The History of Yankton County to 1886

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By
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B. A. Yankton College, 1923

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Department of History
University of South Dakota
May, 1927
The above map was taken from Andreas Atlas of South Dakota.
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INTRODUCTION

It is my endeavor in this thesis to give a history of Yankton County as a typical example of frontier development in the West. The frontier holds an important place in United States history and may be spoken of as the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. "The frontier is the outer edge of the wave of settlement, the meeting point between savagery and civilization. The most significant thing about the American frontier is that it lies on the outer edge of free land."

The kinds of frontier that are generally considered in a discussion of early settlements are prominent in the development and growth of this territory. The various steps through which a frontier passes are:-(1)fur-trading; (2)mining or ranching, if physical background permits; (3)extensive and later intensive agriculture; (4)manufacturing. These various stages of development were prominent in Yankton County; the last mentioned not to such an extent as a labor surplus hardly existed by 1886. "Dakota belonged to the western margin of the agricultural frontier."

Typical problems that were met on the frontier were:-(1)the relations with the Indians; (2)the disposal of the public domain; (3)means of economic growth and intercourse with the older settlements; (4)extension of the political

2 Ibid., p. 3.
organization to meet the needs of the territory;
(5) religious and educational activity.

The development of this western region was one which required time and money but the rapidity of change is a prominent feature. "The buffalo trail became the Indian trail and this in turn the traders "trace", the trails widened into roads and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads."
CHAPTER I

YANKTON COUNTY AS A FUR-TRADING CENTER

Fur-trading developed in the Missouri Valley, of which Yankton County was a later unit, shortly after the purchase of Louisiana in 1803. In order to find out the fur-trading possibilities Jefferson planned an exploring expedition. He intrusted the leadership to Capt. Merryweather Lewis and Capt. William Clark of the regular army. On May 14, 1804 they started up the Missouri River to explore the territory and make friendly relations with the Indians. Various stops were made by the party as they proceeded up the river. The first stop in what is now Yankton County was ten miles from Yankton, near the mouth of the river called by the French Jacques, James or Yankton from the tribe which inhabited its banks. The Yanktons were a tribe of the Sioux Indians.

The interpreter Durion and several others were sent ahead to the Yankton camp, the present site of Yankton, to make arrangements for a council. The next day the expedition proceeded up the river to a point near Calumet bluff where they formed their camp and waited the arrival of the Sioux. This site was at the foot of Locust street in west Yankton. Here the party remained for four days, holding council with the Yankton Indians. "This was the first formal council held between the representatives of the United States and the native inhabitants of this territory, and the first occasion when the Stars and Stripes the national emblem was displayed

as a token of sovereignty upon the soil of Dakota."

These representatives had come to win the good-will and friendship of the Indians and also to open this territory to the prosperous fur trade. The government had supplied the expedition with presents for the Indians. The chiefs were acknowledged and the grand chief was presented with a flag, metal, certificate and a uniform. The old French interpreter Durion, who had been left with the Indians at Yankton on the way up, took a number of Yankton chiefs to Washington in the spring of 1805, where they were royally entertained and returned to their homes so favorably impressed that the tribe forever after remained on friendly terms with the whites.

Fur-trading was established early in this region. "It was of special importance between 1808 and 1837" although nearly destroyed by the war of 1812-1814. Prior to 1808 bison were so numerous east and south of the Dakota area that the fur-trade of the "Sioux country" was mainly in the more valuable, less bulky, and more easily transported furs of the beaver, mink and otter. The furs obtained from Dakota were more valuable than those secured from nearby areas. The greater severity of most winters in the Upper Missouri Valley, the light snowfall of most years and the persistence of the winds are probable reasons for the difference.

6 Visher, p. 132.
When fur trade was at its height in this area the hides of the bison were the chief skins secured. The abundance of the bison was due in part to the geographic conditions. The plains were grass-covered due to the climatic conditions; and this grass, especially the variety called "Buffalo grass" which was cured by the dry weather of late summer provided food the year round for these animals. The various streams furnished the water supply.

The plains and streams of this Dakota country abounded in fur-bearing animals and traffic in this merchandise brought independent traders to this territory; while a number of trading posts were maintained. Most of the fur-trading posts were located on the Missouri or near the mouth of its tributaries. This distribution reflects the importance of water routes in transporting furs to market.

The fur trade of the Upper Missouri Valley was handled by the following companies:—Columbia, American and Frost, Todd and Company. The last mentioned was the most active in Yankton County.

The trading post, Rivere a Jacques was located at the mouth of the James River in Yankton County. The Columbia and the American Fur Companies were established at this post, and carried on trade with the Yanktons.

The American Fur Company had practically a monopoly of the fur trade on the Missouri and Mississippi from 1819 to

7 Visher, p. 132.
9 Visher, p. 133.
1866, the final closing of the fur-trading epoch. This company had its main road of trade across this territory about three miles north of the James River bridge. There was also extensive trade along the Missouri.

Frost, Todd and Company carried on active trade in this territory. This mercantile association held a permit from the government to engage in traffic with the Indians at various points in this territory. Under the authority of this license Lyman superintended the construction of a ferry house and trading post on the east bank of the James River at the ferry crossing in May 1857. Lyman and his associates spent the winter at the trading post; its members employed the time in hunting, trapping, fishing, getting lumber and trading with the Indians.

In March 1858, George D. Fiske, an employee of the Frost, Todd and Company reached Yankton and pitched his tent near the river bank at the foot of the present Walnut street. Fiske had charge of the mercantile affairs at Yankton. "He was the first white man to take up a permanent abode within the present corporate limits of the city." In July following Fiskes arrival a trading post was built under Lymans supervision. It was located on the levee near the steamboat landing on Walnut street. This post was composed of two log buildings joined together with a shed, one part was used

13 Ibid., p. 119.
for a store and the other for living purposes. This post at Yankton carried on active trade not only with the Indians but later with the white settlers during the 1860s.

After completing the building of the post at Yankton Lyman and his associates erected a log cabin for traders at Smutty Bears camp, about ten miles above Yankton. It is doubtful however whether it was occupied as a trading post.

During 1857 and 1858 Frost, Todd and Company constructed other fur-trading posts in the Missouri valley between the Big Sioux and Fort Pierre; ostensibly at least for the purpose of carrying on trade with the Indians. No doubt these improvements were also designed to secure certain preferred privileges which were to be made to such parties in the treaty of cession with the Yankton Indians which was then contemplated. Immediately after the formation of this company active efforts were made by them to affect a treaty of cession with the Yanktons.

Several factors must be noted in the decline of the fur trade. The Indians of the plains depended largely on the bison and where the latter were plentiful, the former were likely to be numerous. They supplied the fur-traders with many skins and were so important in the fur trade of this region that the small-pox scourge of 1837, which almost depopulated several villages, perhaps was an important influence in the decline of the fur trade.

Fur-bearing animals were exterminated more rapidly in

16 Ibid., p. 120.
17 Ibid., p. 120.
this region than in some of the other areas because of the geographic conditions. On the plains the large fur-bearing animals could readily be seen at a distance, also the semi-aquatic species which lived near streams and ponds, consequently the extermination of these animals was facilitated.

The increase of population in this area, and the use of breech-loading rifles had a great influence in bringing fur trade to a close. The fur trade as a leading industry had disappeared from the Dakota area before permanent agricultural settlements were established. Most of the trading posts were abandoned before towns were founded, although on the sites of some towns have been built. This was true of Yankton. The smaller fur-bearing animals, mink, muskrat and skunk increased in number after the decline of the regular fur trade, and their furs helped many pioneer farmers to become established in this territory.

19 Visher, p. 133.
20 Ibid., p. 133.
21 Ibid., p. 134.
22 Ibid., p. 134.
CHAPTER II

EARLY SETTLEMENT OF YANKTON COUNTY

In 1857, the Yanktons, a tribe of the Sioux with their chief "Struck by the Ree" occupied what is now the city of Yankton. Traders and steamboatmen designated the Indian village as "Struck by the Ree's camp" and the surrounding area as the "Yankton Valley".

The earliest white settlers of this territory were representatives of the fur companies, especially Frost, Todd and Company. These men had permits from the government to carry on traffic with the Indians, consequently could settle in this region without being molested. The "squatters" those who occupied the area without a legal right were considered trespassers and were expelled by the Indians.

In February 1858, the Upper Missouri Land Company was organized at Sioux City. It was composed of D. M. Frost, J. B. S. Todd and others. Through the efforts of this company a movement was started for a treaty with the Yankton Indians for the cession of a large tract of their Dakota Domain. A treaty delegation of five members headed by J. B. S. Todd and Picotte, an educated Yankton half-breed was selected. This group and twelve or fifteen warriors including "Old Strike" were sent to Washington to affect a treaty of cession. Two months were spent in negotiating, because Picotte and "Old Strike" were reluctant

2 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
3 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
4 Ibid., p. 117.
to sell but finally were persuaded to do so. About the middle of April 1858 the treaty was agreed to and signed by the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the leading Yankton chiefs. It was ratified by the United States Senate February 1859.

Through the Treaty of 1858, the United States received 14,000,000 acres or twenty-five thousand square miles of Dakota land. The Indians received in payment for this large tract a little over twelve cents an acre, a total of $1,600,066. 400,000 acres on the Missouri in Charles Mix County were retained by the Indians for a reservation. The Indians were given one year after the ratification of the Treaty to leave the territory for the reservation. The government was to establish education, mills and stores on the reservation. By a provision of the treaty Charles F. Picotte and Recontre received 640 acres of land. Several other influential whites or half-breeds received lesser amounts. These people had rendered valuable services to the Yanktons. Most of them had been members of the treaty delegation. Frost, Todd and Company were given the privilege of buying 160 acres for $1.25 an acre at every place where they had trading posts.

In June 1858, the treaty grants to Picotte and Frost, Todd and Company were surveyed by George M. Ryall of Sioux City. The section of land selected by Picotte on his return

6 Ibid., p. 119.
8 Ibid., p. 249.
9 Ibid., p. 249.
from the treaty-making trip to Washington comprised all of college hill and east. The quarter section west of Picottes, which was selected by Frost, Todd and Company, fronted on the river, thus became the townsite of Yankton. This company also made selections on the James, Vermillion and Big Sioux Rivers.

The Indians were reluctant to leave for the reservation. Smutty Bear, one of the chiefs who had signed the treaty, became the leader of the faction opposed to the sale. This group caused a great deal of trouble within the tribe, and no doubt hindered removal to the reservation.

In July 1859 following the ratification of the treaty Major A. H. Redfield, the first United States agent of the Yankton Indians, reached Yankton on the steamboat "Carrier". The boat carried food, blankets and implements for the Indians of the reservation. The agent also had on board gold and silver to pay the Indians the first installment on the treaty. The agent who held a council with the tribe at Yankton, distributed gifts and provisions, thus making a favorable impression. The Indians now decided to leave for their new home, the reservation. As the boat proceeded up the river, the Indians followed along the bank.

During the intervening time between the signing of the treaty and its ratification, several white people came into this Dakota area to hunt or settle. The Indians considered them trespassers and asked them to leave. As they did not

13 Ibid., p. 251.
15 Ibid., p. 142.
comply with the request the Indians called upon the government for assistance. The government sent Company I from Fort Randall. They passed through the country and ejected all those who had no legal right to settle here, and destroyed their property. Several had selected claims about Yankton, but could not take possession until the Indians left. These so called "squatters" banded together and called their organization the "Yankton Claims Club".

In 1859, after the Indians had left, the upper Missouri Land Company met at Yankton and dissolved and the Yankton Land and Town Company was established. In August 1859, the town plot was surveyed and laid out by this company. They also gave the town its name, Yankton.

In 1860, the territory received through the Treaty of 1858 was surveyed by surveyors Ball and Darling, through contract with the Dubuque Land office. In surveying a territory the surveyors determine a north and south line known as the principal meridian and an east and west line at right angles as the base line. At each side of the meridian range lines are run six miles apart, and on each side of the base line parallel lines six miles apart are run. These districts, six miles square, are known as townships. Each township is divided into thirty-six sections, numbered from right to left and from left to right, etc. Each section a mile square is divided into four districts of 160 acres each,

17 Ibid., p. 137.
18 Ibid., p. 144. Prior to 1859 the name Yankton was not applied to the village, but it was known as the "Camp of Old Strike" in the Yankton Valley.
19 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
known as quarter sections.

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A Township

Immigration commenced immediately after the departure of the Indians from the area. Many had settled temporarily on the Nebraska side of the river awaiting the opening of the territory for settlement. The townsite owners placed their land on the market and encouraged settlement. Many came and located in the town and many took up farms in the surrounding area.

In 1858, Yankton County had a population of 2,009:—2,000 Indians and 9 whites; the latter were in the employ of Frost, Todd and Company. The census of 1859 gave a population of 22. In 1860 there was a remarkable increase, 458 now occupying this area. It was during this year that the Scandinavian settlement was made at Gayville in the eastern part of Yankton County.

In 1858 a mass meeting was held at Sioux Falls to establish some organized government and to petition Congress to organize the Territory of Dakota. At this meeting a provisional

21 Press and Dakotan, Jan. 1, 1879.
22 United States Census, 1860, p. 552.
23 Press and Dakotan, Jan. 1, 1879.
legislature was established and several state officers elected. A similar legislature was held in 1859. Through the efforts of the Sioux Falls group three bills were introduced in Congress in 1858 and 1859 for the establishment of a territory, but with no results.

November 8, 1859 a "Settlers Mass Meeting" was held at Yankton. Resolutions were adopted and a memorial to Congress setting forth the needs of the people was drawn up and circulated throughout the territory for signatures. It was signed by every settler in the Missouri Valley. Capt. Todd went to Washington in the interest of this bill. As the bill was not passed in 1860, another territorial mass meeting was held at Yankton, Jan. 16, 1861. Another memorial was drawn up and signed by practically all the settlers. On Feb. 14, 1861 Senator Green from the Committee on Territories introduced a bill for the establishment of the Territory of Dakota. This bill passed the Senate and House and was signed by President Buchanan forty-eight hours before his term expired. As there was no telegraph system north of St. Joseph, Missouri, and only a short distance into Iowa the news did not reach the anxious settlers for eleven days. There was great rejoicing when the news became known. The name Dakota was applied to this Territory in 1858 when Minnesota became a state. This name was derived from "Lakota" or "Dakota" the Indians who occupied this region.

27 Ibid., p. 169.
28 Ibid., p. 174.
President Lincoln appointed Dr. Jayne of Springfield, Ohio, as Governor of Dakota Territory. The settlers anxiously awaited the arrival of the Governor. Vermillion, fearing the Governor would pass through their town and locate at Yankton, devised a scheme by which they would banquet him and treat him so royally that he would remain and establish the temporary capital at Vermillion. The prominent men of the town met the stage-coach and found a distinguished man on board. They escorted him to the banquet hall. During the conversation at the banquet they learned much to their surprise that he was not the Governor but Bigelow, a prospective settler, who had come from the East to look over the Territory. He settled at Vermillion and lived there many years. While this man was being entertained, the Governor passed through Vermillion to Yankton, and established the temporary capital there.

The first duty of the Governor was to have the census taken and to establish judicial districts. The census of 1861 showed a population of 2,376 persons in the Territory and 287 in the Yankton area. Three judicial districts were established:—Yankton, Vermillion and Bon Homme.

The early settlers in this Dakota area were greatly interested in politics. This is shown by the various political movements during 1861 for the nomination and election of representatives to the Legislature. The various settlements held mass meetings in which strife was shown in the election of members to the Legislature; but Todd

29 Armstrong, p. 113.
seemed to be favored as delegate to Congress. Kingsbury says: “the first formal political movement was held in Yankton in August 1861”. The election held in September 1861 resulted in Todd becoming Congressional delegate; Bramble and Stustman from Yankton, councilmen; Armstrong and Stanage, representatives to the Legislature.

The first Territorial Legislature, known as the "Pony Congress" was called by Governor Jayne to convene Mar. 17, 1862, at Yankton. The Legislature was composed of nine councilmen and thirteen representatives. The main issue was the location of the capital. Vermillion and Yankton were rivals for this honor. Pinney of Bon Homme became speaker of the House, through the influence of the Yankton representatives, so it was thought that he would favor Yankton as capital of the Territory. He however proved unfriendly causing a great deal of strife in the House. One day it was necessary for him to ask for assistance from the Governor to maintain order. As a result a body of troops from Company A were stationed in the building to prevent riot. This caused a great deal of indignation both in the House and Council.

The bill for the location of the capital of the Territory was introduced in the Council by Stustman, a Yankton councilman. It was read twice, referred to the Committee on Territorial Affairs and reported on favorably. When it was taken up for a third reading, Boyle of Vermillion proposed an

32 Council Journal, Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Dakota, 1862, p. 51.
amendment inserting the word "Vermillion" in place of 
"Yankton". The amendment was lost. The bill was now sent 
to the House, where it was laid on the table the first day, 
the following day it was considered by a committee of the 
whole. Pinney moved that "Bon Homme" be inserted for 
"Yankton". The amendment was lost. Pinney then moved to 
strike out "Yankton" and insert "Vermillion". The bill 
passed the House in this form. The Council would not concur 
in the House amendment, and thus notified the House. 
Through a motion by Armstrong, from Yankton, the House 
receded from its amendment and concurred in the original 
bill. The bill thereupon passed in its original form and 
was signed by the Governor. Yankton now was the permanent 
capital of the Dakota Territory.

Ninety-one laws were passed at this first session of the 
Legislature. The most outstanding laws were the following:— 
(1) to locate the university at Vermillion; (2) to locate the 
penitentiary at Bon Homme; (3) a law for the regulation and 
support of common schools; (4) a code of criminal procedure; 
(5) Yankton County was established with Yankton as county seat.

The first general election under the Territorial 
government was held Sept. 1, 1862. This election came at the 
time of the Indian trouble. It is said that many voters 
carried their guns to the polls for protection. The vote was

33 Council Journal, Territory of Dakota, 1862, p. 54. 
36 Council Journal, 1862, p. 72. 
37 Ibid., p. 73. 
39 Ibid., p. 208.
heavy in spite of the Indian scare. No election was held at Sioux Falls, as the inhabitants had either left the Territory or gone to the stockade at Yankton. Todd and Jayne were the candidates for congressional delegate. Jayne won in the southern counties. Todd had a majority of the Red River Valley votes. The Legislature had provided that if the votes were not in within forty days a messenger should be sent for them. No messenger was sent to the Red River area because of the expense it would incur, consequently the votes came in too late to be considered, so Jayne became the congressional delegate.

Since the first election was not held until Sept. 1, 1862, the Governor appointed the following county officers:—three commissioners, register of deeds, who was also county clerk, sheriff, judge of probate, county attorney, surveyor, coroner, superintendent of schools, two justices of the peace, and two constables.

The first meeting of the Yankton County commissioners was held June 2, 1862. A temporary organization of county affairs was made at this meeting. In September the general election was held and the county officials elected. The important county officials were:—the commissioners, surveyor, treasurer, constables, sheriff, superintendent of schools and county judge. The commissioners had general administration of the affairs of the county. They levied the taxes, cared for county roads and bridges, issued the warrants

41 Ibid., p. 229.
for the payment of money, audited the accounts of the county officers, issued bonds, which must also be put to the vote of the people, canvassed election returns and had general supervision of all county constructions. The duties of the other above mentioned officials are self-explanatory consequently need no special comment.
CHAPTER III

PERIOD OF HARDSHES, 1862-1868

This period was one of hardtimes not only in the Dakota Territory, but in the United States in general. The Civil War 1861-65 had a great influence on the conditions in the West. In the fall of 1861, the war department authorized the Dakota government to raise two companies of cavalry for the war of the rebellion. These companies were to be employed in patrolling and garrison duty in the Territory. Three recruiting stations were established:—Yankton, Vermillion and Bon Homme. These towns were the most important on the Missouri, at this time. The recruiting officers entered upon their duties, and soon Company A raised its complement and was mustered into the service, April 1862, for three years or till the end of the war. This company was claimed by some as a local organization, though not more than one-third were from Yankton County. In June 1862, the cavalry was placed under the territorial Governor. These cavalrymen were now placed at various points throughout the Territory for the protection of the settlers. One of these camps was near the James River in Yankton County.

In 1862 the Great Indian War broke out in Minnesota. The Indians of western Minnesota were promised $140,000 annuities by the government for giving up part of their territory. The government did not pay these annuities promptly; consequently the Indians started an uprising, known as the Minnesota Massacre. Most of the able-bodied

2 Ibid., p. 191.
3 Ibid., pp. 233-234.
whites and half-breeds were in the United States service in the Civil War. The Indians took advantage of these circumstances, massacring eight hundred whites in a few days in Minnesota. Since the frontier was not adequately protected, the Santee band of the Sioux crossed the border into Dakota Territory and began their depredations in eastern Dakota. Two men were killed near Sioux Falls by these ravaging tribes. Fear of the Indians ran high and it was evident that some provision must be made for the protection of the frontier settlers. Governor Jayne to guard against future massacres called out the militia, all male citizens between the ages of eighteen and fifty. The people of Yankton met and organized a company of militia composed of eighty members. Steps were now taken for the building of a stockade at Yankton where the people of the Territory could seek refuge.

4 The stockade (see Figure 3) was six hundred and fifty feet square and was built so that the intersection of third and Broadway was at the center of it. Ashe's hotel and several other buildings were enclosed within its walls. The north defence was of sod three feet thick and five and a half feet high; the east and west, posts planked and filled with earth; the south side was built in stockade fashion, a double row of posts in a trench. The gate was on the south side near Broadway. A bronze tablet inserted in a large boulder now marks the site of the stockade, which was of historic importance in Dakota.

5 Ibid., pp. 236-237.
The Stockade at Yankton

The above figure was taken from Robinson's History of South Dakota, Vol. I, p. 186.
The settlers of the Missouri valley were fearful of the attitude of the Yankton Indians. It was rumored that Strike the Ree had made a statement that the young Yanktons might assist Little Crow against the whites. This report heightened the excitement throughout the Territory but especially in Bon Homme where the settlers feared if the Indians did go on the warpath their territory would be devastated, because of its proximity to the Yankton Reservation. The Yankton Indians, however, proved friendly and later one hundred of their tribe joined the whites in driving out the Minnesota tribes.

The Norwegian settlement of Gayville was cut off from Yankton by Indians in the James River Valley, so they crossed the Missouri into Nebraska. This move no doubt saved them from possible massacre because the cavalry drove the Indians through this area.

The militia with the aid of the Yanktons subdued the Minnesota tribes, consequently they withdrew from the Territory and the serious Indian troubles in this section were at an end. In 1866 the Indians again caused trouble along the frontier but with no serious consequences.

Agricultural conditions during this period were such that prosperity was doubtful. The early crops were not successful because of the crude methods employed in preparing the soil and planting and because the settlers did not know what crops were best adapted to the soil.

6 Press and Dakotan, Dec. 6, 1878.
and climate. The frontier conditions in general placed a great hardship upon the settlers. The settlers lived in sod houses and often burned hay because of lack of adequate fuel. Many farmers were made destitute by the crop failures during this period, as in early times they depended almost entirely upon the crops for sustenance. Crops failed during this season because of the climatic conditions and pests. Especially was this failure due to severe winters followed by devastating floods and dry weather. In 1863–65 the grasshoppers were numerous and caused a great deal of damage. The fine crops of 1867 were destroyed by vast swarms of grasshoppers in one day. Due to the severe drought and devastating visits of the grasshoppers, few settlers were left in the Territory. For these reasons little was done from 1862 to 1867 toward extending the settlements or following agricultural pursuits; except the raising of stock, for which there was a good market at the posts and agencies.

Transportation facilities were such that articles of necessity were often impossible to obtain. Steamboat traffic was active on the Missouri, but often during the dry seasons of this period the river was low, so the boats became stranded on the sand bars. Five months during the year it was impossible to carry on traffic on the river. Consequently it is evident that steamboat traffic was not

10 Armstrong, p. 47.
12 Ibid., p. 68.
dependable. The people suffered hardships as their supplies had to be brought from Sioux City to Yankton and the various towns on the river, and from them carried overland to outlying settlements.

Immigration during these years was very small, although some Easterners were seeking homes in the West under the Homestead Act of 1862. In 1864 a group of New Yorkers formed the "Free Homestead Association of New York". They sent a representative to investigate the conditions. He returned home and reported Dakota as the most favorable with Yankton as the best place of settlement. Special railroad rates and transportation were given to this group. A hundred families came West, all bound for Yankton; some however stopped at Sioux City, others in Clay County but the majority came to Yankton and Yankton County, a few going on to Bon Homme. This was the first colony of Americans to emigrate to Dakota, consequently was known as the "Pioneer Colony". A number of the sixty families who settled in Dakota became disheartened by the drought and grasshoppers of the first summer, and consequently left the Territory. In 1870, only thirty families remained mostly in the Missouri Valley, near Yankton.

The Indian Wars of Dakota during 1863-1865 greatly depopulated the towns and retarded the growth of settlements. The influx of settlers after the Indian troubles was slow, partly due to the unfavorable reputation given the territory.

14 Foster, p. 42.
16 Press and Dakotan, Feb. 1, 1871.
as a result of the drought and grasshopper plague. Iowa
volunteers, during this period had witnessed the adverse
conditions, therefore circulated unfavorable reports.
The stagnation during this period is well illustrated by
the population of the Sioux Valley, which in 1868 was less
than it had been ten years previous. Conditions gradually
improved during the period, so in 1868 we enter into a
period of prosperity in Dakota.

17 Foster, p. 23.
(Chicago, 1884).
CHAPTER IV

PERIOD OF PROSPERITY, 1868-1873

In 1869, shortly after the beginning of the First Dakota Boom, Yankton was chartered as a city. The first charter election was held on the first Monday of April, at which time 1 aldermen were elected. Real estate met with ready sale here and throughout the Territory during the year. Prices advanced 2 from twenty-five to one hundred per cent. There was active development in the county during this period.

Factors influencing prosperity during the period were:- (1) extensive steamboat travel; (2) approach of the railroad and resulting improvement of transportation; (3) large increase of immigration; (4) seasons favorable for all kinds of grain; (5) good crops in this area.

Steamboats took a prominent part in trade before the coming of the railroad. As soon as the railroad entered a town the steamboat traffic below that point diminished. When the railroad entered Omaha, Sioux City became the steamboat center; when the railroad reached Sioux City, Yankton became the base of navigation. Among the natural advantages of Yankton during the early years of settlement was the excellent steamboat landing, extending the entire length of the city's river front. The capital city had extensive steamboat trade and steamboat accommodations. In 1869 Yankton was the only commercial port on the Missouri. During this year when large numbers of gold

1 Andreas, p. 131.
2 Foster, p. 86.
3 Hanson, Joseph Hills: The Conquest of the Missouri River, p. 396, (Chicago, 1909).
seekers went to the western mines, one hundred and forty-three landings were made at Yankton. After 1873 when the railroad was built to Yankton, Bismark became the commercial center. The supplies for the Indians and the forts were shipped to Yankton by rail and then carried west by steamboats.

There were urgent demands in this Territory for transportation better than the steamboat provided. Several should be noted:—(1) railroad facilities were demanded by the growing interests of Dakota; (2) farmers needed cheaper and speedier transportation for their surplus products; (3) merchants needed better facilities for securing their merchandise; (4) people needed more ample and convenient means of travel.

Yankton County was in touch with the nearest commercial center, Sioux City, by steamboat and stagecoach. These means of transportation did not meet the needs of the area, consequently measures were taken to arouse interest in railroad connection with Sioux City. Representatives from the various railroad companies were called to Yankton and a conference held in regard to possible railroad extension in this territory.

In 1866-67 the Dakota Legislature enacted a law incorporating the Dakota and Northwestern Railroad Company. This was prior to the action of Congress prohibiting Territorial Legislatures to grant special charters. The granting of this charter was the beginning of earnest efforts

to secure a railroad west of Sioux City to Yankton. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul contemplated a western branch, the "Yankton Division", from Canton to Yankton. Elk Point and Vermillion were opposed to this proposition because they would not benefit by it. In March 1871, a number of the citizens from Yankton met and organized a railroad company under the title of the Dakota Southern Railroad Company. This company was strongly in favor of Lemars, Iowa, as an eastern terminal. Sioux City had a monopoly on the trade of this Dakota area, consequently discouraged the extension of a railroad westward. Seeing however, that a Yankton-Lemars railroad was contemplated Sioux City changed her attitude, and thus became the eastern terminus of the Dakota Southern.

The Territorial Legislature met in a special session and passed an act enabling the counties and townships to call elections to vote bonds for the aid of a railroad. Yankton County thereupon called an election and voted $200,000 in bonds. Elk Point voted $15,000 in bonds. Vermillion failed to vote bonds to assist the railroad, but finally agreed to give the railroad a right of way through the city, to erect a depot and give a deed to one hundred and fifty lots.

The Dakota Southern which absorbed the Dakota Northwestern completed the railroad from Sioux City to Yankton via Vermillion by Jan. 25, 1873. The first locomotive reached Yankton January twenty-sixth. An excursion to Sioux City was one of the ways

6 Press and Dakotan, Nov. 1, 1871.
8 Press and Dakotan, July 26, 1871.
of celebrating the completion of the railroad.

The promise of the railroad to employ mechanics and others from Yankton, and the building of workshops there was not carried out. This caused open complaint on the part of Yankton.

In 1875 the directors met and decided to mortgage the railroad for $1,200,000. They passed a resolution issuing $600,000 first mortgage bonds and $600,000 second mortgage bonds. Yankton County thereupon applied to the district court with the result that the company could go ahead with its bonding proceedings, but were required to give security in the amount of $200,000 to indemnify Yankton County against loss. The company objecting to the court decision, applied for a change of venue. It was not granted at this time. The trial was to be held later in Clay County. The railroad directors met with the County commissioners in conference, and decided the bond case out of court. The company now promised to erect $50,000 of improvements at Yankton.

The next legal proceeding was a step to keep the county treasurer from collecting taxes for the railroad bonds. This question was taken up in court, with the decision that the collection of taxes for railroad bonds was stopped for a time. This action led to a lawsuit of the National Bank of Brunswick, Maine, against Yankton County, the plaintiff seeking to recover defaulted interest on $10,000 of Yankton

10 Ibid., p. 628.
11 Ibid., p. 641.
12 Ibid., p. 641.
County railroad bonds. The case was tried in the United States court at Yankton, and judgment by the lower court was rendered the defendant. The case was then taken to the Territorial supreme court where the decision of the district court was reversed. The case was then appealed to the supreme court of the United States where it rested in the archives for four years, until 1880, when it was taken up and the decision of the territorial court reversed. The United States officials at Washington showed a great deal of antagonism, based on the alleged efforts of Yankton County to repudiate her indebtedness. Yankton County denied the charge and stated that the company did not abide with its agreement.

Finally after several attempts at settlement the county authorized new bonds. The election held for the purpose resulted in 804 for and 17 against. The new bonds were to be paid within thirty years, the redemption to begin at the option of the county any time after ten years from date of issue. These thirty year bonds were to bear four per cent interest the first ten years and four and one-half per cent thereafter.

The settlers of Yankton County received unfavorable criticism for bonding the county for such a large amount to secure a railroad. A railroad was absolutely necessary or settlement and production would have stopped in this area. The unfavorable criticism should have gone to the Federal

13 Press and Dakotan, May 29, 1880.
15 Press and Dakotan, April 4, 1882.
17 Press and Dakotan, Nov. 24, 1882.
18 Ibid., Nov. 24, 1882.
government for not giving a land grant on the public domain for the purpose. The United States received the gain from this railroad as she had paid only twelve cents an acre for this area and received $1.25.

In 1879-80 the Northwestern and the Milwaukee contested for the control of the Dakota Southern line with the result that the Milwaukee won.

The railroad had a very favorable effect upon the county. It furnished an outlet for her products; it brought in greater trade; and it stimulated immigration. Yankton became the distributing center of commercial products. The goods were brought to Yankton by railroad and then taken to western points by steamboat or overland. The county thus became the most prosperous in the Missouri Valley.

Immigration was a potent factor in this period of prosperity. "The rush of immigration during 1868 was so great that at the close of the year the population of the Territory was estimated at 12,000." In 1860 the population of the Territory was 4,837. In 1869 there was evidence of an unusually large addition to the Dakota population through immigration, stimulated by reports of the settlers to Eastern friends, describing the prosperous conditions and good crops of 1868. Prior to 1869, the only organized effort, that was made to bring settlers to Dakota, was the New York Colony. During 1869 a colony of several hundred Bohemians came West.

20 Ibid., pp. 647 and following.
21 Andreas, p. 100.
22 United States Census, 1860, p. 552.
23 Foster, p. 40.
24 Visher, p. 143.
and located in Dakota Territory; several groups settled along the Missouri, one group in western Yankton County. Several groups of Norwegians came into the Territory the same year.

"It is said that eight hundred of them left Sioux City for Dakota on June 3, 1869." In 1870 Yankton made more progress than any other western city without the stimulus of railroads. Yankton increased one-third in size and also one-third in population. Immigration was promoted in this period not only by land agents, colony organizers and the railroad but by local improvements and transportation facilities. Ferries had been established on the larger streams flowing into the Missouri. The early settlers of Union, Clay and Yankton Counties kept ferries on the Missouri. Bridges were constructed by government appropriation.

The crops of this period were good as a result of sufficient rainfall. Farmers had a surplus of grain in 1868 which amounted to thousands of bushels. This grain was shipped to Sioux City by steamboat and thence by rail to the East. Stock-raising was also a profitable industry during this period. The leading products were wheat, corn and oats. Barley was also being raised successfully.

Southeastern Dakota was being rapidly settled during this period. By 1869 nearly all the land of Union County had been taken up and Clay and Yankton Counties were being rapidly settled. The land in Yankton County was all occupied

25 Foster, p. 42.
26 Visher, p. 144.
27 Press' and Dakotan, Nov. 30, 1870.
28 Visher, p. 142.
29 Armstrong, p. 35.
30 Foster, p. 35.
by 1870.

The results of this period of prosperity were:—eastern capitalists invested in Dakota projects; property rose in price; trade increased rapidly; the output became much greater; the Territory became settled through the influx of immigration in this period; general prosperity prevailed.
CHAPTER V
DEPRESSION, 1873-1878

The causes of depression during this period were:—
(1) the unusually high interest rates; (2) the destruction of the crops by grasshoppers, 1874-76; (3) periods of dry weather; (4) no railroad extensions until the country had recovered from the financial and commercial depressions of 1873; (5) great decrease in the number of immigrants coming to Dakota.

The object of the high rates of interest, eighteen to twenty-four per cent, was to stimulate Eastern capitalists to invest in western projects and loans. The farmers suffered great hardships because of the exorbitant interest rates, as they had mortgaged their farms and borrowed money to invest in improved farm machinery. During these years due to drought or grasshopper plagues the crops were destroyed, consequently the settlers were unable to pay their mortgages and many lost their farms.

During 1874-76 the grasshoppers appeared in enormous swarms in the mid-western region of the United States, including Dakota, and destroyed the crops. Many of the farmers were destitute as a result. They did not have the means of livelihood, nor feed for the cattle. To add to their hardships the winter of 1874-75, following what is known as the "Grasshopper year of 1874", was very severe. The people of Yankton gave credence to the reports of suffering and societies, churches and individuals gave their assistance. The Dakota

2 Historical Collections of South Dakota, Vol. III, 1906, pp. 142 and following.
3 Press and Dakotan, May 15, 1875.
Legislature met in 1874 and passed an act to issue $25,000 of bonds with which to provide seed and assistance to the settlers in the Territory. Governor Pennington discouraged the placing of these bonds on the market and vetoed the bill; but it was passed over his veto. The bonds were never placed on the market. Since the Legislature made no definite plans for relief before adjourning the Governor made an appeal to the general public. A Relief Convention was held in 1875 at Fort Dodge, Iowa, at which committees were present from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Dakota. The farmers of these districts had been deprived of their crops in 1874 because of the grasshopper plague. The convention was a success and brought favorable results, giving aid to the destitute settlers.

The government of the United States appropriated $15,000 for the sufferers of this area. Yankton County received 11,200 pounds of flour and 5,600 pounds of bacon for one hundred and twenty-two families of six hundred and seven persons.

During 1875 a cloud of hoppers passed over Dakota but did not alight; consequently no damage was done. The following years 1876-77 the young hoppers did some damage to the planted grain, but disappeared before harvest time. Various successful methods of destroying the pest were devised: (1) kerosene, tar and oil paper were used in catching the young hoppers; (2) burning the stubble, thus destroying the larvae.

The dry seasons during this period were potent factors in

5 Ibid., pp. 844-45.
6 Ibid., pp. 846-47.
7 Ibid., p. 848.
8 Press and Dakotan, May 28, 1877.
bringing about depression. The intermittent grasshopper plagues and drought caused hardtimes, consequently immigration during the early part of the period was small.

After the discovery of gold in the Black Hills by General Custer and his expedition in 1874, immigration started to increase. Many prospectors came into the Black Hills area in spite of the protests by the Indians to whom the region belonged until Feb. 28, 1877. Since conference with the Indians proved unsuccessful, almost all official hindrance ceased, and settlers rushed into the Territory. Due to the settlement of the western part of Dakota, the markets for the products of the Missouri Valley increased, consequently conditions became better and immigration increased.

The moral effect of the grasshopper plague was worse than anything else according to Kingsbury. Governor Pennington said that through appeals made to eastern states the Territory was damaged ten times more by the panic than by the grasshoppers. The nation wide panic of 1873 due to commercial and financial depression led to a let up of investments in the West; as a result there was no railroad building during this period. Eastern capitalists and foreigners did not invest in western projects because of the insecure conditions in this area, consequently there was little industrial development.

Immigration, after the establishment of the Bureau of Immigration in 1875, increased rapidly. Pamphlets printed in

9 Visher, p. 143.
10 Ibid., p. 144.
12 Ibid., p. 1012.
German, Norwegian and English were sent to the East and abroad describing the possibilities in Dakota, and representatives were sent East to encourage immigration. The success of the above organization was pronounced and many settlers came into the Territory in the latter part of the period. Thus prosperity again dawned upon the stricken area.
CHAPTER VI

INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED

When the land office was established in Yankton, the officers predicted that attempts to settle in the Territory would be a failure because of lack of moisture the preceding years, 1858–1861. Conditions changed however and with the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 immigration into this area became pronounced. The first United States land office in Dakota Territory was opened in Vermillion in 1862. This office issued preemption and homestead rights in Dakota. As the Territory became more populated other offices were established. The Fourth United States Land District was defined by Congress in 1872. It was known as the "Dakota Land District" — and the office was located at Yankton, the capital of the Territory.

The Homestead Act passed in 1862 was a great impetus to the settlement of Yankton County. Through this act a citizen twenty-one years of age could get a title to 160 acres of land by continuous residence of five years and the payment of $14.00 entrance fees; or after six months regular residence and suitable improvements the claimant could commute his homestead entry fee and pay $1.25 an acre.

The public lands in this area were rapidly settled after the passage of the above act. Many settlers took up an additional 160 acres under the preemption right; six months residence and the payment of $1.25 an acre. George D. Hill, surveyor-general located at Yankton gave the following report to the Department of Interior regarding this area:—"The Territory

1 Press and Dakotan, April 3, 1872; Hagerty, p. 87.
2 Hagerty, p. 88.
presents unusual and remarkable inducements to those seeking a home in a new country. The lands are of the most fertile character, the climate healthful and agreeable, the water pure and wholesome. The capacity of the Territory as a stock-raising country cannot be overestimated. Yankton County was favorably located and was a fertile area, consequently was one of the first counties to be settled.

Schools were established shortly after settlement in the Territory began. In 1859, a private school was started at Vermillion. In 1860 the first school in the Territory was erected at Bon Homme. It was built of logs and had a dirt roof, while the floor was the ground. A log school was built at Vermillion in 1862. In 1862, when the Indian Wars began all the schools were closed. In 1864 an association of ladies in Yankton under the leadership of Mrs. Edmunds, wife of Governor Edmunds raised money to build a school. A two-room school was built of gravel and grout and stained brown; consequently it was known as "the brown school-house". This was the beginning of education in Yankton. About the same time Melanchon Hoyt, an Episcopal rector started a private school in his own building. The Sisters of Mercy conducted an Indian school in Yankton in the early days.

The first Legislature which met in 1862 passed a law for the establishment and support of public schools. The

5 Ibid., p. 154.
"county superintendent of public schools" was to be appointed by the county commissioners. Few if any public schools were opened for two or three years after the passage of the law in 1862 because of the Indian Wars. Provision for public education was also made by setting aside sections sixteen and thirty-six of each township for educational purposes.

By 1865 there were four legally organized districts in the Territory. The private schools had not yet given way to the public schools. Yankton, Clay and Todd Counties had excellent private schools; some had an enrollment of seventy-five pupils and were taught by competent teachers. In 1873 Dr. Ward established the Yankton Academy, a forerunner of Yankton College. The building accommodated one hundred. The Academy and Dakota Hall, Hoyt's school, were institutions for advanced students. When the Legislature passed the law, framed by Dr. Ward, establishing a satisfactory system of public schools including high schools, the Academy was transformed into the Yankton High School.

As the population increased it was necessary to pass new school laws. One of the most important was the creation of a township system. The school township corresponded to the township. The schools were established on this district as necessity demanded. The Board of Education was elected. They had supervision over the building of schools, employing of teachers and purchasing of textbooks. By 1875, good schools had been established in all the settlements of the Territory.

7 Ibid., p. 180.
8 Press and Dakotan, May 18, 1875.
Dr. Ward sponsored the building of a College at Yankton. The Congregationalists under Dr. Ward's direction met and appointed a board of trustees of Yankton College. This board was to raise money and purchase the site for the proposed institution. The grounds procured consisted of one block upon which the old cemetery was located and four blocks north of this site, in north Yankton. This was an excellent location for the College. The necessary funds were obtained from subscriptions by Yankton capitalists and gifts, mainly from the East. The first year, before the completion of Ward Hall, a small group of five students met in a small building south of the church; the next year the enrollment increased and by 1883 when the new building was ready for use, the enrollment reached a goodly number from within and without the Territory. The curriculum and professorships in the articles of incorporation were practically the same as to-day, except that Greek and Latin are no longer required subjects. Yankton College, the first college in the Dakotas, was prominently known and was well patronized by Dakota settlers.

Churches were established soon after the arrival of the settlers. The Episcopal church was established at Yankton in 1862, the Methodist about 1865, the first Lutheran church was erected at what is now Mission Hill, in 1869, the Congregational at Yankton in 1870 and the Catholic at Yankton in 1871. The Episcopal, Congregational and Catholic churches were especially active in the fields of education and religion. Many Indians

9 Press and Dakotan, Sept. 1, 1881.
10 McMurtry, W. J.: Yankton College, p. 27, (Yankton, 1907).
were christianized through their efforts. Hagerty says "the first indication of a town were the spires of the churches and the cupola of the school house, while in every settled community steeples gleamed across the prairies".

One of the most potent and direct influences which contributed to the upbuilding of Dakota was the newspaper. The establishment of newspapers was due to the demands of the intelligent population as well as in response to commercial necessity, and consequently were an influential element in the growth and greatness of the Territory. Several newspapers of importance were established at Yankton: the Press and Dakotan, a weekly in 1861, the first permanent journal in the Territory; the Dakota Herald, a weekly, 1872; the Freie Presse, the first German paper in the Territory, 1874; and the Press and Dakotan, a daily, in 1875. These newspapers stressed both politics and news.

The establishment of the telegraph in 1870 and the telephone in 1882 brought the Yankton area into communication with the outside world, so this area could no longer be considered an isolated region. These improvements also aided greatly in the getting of news for the newspapers.

Dakota had more postoffices than any other Territory. In 1860 a postoffice was established at Yankton; this was the first in the county. Up to 1870 there were few postoffices in this area. After this date immigration increased rapidly, new towns were established and consequently many new postoffices.

11 Hagerty, p. 112.
12 Ibid., p. 114.
13 United States Census Office Reports, 1884, p. 213.
came into being. By 1874 Yankton County had postoffices at
Lakeport, Marindahl, Norway, Oakdale, Odessa, Utica, Weston,
Ziskov, Gayville and Yankton. By 1880 there were thirteen
postoffices in the County.

Many societies had been organized by 1880. The most
important were:—Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias,
Grand Army of the Republic, and the Christian Temperance Union.
The Farmers Alliance was a strong and influential organization
during the later 1880s.

Dakota Territory had a large number of banks. The National
banks of this Territory exceeded those of all the other
territories combined. The first bank established in Yankton
County was the Palmer Bank at Yankton, in 1868. Three banks
were established in Yankton by the early 1870s:—Palmer, First
National and the Yankton Bank. The Palmer Bank the first to be
established in the Territory was also the first to fail. The
failure of this bank came early in 1878; it was caused by
the general depression of the preceding years and unusual
withdrawal of deposits to meet the demands of trade. The
failure of this institution brought hardships not only to
Yankton County depositors, but also to many from Nebraska.

The Yankton Hospital for the Insane was the first of the
kind built in any of the territories. The first mention of the
case of the insane was made by Governor John Burbank in his
first message to the Legislature, Dec. 6, 1870. He said
that the insane should be cared for as it was a duty of

15 Hagerty, p. 113.
16 Ibid., pp. 114-115.
17 Press and Dakotan, Jan. 18, 1878.
humanity to do so. He also said that provision should be made for the care of these unfortunates at hospitals in other states, until a hospital could be erected at Yankton. The Legislature authorized arrangements with St. Peters Hospital of Minnesota. In 1873-75, there were three patients in the Territory; in 1876-78 there were twenty-two. In 1878 the Governor received word from the authorities at Minnesota that the hospital was overcrowded and that the Territory should make arrangements to remove their patients by October 1878. Arrangements were made with Nebraska for the care of five patients until Feb. 1, 1879. The Governor also secured an extension of time in Minnesota. In the meantime he went about the Territory in search of a suitable building for a hospital. He decided to take over the two large buildings at Yankton, which had housed the German-Russian immigrants a few years before. One of these buildings was owned by the Territory, the other by the city. The Governor proposed to have the buildings torn down and taken to the school section two miles north of Yankton, where a hospital should be built. The Governor paid the expenses, trusting that the Legislature would reimburse him in their 1879 meeting. The building was erected about a thousand feet south of the present site. It was a large frame one story building facing the south.

In his message to the Legislature of 1879, Governor Howard recommended the building of a hospital and presented the expenses that would be involved. In response to this need the Insane Hospital Bill was introduced and became a law, Feb. 22, 1879. The Governor was paid the amount he had expended.

The Governor appointed a Board of Trustees, and they chose Dr. Rainey of Illinois as superintendent of the institution. The patients from Minnesota and Nebraska hospitals were removed in April 1879 to the Territorial Institution.

The United States donated six hundred and forty acres for the purpose. The building of the new institution was begun in the early 1880s on the present site. The buildings were erected of brick and were equipped with the latest improvements.

In 1882 the insane hospital was destroyed by fire and twenty-four patients lost their lives. Fortunately the new building was inhabitable, consequently the patients were placed in the new structure.

CHAPTER VII

PROSPERITY AND RAPID DEVELOPMENT

The geographical influences which brought about and extended this period of boom are very important in the settlement of the Territory. The rainfall was sufficient during this period and came at such times and in such amounts as to be especially beneficial for crops. Crops were very good for several consecutive years in spite of the lack of knowledge or disregard of how to prepare the soil, plant the seeds and care for the crops. The abundant snowfall in the winter of 1880-81 was also beneficial for the crops, as it supplied the necessary moisture. The Dakota area was especially adapted for agricultural purposes because there were few natural hindrances as forests, swamps or stones. The level prairie lands made it possible to use labor-saving machinery; consequently large-scale farming was carried on. Up to the late 1880s wheat was Dakota's principal agricultural product. Due to the extremely favorable conditions of the period a fine quality of wheat was raised in the Territory. The report of the United States Department of Agriculture for 1884 shows that out of 2,759 specimens of wheat from all over the world, investigated for dryness and richness of albuminoids, that of Dakota ranked the best of any in America or probably in the world. At the World's Exposition in New Orleans, 1884-85, Dakota was awarded first prize for wheat over competitors from all the

1 Visher, p. 146.
2 Ibid., p. 146.
3 Hagerty, F. H.: The Territory of Dakota, (Aberdeen, 1889), p. 72
4 Ibid., p. 72.
famous wheat growing countries of the world. The increase in the wheat production is shown by the following statistics:— in 1860 about 1,000 bushels were produced; in 1870, 170,662 bushels; in 1880, 2,830,289 bushels; and in 1885, 36,166,413 bushels. In the early days the settlers thought it was impossible to grow corn, but they soon dispelled the idea and now the Territory ranks high in the production of this product. Corn is one of the most important products of the Missouri Valley. Oats is also extensively grown and in its total yield and value ranks next to wheat. Stock-raising developed early in this area because the country was especially adapted to animal life. Several factors stimulated the raising of live-stock:—(1)grasses and pasturage; (2) climate; (3)feed, corn being easily grown; (4)water; (5) markets; (6)railroad facilities to Minneapolis, Duluth, Chicago, Milwaukee and Omaha. Rapid development in this industry came after 1880.

The following statistics illustrate the above statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Swine</th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Mules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>87,250</td>
<td>31,595</td>
<td>25,159</td>
<td>33,990</td>
<td>4,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>183,528</td>
<td>66,480</td>
<td>49,764</td>
<td>73,106</td>
<td>6,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>321,616</td>
<td>123,805</td>
<td>116,053</td>
<td>142,079</td>
<td>14,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>475,808</td>
<td>132,581</td>
<td>173,128</td>
<td>258,059</td>
<td>16,738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yankton County's markets for selling and buying were equal to any other of equal population. "The annual demand

5 Hagerty, p. 73.
6 Ibid., p. 73.
7 Ibid., p. 75.
8 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
9 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
by the government for corn, oats and cattle for the subsistence of the army and the Indians afforded an unfailing market for these products." Consequently the river transportation was pronounced; it exceeded that of any other town on the Missouri west of Kansas City. The annual shipment of government stores and other freight westward exceeded 20,000,000 pounds.

"In range of variety of agricultural products and adaptability to stock-raising Yankton County was excelled by no county in the West." The farmers had discovered that they did better by general farming and the feeding of cattle than by raising wheat; although wheat was still raised. The raising of hogs and cattle had become important by the end of this period, and large numbers were shipped annually from Yankton County. Because of the great number of hogs being raised in Yankton County and the surrounding area a packing house had been established at Yankton, with a capacity of one thousand hogs a day.

The second important factor in bringing about prosperity was the extension of the railroad in this territory. Before this period the railroad facilities were inadequate in the Dakota area. In 1873 the railroad reached Yankton, being built from Sioux City up the Missouri Valley. The same year a railroad was built west of the Sioux River and extended to Lake Kampeska near the site of Watertown. There were no settlers in

10 Press and Dakotan, March 17, 1880.
11 Ibid., March 17, 1880.
12 Ibid., October 27, 1884.
13 Ibid., October 27, 1884.
14 Ibid., Dec. 9, 1884.
this region but the construction company extended the road into this area to receive the land subsidy granted them, according to mileage, by Congress. Sioux Falls had no railroad nearer than Worthington, Minnesota, sixty-eight miles distant, until late in 1878, when a road was built from Sioux City up the Sioux Valley, connecting Sioux Falls with the East.

There was a great deal of hardship in the Territory prior to the building of railroads. Houses on the prairies were built of sod. Along the rivers where groves were numerous settlers built log cabins. Fuel was inadequate, corn and hay often being used for fuel. Many who settled in this area did little to promote prosperity but merely held down a claim, awaiting the arrival of the railroad, which would raise the value of their lands.

The people looked forward to the coming of the railroad with great joy. The following quotation is hardly an exaggeration: "The whistle of the locomotive would be the sweetest music a resident of the broad prairies could hear, and the mere rumor that a party of railroad surveyors had been seen in a particular locality was enough to fill the heart of every settler with joy and cause visions of town-site and county-seat speculations to color with all the beauteous hues of the rainbow, his dreams at night".

The railroad, next to the vast productive lands, was the

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15 Andreas, p. 158.
16 Ibid., p. 165.
17 Visher, p. 147.
18 Holley, F. Q.: Cur Heritage from the Dacotahs, p. 39, (Chicago, 1890).
18 Visher, p. 148.
greatest factor in the upbuilding of Dakota. The importance of the railroad can best be illustrated by the following quotation: "As a direct consequence of progress in railroad construction the increase of the territory in population and wealth has been phenomenal in the history of the country". This territory no doubt would have been settled in time without the extension of the railroad, but it would no doubt have required a century to accomplish what was done in this period in five years, with the aid of the railroads.

During this period there were various railroad extensions; consequently Yankton had connection with Sioux Falls, Sioux City, Centerville and Mitchell. Yankton therefore had an independent outlet.

The Press and Dakotan of Jan. 1, 1879 gives an account of the railroad business of the previous year 1878 as follows:—Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 50,141,024 pounds of freight were unloaded from the Dakota Southern and 30,686,486 pounds shipped eastward, 3,351 local passenger tickets were sold, 1,044 to points east of Sioux City. 20,000,000 pounds were shipped up the river, 30,000,000 pounds disposed of at Yankton. An average of 2,000 pounds of wheat were disposed of a day.

The third important factor in the rapid settlement of this Territory during this period was the earlier occupation of the desirable land in the older states. There was little free farming land available in states to the east in 1879.

19 Andreas, p. 100.
20 Ibid., p. 98.
21 Ibid., p. 100.
22 Press and Dakotan, Dec. 27, 1879.
23 Ibid., July 22, 1885.
The land in eastern Dakota was better adapted for agricultural purposes than that still available elsewhere. Of great significance in creating an agricultural boom was the factor that the land was ready to be plowed and did not have to be cleared of trees, shrubs and stones. The soil was rich as is evident from the "bumper crops" of this period.

A fourth factor was the abolition of fiat currency. The effects of the panic of 1873 having been overcome the country's credit abroad was greatly improved, consequently there was a great inflow of foreign capital during the period.

The development of industries during the period was a contributing factor to prosperity. The establishment of the cement works, brick factories and mills in this area stimulated trade and development. Dakota flour was shipped in large quantities to eastern markets. Wheat-raising became very profitable, consequently there was renewed interest in settlement and a demand for land.

The rapid increase in immigration to the territory was an important factor. The railroads had stimulated immigration by issuing descriptive pamphlets of Dakota and her prosperity. During 1878, 132 steamboats arrived at Yankton and there were 126 departures. These steamboats left heavily laden with freight and returned with passengers. In 1879 immigration was greater than in any former year. Southeastern Dakota had a very large increase; as many as three hundred teams and immigrant wagons passed through the southeastern part of the

25 Visher, p. 149.
26 Ibid., p. 149.
27 Press and Dakotan, Jan. 1, 1879.
Territory during the summer of 1879. On July 25, 1879, eight coaches of Russians, direct from Russia, arrived at Yankton. They brought with them $400,000 in cash, and consequently were the richest party of immigrants that came to Yankton. A few of this group of mennonites settled in Yankton County; the others obtained land in Hutchinson, Armstrong and Hanson Counties.

Immigration was very rapid during the period. It is said that often when a wave of immigrants came in, the land officials were gotten out of bed to make out the papers before some other claimants would file ahead of them. There was a pronounced rush at the office at Yankton, Watertown, Fargo and Bismark. Immigration soon passed beyond the surveyed lands. Congress met the situation by passing a law whereby the claimants of land could deposit $400.00, the amount necessary to survey a township, with the surveyor-general. The land was then surveyed. The surveyor-general issued certificates for the amount deposited to the claimants who could apply them on the payment of the land.

In 1881 the Board of Immigration was established to take the place of the Immigration Bureau. It was the purpose of this organization to advise immigrants from the old world of Dakota's resources, thus fostering settlement of this Territory.

The rapid increase in population in Dakota Territory during the two year period 1880-81 is shown by the report of the House Committee on Territories in 1882. Prior to 1880,
44,122 filed upon preemption and homestead claims. In the years 1880 and 1881, 16,718 entries were made. Estimating four persons to each land entry, there was an increase in population of 66,172 from June 1, 1880 to Dec. 31, 1881.

Immigration was also extensive during 1883. In this year twenty-five counties were organized, the greatest number since the creation of the Territory. The semi-decennial census taken in 1885 shows a population of 415,610; while the census of 1880 reported 135,700 in the Territory. The number of counties doubled during these years and the population increased two hundred per cent. In 1880, Yankton County had a population of 8,390; in 1885, 9,404.

The outstanding unfavorable conditions during this period were caused by the severe winter and flood of 1880-81. The first snow storm of this very severe winter was on Oct. 15, 1880. Since it came so early in the season the settlers were not prepared and consequently suffered great hardships. Many had to use hay and corn for fuel. The steamboats that had gone to the forts and Indian agencies were caught in the storm, so had to draw up to the bank wherever they were. There were several severe storms during the winter, snow being so deep that traffic was impossible. Railroad traffic was held up because of the snow-bound conditions and lack of fuel. The first train from Yankton to Sioux City after the severe tie-up was equipped with fifty bushels of corn for fuel until it reached Elk Point where a supply of coal was obtained.

33 Ibid., p. 1377.
34 Ibid., p. 1417.
35 United States Census, 1880, p. 53.
37 Ibid., p. 1150.
These severe conditions existed in Minnesota, Iowa and Dakota, in fact in the whole Northwest. On Feb. 7, 1881 occurred one of the severest storms of the winter, lasting thirty-six to forty-eight hours. Railroads suspended traffic and no attempt was made to clear the tracks as the snow was so deep. These conditions existed until March 1881 when the Missouri, Big Sioux and Vermillion Rivers broke up, with the great flood as a result.

The damage caused by this flood was enormous. Nearly all the bridges south of the forty-fifth parallel were swept away. The territory between Yankton and the Big Sioux River suffered the greatest damage. The town of Vermillion, then located below the bluff, was destroyed. The town was later established on the bluffs, its present site. The town of Green Island on the opposite bank of the river from Yankton was also completely destroyed by the flood. The brick buildings withstood the force hurled against them longer than the frame structures, but all gave way and floated down the river. Several persons were marooned on the roofs of these buildings as they floated away. The little town contained twenty or twenty-five buildings, which were destroyed by the flood.

Lower Yankton was under water and a great deal of damage was done. The government warehouse was totally wrecked. The steamers that were forced to land along the river and those at Yankton were damaged. The "Western" and the "Fontenelle" were destroyed. Everything in the path of the ice was swept

39 Ibid., p. 1151.
40 Ibid., pp. 1152-1153.
41 Press and Dakotan, March 30, 1881.
42 Ibid., April 6, 1881.
down the river.

The farmers lost heavily, their homes, livestock and hay being swept away by the flood. Many were made destitute, having lost everything in this terrible catastrophe. The United States government issued food, blankets and tents to the destitute.

Trains stopped running from Yankton to Sioux City March 25, and until April 23d no eastern mail was received. The telegraph line was out of order, consequently Yankton and the other towns of the Missouri Valley were practically isolated from the outside world. On April 29, the steamboat "Niobrara" left Sioux City with two tons of mail for Vermillion and Yankton. The mail was carried as freight, forty-five cents per hundred pounds. The Dakota Southern railroad between Yankton and Sioux City was a wreck after the flood. The grade had been washed away and the rails were covered with mud. The road had to be rebuilt; twelve miles between Yankton and Gayville had to be entirely rebuilt on a new grade.

The Indians and early settlers said that for thirty years \[43\] there had not been so much snow, and according to the traditions of the tribe the winter had never been so severe since the early part of the century. Strike the Ree, who had lived on the banks of the Missouri since 1801, testified that he \[44\] had never seen nor heard of a similar flood.

Politics during this period centered around the removal of the capital and agitation for statehood. The first formal

43 Press and Dakotan, April 6, 1881.
legislative movement for the removal of the capital was taken by Councilman George Walsh of Grand Forks in 1883, when he introduced a bill to locate a new seat of government and provide for the removal of the records. This bill proposed to put the capital at Huron. The bill was referred to a special committee and reported on adversely. Then it was considered by a committee of the whole and it was reported on adversely. It was then returned to the special committee. Nickeus, councilman from Jamestown reported the Huron bill without recommendations and at the same time introduced a resolution for the appointment of a committee of five to decide whether to remove the capital, to what place, and to consider inducements offered the Territory. The resolution was adopted, 7 to 5. The committee was appointed. They met two or three times and received proposals from towns that wished to contest for the capital. The committee did not report, but Allred of Fargo introduced in the House the Capital Commission bill. The Commission, of nine members had been appointed by the Governor and on request their names were placed on the bill. This bill passed the House, 15 to 7. When the bill came to the council it was considered by a committee of the whole. Several hours were spent in filibustering; then Dewey of Yankton offered an amendment whereby the people of the Territory should ratify by vote the location of the capital by a commission. It carried by a vote of 7 to 5. The chair did not announce the vote until Nickeus instructed one of the councilmen to change his vote.

46 Ibid., p. 1302.
47 Ibid., p. 1303.
to nay. The result was now 6 to 6 and the amendment lost. The bill was finally passed and signed by the Governor. In accordance with the resolution of the commission the bids were opened at Canton, May 15, 1883. The commission did not announce an award at this meeting. In June, at the meeting held at Fargo they gave their final vote to Bismarck. Bismarck's bid was $100,000 and 320 acres of land.

The general sentiment of the Territory was that the removal of the capital had been brought about by fraudulent means. McKenzie of Bismarck visited the capital, Yankton, before and during the meeting of the Legislature in the interest of capital removal. He is said to have been working in the interest of the Northern Pacific railroad. Ordway, the Governor, knew of the scheme and sponsored it. He appointed McKenzie as one of the nine commissioners. Appropriation bills had been passed and large amounts were expended in salaries to this commission. Indignation meetings were held at Yankton and Sioux Falls, in which it was shown that the commission received their offices in fraudulent ways and that Governor Ordway accepted a bribe. A case was brought in the district court against the Capital Commission with the object of removing the commissioners because they had no legal right to the office. The judgment of the district court was in favor of the plaintiff, the Territory. The defendants took the case to the Supreme court of the Territory and won the case. The plaintiff appealed to the United States Supreme Court, but the case was still pending when North and

49 Ibid., p. 1322.
South Dakota entered the Union.

Yankton was indignant because the removal of the capital was brought about through fraudulent means. Yankton did not enter a bid, nor try to retain the capital. She admitted that a capital was of little value to a town especially from a pecuniary standpoint.

The Dakota Legislature petitioned Congress for division of the Territory seven different times between 1871 and 1882. In January 1882 a meeting was held at Yankton at which all those advocating division signed a petition to send a delegation to Washington to agitate for statehood.

In June 1882 representatives met at Canton from ten counties. They advocated division of the Territory. The convention organized as the "Dakota Citizen's League" and appointed an executive council of seven. The committee laid the matter before the Legislature of 1883, and a bill was passed providing for the calling of a Constitutional Convention at Yankton in October. The purpose of this convention should be to frame a Constitution for a state south of the forty-sixth parallel. Governor Ordway vetoed the bill. This act made the Governor unpopular.

The first Constitutional Convention was held at Sioux Falls, November 1883. A constitution was adopted and submitted to the people; it was ratified by a vote of 12,336 for and 6,814 against. A committee presented the constitution to Congress, but no action was taken.

51 Press and Dakotan, Jan. 13, 1882.
52 Ibid., Sept. 15, 1883.
The second Constitutional Convention was held at Sioux Falls, September 1885. It was composed of elected delegates from the territory south of the forty-sixth parallel. A constitution was framed and adopted by a vote of 25,132 to 6,522. The expense of the convention was borne by a tax on property south of the forty-sixth parallel. Huron was chosen as the temporary capital and the state officers were elected. A memorial was sent to Congress by the Legislature, but no action was taken. The pseudo-state officers did not function in their offices, but the Territorial government continued until 1889.

This period of prosperity brought great results:—
(1) there was an enormous increase in population; (2) thirty-one counties had been organized and hundreds of towns sprung up; (3) the wealth of the Territory increased exceedingly; (4) by the end of this period half of what is now South Dakota had been filed on; (5) the business prosperity of Dakota became known in the East; (6) a different attitude between the East and West was developed; (7) agricultural prosperity proved that this territory was as good as any in the United States.

The factors in the late 1880s and early 1890s that brought this period of prosperity to a close were:—(1) crop failures due to several years of dry weather; (2) free land east of the Missouri being nearly all taken; (3) little or no railroad building in this section; (4) financial conditions becoming less and less satisfactory and loans harder to secure;

54 Ransom, p. 90.
and (5) the loss of inhabitants due to drought, and disappointments in business and land speculations.