

AN EDITOR HAILS THE AUTOMOBILE: AL J. ADAMS AND THE *SISSETON COURIER*

by
Keith A. Sculle

Albert J. Adams exemplified the South Dakota small town editor in his management of the *Sisseton Courier*. Between his purchase of the paper in 1923 and his death in 1944, "Al," as he was commonly called, did more than simply gather his hometown's news and publish it weekly. On its editorial pages Al projected his vision of a better civic life and in various community organizations he actively worked for his principles. No issue affecting Sisseton missed his notice, comment, and commitment. The impact of the automobile, although an issue of profound consequences for Sisseton as elsewhere, ignited strangely little community controversy and Adams's *Sisseton Courier* provides the historian with a special vantage point from which to analyze this silent revolution.

About the automobile's rapidly gained popularity and much of its economic impact, there is little doubt in history. As Robert Karolevitz, a South Dakota historian, wrote,

The automobile came to South Dakota as it did to all other states, and its increased use started a gradual change in shopping, farm marketing and general living patterns. The importance of the railroads began to diminish, and small towns . . . ultimately experienced declining business activity as improved roads and greater speed permitted farmers to travel to larger population centers.¹

Reynold Wik, an historian who has researched the Ford automobile's impact, confirmed that the automobile ended rural isolation and much monotony in his South Dakota boyhood home.² Cheaper access to distant markets also accounted for the business-minded farmers' demand. Yet historians are still awed by the transformation wrought by motor vehicles. Formation of the car-dependent culture in the first thirty years of the twentieth century struck one historian of the automobile as something that "would have been an impressive accomplishment

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over a period of centuries; as it was, it took place in two generations."³ In his classic study of how small town life changed radically in the process, *Main Street on the Middle Border*, Lewis Atherton pointed out that even those who prophesied economic growth through improved transportation did not understand in 1900 that the automobile and its highways would triumph over such rival systems as the railroad, interurbans, and bicycles. Contemporary observers and dispassionate scholars alike attributed unimagined cultural changes to the automobile's ascendancy.⁴

A phenomenon as remarkable as the rapid and virtually unquestioned acceptance of a new technology laden with profound consequences deserves continued study. How to demystify it? Many attempts have focused on the national scene: the early proliferation of competing companies; the entrepreneurial wizardry of those who founded the industry; the eager, widespread acceptance of taxation to build a national highway system; and the popular delights of recreation and status which drove popular demand for the automobile. So sweeping a triumph had to be won at all levels of society and everywhere the process of many mundane and daily changes eventually yielded a seemingly mysterious social transformation. Although little attention has been paid to the automobile's advent in individual small towns, close scrutiny of these incremental changes in a small community like Sisseton helps shed more light on how the automobile triumphed.⁵

Small town newspapers like Adams's *Sisseton Courier* offer a source for exploring this perspective. Although outsiders are often bored by the petty disclosures in local papers, townspeople regard their chronicle of detail as essential to life of the community. As significant as the information conveyed, however, is the vision of a better community editors periodically project about their community. Small town newspapers read like a record as well as conscience, reflecting much of what the small town is and foreshadowing what it might become. For South Dakotans, whom one intimate observer characterized as leading "gratifying life in provinces and enclaves protected by distance from mainstream America," there is perhaps no better window on how the automobile transformed their small towns than their newspapers.⁶ Although many newspapers could be studied for their response to the automobile, Adams' twenty-one-year editorship of the *Sisseton Courier* is especially instructive, for it coincided with the ascent of the automobile and likely helped spur its acceptance in his community.

Adams reveals that the public's embrace of the automobile evolved slowly. A review of his writing shows that acceptance of the automobile was an ongoing affair, the result of continual adjustment. The following reconstruction of the step-by-step process of acceptance sheds light on the dynamics by which individuals embarked upon what proved to be a historic journey.

Sisseton had been the county seat of Roberts County, South Dakota's northeasternmost county, since 1898. Sisseton lies approximately 200 miles from Pierre and about 300 miles from Minneapolis, the closest major urban center of common reference in the *Sisseton Courier* during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1920 the population stood at 1,431 in Sisseton and 16,514 in the county. A succession of Sisseton newspapers preceded the *Courier* before its founding in 1920. As for automobiles, they began appearing on Sisseton's streets in sufficient numbers by 1910 that an ordinance enacted that year limited automobile speed and forced the drivers to stop when their vehicles frightened horses.⁷

Editor Al J. Adams was born a blacksmith's son in 1894 in the small town of Kent, Minnesota. Educated through public high school, he apprenticed to a printer at seventeen and went to Duluth, Minnesota, where he worked on that city's *Tribune*. He later worked as a manager at a succession of Minnesota newspapers and in 1923 began managing the *Farmer and Reporter*, in Webster, South Dakota, about 32 miles southwest of Sisseton.⁸



Al Adams as pictured with his obituary
November 30, 1944 in the *Sisseton Courier*.

In his reasoning about the automobile, Al Adams concurred with the new middle class as defined in Robert Wiebe's classic study of American social development at the turn of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, *The Search for Order 1877-1920*. Facing a nation of "island communities" in which affairs were locally controlled, the new middle class pursued economic and social gain for itself by advancing urban and industrial values and products.⁹ Adams was

a lifelong Republican who saw the automobile as an agent of modernization. But Adams deviated significantly from this broad, national consensus in his calculation of local and regional needs and shared faith in their values. He was in truth a complex person defying easy classification, as Wiebe readily acknowledged most Americans of the time to be.¹⁰

The automobile was already an essential element in Adams's reality when he purchased the *Sisseton Courier* on October 15, 1923. Adams selected Sisseton to begin his public life as a self-employed newspaperman because he calculated great material prosperity and ethical fulfillment in Sisseton's future. In short, he was convinced Sisseton would be a great place to live and grow. As early as 1921, the preceding owner-editor reported Sisseton's Saturday night population doubled with the appearance of shoppers in automobiles; this may have drawn Adams' attention while he managed the newspaper in the nearby community of Webster. Within three days of buying the *Courier*, Adams declared firm faith in Sisseton because of its location in a agriculturally diversified region. Amidst the 1920s agricultural depression, this diversification—profit through dairying, beef-raising, and corn, wheat, and orchard growing—made livelihood more probable than would dependence on any one commodity.¹¹

As for the automobile, Adams considered it essential for the area's latest economic diversification, the nascent tourist industry.¹² The numerous glacially produced hills and lakes dotting Sisseton's vicinity offered fishermen great recreational outlets and the coteau provided scenic beauty. Access to these rural resources from the remotely based urban population centers required automobile transportation. Although the Milwaukee Road provided adequate railroad service to Sisseton, until discussion of reduced service in 1926, Adams thought only of the automobile for bringing tourists through Sisseton into Roberts County. "The through highways of the future will mean to the communities through which they pass what the railroads have in the past and the more tourists we can route through this way the more favorable advertising we will obtain, besides getting our share of tourist money."¹³ Perhaps he believed railroads would have too uncertain a future to rely on them for vital economic links. Or maybe he appreciated the growing national taste for individualized transportation the automobile satisfied.¹⁴ Air service intrigued Adams enough in 1931 for him to advocate building a town airport but stimulated no further remarks until a decade later, during the Second World War, when he insisted the town's post-war landscape must include an airport.¹⁵ Horse and buggy went unmentioned even in news reports, relegated to status as a means of only local transportation ignored by the future-oriented Adams. It is clear, however, that he exerted much of his twenty-one-year stewardship for Sisseton on behalf of accommodating automobile travelers.

Adams held automobile transportation critical for Sisseton's outlying farmers and distant tourists alike. He often and routinely lectured on a cardinal principle in the small town booster's code: buy locally. For example, a half-page advertisement for sixteen local merchants appealed: "When you buy your needs out-of-town, you take that much away from yourself. Keep your money working at home."¹⁶ Arguments against mail order purchases reflected his earliest concerns with the potential drain of capital out of Sisseton.¹⁷ During the Depression, he warned that out-of-town salesmen traveling door to door should be avoided because they offered no refunds to dissatisfied customers.¹⁸ Conversely, Adams believed local merchants arranged their inventories for local taste.¹⁹ Feeling secure in Sisseton's financial future so long as its merchants capitalized on Roberts County's assets, Adams felt no need to lash out against local consumers driving to larger nearby towns on buying sprees.

Automobiles were not shrinking Sisseton's financial base in the 1920s; indeed, automobile-borne consumers could enrich it at the expense of smaller, adjacent towns, each of which Adams labeled a "local market."²⁰ He believed aggressive marketing by Sisseton merchants would nourish their town and county collectively as a leading "trade area," even in the Depression.²¹ He seemed blind to the possibility that the automobile might only be Sisseton's temporary ally in the trend toward ever larger markets in which such towns might eventually lose many regular consumers to larger municipalities easily reached by faster automobiles on better roads. Adams came to Sisseton hoping to help transform it into a larger trade center. Advertising in his *Courier* "will put more people in touch with Sisseton and will be a big factor in bringing them to this city to do their business."²² His vision of an aggrandized Sisseton never extended beyond the territory circumscribed within a 10-15-mile radius having Sisseton at its epicenter.²³

Tourists visiting the region required lodging, which Adams regularly encourage Sisseton to provide in the form of clean and ample campgrounds for automobile travelers. When, in 1929, Sisseton's city council undertook a program to rehabilitate the existing campgrounds, Adams reported progress at the site with characteristically regular attention, predicting it would eventually be one of the best within several hundred miles, and within a couple years, a fine park.²⁴ He then watched with equal care as Sisseton built a municipal campground with rental cabins in the early 1930s. Adams reasoned these travelers by automobile would linger in direct proportion to the campground's and Sisseton's overall physical attractiveness. Some might even be attracted as permanent residents. Therefore, he suggested, "It is time to think of the garden . . . Villages on the outskirts of the city ask how to plant their roadsides to make them attractive to visitors driving

through . . .²⁵ Dusty streets too were undesirable and surfaced streets were an amenity expected by outsiders. "Dustless" became an Adams watchword for municipal progress.²⁶ He also watched with avid interest and regularly declared his support for Sisseton's program of laying gravel on commercial streets in 1925 and paving them with a material known as "tarvia" in the early 1930s.²⁷ By welcoming the automobile as the major technology to build a more prosperous Sisseton, Adams embraced a series of changes he perceived necessary to maximize the automobile's beneficial impact. Dependence on the automobile became reason for further investment in the automobile's needs.



Main Street Sisseton was commonly filled sometimes even congested with autos in the 1940s.

Photo courtesy Oliver Swenumson.

Highways constructed to and from Sisseton, however, were the most financially costly and politically volatile issue to which Adams found himself drawn on behalf of the automobile.²⁸ He strongly supported balanced public budgets and abhorred government indebtedness.²⁹ Although Adams understood the high cost of grading and realigning old roads, graveling and paving them to serve automobiles, he never rejected the wisdom of this expense.³⁰ Instead, he promoted a succession of such organizations as the Twin Cities-Aberdeen Scenic Shoreline Association, the Fort Sisseton Memorial Association, and the South Dakota Lakes

Association which attempted to raise awareness of South Dakota's tourist possibilities and lobbied for highway construction funds to tap this potential. Adams's campaigns in these areas began shortly after he purchased the newspaper and continued through the economically depressed 1930s.³¹ In 1930 and 1931, before New Deal funds assisted public construction in the name of unemployment relief, Adams rose to the most prominent position he ever held, director of the South Dakota Lakes Association—a ten-county consortium in northeastern South Dakota created to promote tourism there—while arguing for paved highways to achieve access to the area.³² During the governorship of New Dealer, Tom Berry, Adams, a stalwart Republican, regularly editorialized against what he believed was a prejudiced allocation of highway funds to Berry's political friends. Were roads to be built only along the southern side of South Dakota as a corridor to the state's prime tourist destination in the Black Hills? Or was the glacial lakes region of the northeast, centered in Roberts County, to get its fair share of funds and recognition as a tourist attraction? "It is time we did a little selfish sectional boosting of our own up this way," Adams counseled.³³ His editorial salvos grew stronger during Governor Berry's administration. Adams's politics were clearly colored, if not motivated, by his frustrated desire for an influx of tourists in automobiles.

Although Adams initially suspended judgment of the New Deal, he became convinced that its tendency to partisanship rather than national recovery was reflected in the allocation of vital highway construction funds. In Roberts County the issues became whether U.S. highways 14 and 16 to the Black Hills would be improved and developed at the expense of highways in the northeastern corner of the state—including U.S. 81, the Meridian Highway tracking through Roberts County—and whether at least one of the state's few snow plows would be assigned to open the northeast's roads.³⁴

Partisanship disappeared from Adams' editorials about automobile highways following the 1937 inauguration of Leslie Jensen, a sympathetic Republican governor. Nevertheless, the newspaperman's 20-day trip to the east coast in the late summer of 1937 convinced him that South Dakota's largely gravel-surfaced highway system should be replaced by a more expensive hard surface to draw tourists.³⁵ That same year Adams advocated widened highways to accommodate the increased traffic although he fully acknowledged that roads only six years old had already become deficient.³⁶ Two years later he remarked, "It is surprising the amount of money that the people of the United States have invested in modern means of transportation in the last quarter of a century."³⁷ In the ever expanding need for road building Adams perhaps had a sense that the automobile had gotten out of control.

The automobile's extensive physical influence on the landscape notwithstanding, Adams found its cultural influence potentially even greater. He editorialized on the automobile as symptom in one issue of his paper:

Nowhere across the Atlantic is there anything like the proportionate number of automobiles as in America.

Here may be found another reason why radicalism does not grow and prosper in America. Our automobiles are not owned principally by the wealth as in Europe. The greater proportion of them belong to the farmer, the teacher, the mechanic, the clerk, the small merchant, the railroad man, and so on. They are indicative of the progress and general prosperity of America,³⁸

Adams habitually hailed automobile service stations as "modern" when their openings were announced on the *Courier's* pages.³⁹ Although automobiles could embody or facilitate virtues according to Adams, they always remained devices of human service and were incapable of controlling human behavior. Thus, Adams, for example, never beheld the automobile as a status symbol. However, this did not prevent his receiving and printing a large quantity of national automobile advertising laden with irrational lures of fantasy and myth appealing to status.⁴⁰ Adams evidently counted on the force of individual will to ward off the psychological inducements to which many succumb in the automobile age; for example, the tendency to isolate and easily exempt oneself from social responsibilities while driving about in the automobile's self-contained metal envelope. Writing of the pleasure of sightseeing in a new all-weather enclosed automobiles of the 1920s, Adams recommended riders alight occasionally to stretch their legs and enjoy the fresh air. "Automobiles, we should remember, are only the means to this end, not the end in itself," he warned.⁴¹

Adams confined most of his efforts at taming the automobile to endless reminders about reckless driving. Well before the appearance of psychological articulations about the aggressive social pathologies fostered by automobile driving, Adams appreciated the individual operator's capacity for destruction. Each accident involving the people in his small town likely intensified the watchful editor's desire to halt this destructive process. While people accommodated themselves to the automobile's negative implications in the general process of accepting the new technology, Adams soon tried to direct public response:

Sentiment is swinging over to regard the drunken driver as one who commits more than a misdemeanor; but it should swing faster and go

further. The man who, drunk, drives a car or truck, is a madman; a man without sense, without reasonability, without judgement. He puts in jeopardy the lives of men, women and children. He endangers property. He may cause frightful loss of life, hideous maimings, terrible accidents. No maniac with a gun is allowed upon the streets; the man who deliberately makes himself a maniac and fits himself out with a car loaded with potential death for many, should be dealt with with [sic] the utmost severity.⁴²

Automobile accidents and the resultant deaths and property damage were reported regularly on the *Courier's* pages. By the late 1920s, Adams added editorials warning about seasonal hazards: rutted and muddy winter roads, automobile- and pedestrian-filled summer roads.⁴³ Editorials periodically appeared decrying a variety of individual, year-round problems: speeding, "road hogging," faulty equipment (brakes, headlights, and tires), undimmed headlights, drunkenness, and absent-mindedness at railroad crossings and when merging onto main roads.⁴⁴ Although there is no indication Adams actually appreciated the fact that an automobile can induce a false sense of invincibility with consequent recklessness, he did believe the obvious solution to dangerous driving rested in driver regulation. For a person dedicated to the principle of minimum government intervention, it is instructive that Adams moved by increments from belief in voluntary to mandatory compliance in order to achieve driver safety. On one occasion, appalled at the large number of traffic deaths, Adams wrote, "We cannot endure such slaughter. Some cure must be evolved, and, no matter how drastic it may be, we shall have to grin and accept it."⁴⁵ He always called for driver "courtesy" and vigorous enforcement of existing traffic laws;⁴⁶ but, likely appreciating the limited remedy this afforded, also endorsed the state's lengthened code of driver violations enacted in 1929 and also recommended standardized education for new drivers a year later.⁴⁷ Nagging news about accidents and regularly repeated editorials on driver safety suggest Adams never tamed the automobile to his satisfaction.⁴⁸ Although trucks and busses posed many of the same threats as automobiles and required similar regulation, they never received the same attention Adams devoted to the automobile.

Another challenge to accommodating the automobile eventually loomed in the form of advertising billboards erected along the roadside. Although billboards introduced garish art placed indiscriminately throughout the countryside as early as the end of the nineteenth century, well before the automobile, Adams was startled when they came to his countryside. Perhaps because they were not yet numerous or brash enough in the highway system evolving around Sisseton, he

early on observed that billboards were often not as bad as what they concealed. By 1931, however, Adams charged that since billboard advertising along the road not only blighted the landscape (and often gave false information) but also posed a hazard to safe driving, he favored a state tax on them. He was also persuaded that they constituted unfair competition for newspaper and magazine advertising because the latter two media were taxed heavily, he thought, and billboards were not. As the intended main advertising medium for his town's merchants, Adams may well have felt or anticipated billboards' appeal to passing motorists.⁴⁹

Adams' civic code also made the automobile an essential tool for building his idealized community. To the small town's legendary virtues of neighborly intimacy and support, the traditional morality of his area, Adams added the automobile as a means to overcome "provincialism, and sectionalism, destroying dialects and spreading tolerance and understanding everywhere."⁵⁰ Automobile roads were the single greatest civilizing source—more than the church, public school, printing press, or home—Adams preached. It also bound the nation more tightly as it facilitated communication between rural and small town citizens.⁵¹ The overall effect of the automobile enhanced mutual dependence and communal sharing among small town denizens at the same time their sphere of acquaintances expanded. The automobile made possible an ideal balance: participation in both local and national community.

Results may have been otherwise, for historians and sociologists have claimed that farmers and small town people grew to be like the urban dwellers they hosted on automobile vacations and with whom they daily traded goods by automobile or truck. Adams for one, however, wanted his community to take advantage of the symbiosis but resist any erosion of values in the exchange.⁵²

Amidst the Depression, Adams began tentatively to doubt the automobile's blessings. Although it was not his manner to complain and admissions of self-doubt are absent in the *Courier*, his 1936 editorial "Community Dangers," blaming out-of-town shopping, was perhaps Adams's bleakest editorial in his twenty-one years:

With paved highways and other forms of transportation, small communities are drying up. There is no greater tragedy than a deserted village—a town or small city drying up. But the process is going on. It is here in South Dakota. It is everywhere.⁵³

Sisseton and Roberts County, on balance, however, grew in Adams's mind to achieve the desired balance between rural and urban life he envisioned. When in the late 1930s, Adams began to editorialize about the negative impact of

automobile parking congestion, he probably dismissed it in the long run as a consequence of economic recovery.⁵⁴

In one of the last editorials Adams wrote before dying prematurely of a heart attack stemming from a boating accident late in 1944, he foresaw victorious servicemen returning from the Second World War to Sisseton's and Roberts County's good life. Only three months before, Adams had editorialized for the specific highway improvements he believed Roberts County deserved.⁵⁵

Careful attention to Adams's gradual accommodation to the auto yields meaning not only for Sisseton and Roberts County but also beyond. It can be taken as a case study testing the theory that the new middle class promoted the automobile for personal financial and status gain.⁵⁶ Although Adams eludes this theory, a pattern emerges. As an articulate spokesman for South Dakota values, Adams exemplified those who valued persistence above boom, character before acclaim. In his cautious accommodation to the automobile's long-term implications for an idyllic community, Adams shared his fellow South Dakotans' stalwart commitment to making a home safe from urban and industrial America's perceived depredations by adopting one of its chief products. He welcomed automobile tourism to maintain northeastern South Dakota's colonial status, at once dependent on automobile tourists' spending during brief visits and yet removed from their influence most of the time. To the end, automobiles and the good life were partners in Al Adams's paternal vision for community.

NOTES

1. Robert F. Karolevitz, *Challenge: The South Dakota Story* (Sioux Falls: Brevet Press, 1975), 5.
2. Reynold M. Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass-roots America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 25.
3. John B. Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 1.
4. Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (1954; reprint ed., New York: Quadrangle Books, 1954), 237-240; and Michael L. Berger, "The Motorization of Library and Related Services in Rural America, 1912-28," Jan Jennings, ed., *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), 62-73.
5. The standard history of the automobile and its multifaceted influence is James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988). Michael L. Berger, *The Devil Wagon in God's Country: The Automobile and Social Change in Rural America, 1893-1929* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979) concentrates on the automobile's rural influence in general and without distinction between specific rural places. The most comprehensive study regarding a small town is Norman T. Moline, *Mobility and the Small Town, 1900-1930: Transportation Change in Oregon, Illinois*, Department of Geography, Research Paper No. 132 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971). For the Dakotas, see John E. Miller, *Looking for History on Highway 14* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), especially pp. 7-17 and Charles Ellis Dickson, "Prosperity Rides on Rubber Tires: The

Impact of the Automobile on Minot during the 1920s," *North Dakota History*, 53:3 (Summer 1986):14-23.

6. Herbert T. Hoover, "South Dakota: An Expression of Regional Heritage," James H. Madison, ed., *Heartland: Comparative Histories of the Midwestern States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 204.

7. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Fourteenth Census* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1921), 617; Norma Johnson and Oliver Swenunson, eds., *Across the Years: History of Sisseton, South Dakota, 1892-1992* (n.p.: Sisseton Centennial Book Committee, 1992), 15, 105.

Northeastern South Dakota's introductory or "pioneering" automobile period, as Art Buntin labels it, is the subject of his sketch: "20th Century Pioneering: The Road and Auto Frontier in Northern S.D.," in *The Karl E. Mundt Historical and Educational Series No. 15: 18th Dakota History Conference, April 10-12, 1986, Papers*, comp. H[erbert] W. Blakely (Madison, SD: Dakota State College, 1986), 134-48.

8. Doane Robinson, *South Dakota*, vol. 2 (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1930), 315-16; *Sisseton Courier*, Nov. 30, 1944.

9. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

10. *Ibid.*, 134.

11. *Sisseton Courier*, July 7, Dec. 22, 1921; Jan. 4, Oct. 18, 1923; June 9, 1927.

12. For a brief overview of South Dakota tourism, see Shebby Lee, "Traveling the Sunshine State: The Growth of Tourism in South Dakota," *South Dakota History* 19:2 (1989): 192-223.

13. *Sisseton Courier*, Jan. 31, 1924.

14. Flink, *The Automobile Age*, 138.

15. *Sisseton Courier*, July 9, 1931; Sept. 9, 1943.

16. *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1924.

17. For example, *ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1927.

18. For example, *ibid.*, July 21, 1932.

19. *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1924.

20. *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1929; July 6, 1933.

21. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1933.

22. *Ibid.*, June 6, 1925.

23. *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1929.

24. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1929.

25. *Ibid.*, Ap. 4, 1935.

26. *Ibid.*, Aug. 8, 1929.

27. *Ibid.*, Oct. 22, 1925; Aug. 15, 1935.

28. See John Cracco, "History of the South Dakota Highway Department, 1919-1941" (master's thesis, University of South Dakota, 1970) for an administrative overview.

29. For example, *Sisseton Courier*, Nov. 16, 1933; Oct. 1, 1942.

30. For example, *ibid.*, Jan. 21, 1937.

31. For example, *ibid.*, Mar. 6, 1924; May 21, 1936.

32. *Ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1931; Nov. 19, 1936.

33. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1935.

34. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1935; Feb. 4, 1937.

35. *Ibid.*, Mar. 4, Sept. 2, 1937.

36. *Ibid.*, Jan. 21, 1937.

37. *Ibid.*, Nov. 25, 1939.

38. *Ibid.*, July 9, 1925.

39. For example, *ibid.*, June 25, 1925.

40. T. J. Jackson Lears, "Some Versions of Fantasy: Toward a Cultural History of American Advertising, 1880-1930," *Prospectus* 9 (1984): 353-54.
41. *Sisseton Courier*, May 24, 1935. For the cultural aspects of aggressive driving, see Raymond I. Novaco, "Automobile Driving and Aggressive Behavior," Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford, eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 234-47.
42. *Sisseton Courier*, Jan. 3, 1924.
43. For example, *ibid.*, Jan. 19, 1928; Jan. 2, 1941.
44. For example, *ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1929; Nov. 6, 1930.
45. *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1935.
46. For example, *ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1928.
47. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1930.
48. For example, *ibid.*, Mar. 20, 1941.
49. *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1924; Feb. 5, Oct. 8, 1931.
50. *Ibid.*, Aug. 19, 1926.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Berger, *The Devil Wagon in God's Country*, 209-10; *Sisseton Courier*, Aug. 29, 1940; July 3, 1941.
53. *Ibid.*, June 18, 1936.
54. *Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1939; July 25, 1940.
55. *Ibid.*, Aug. 17, Nov. 9, 1944.
56. Peter J. Ling, *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform and Social Change, 1893-1923* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
57. Paula M. Nelson, *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986), 177; Catherine McNicol Stock, *Main Street in Crisis: The Great Depression and the Old Middle Class on the Northern Plains* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 217.

Acknowledgments:

For substantial help to access local sources, the author thanks Jack Adams, Oliver Swentumson, and, of the Sisseton Memorial Library, Delores Eggen and Mary Ann Cameron.

A GREAT PLAINS POTPOURRI

POEMS

by

Michael L. Johnson

Frank James

Jesse gone with a shot
from behind, Youngers jailed
at last, he got himself
off—even after he'd
ridden with Quantrill's goons—
And opened up his house
to tourists, took them through
for half a dollar, then
died at seventy-two
peaceful as any man.

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**Fred Dubray, President of the
Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative,
Tells His Story of the West**

when a storm comes
across the plains

buffalo stand
and face the wind

but cattle turn
their backs and run

**Dr. Brewster Higley, the Man
Who Wrote "Home on the Range"**

Whatever the sweet scenes his rhymes
rehearse, he was married five times
and often undoubtedly heard
many a discouraging word.

Quanah Parker

After he lost
the Llano Estacado, this
fearless Comanche chief surrendered but

soon beat the whites
at their own game:
went on

to deal in eattle, bought
a house large enough to hold all
his wives, and painted stars

across the roof
so he'd outrank
any general who might happen by