The Black Hills a Century Ago

(Ed’s note: At this point General Beadle pauses to allow his young readers to see the Black Hills from atop Harney Peak through the eyes of Professor F.B. Carpenter, A.M., Dean of Dakota School of Mines.) Let one imagine himself in the center of the uplift at Harney’s Peak; spread out on every side is a wilderness of jagged mountains, worn and scarred by the rains and frosts of ages, yet ever green from the pine forests they carry. Between these his eye rests upon mountain parks, through which flow streams of clear water, stretching away like ribbons of silver...

(Beadle’s view continues) A curious fact is that the Hills are circled round with a high wall of sandstone, between which and their edge is the beautiful Red Valley, the ‘race course’ of the Indians. Opening into this are 27 gateways, through which streams flow out. Some of these unite before they reach the Cheyenne.

Out upon the plains, beyond the sandstone wall, rises Bear Butte, alone. All day long its dark form stands before us as we travel toward it. Journeying to the Hills from the southeast, on a hot day we may gasses from deep among the rocks. It is called Minne-kah-ta. Invalids come here to secure warm baths of medicated water. The pure mountain air and charming scenery add to the attractiveness of the spot.

Not far away is a large lake, and further up are great basins, rough hills, mountains, high prairies and deep canyons. Upon the east and north is a rolling and fertile plain, descending with the streams toward the river branches. The Spearfish rises near the center of the Black Hills and flows north to the Belle Fourche (‘bel-foorsh’), and is one of the longest and largest of the many streams. Along its middle and northern boundary, the country is an open rolling plain of great beauty. Rapid Creek rises in about the same place, and flows east, near the highest points of the Hills. You can easily understand the reason for its name.

Spring Creek, Elk Creek, and White-woof are other important streams; along the head of the last are the richest gold mines. All have rapids, waterfalls, scenes of wild beauty, and parks.
Editor's Note: A century ago students in Dakota Territory’s schools opened a brand new edition of the territory’s first geography textbook. Dakota: Its Geography, History and Resources, by William Henry Harrison Beadle, joined a number of other volumes in Merrill’s School Book Series published by D.D. Merrill, St. Paul, MN. Beadle’s text described all of Dakota Territory (now both North and South Dakota) as it appeared on the threshold of its next great adventure—statehood for the 39th and 40th states.

The book’s author, General William Henry Harrison Beadle, had already achieved a measure of fame for his support of education in Dakota when his textbook was published. Born in Indiana in 1835, Beadle was trained as an engineer at the University of Michigan. He was a general in the Union Army during the Civil War and was appointed Dakota Territorial surveyor-general in 1869. In 1879 when Beadle became superintendent of public instruction, he set out to save the territory’s public school lands. Other states and territories which had sold their school lands for pennies an acre found it difficult to pay for good schools. Beadle insisted that South Dakota’s new state constitution would contain a section outlawing sale of school land for less than 10 dollars an acre. Beadle received the honor of having one of the state’s normal schools named for him. The teachers’ college in Madison where he was superintendent became known as General Beadle Normal School (now Dakota State College). General Beadle died in 1915.

(The text of Beadle’s view of the Black Hills in the 1880’s with editor’s notes follows—Ed.)

The Black Hills ‘rise like a wooded island from an almost treeless plain.’ The forests which cover so much of them, and the lofty walls, buttes, and peaks, give, from a distance, a dark outline which suggested the name. The open parks, the cool and grassy valleys, the great springs of pure water, the abundance of game, and the protection afforded from storms, made them a paradise to the Indian, as they are now a delight to every visitor.

A single river clasps all the Black Hills in its two branches, and a score of swift and sparkling streams flow into these in nearly every direction from the very center of the region. Oval in outline, their longest diameter is northwest and southeast. They are about 90 miles in length and 60 in breadth, and the much larger portion is included in Dakota.

The most elevated is crowned with peaks, of which Harney’s Peak, near the southern line of Pennington County, is 9,700 feet. (Ed’s. note: Apparently Harney peak has fallen on evil days since the 1880's. Its current elevation is listed as 7,242 feet.) There are other high points near this. Custer’s Peak and Crook’s Tower, in the southwest part of Lawrence County, are nearly as high. See a cloud cap form on Harney’s Peak, like the one described on ‘Thunder’s Nest.’

The list of products of the Hills would be a complete list of the products of Dakota. Corn and flax receive little attention. Wheat, oats, and grass yield great crops. Upon the plains far around are vast herds of cattle that are left to graze all winter upon the cured grass. Generally, the snow is kept off the ridges and slopes by the wind, but in times of severe cold and deep snows the animals suffer greatly.

The chief wealth is in the metals—gold, silver, tin, lead, and copper. As if these

Continued on page 3.

READING LESSON 1.

“‘To the doorways of the West Wind, To the portals of the Sunset.”

Queen of the free rolling prairie, Fenced with the ripening grain, The eagle, far up in his aer, Seeks thy riches, widespread as the main.
The miner dives deep in earth’s bosom, To deck thy proud brow with pale gold; On thy emerald ranges the rookish Guard the herds and the flocks, without fold. Who shall limit thy future’s proud glory? The conquests that for ever remain, Thy time-honored greatness in story, Dakota, Proud Queen of the Plain.”
History Conference Slated

The 13th Annual Black Hills History Conference will be held at the Northern Hills Holiday Inn (Spearfish) on April 24 and 25, 1987.

The conference is sponsored and organized by the Social Science Division at Black Hills State. Its purpose is to heighten the interest of people in the history of our region and to preserve parts of it that might otherwise be lost.

Two years ago, the conference was cancelled because of a severe snowstorm. Last year, another storm forced consolidation of the conference into a single day affair, but in spite of that, the conference went off very well.

Last year, some very interesting papers were presented. Don Young presented a paper on C.V. Gardner, a Black Hills pioneer who fought in the Civil War. Joel Waterland, a retired Homestake engineer, talked on the first major innovations in mining machinery in the Black Hills. “Homestead Hardships” was the topic of Esther Leitellier of Norris. Dave Laudenschlager from Rapid City spoke on “Duane Robinson: Dakota Historian.”

Shebby Lee, Rapid City, presented a look at 19th Century Club Women and Mabel Brown from Newcastle reminisced about rural schools in this region. The work of Civilian Conservation Corps in the Black Hills region provided the topic for Spearfish resident Ron Schultze while Tom Gaske of Vermillion regaled us with his study of how places were named in South Dakota. Jim Court, Custer Battlefield Superintendent, was the luncheon speaker. He talked about the archeological digs at the battlefield in 1984-85.

The conference will begin with registration from 12 noon to 1 p.m. on Friday, and will include a banquet Friday evening and additional presentations and a luncheon on Saturday. Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the conference, or in attending, should contact Dr. David Miller or Dr. Paul Haivala, Social Science Division, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, SD 57783. Winners of the Leland D. Case essay awards and recipients of Case Scholarships will be honored at the Friday evening banquet.

Do you have anything that looks like this? The Case Library for Western Historical Studies would like to preserve your old photos, maps, diaries, journals, letters, business records, etc. If you want the originals, let us pick up your materials, copy them and return them to you.
Part of one of the Black Hills’ most interesting ghost towns, this is Tinton’s school as it appeared in the early 1970’s.

1987 Scholarships Offered

The BHSC Social Science Division will offer five scholarships for the 1987-88 school year. These scholarships will be awarded to entering freshmen who plan to major in history or other areas of social science at BHSC.

The scholarships are made possible through the generosity of Leland D. Case and the Friends of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies at BHSC. These scholarships are limited to residents of western South Dakota; Carter County, Montana; and Crook and Weston Counties in Wyoming. Interested persons should send a letter indicating their desire to receive a Case Scholarship. The student’s high school principal should forward a copy of the student’s high school transcript and a letter of recommendation. The student should also request that a teacher send a letter of recommendation attesting to the academic ability and moral excellence of the applicant. Scholarship awards will be for $250 each and will be presented at BHSC when students enroll for the fall semester 1987.

The scholarships will be drawn from a list of 15 names honoring individuals who have helped to make the history of the Black Hills.

- Jedediah S. Smith (1799-1831), first explorer of record in the Black Hills (1823), for whom the Westerner Corral at Hot Springs is named.
- Joseph W. Pickett (1832-1879), founder of Dakota College (1879-83), under Congregational auspices at Spearfish, forerunner of Black Hills State College.
- Annie D. Tolliver (1827-1901), first white woman in the Black Hills (1874), public school teacher and historian.
- Henry Weston, “Preacher,” Smith (1827-76), first clergyman in the Black Hills, killed enroute from Deadwood to Crook City to preach.
- Capt. C.V. Gardiner (1836-1930), brought first quartz and flour mills to Black Hills, merchant, editor, rancher, Civil War veteran.
- Seth Bullock (1847-1910), first Black Hills sheriff and U.S. Marshal, Deadwood merchant and Belle Fourche rancher.
- John W. Hencher (1856-1942), president of the Methodist-founded Black Hills College (1887-1900), first four-year liberal arts school in the Hills, at Hot Springs.
- Chauncey Yellow Robe, Tasingi in Sioux (1867-1930), son of Lakota chief, graduate of Carlisle, disciplinarian at Rapid City Indian School.
- Badger Clark (1882-1957), the “Cowboy Poet,” South Dakota Poet Laureate, who lived at “Badger Hole” in Custer State Park.
- Gauton Borghem (1897-1941), creator of the world famous Shrine of Democracy known as the Mount Rushmore Memorial.

Letters of application should be received by June 1, 1987, and should be sent to:

Dr. David Miller
Social Science Division
College Station, Box 9070
Black Hills State College
Spearfish, SD 57783-1797

Purpose of the Friends of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies as described in Article II of the organization’s bylaws:

“The purpose of this organization shall be to focus campus regional and national attention on the Leland D. Case Library as an appropriate center for studies, to stimulate gifts of appropriate books, letters, manuscripts and other memorabilia and to raise funds through memberships and other gifts.”

Comprising collections oriented to the Black Hills—a geological/geographical rosette some 60 miles wide and 120 miles long but two centuries deep in history, (At E.V. Berry Learning Center; Phone: 605-642-8833)
The Black Hills a Century Ago (cont.)

were not enough, there are also mica, gypsum, coal, and many varieties of building and ornamental stone.

Four great mines, the Homestake, the Father DeSmet, the Deadwood-Terra, and the Caledonia, all in one small district, produce most of the gold. There are many other rich mines, all in this locality, but they have not been so thoroughly worked. The wealth of the Hills has only been touched, and great things are to be done in the future.

The Carbonate district, where lead is mined that contains silver, lies 12 miles west of Deadwood. Iron Hill is the leading mine. All around the central peak (Harney Peak) is a region in which tin is found. Upon the north and west sides are the best mines, which extend to a point six miles south of Custer, in the county of that name. There is another and smaller tin district in the western part of Lawrence County.

When gold is dug and brought up out of the mines, you would not think it was that metal. It is thinly scattered through masses of rock. There are great and strong buildings, in which are powerful steam engines and machinery. This gold-bearing rock is often lifted from the mines in pieces as big as the body of a child.

Rock crushers break it up into smaller pieces, which are then ground to dust under stamps, which free the particles of gold. The gold is taken out by washing all this over sheets of metal covered with quicksilver which catches and holds the little gold flakes. Then the quicksilver is separated from the gold. Many millions of dollars have been mined in the Hills.

Deadwood is the chief city, or metropolis. It was begun in 1876, and in the early days was the scene of many acts of lawlessness and violence. It is now a beautiful and orderly city. Its wealth comes from the mines near Lead City and Central City a short distance above. In 1879 it was nearly destroyed by fire, and later, was badly damaged by flood. It recovered with great energy and now has fine churches, school-houses, and business blocks.

Rapid City, in Pennington County, is a beautiful town just east of the Hills. It is the seat of the Dakota School of Mines, which has good buildings, and is doing superior work in preparing young men for skillful mining. (The first person to complete the full course of study would be a woman—Ed.)

The Methodist Church has located its college for Western Dakota at Hot Springs, in Fall River County.

Custer City and Buffalo Gap are the principal places in Custer County. A Normal School has been erected by the territory at Spearfish, a pleasant town in a very attractive region, in Lawrence County.

The valley of Belle Fourche, in Butte County, is a beautiful rolling plain, adapted to farming and stock raising. Minnesotan is the county seat and chief town.

Railroads have now entered the hills and much more rapid progress will follow. The people are educated, intelligent and rigorous.

(There it is... The Black Hills, a century ago. No Mount Rushmore, no Crazy Horse Mountain, no Ellsworth Air Force Base, no Reptile Gardens, no Black Hills Passion Play... There have been some changes. But could someone reading Beadle's 1880's description of the Black Hills landscape still get a reasonably good picture of the Black Hills today? How one answers this question may offer an insight into how well we have preserved the natural legacy the American frontier received when it captured one of the gems of the American West—the Black Hills... Ed.)

Case Library Donors

The holdings of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies continue to grow, and the generosity of donors is a major reason for that growth. The summary of donations which follows includes gifts received during the period from August 1, 1984, through September 6, 1985.

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Black Hills History Conference: 6 cassette tapes; 16 typescripts........... 22 pieces
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The Westerners, Black Hills Corral: 1 newspaper clipping (2 copies)........ 2 pieces
Young, Donald E.: 2 monographs; 1 pamphlet; 1 typescript; 1 portfolio (with 5 prints).......... 9 pieces
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Haivala, Dr. Paul A.: 3 student papers; 3 student interviews on cassette tapes.... 6 pieces

Continued on page 4.

An Open Invitation

Those interested in becoming Friends of the CASE Library (everybody is welcome) are encouraged to “saddle up” with those already in the vanguard of enthusiastic supporters. Cash contributions as well as gifts of western historical material are earnestly solicited. Make checks payable to Friends of the Case Library and mail to Richard Hart, treasurer, 1317 Davenport St., Sturgis, S.D. 57785.

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* Annual Endowing Memberships are cumulative; ten will bring a Life Fellowship

* Funds become Endowment Principal only income used
No longer in service, this is the Kennebec, S.D., Milwaukee Railroad depot. Since this photo was taken in 1980, the Kennebec depot has joined hundreds of other extinct railroad structures in South Dakota.

Ready for competition, a Rapid City hose team prepares to run in the fireman’s association race about 1900. Hose team races combined competition and socializing among volunteer fire companies and gave citizen-firemen incentives to keep their fire-fighting skills sharpened.
Here lie the remains of downtown Wellington, Kansas, after an 1890's tornado. Thousands of photos of this style were sold by studios across the west during the pre-First World War era. Do you have any you would be willing to share with the Case Library?

The residence of Rapid City banker James Halley at 7th and Kansas City Streets was typical of homes built by the town's rising business leadership in the 1880s and 1890s. Perhaps Halley's greatest legacy to Rapid City is Halley Park where the Sioux Indian Museum and Minnelusa Historical Society building now stands. The Halley home pictured here was razed in the 1950s.

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- **Jonas, Mrs. Lorena:** 6 monographs: 6 pieces

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