and native-stock farmers evidently backed the agrarian party strongly.¹⁷ In contrast, Star township, where potential Irish voters outnumbered Scandinavian ones, was the banner Democratic precinct in 1890 and 1894 and was the second highest precinct for that party in 1896.

Deuel County

Deuel County, located along the eastern edge of the state's wheat belt, borders on Minnesota in east central South Dakota. A large influx of Norwegian immigrants in the 1870s and 1880s, many of them from Iowa and Minnesota, gave rise to a dense concentration of that element in the southeastern townships of the county. In the 1900 census Deuel County registered the highest percentage of Norwegian-born residents in the state. That year Scandinavians comprised over ninety percent of the voting population of Blom and Scandinavia townships and over eighty percent of Norden township. The small town of Toronto was virtually pure Nordic with only two adult males who were not of Scandinavian stock. The few Danes in the county were spread along the eastern border and most

likely were attracted to the area because of the Danish settlements at Canby and Tyler, Minnesota.¹⁸

In less populated areas of northern and western Deuel County, Germans predominated in 1900, constituting over sixty percent of the adult males in Rome, Altamont, and Hidewood townships. Havana township contained a small Dutch community. Goodwin and Portland townships contained numbers of Irish settlers.¹⁹

Prior to the advent of the Populist party the county appears to have been solidly Republican. In the 1889 gubernatorial election Republican Arthur C. Mellette soundly defeated his opponent with ninety percent of the votes cast. In 1890 Henry Loucks, a resident of Deuel County, cut Mellette's 1889 strength by more than half and won the county by a plurality. During the remainder of the 1890s the Populists or fusionists managed to take the county twice more--in 1892 and in 1898.²⁰

Figure 2 presents coefficients of correlation between the proportion of Scandinavian adult males and the proportion of Republican votes cast in the elections from 1892 through 1900.²¹ The percentage of Republican votes was selected because that is the only variable that provided a positive correlation with potential Scandinavian voters. The coefficients obtained are generally low, though consistent, ranging from +0.1753 in 1892 to +0.2002 in 1898. The 1900 result jumped to +0.4893. In 1892, a year that the Populists won the county,

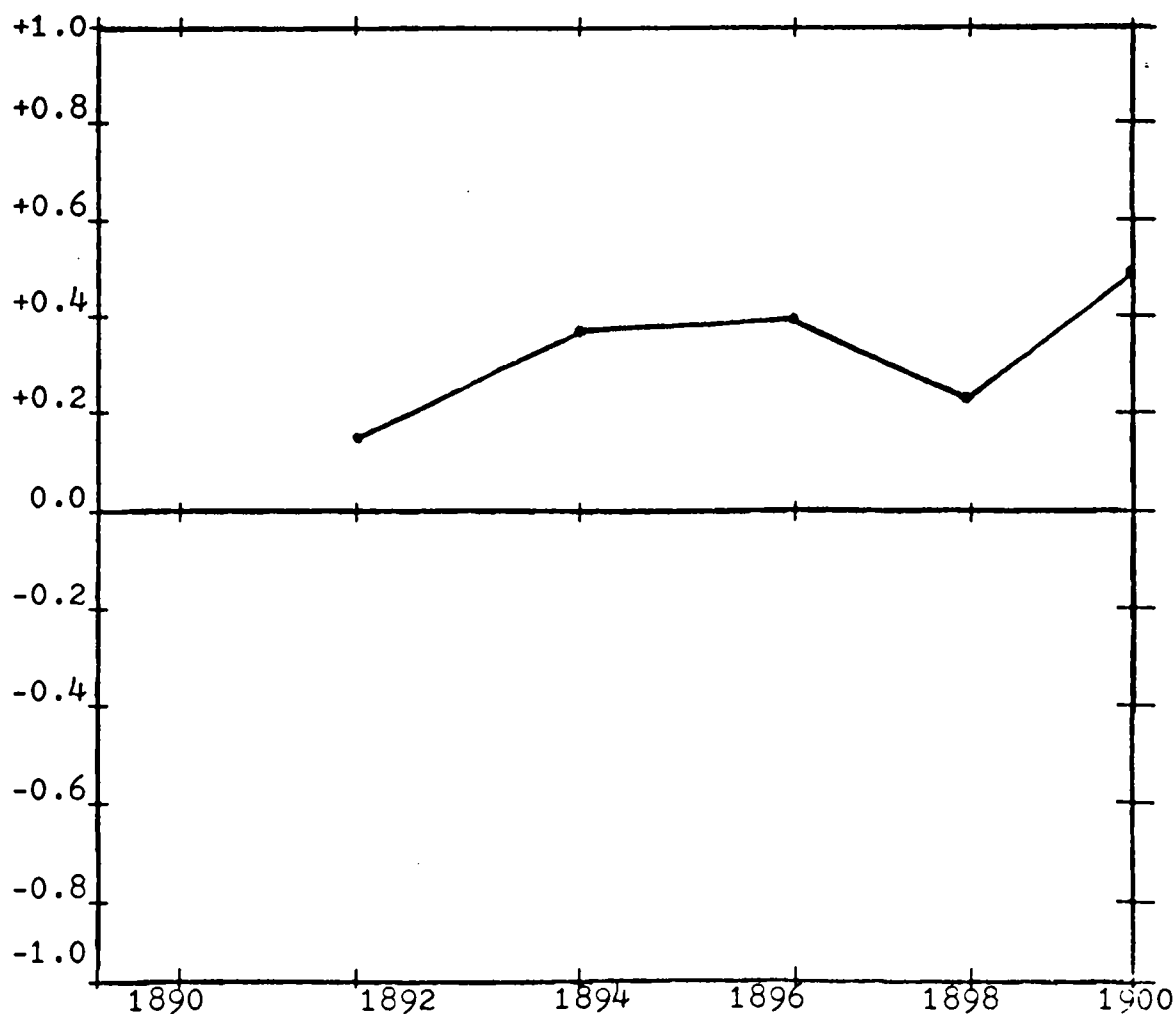


FIGURE 2. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Scandinavian voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Republican candidates for governor in Deuel County, South Dakota, 1892-1900.

the correlation with the Populist vote exceeded the Republican vote correlation, +0.2357 to +0.1753. In 1894 the correlation of the Populist vote with potential Scandinavian voters was nearly zero, and, as in Clay County, dropped considerably when the Populists fused with the Democrats in 1896. Although the degree of negative correlation diminished slightly

in 1898 when only the Fusionist offered a Scandinavian candidate for governor, the reform party continued to be less attractive to Deuel County Scandinavians than was the Republican party.

This shunning of the Populist and fusionist parties by the Deuel Scandinavians may be due to differences in church affiliation. In Clay County, where there was strong support for the Populists among Scandinavians, diverse churches among that North European group abounded. Although some of the earliest churches in southern Clay County had been members of the conservative Lutheran Norwegian Synod, the area was often served by lay preachers of a more evangelical cast. Norwegians of Prairie Center township organized a congregation affiliated with the pietistic Eielson Synod. Vermillion contained a Swedish Methodist church. The Swedes of the Dalesburg settlement were served by Baptist, Mission Covenant, and Augustana Lutheran Synod churches. The Danes formed a Baptist congregation at Lodi and an Inner Mission church at Irene in Clay County. The Danish settlement just to the north of Clay County--to which some of the county's Danes must have been oriented--contained Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and Seventh-Day Adventist congregations. Such groups tended more toward pietism than did the Scandinavian Lutherans and would have been more attracted to Populist reforms and zeal.²²

In contrast, the Scandinavians of Deuel County seem to have congregated in Norwegian Synod churches. At least six such bodies existed around the 1880s and 1890s, served by a single pastor for a time. A minority of more pietistic Lutherans also existed in the county. Churchgoers at Toronto were served by a Haugean Lutheran church and a congregation of "strongly Haugean" Norwegian Augustana Synod was located near Astoria. In Deuel County these groups maintained their loyalty to the Republican party, although other studies have suggested that these bodies were likely to show some affinity for the Democrats at some point during the Populist era.²³

The strength of support among Germans for the Democrats and later the fusionists is shown in Figure 3. In the 1892 and 1894 elections, German adult males showed a moderate affinity for the Democratic party, possibly because Germans still associated the Republicans and Populists with cultural issues. The former had supported constitutional prohibition and many leaders in the latter had been fervent advocates of suffrage and prohibition, issues that threatened German cultural values. The election of 1896 produced the lowest correlation of the series, possibly because some Germans found the moralism of William Jennings Bryan, his free silver policy, or fusion with the Populists a difficult pill to swallow.²⁴ The last two elections of the decade, however, brought a resurgence of support for the fusionists. For 1900 the coefficient reaches +0.7650. This trend may be due to German

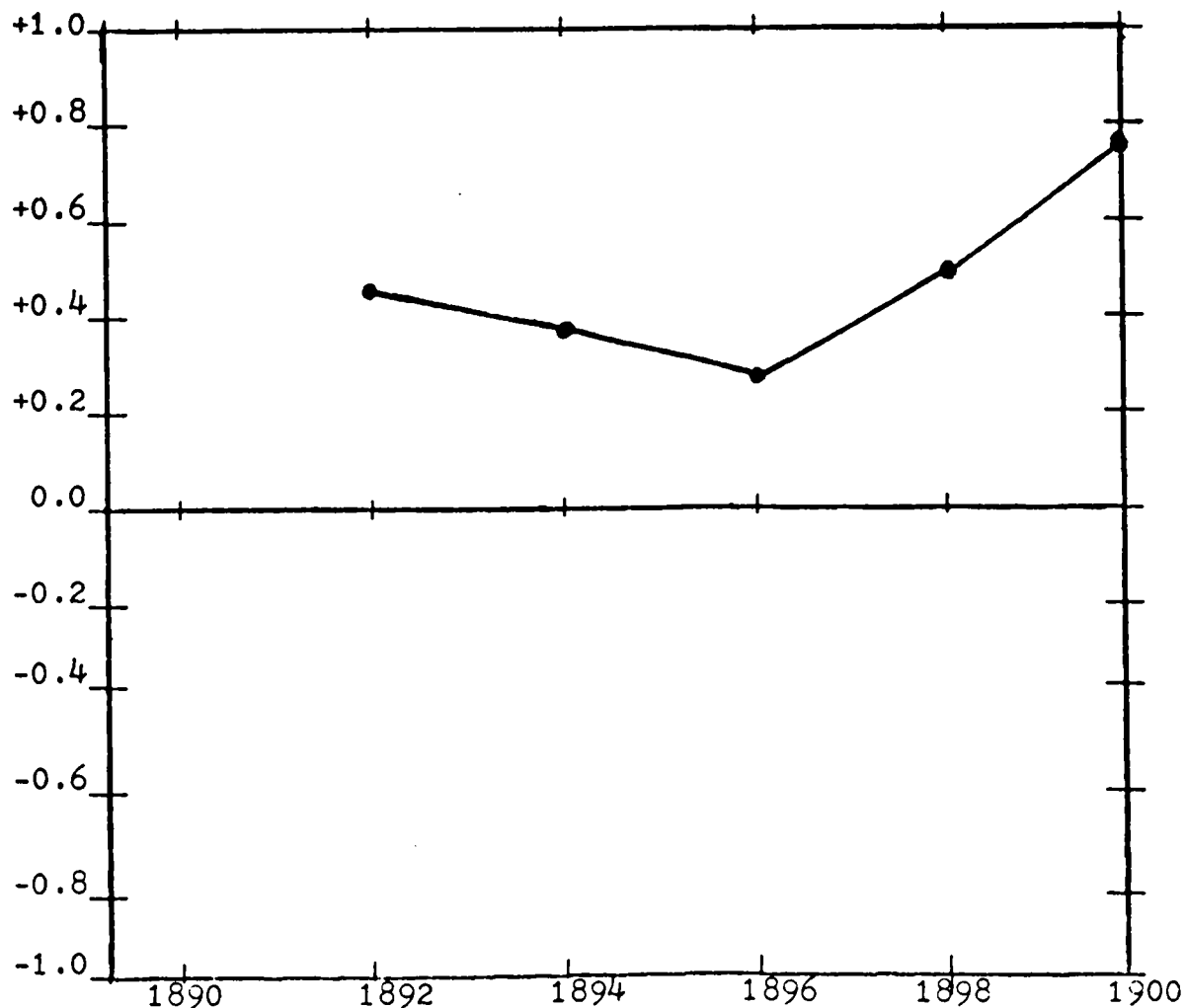


FIGURE 3. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Democratic and fusionist candidates for governor in Deuel County, South Dakota, 1892-1900.

reaction to the imperialism of the McKinley administration, an issue that was present in the platforms of all three of the elements making up the fusion party.²⁵

The correlation coefficients themselves, however, do not tell the full story. Deuel's German precincts were not homogeneous in their political preferences. Several precincts

gave the Republicans solid majorities in a number of elections, while other precincts avoided the GOP consistently. Hence Rome township, with sixty percent of its adult males German, gave Republican majorities for every election except 1898 when it offered the fusionists over seventy percent of its ballots. With even more regularity, Hidewood township, with nearly 62 percent German males, provided the Populists and fusionists with substantial majorities. Although information on the exact denominations present in the German precincts is not available, the 1906 census of religious bodies reveals that there were no Roman Catholic parishes in the county. While there were over 1,500 Scandinavian Lutherans in Deuel County, there were less than 100 other Lutherans. No other denomination had enough strength to dominate the county; Deuel's Germans must have been divided among a number of diverse Protestant religious groups. This would account for the divisions in political preferences among the Germans and would explain why some Germans sought a haven in the Republican party.²⁶

McCook County

McCook County, situated in the southeastern portion of the state, was first settled in the 1870s. By 1900 the largest foreign-born group in the county were the Germans, whose greatest concentration was in the southwestern two-thirds of McCook. With nearly nine percent of its population German-born, McCook ranked third among the state's counties for that

ethnic group in 1900. Its population, however, was more stable than that of the two counties with higher proportions of Germans, thus making it the best choice for a German county. A few Russian-Germans were sprinkled in the southern half of the county.²⁷

McCook's Germans were considerably more homogeneous than those of Deuel County in religious faith. The large Roman Catholic parish at Salem was a German congregation. Catholics in the vicinity of Canistota and Spencer were evidently mostly German. In Bridgewater German and Irish Catholics established a church, and an Irish Catholic church at Montrose served the remaining members of that faith who worshipped in the county. German Lutheran congregations were organized in Canistota, Bridgewater, Spencer, and in Pearl township. A small group of German Lutherans worshipped at Salem but had no formal organization until after 1900. German Baptist churches serving the county's residents existed for a time at Bridgewater, several miles south of Canistota, and north of Salem. A small German Reformed church stood in Salem. The Russian-Germans of the southwestern corner of the county were Mennonites.²⁸

A Swedish settlement dominated the north central townships of Sun Prairie and Brookfield and extended into Ramsey township along the county's eastern border. Another pocket of Scandinavian settlement was in the county's southeastern section. Like the Dalesburg community of Clay County, the

Sun Prairie settlement Swedes were divided among Baptist, Lutheran, and Mission Covenant congregations. A Norwegian Lutheran church existed near Bridgewater.²⁹

Two areas of Irish settlement existed in McCook. One of these was strung along the east fork of the Vermillion River that cuts through the eastern range of townships in the county. The other community was in Jefferson township in the southwestern region of McCook.³⁰

With over thirty percent of its adult males of German stock and another ten percent of Irish stock, McCook County had a substantial proportion of its voters who were prone to stand with the Democrats. In 1890 the Democratic candidate captured a plurality in the county. In 1892 and 1894, although the Republicans won the tickets, the voters of McCook gave the Democrats sizeable proportions of their votes. In all of the fusion contests of the last half of the decade, the reform coalition bested the Republicans by a wider margin than was done in the state as a whole.

The Spearman correlation coefficients between the percentage of potential German voters and the Democratic and fusionist voting totals in the various precincts are depicted in Figure 4. That combination of variables was the only one that produced positive correlations throughout the Populist era. During the first three gubernatorial contests of the decade, the coefficients ranged from +0.3924 to +0.5418. This was the period of the strongest relationship between Germans

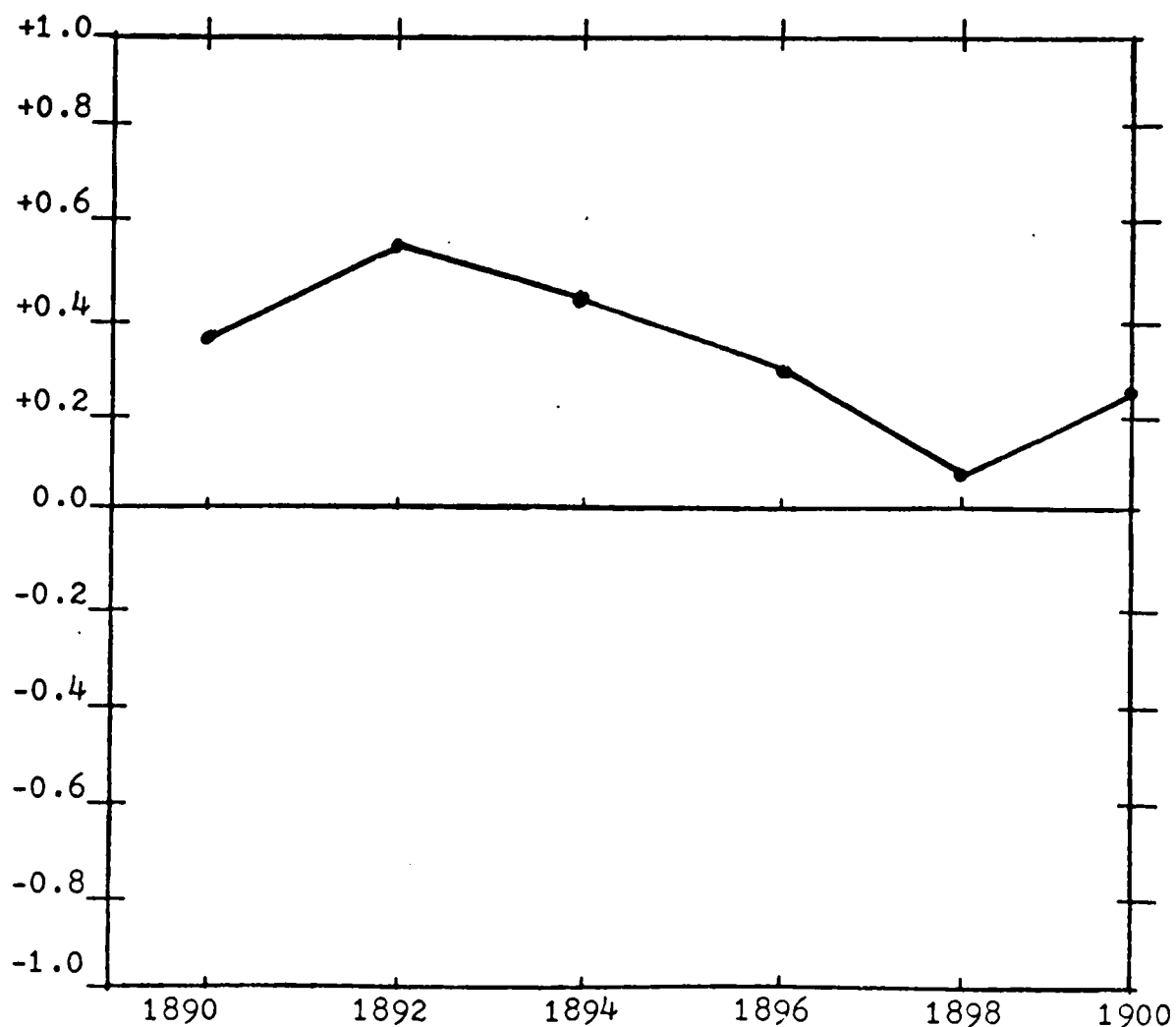


FIGURE 4. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Democratic and fusionist candidates for governor in McCook County, South Dakota, 1890-1900.

and the Democracy. It was also the period during which South Dakota "wets" struggled in vain against constitutional prohibition, suggesting that a German ethnocultural consciousness expressed itself as a political action in defense of cultural norms. The strength of the relationship declined after 1892, possibly as Germans joined the general movement away

from Cleveland's Democrats and as some German farmers swelled the ranks of the Populists. Correlations with Democratic strength continued to decline until 1900.

McCook County's Scandinavians at first showed no clear preference for the Populist party, as is shown in Figure 5.

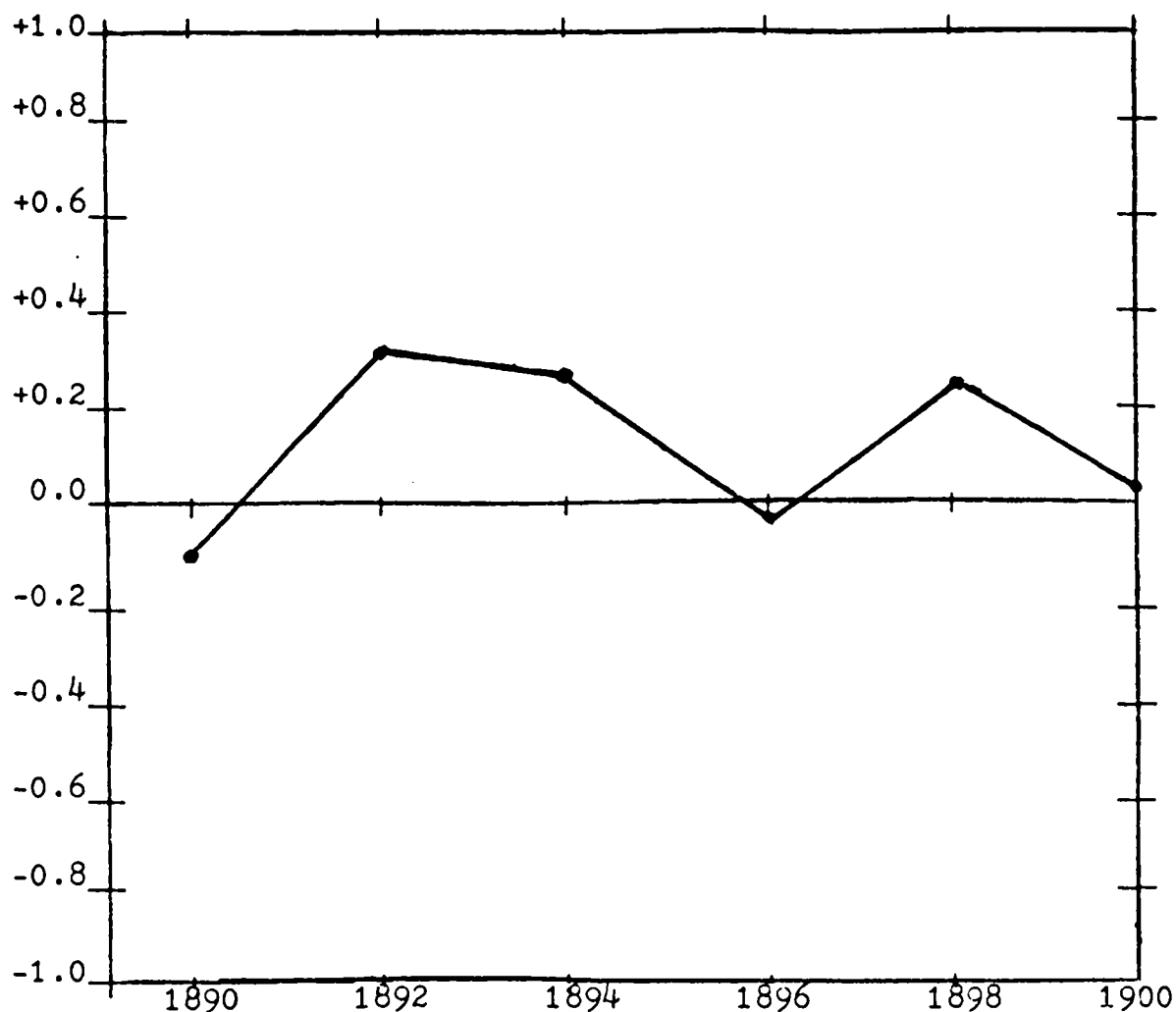


FIGURE 5. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Scandinavian voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Populist and fusionist candidates for governor in McCook County, South Dakota, 1890-1900.

In 1892 and 1894 the coefficient rises to a moderate +0.3478 and +0.2767 respectively. The figure derived would have been higher had not Ramsey township, ranking third in percentage of Scandinavians but having a small community of Britons, been the banner Populist county in 1894. The Scandinavians in the county gave the reform coalition strong support for the remainder of the decade. The coefficients for the last three elections of the Populist era are not high, however. The Scandinavians may have voted for fusion candidates, but ethnicity alone cannot explain the relationship. The presence of two Scandinavian candidates on the ballot in 1896 and 1900 may have reduced the tendency to vote as an ethnic group in a distinctive fashion. As was the case with other counties with Scandinavians, the coefficient for 1898--when only the fusionists nominated a Norwegian for governor--rose slightly.

Bon Homme County

Bon Homme County, also in southeastern South Dakota, lies on the Missouri River in the fourth tier of counties from the state's eastern border. The county began experiencing strong immigration during the 1870s, particularly of groups from central Europe. By 1900 the largest foreign-born group in Bon Homme were the Germans from Russia, who were closely followed by Czechs. Indeed, the county is more noted for its Czech population and Tabor, the center of settlement for that group, styles itself South Dakota's Czech capital

in much the same manner Wilbur does in Nebraska. Although the Russian-Germans had a higher percentage of total population in 1900, they and the Czechs each comprised nineteen percent of the adult male population that year.³¹

Russian-Germans formed the dominant ethnic group among potential voters in seven of Bon Homme's sixteen townships, although in one of these--Bon Homme township--all of the Germans from Russia were members of a Hutterite colony and presumably eschewed political involvement. The area of greatest concentration was in the four northern townships and in Franklin of the second tier from the north. The final Russian-German precinct was Hancock township in the southwestern corner. This ethnic element was apparently all or nearly all Protestant in religious preference and was scattered among a number of denominations. In the north, around Scotland, in a settlement of Protestant Black Sea Germans called Odessa, these immigrants were served by Lutheran churches of the Iowa and Missouri Synods and by German Congregational churches. Located in the center of Bon Homme, the county seat of Tyn dall had a Missouri Lutheran and two Baptist churches that Russian-Germans attended. German Congregationalists were also in the area. The Danzig settlement of Black Sea Germans located around Avon had a Baptist congregation, a Missouri Synod Lutheran church, and two Mennonite organizations. The Mennonites were Prussians who had settled in Russia and in areas of Poland for some time before emigrating to the United

States.³²

The Czechs were concentrated throughout the eastern third of the county, with Tabor township being over eighty percent Czech. Virtually all of the Bohemian immigrants to this country were either Roman Catholics or freethinkers. Although the exact distribution within Bon Homme county is not available, Catholics seem to have held a slight majority. Tabor Czechs were more Catholic than those around Tyndall or Scotland and that place had a Catholic Sokol, a gymnastics society. Tyndall and Scotland at one time supported lodges of the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, the social organization that fulfilled many of the roles of the church for freethinkers. Tabor also had such a lodge, indicating the presence of freethinkers there as well.³³

The Germans, comprising about fourteen percent of the potential voting population in 1900, were to be found throughout the county, but had their highest density in the three northern townships in the western range of the county. No data are available concerning church affiliations, although the townships with the highest concentrations of Germans would have been served by the churches of Avon, which was a strongly German community. These included Missouri Lutheran and Baptist congregations.

Other groups of interest in the county include Irish and Dutch. Irish formed approximately twenty percent of the males of voting age in Albion and Running Water townships and

no doubt contributed to the high proportion of Catholics in the county. Of 5,000 Bon Homme churchmembers reported in the 1906 census of religious bodies, Catholics number 3,000. The townships of the southwestern corner had Dutch settlers, reflecting the presence of a large Dutch community in the adjacent county.³⁴

Because of a major precinct change that took place between 1892 and 1894, the first two elections of the decade were omitted from statistical analysis. Nevertheless, the results of those contests are of some interest. In 1890, the Democrats managed to win the county with a plurality, although the Republicans consistently won Bon Homme with a majority of all votes cast the remainder of the decade. As was the case in Nebraska, certain cultural and religious groups strongly opposed moralistic legislation that struck at group mores. Prohibition was just such an issue. In 1889 the Republicans had endorsed constitutional prohibition and in 1890 the GOP candidate for governor supported it. The Democratic plurality of 1890 may be seen as a reaction to Republican identification with the reform.³⁵

As can be seen in Figure 6, the Czechs of Bon Homme County were strongly interested in the Populist and fusion parties. The highest correlation coefficient occurs with the 1894 election, but it never dropped below the +0.4647 mark for the rest of the Populist era. The fact that the Czech community in Bon Homme was divided between Catholics

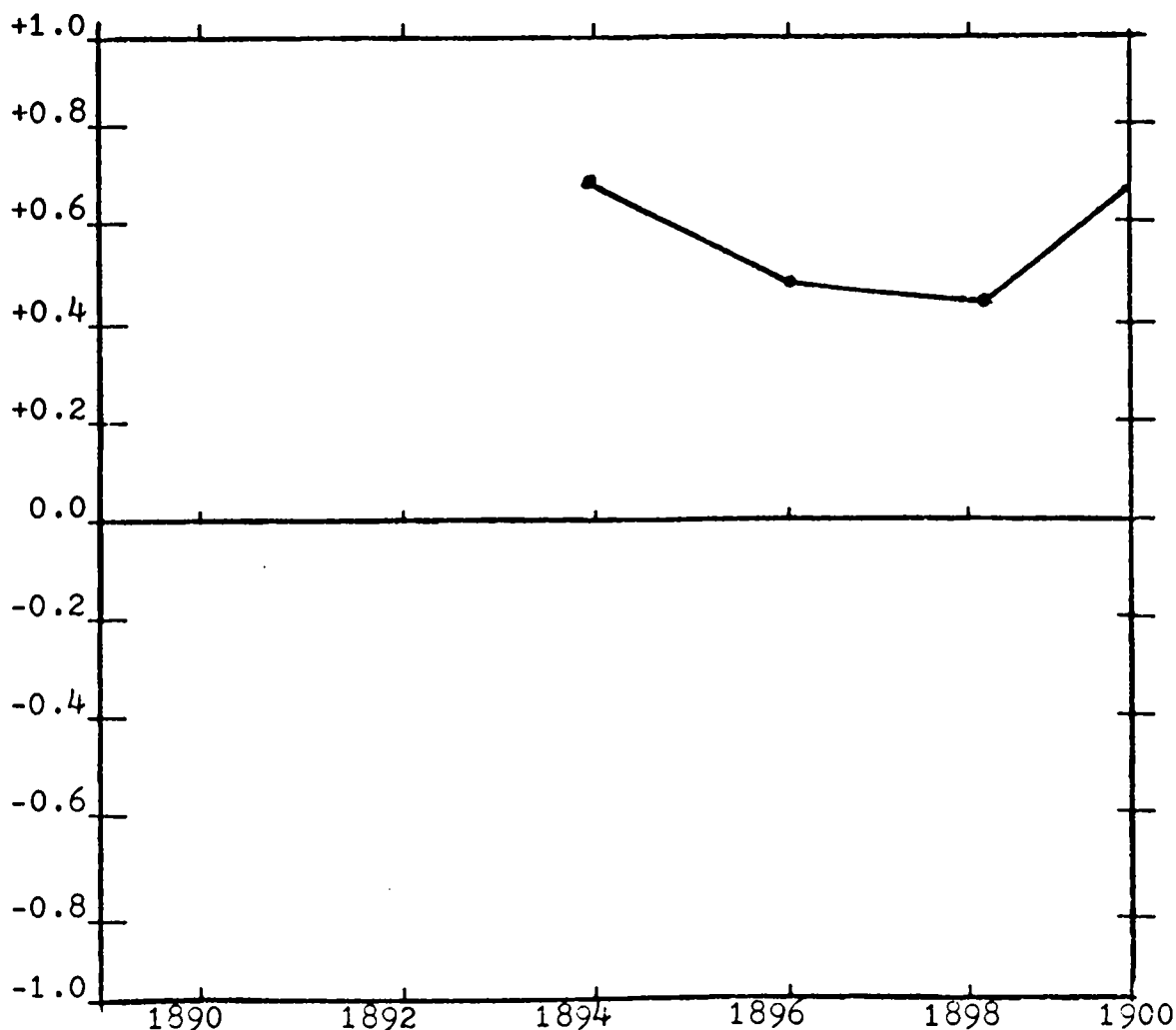


FIGURE 6. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Czech voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Populist and fusion candidates for governor in Bon Homme County, South Dakota, 1894-1900.

and freethinkers seems to have had no difference in how Czechs reacted to the reform party. Tabor township contained both elements, yet it constantly gave the opponents of Republicanism approximately eighty percent of its vote or better. This willingness to vote without apparent regard to church or nonchurch orientation accords with Bruce M. Garver's conclu-

sions about Czech voting behavior, although the relationship with the Populist party seems stronger than he suggests.³⁶

The Russian-Germans of the county registered positive correlations with the Republicans through the last four elections of the Populist decade (Figure 7). There were a few,

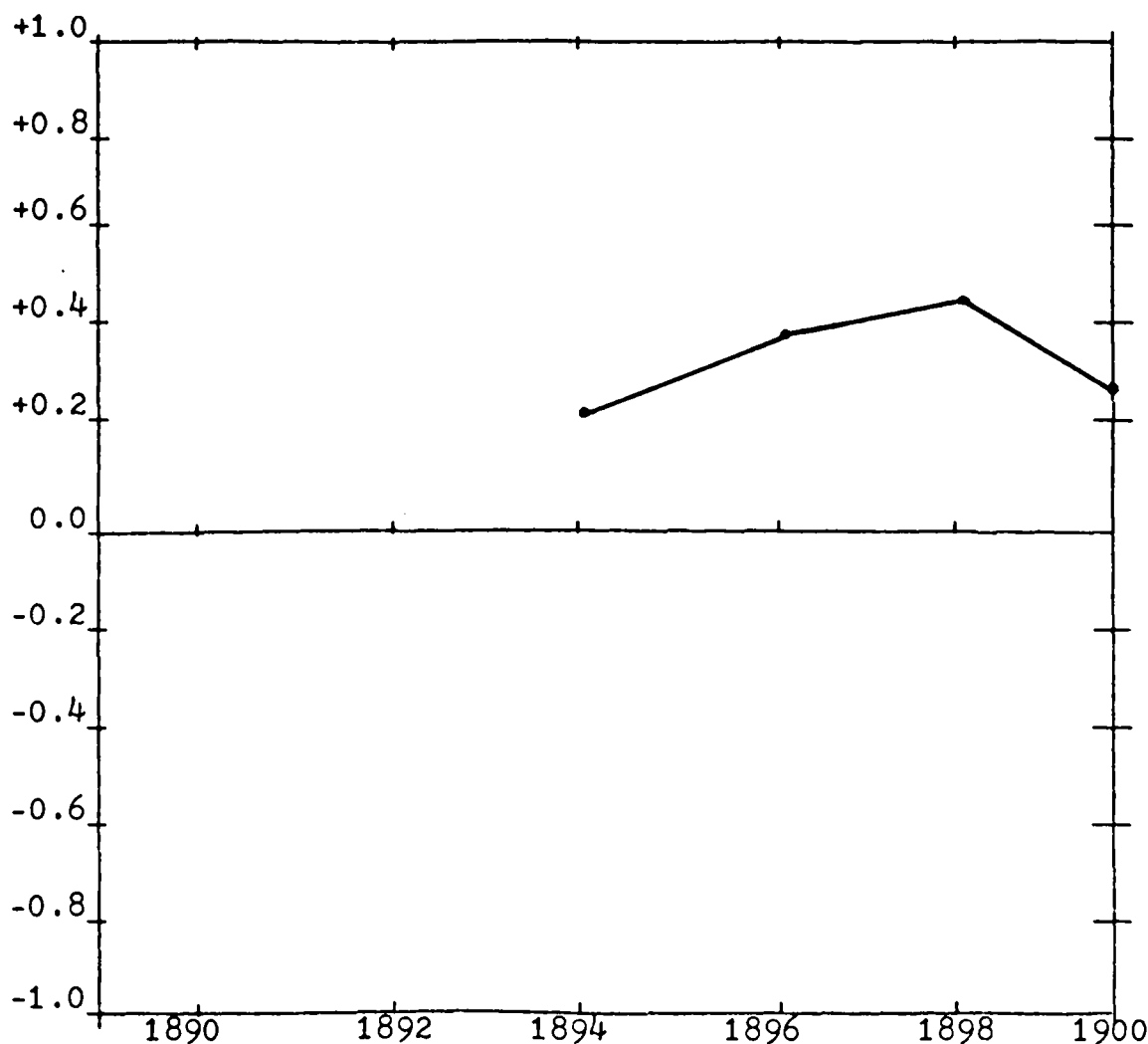


FIGURE 7. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Russian-German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Republican candidates for governor in Bon Homme County, South Dakota, 1894-1900.

if any Russian-German Catholics remaining in Bon Homme by the 1890s. Those that resided in the county at the time were generally members of the various pietistic churches that dotted the countryside. This loyalty to the Republican party is in line with voting patterns among Protestant Russian-Germans in Nebraska and with what other historians have concluded about this group's behavior. Studies of the Mennonites have noted a predisposition to the Republican party, although that could change given the right pressures.³⁷

The correlation of the percentage of potential German voters in the various precincts with the percentage of Republican votes also reveals a positive relationship (Figure 8). This, too, is probably related to German membership in Protestant denominations that place stress on proper behavior, although more data on the exact affiliations would be necessary for a stronger inference.

Campbell County

Campbell County in north central South Dakota on the eastern bank of the Missouri was one of the counties heavily settled by Germans from Russia in the 1880s. Mound City, the county seat was platted in 1884 and by that year Protestant Black Sea Russian-Germans were taking up land in the county. By 1900 Russian-Germans born abroad formed nearly thirty percent of the county's population and that ethnic group accounting for forty-five percent of Campbell's potential voters.³⁸

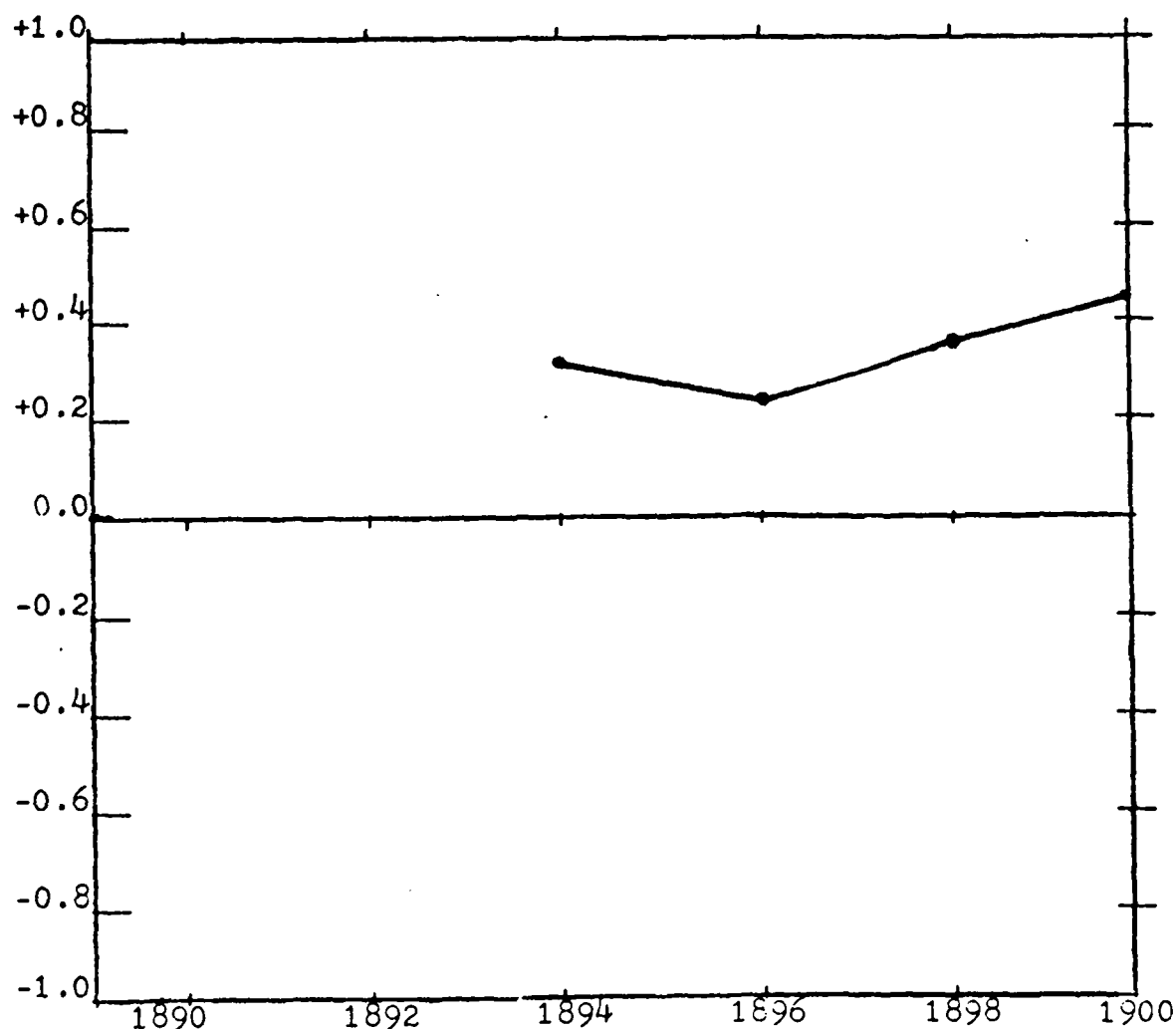


FIGURE 8. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Republican candidates for governor in Bon Homme County, South Dakota, 1894-1900.

The Russian-Germans were concentrated along the eastern ranges of the county where adult males of the group formed over ninety percent of the voting population of three precincts. The proportion of Germans from Russia drops off in the center of the county to thirty to thirty-five percent of the adult males. Few lived in the ranges of townships washed

by the Missouri. The greatest part of these Russian-Germans were members of Protestant bodies, although a Catholic congregation in Herreid, a town founded in 1901, is partly Russian-German. Protestant denominations known to have operated among the Germans from Russia in Campbell County include Iowa Synod Lutherans, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Reformed.³⁹

Scandinavians, principally Norwegians, were the largest ethnic group in the western townships, forming over seventy percent of the potential voting population in the southwestern corner of the county. The composition of the northwestern corner was more mixed, but a change in voting precincts between 1890 and 1892 forced that portion of the county to be omitted from the statistical analysis. The Scandinavians appear to have been served by a Lutheran church or churches or Norwegian ties, but whether it was a member of the conservative Norwegian Synod or one of the more evangelical bodies is not known.⁴⁰

Two other ethnic groups are of some interest. The central portion of the county had a number of Germans, primarily found in the area around Mound City. Although their precise religious orientation is unknown, they may have been numbered among the 241 Roman Catholics recorded in the 1906 census of religious bodies. In Fremont township in the north central portion of the county, a small Dutch community predominated, forming over fifty-five percent of the potential voters

in one precinct in 1900. These settlers were served by a Dutch Reformed church.⁴¹

Politically, the voters of Campbell County favored the Republican party over any competitor throughout the Populist era, giving the GOP a clear majority in every election. The Russian-German townships provided the banner Republican precinct every time. In 1900, for example, the voters of precinct seven, with a least ninety-two percent of its voters of Russian-German origin, gave the Republicans over ninety-eight percent of their ballots.

Figure 9 shows the course of the relationship between the percentage of potential German-Russian voters and the percentage of votes cast for the Republican party during the 1890s. Probably associating the Republican party with the detested constitutional clause for prohibition, Russian-Germans split their strength in 1890, thus producing no clear correlation with the GOP. While two of the three dominantly Russian-German precincts voted with the Republicans, one deviated substantially by turning to the Independent party. For the election of 1892, however, the correlation leaps to $+0.5714$. That was to be the lowest coefficient for the remainder of the decade; the peak year came in 1898 when the figure reached $+0.8095$. A slight dip in 1896 may indicate that some Germans from Russia heeded Bryan's siren call to silver, for Republican majorities in the important Russian-German precincts were reduced that year. The decline in the

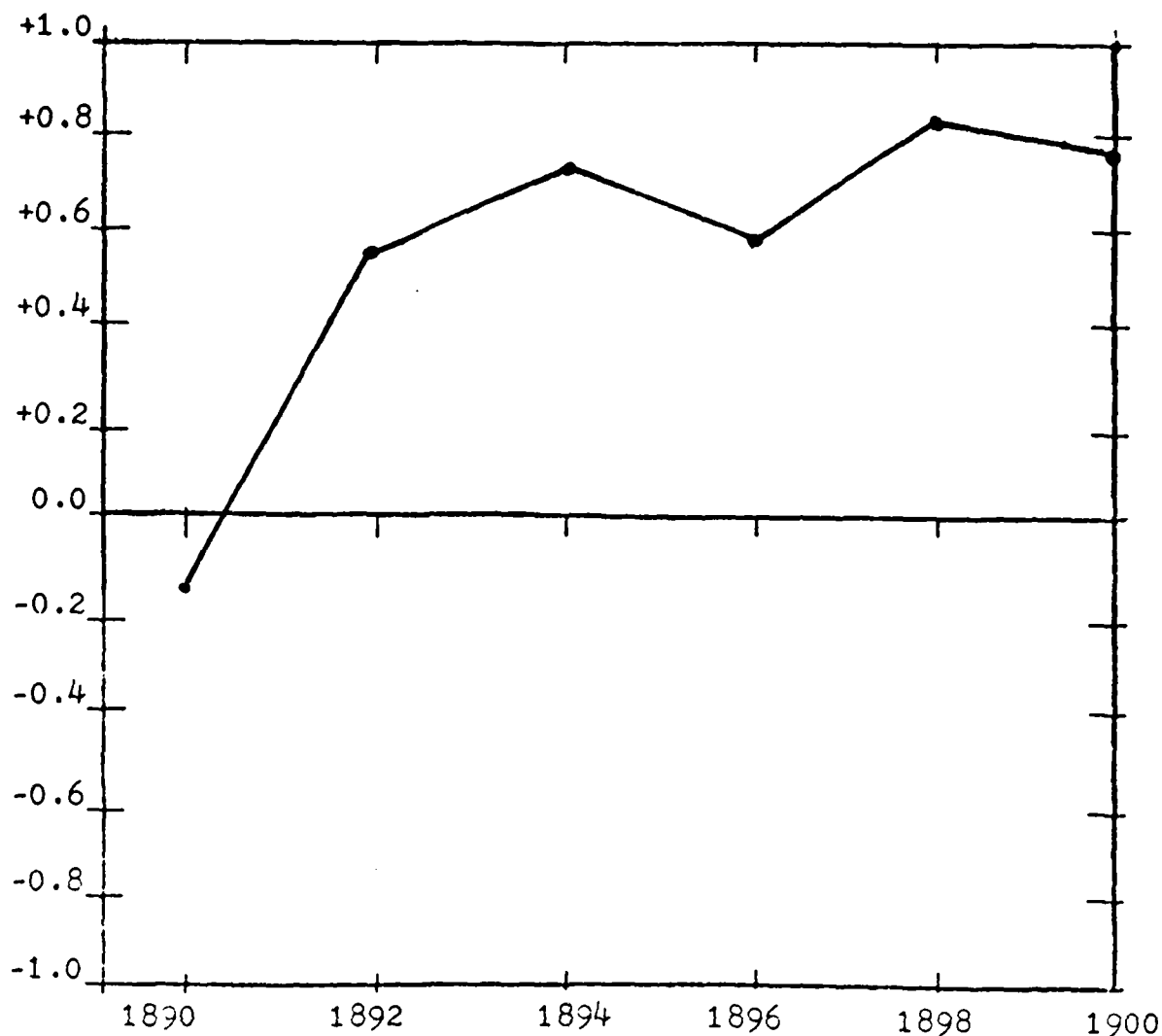


FIGURE 9. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential Russian-German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Republican governor in Campbell County, South Dakota, 1890-1900.

correlation in 1900 may indicate that the neighbors of Russian-Germans were swinging further toward the GOP as the Populist era came to a close. That year the Republicans received record majorities in some of the Russian-German precincts.

One political scientist has looked at the voting behavior of some Russian-German counties in South Dakota and concluded that that ethnic group was strongly Republican. This ignores the fact that not all Russian-German counties have acted in the same fashion. Edmunds County to the southeast of Campbell had large sections settled by Black Sea Catholics and, though the Republicans generally captured the county in the 1890s, percentages of the vote cast for Democrats were consistently high.⁴²

Scandinavians in Campbell County reacted to the politics of the Populist years in much the same manner of the Scandinavians of McCook County (Figure 10). Although the Spearman correlation coefficient showing the relationship between the percentages of Populist votes and potential Scandinavian voters was negative in 1890, by 1892, a very high direct relationship existed. For 1894 the coefficient climbs to a remarkable $+0.9027$. The election of 1896, with its two Scandinavian candidates on the ballot and fusion with the Democrats, led to a slight dip. When only the fusionists offered a Scandinavian choice for governor in 1898, the correlation with the reform party climbed, but dropped again when the Republicans nominated a Scandinavian from the adjoining county of McPherson for governor in 1900.

A graph of the coefficients of correlation between the percentages of German adult males and the percentages of votes cast for the Democratic and Populist parties reveals an in-

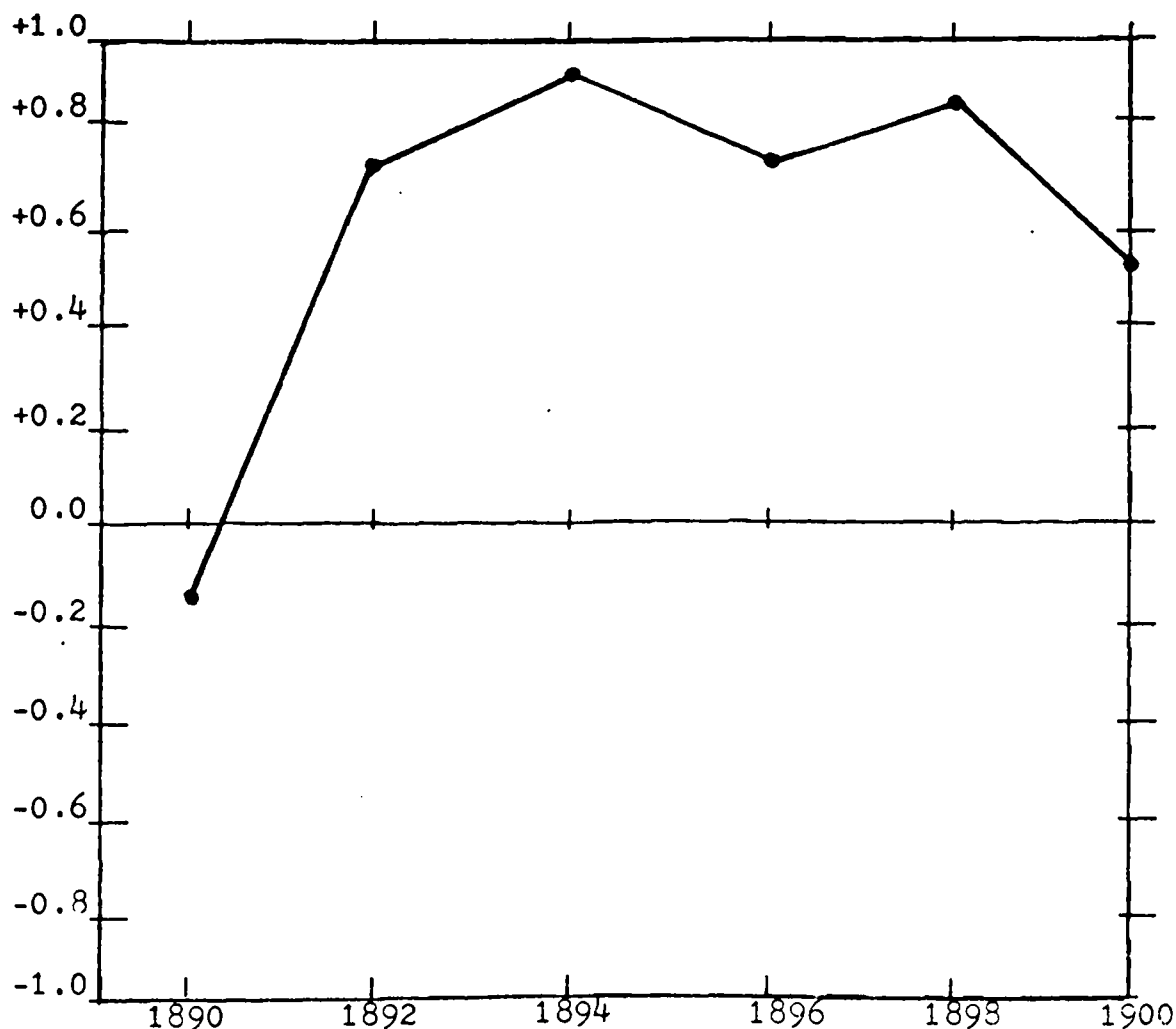


FIGURE 10. Coefficients of correlation of potential Scandinavian voters according to the 1900 Federal census and percentages of votes cast for Populist and fusionist candidates for governor in Campbell County, South Dakota, 1890-1900.

teresting pattern (Figure 11). In 1890, when only the Democrats could not be associated with prohibition, a traditionally sensitive cultural issue among Germans, the Germans of Campbell reacted negatively to the Democratic party. In 1892 the correlation with the Populists is very high, though the Germans turned their loyalties to the Democrats to a consid-

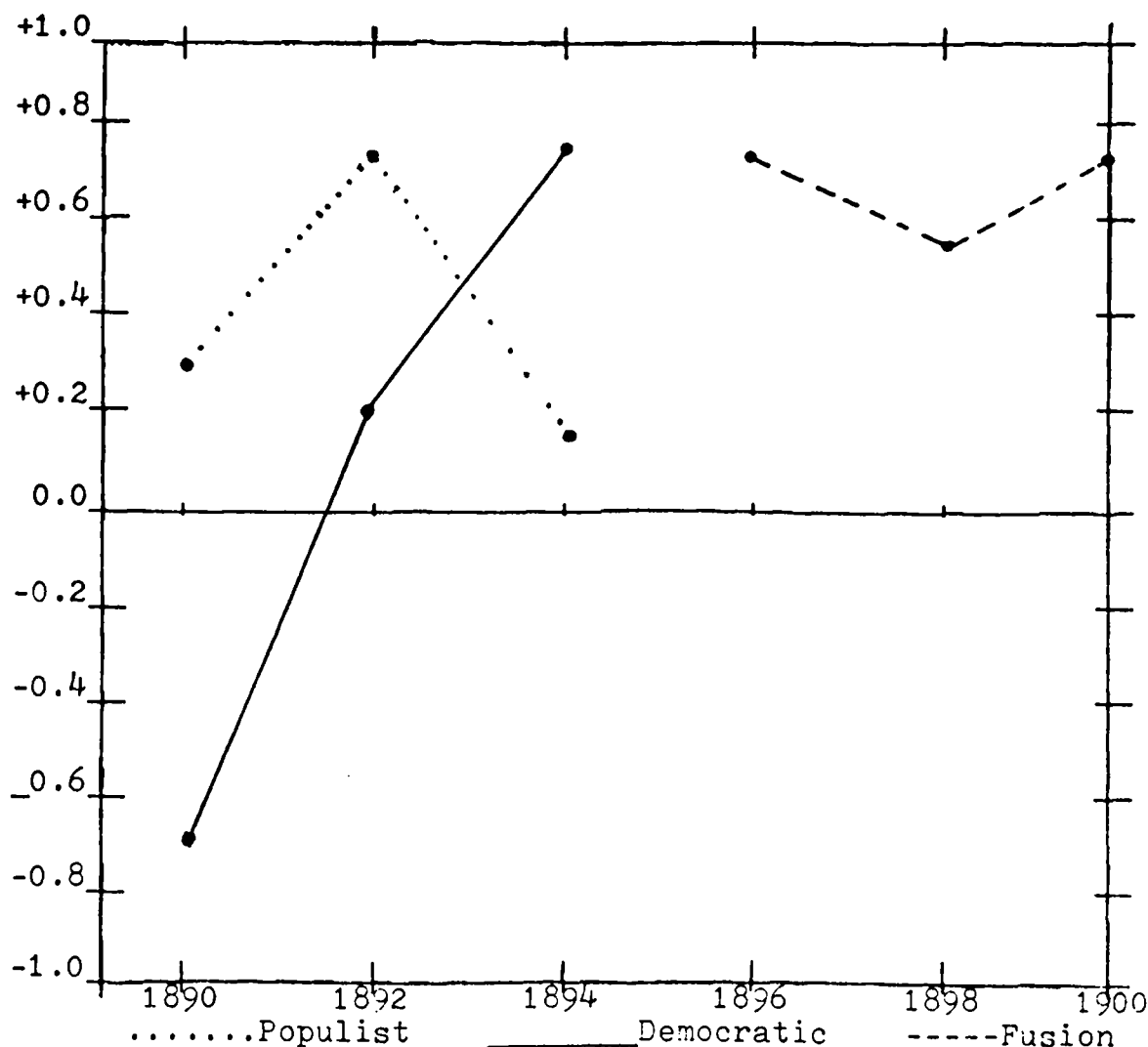


FIGURE 11. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and the percentages of votes cast for Populist, Democratic and fusionist candidates for governor in Campbell County, South Dakota, 189-1900.

erable degree in 1894. The continuing support for the fusionists during the rest of the decade reflects a general German support for the reform coalition, although the coefficients are higher in Campbell County than elsewhere. The causes of this pattern may lie in local circumstances, which cannot be determined because the local papers for the 1890s

are not extant. More complete data on the denominations among which the Germans were spread in the county might also shed light on the behavior of this group.

The Dutch of Fremont township favored the opponents of Republicanism during the first two contests of the decade, giving the Populists a majority in 1890 and the Democrats a plurality in 1892. The last four elections, though, saw solid Republican majorities ranging from sixty to seventy-two percent despite fusionist expressions of sympathy for the Boers in 1900. This Republican tendency among Protestant Hollanders is similar to findings elsewhere.⁴³

Lawrence County

The last of the six counties included in the statistical analysis is Lawrence of the Black Hills. Home of Deadwood and Lead, this county was the scene of large-scale hard rock mining by the 1890s and from its rugged hills came great quantities of precious metals, primarily gold. The lure of gold and high wages brought thousands to western South Dakota from home and abroad, making Lawrence's mining centers among the most cosmopolitan communities of the state.

Lawrence's 1900 population was scattered among dozens of small camps and towns, many of which contained only a few voters. As lodes played out in one area and rich strikes were made elsewhere, people and precincts shifted, making a countywide study inappropriate. The lack of some voting data

for the entire period and the problem of unstable precincts-- or of shifting names that make precinct identification impossible--have forced some changes in the way with which Lawrence is treated. Only the towns of Deadwood and Lead are included in the analysis and the election of 1900 is omitted from the study because returns for Lead could not be located for that year.

Deadwood, a city with as colorful a history as can be found in the Black Hills, had a population of nearly 3,500 in 1900. Of the males of voting age in the city, men of native stock comprised nearly half. Germans contributed over twelve percent and the Irish over ten percent of the remainder. The various Scandinavian groups added about eight percent and the British, the most numerous foreign-born group in the Hills, contributed nearly ten percent. Deadwood's Chinatown contained slightly over four percent of the adult males in the city.

Lead, home of the great Homestake Mining Company, was proportionately far more foreign-stock than was Deadwood. Of the adult male population in 1900 only a quarter were born in America of American born parents. Of the remainder, the British were the largest group with nineteen percent of the population. Scandinavians and Irish both contributed about ten percent, Germans added seven percent, and Finns comprised eight percent. Nine percent of the adult males listed Austria as their birthplace or their parents', but close inspection

of surnames reveals that these men, mostly miners, were Slavic. Italians added another five percent.⁴⁴

The county as a whole favored the Republican party through the 1890s, giving that organization a majority or plurality in all but the election of 1896, when its opponents first attempted fusion on a state level. Of the two cities, Lead consistently gave the GOP a majority, while Deadwood voters split their votes enough so as to give the Republicans pluralities before fusion and a minority in 1896.

Correlation coefficients produced when the relationships between the proportion of ethnic voters and the percentage of votes for a party are analyzed should be used with care in counties such as Lawrence. The mining camps were characterized by high rates of geographic mobility that could dramatically alter the composition of the various precincts. This may be particularly true during the adverse economic conditions during the 1890s. Nor were population levels stable through the period. Deadwood increased by fifty percent during the decade, but Lead grew four hundred percent in the ten year time span.⁴⁵ It is entirely likely that the newcomers did not mirror the ethnic mix of the earlier residents and that the proportions of the various ethnic groups in 1900 was not the same as it had been in 1890, particularly on the ward level. Spearman rank correlations produce the clearest coefficients when there are no other groups present whose behavior is similar to that of the group under study. In the

Lawrence county mining centers a large number of groups did exist, often in similar strength, and may well have distorted the coefficients obtained.

The correlations produced by the analysis of the major cultural groups are marked by wild swings from one half of the graph to the other in the space of one or two elections. For example, the correlations between potential Scandinavian voters and Populists in 1892 were nearly zero. In 1894 it was nearly perfect $+0.9524$. The comparison of trends among several groups reveals some similarities (Figure 12). The British and Finns reacted very much alike during the first half of the decade, with high negative correlations in 1890 continuing in 1892 (though less strongly for the Finns) and suddenly shifting to high positive correlations for 1894. The Scandinavians, with the exception of having virtually no correlation at all in the first two elections, behaved in the same fashion as the first two groups in 1894. The Irish showed a moderate correlation with the Populists in 1890, something unexpected because of the proclivity of that group to the Democracy and to opposition to prohibition. Although this figure dipped in 1892, it returned to a moderate level in 1894. That year marked a shift in voting patterns in the mining cities. Lead, where the British and Finns were concentrated, had given the Republicans a comfortable 60.1 per cent majority in 1892 but furnished the GOP a majority by only one vote in 1894. Democratic strength there was cut by

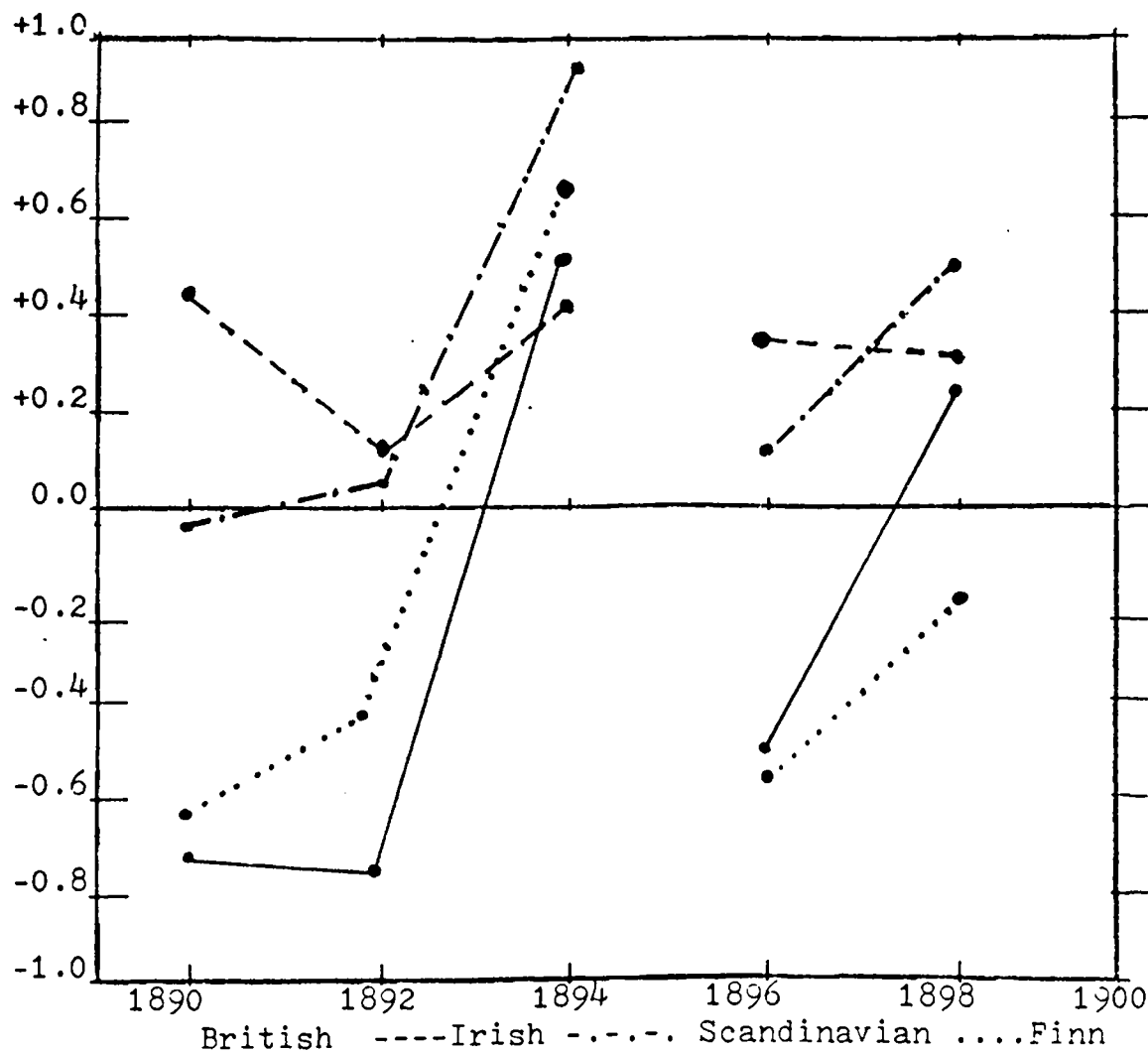


FIGURE 12. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential British, Irish, Scandinavian, and Finnish voters according to the 1900 Federal census and percentages of votes cast for Populist and fusionist candidates for governor in Lead and Deadwood, Lawrence County, South Dakota, 1890-1898.

nearly two-thirds at the same time as Lead tripled its Populist vote.

In Deadwood the shift toward the Populists was also apparent, but the extra votes came from the Democrats. There the Republicans were able to increase their plurality by

three percent. Voters in Ward 1--eighteen percent Scandinavian--turned from both of the old parties to give the Populists a majority. The miners of Dakota, not immune to the worsening economic conditions following the Panic of 1893, expressed their discontent in the voting place. Although local miners could not realistically expect the free coinage of silver to provide full employment in Lawrence again--for little silver was mined in the state--the depression did dry up eastern capital that was vital to the economy of the region.⁴⁶ In eastern states where third parties were relatively weak and offered little hope of being able to change the economic climate, dissatisfied Democrats turned to the Republicans. In South Dakota, where the Populists had replaced the Democrats as the second most powerful party, voters saw the third party alternative as a viable choice.⁴⁷ The same was not the case in 1896. The correlations for the British, Scandinavians, and the Finns dropped nearly to the 1892 level, although the Irish figure remained close to the 1894 correlation. This may be due to the fact that the Irish were far more evenly scattered than the other groups, with percentages in the eight wards in the study ranging from 7.7 to 13.8 percent compared to the ranges of 10.4, 11.9, and 10.0 percent for the British, Scandinavians, and Finns respectively. Thus the changes in Irish voting behavior were less likely to affect correlations to the same degree.

This does not, however, explain the voting behavior of natives and Germans in Lawrence County. Correlations between the percentages of adult males of those two groups and Democratic and fusion votes are depicted in Figure 13. Germans and natives reacted differently from the other groups

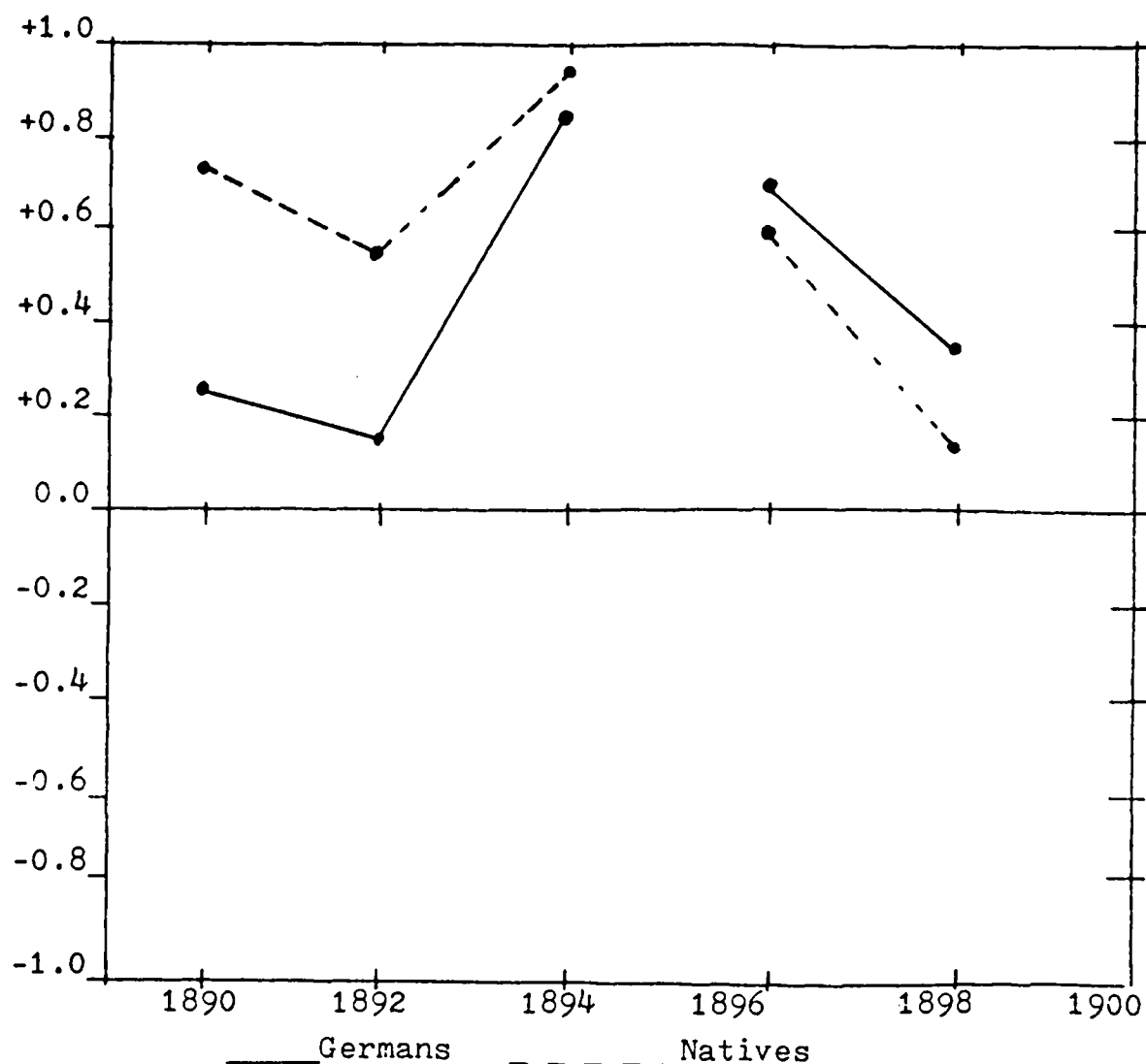


FIGURE 13. Coefficients of correlation between percentages of potential native stock and German voters according to the 1900 Federal census and percentages of votes cast for Democratic and fusion candidates for governor, Lead and Deadwood, Lawrence County, South Dakota, 1890-1898.

examined during the first half of the decade. For 1890 both groups have a positive correlation with the Populist party, too, as both of these groups expressed dissatisfaction with the Republicans. The relationship weakened somewhat in 1892, but took a dramatic upturn in 1894--precisely the time when other groups in the county were repudiating the Democrats. The cause of this shift is unknown, but may lie with local factors in Deadwood. That was the strong-hold for both natives and Germans in the study and there the Democrats managed to hold on to more of their voters than was the case in Lead. Though lower than 1894, the correlations between these groups and the fusion party in 1896 remained strong. In 1898 the figures dropped again as natives and Germans cast their ballots less as natives and Germans than as members of some other group.

Quantitative methods allow historians to study political behavior to a degree not heretofore possible. Such techniques allow historians to approach the basic unit of political action--the individual voter--as closely as the available sources of data will allow--the voting precinct. No longer are we tied to the records left by the elite members of society. The application of statistical methods to South Dakota politics during the 1890s reveals certain patterns of behavior among the state's immigrant groups that would not otherwise be easily discernable.

The state's Scandinavians--Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes--entered the Populist era with long loyalties to the Republican party. By the 1890s, though, recent immigration had brought many new Scandinavian voters to the Great Plains, men who did not have ties to the GOP. Agricultural distress and the Independents' reformist nature made the third party acceptable to most of the Scandinavians and they gave strong support to the new groups until the Populists fused with the Democrats. In 1896 this fusion with a group for whom the Scandinavians had few sympathies and the presence of two Scandinavians at the head of the state ticket ended or diminished a clear relationship between the Populists and the Scandinavians. In 1898, with only the fusionists running a Scandinavian candidate for governor, members of this ethnic group were more likely to vote as Scandinavians for the reform coalition. By 1900, when both parties fielded Norwegian gubernatorial candidates, the correlation vanished. This scenario holds true for three out of the four counties with Scandinavians studied. In Deuel County the Scandinavians remained loyal to the Republican party, probably because that county had a much higher percentage of conservative Norwegian Synod Lutherans who were less oriented toward the evangelical and pietistic behavior that made Populism appealing.

In two of the four agricultural counties containing German elements that ethnic group gave general support to the

Democratic party, the party of personal liberty and the negative state that would allow the group to defend its cultural values from natives who sought to reform American society. This was true particularly in McCook County where most of the Germans were Catholic or Lutheran. In other counties where the proportion of Catholics and Lutherans was not so high--where more pietistic denominations like the Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists held sway among German immigrants--the group gave support to the Populists, or more often, to the Republicans.

Protestant Russian-Germans, temporarily distrustful of the Republican party in 1890 when they associated the GOP with prohibition, showed their true colors by strong support for that party for the rest of the decade. Catholic Germans from Russia appear to have been much more prone to voting the Democratic ticket than their Protestant neighbors were.

South Dakota's Czechs, apparently hesitant about the Populists early in the decade, turned wholeheartedly to that party in 1894. For the remainder of the decade the Czechs of Bon Homme County gave consistent support to the reform coalition, despite divisions in the community between Catholics and freethinkers.

In Lawrence County, the mining center of the Black Hills, British, Finns, Scandinavians, and Irish all showed increased support--sometimes dramatic support for the Populist party in 1894--reflecting their dissatisfaction with contemporary

economic conditions and with the old parties. By 1896 this support was on the wane and although the correlations increased for some groups in 1898, the overall trend was downward after the 1894 peak. These four groups tended to concentrate in Lead; natives and Germans, located in Deadwood, reacted in a completely different manner. This may indicate that the true source of Populist voting strength in the Black Hills mining camps might not have been based on ethnic origins but on occupation in a certain industry or residence in a particular town that fell on hard times during the Panic of 1893. If this is the case, and only further research would disclose this, the high correlations with ethnicity are coincidental.

Ethnicity can serve as a general indicator of political behavior among South Dakota's immigrants during the 1890s but does not provide quite the precision one might hope. The state's foreign stock groups were not homogeneous; they were divided among themselves by a basic difference in religious orientation. Some Protestant groups exhibited a pietistic background that led them to translate their religious attitudes into political action, often in support of prohibition and other reforms. Among these were numbered most Scandinavians, although the conservative Norwegian Synod Lutherans apparently stayed solidly behind the GOP while more evangelical Lutherans turned to Populism. Other Protestant immigrant groups with pietistic leanings--peoples like the Russian-

Germans, Dutch, and some Germans--showed loyalty to the GOP after first expressing dissatisfaction with the prohibitionist portion of the party that had brought on a cultural reform that the ethnic groups found neither necessary nor desirable. With the exception of the Czechs, most Catholics, with a heritage that stressed orthodoxy and belief rather than conversion and behavior, took up the cause of the Democratic party and its philosophy of the negative state and personal liberty as a means of defending cultural values against assault from those who felt differently. The battle between pietists and ritualists waxed and waned during the 1890s as various issues and events touched on cultural nerves. Behind that battle, the basic orientations of the diverse groups in the state helped determine the course of South Dakota politics.

NOTES

1. Frederick C. Luebke, Immigrants and Politics: The Germans of Nebraska, 1880-1900 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), pp. 71-73, 194-196; Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), pp. 68-71. All coefficients of correlation were calculated with the use of SPSS. See Norman H. Nie et al., SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), pp. 288-92.

2. George A. Boeck points out the importance of using potential voters rather than gross population figures. See his "A Historical Note on the Use of Census Returns," Mid-America 44 (January, 1962): 47, 49. The age of twenty-one was selected rather than twenty, which was used in some older studies, because the 1900 Census records not only age, but month and year of birth as well. This greater precision on the part of the census taker presumably led to greater accuracy. For examples of earlier studies see Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, p. 78, and Merle Curti et al., The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier Community (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 457. On the 1900 Census, see Robert G. Barrows, "Instructions to Enumerators for Completing the 1900 Census Population Schedule," Historical Methods Newsletter 9 (September, 1976): 206.

3. Harold Edward Briggs, "The Early History of Clay County," South Dakota Historical Collections 13 (1926): 78-79; Carlton C. Qualey, Norwegian Settlement in the United States (Northfield, Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938), pp. 132, 138-39; G. Bie Ravndal, "The Scandinavian Pioneers of South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 12 (1924): 309; Peter J. Ristuben, "History of the Early Norwegian Settlements in Southeastern South Dakota" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1957), pp. 11-13.

4. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900. Population. Part I. (Washington: U.S. Census Office, 1901), pp. 781-782.

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6. Thomas P. Christensen, "The Danes in South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections 14 (1928): 540-41; Olga S. Olsen, "An Historical Study of the Danish Immigrants in South Dakota" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1940), pp. 13-14.

7. Ristuben, "Early Norwegian Settlements," pp. 18, 25; Ostergren, "Prairie Bound," p. 76; Qualey, Norwegian Settlement, pp. 140-41.

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9. Ibid.; "Supplement, Markers No. 3," The Wi-iyohi 20 (May, 1966): 2, 4.

10. Theodore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America, vol. 2: The American Transition (Northfield, Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1940), pp. 297-98, 313, 321; Theodore C. Blegen, "The Scandinavian Element and Agrarian Discontent," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1921 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), p. 219; George M. Stephenson, "The Mind of the Scandinavian Immigrant," Norwegian-American Historical Association Studies and Records 4 (1929): 72; Kendrick Charles Babcock, The Scandinavian Element in the United States, University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, vol. 111, no. 3 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1914), pp. 159-60; Sten Carlson, "Swedes in Politics," in From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration, eds. Harald Runblom and Hans Norman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 291.

11. For a more detailed treatment of the ritualist-pietist split, see Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 72-75, and Richard Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 63-66.

On the Scandinavian support for prohibition and other reforms see Frederick Hale, "Marcus Hansen, Puritanism, and Scandinavian Immigrant Temperance Movements," Norwegian-American Studies 27 (1977): 18-40; Ingrid Semmingsen, Norway

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12. Herbert S. Schell, History of Clay County, South Dakota (Vermillion: Clay County Historical Society, Inc., 1975), p. 78.

13. Ibid., pp. 90-98, 101.

14. In the 1890 election, the city of Vermillion was not returned separately from Vermillion township, so those precincts were considered as a single unit in the remaining elections. In 1897 "The Island," a body of land separated from Nebraska by a channel change in the Missouri River in 1881, was ceded to South Dakota and attached to Vermillion township. The population of this island, however, was not large enough to affect voting trends. See the Vermillion Dakota Republican, November 3, 1898, and Schell, History of Clay County, pp. 102-104.

15. On the antipathy of Scandinavians, particularly of Norwegians and Swedes, to the Democratic party, see Kleppner, Cross of Culture, pp. 51-53. For examples of the same pattern of declining Populist strength among Scandinavians after fusion, see Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, p. 104, and Kleinschmidt, "Political Behavior," pp. 195-96.

16. For the sake of simplicity, in this and many of the figures to follow, a single line will be used to indicate voting trends between 1890 and 1900 even though the correla-

tions to 1894 may represent either the Populist or the Democratic party and the correlations after 1894 represent the fusionist party. The reader will note that in some figures, correlations with the Republican party are graphed.

17. The Dakota Ruralist, August 11, 1892, claimed that the French of Union County readily embraced the Populist party.

18. Qualey, Norwegian Settlement, p. 146; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census. Population. Part I, pp. 781-82; Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Deuel County (microfilmed); Gary Inter-State, March 1, 8, April 5, 1895.

19. Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Deuel County (microfilmed); Gerald DeJong, "The Coming of the Dutch to the Dakotas," South Dakota History 5 (Winter, 1974): 26-27.

20. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote of South Dakota by Counties from October, 1889, to November, 1912 (Aberdeen, 1912), pp. 4, 9, 17, 26, 33, 49, 67.

21. The election of 1890 was omitted because vote totals by precinct have not survived. Between 1896 and 1898 the precinct of Toronto was created, evidently from parts of Scandinavia and Blom townships. Hence those precincts have been aggregated into a single entity to allow analysis for the entire period.

22. Doris Stensland, Robert Lundgren, and Donald J. Sneen, "Life in the New Land--1859-1880: The Scandinavian Experience," in Prairie Faith, Pioneering People: A History of the Lutheran Church in South Dakota, ed. Donald J. Sneen (Garretson, S.D.: South Dakota District, American Lutheran Church, 1981), pp. 1-19; Briggs, "Early History of Clay County," p. 147; Ostergren, "Prairie Bound," pp. 76-78; Christensen, "Danes in South Dakota," pp. 545-47; Kleppner, Cross of Culture, p. 52.

23. Mrs. R. O. Brandt, "Social Aspects of Prairie Pioneering: The Reminiscences of a Pioneer Pastor's Wife," Norwegian American Studies and Records 7 (1933): 16n., opposite p. 38; Selmer Hatlestad, "The Ethnic Consciousness Era, (1889-1920)," in Prairie Faith, Pioneering People, ed. Donald J. Sneen, pp. 59-61, 64; Kleppner, Cross of Culture, p. 334; Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, p. 81. Kleppner notes the increased attraction of the Democracy of Bryan had over that of Cleveland for some Norwegians. Jensen deals with several Norwegian Synod communities whose

Republican sympathies were reduced by that party's support for prohibition. In Deuel County, however, the Norwegians strongly favored prohibition.

24. Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, pp. 292, 294; Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, p. 103.

25. See Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, pp. 166-70.

26. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1906, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), 1: 354; Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, pp. 66, 113, 150; Kleppner, Cross of Culture, pp. 42-51.

27. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census. Population. Part I, pp. 781-82; Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, McCook County (microfilmed).

28. [Jeanne Weber, comp.], Within These Borders: McCook County from Its Beginning to Its Present Day ([Salem, S.D.]: n.p., 1976), *passim*; Esther Shane, comp. and ed., Echoes of an Era, 1890-1980: Bridgewater, South Dakota (Bridgewater, S.D.: Bridgewater Tribune, 1980), pp. 131-32, 137-43; Montrose Memories, 1879-1976 (Montrose, S.D.: n.p., n.d.), pp. 146-47; History of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Salem, South Dakota, 1915-1965 (Salem, S.D.: n.p., n.d.).

29. [Weber], Within These Borders, *passim*; Montrose Memories, p. 148; Shane, Echoes of an Era, pp. 130-31.

30. Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, McCook County (microfilmed).

31. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census. Population. Part I, pp. 781-82; Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Bon Homme County (microfilmed).

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33. Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Bon Homme County (microfilmed); Paul E. Vondracek, "History of the Early Czech Settlements in South Dakota" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1963), pp. 12, 17, 31, 42; Bruce M. Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains," in Ethnicity on the Great Plains, ed. Frederick C. Luebke, pp. 152-53, 155-60; John P. Johansen, Immigrant Settlements and Social Organization in South Dakota, Bulletin 313 (Brookings: Department of Rural Sociology, Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State University, 1937), pp. 23-29.

34. Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Bon Homme County (microfilmed); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1906, 1: 353; DeJong, "The Coming of the Dutch," pp. 20, 30-34, 50.

35. South Dakota, Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 9, 17, 26, 33, 49, 67; Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, pp. 147-50.

36. Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers," pp. 154-55. In some Czech precincts in Nebraska Kleinschmidt found support for Populism when cultural issues subsided after 1890, although many Democratic Czechs found fusion with the Populists unacceptable. See Kleinschmidt, "Political Behavior," pp. 96-98, 101-102, 106-107, 110, 115-14.

37. Luebke, Immigrants and Politics, pp. 111-14; Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (San Jose, Calif.: San Jose State College, 1964), p. 166; James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1975), pp. 42-43, 48-52; Unruh, "A Century of Mennonites in Dakota," p. 100; John D. Unruh, "The Mennonites in South Dakota," South Dakota Historical Review 2 (July, 1937): 165; John D. Unruh and John D. Unruh, Jr., "Daniel Unruh and the Mennonite Settlement in Dakota Territory," Mennonite Quarterly Review 49 (July, 1975): 210.

38. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census. Population. Part I, pp. 781-82; Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Campbell County, (microfilmed).

39. Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Campbell County (microfilmed); Rath, Black Sea Germans, pp. 122-23; Sallet, Russian-German Settlements, pp. 25-26; Hatlestad, "Ethnic Consciousness Era," p. 83.

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42. Alan L. Clem, Prairie State Politics: Popular Democracy in South Dakota (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1967), p. 66. Schock, In Quest of Free Land, p. 166; South Dakota, State Board of Canvassers, Official Vote, pp. 9, 17, 26, 33, 49, 67.

43. Kleppner, Cross of Culture, pp. 59-61.

44. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census. Population. Part I, pp. 361, 781-82; Schedules of the 1900 Federal Census, Lawrence County, (microfilmed). On immigrants in early Deadwood, see Watson Parker, Deadwood: The Golden Years (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), pp. 73, 116-17, 143-48. On the ethnic groups that contributed to Lead's work force, see Joseph H. Cash, "A History of Lead, South Dakota, 1876-1900," South Dakota Historical Collections 34 (1968): 96, 117-24; and Joseph H. Cash, Working the Homestead (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1973), pp. 29-33.

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46. James E. Wright, The Politics of Populism: Dissent in Colorado (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 166-67, 171, 254; Thomas A. Clinch, Urban Populism and Free Silver in Montana: A Narrative of Political Action (Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1970), p. 46 49-50, 87, 100-101, 105, 119-20; U.S. Department of the

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CONCLUSION

During the late 1870s and through the 1880s Dakota Territory experienced a phenomenal rate of growth. During the Great Dakota Boom, as this period is known, a flood of settlement poured over the fertile prairies. The drought, depression, and grasshoppers of the early 1870s had vanished. Blessed with abundant rainfall during the 1880s, Dakota appeared to be a new Canaan, beckoning landseekers to take advantage of all the bounty the West offered. With the aid of borrowed money and with the promise of easy markets via new railroads racing across the territory, tens of thousands of farmers flocked to Dakota, their hopes and dreams inflated with stories of rich soil and huge harvests.

Nature, however, had played a cruel trick. The heavy rainfall of the 1880s was an anomaly, particularly in the areas of the territory that were found in the Great Plains. Drought, returning again in its periodic cycle, withered the fields upon which agrarians had placed so much hope. Nor was man innocent of blame for the hardships on the Plains. Railroads and elevators that farmers needed in order to dispose of their harvests became ravenous corporations that gobbled up the slender margin of profit left after crops were sold in markets glutted with the produce of vast new farmlands the world over. Bankers from whom farmers had borrowed heavily to begin operations became wolves at the door, threatening foreclosure when payments could not be made.

Faced with such adversity, Dakota farmers resorted to the organization of a Territorial Farmers' Alliance, an agricultural order that might give them the power to strike back with a unified voice. The Alliance took up the challenge on two fronts. It started a variety of cooperative ventures that would cut the middleman out of the marketing procedure, thereby hoping to increase farm profits. Recognizing that some agrarian goals could be met only within the political process, the Alliance began to act as a pressure group to force the old parties to heed the demands of hard-pressed farmers. Initially this lobbying was bi-partisan; it sought to force both the Democrats and the Republicans to offer remedies for deteriorating agricultural conditions.

The results of these tactics were not encouraging. The cooperative enterprises met problems from the traditional mechanism of business. Leaders in the old parties were reluctant to yield their power to new interests and were more concerned with promoting economic growth than in providing relief that might damage Dakota's image and drive away capital. Even when the farm order managed to elect a majority of Alliance candidates to the territorial legislature, more experienced politicians succeeded in preventing significant reforms.

Barred from what they considered to be economic justice through the existing parties, Alliance leaders chose to launch their organization on a new venture--the Independent party.

Acting at the same time as discontented elements in other states, the South Dakota Farmers' Alliance took the promising path of a third party as a means of circumventing the old political order. With a platform that called for wide-ranging reforms and candidates acceptable to farmers, the new party entered the realm of partisan politics in 1890s. Although Republican strength proved too great for the Independents to capture the state's executive machinery that year, the reformers took enough legislative seats to control the legislature when acting in cooperation with the Democrats. With this strength, the Independents managed to elect one of their own to the U.S. Senate in 1891.

This proved to be the only major victory of the first half of the decade for the Populists, as the members of the new party soon came to be called. The Republicans gradually lured back many of their former adherents through hard campaigning and concessions to the farm vote in their party's platform and candidates. By 1894 the Republicans had re-established themselves as the majority party. Yet the Populists were also growing, their ranks swelled by defecting Democrats. As cultural issues like prohibition and woman suffrage--reforms that many of the early Populists had been linked to--began to recede from partisanship, the economic goals of the third party attracted some groups that had traditionally supported the Democratic party.

By the mid-nineties, the outlook appeared brighter for the Populists in South Dakota. A growing sentiment for the free coinage of silver followed the Panic of 1893. Caught up in this were major elements in the Republican party, including Senator Richard F. Pettigrew, a long-time leader of the party in the state. When the national Republican convention refused to adopt a silver plank, Pettigrew joined other silverites in walking out. When the state Republican organization would not take up the cry for silver, Pettigrew's camp abandoned their old party. These Silver Republicans, together with the handful of Democrats left after the 1894 repudiation of Cleveland's Democracy, joined the Populists in a reform coalition.

This fusion of forces did not come without some friction. Many of the early Populists could not abide with the dilution of principles that accompanied combination with old enemies. For them, silver was just one of a variety of reforms that had to be achieved, not the common element upon which to base a tri-partisan campaign. Some ethnic groups found that their distaste for Democrats overcame their dissatisfaction with the Republicans and so filtered back to the GOP.

Whatever its weaknesses, the reform coalition was able to win a victory at the polls in November. Electing the governor, a number of other executive positions, and a majority of the legislature, the anti-Republican forces were given the opportunity to carry out their reform program. The

coalition, though it could unite against a common foe, was not strong enough to achieve any major changes. As legislators, the reformers were too disorganized, too divided, and too intent upon their own interests. Indeed, the Republicans in the 1897 session succeeded in re-electing James H. Kyle, a fact that moved the senator into Republican circles.

These same deficiencies characterized the reform party as a whole. The coalition began to crumble as leaders who had thrown their power behind it in 1896 turned to the Republicans. Other scrambled for power within the coalition. It became more difficult to hold together diverse groups who were old political enemies. Republican officeholders threw up barriers to the Populist governor and to his plans. By 1898 the reform groups were losing their momentum and in that year the only reformer returned to major office was Governor Andrew Lee.

By 1900 the Populist era was over. Overwhelming Republican majorities swept from power all fusionists except a few legislators. Aided by returning farm prosperity, the inability of the reform coalition to make lasting reforms, and the outbreak of a war that captured the electorate's attention, the Republicans were able to beat back the Populist challenge.

The decade of the 1890s brought some changes. The Populist protest had engendered some minor reforms on the part of the Republican party. Fierce competition for votes had

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led the state's parties into an era of ethnic politics when South Dakota's major foreign-stock groups would receive greater recognition in the form of nominations to high office. Voters gained the powers of initiative and referendum. Yet most of the objectives of the original Populist party remained unreached. Some would be accomplished in the succeeding decade as a new generation of Republican leaders added their efforts to the national Progressive era. Other goals remained unmet.

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