

EARLY AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC
OF THE UPPER MIDWEST

By

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Sodbusters and Cowboys.....	13
Songs of the Black Hills.....	30
Shanty-boys of the East.....	41
Further Research.....	52
Bibliography.....	54
The Dreary Black Hills.....	56
Additional Material.....	57
Research Statement.....	71
Acknowledgements.....	73
Presentation Information.....	74
Folk Recordings by Author.....	75

Pioneers have kept sane (whatever their frontiers were)
by expressing, compressing, and echoing themselves
to ears belonging to time's orphans themselves,
of their struggles and successes of their failures and freedoms
through their dances and plays, through their poems and paintings,
and through their songs most especially of all.¹

-Jack Kreitzer

The Folk Song

In his article for *Editio Musica* of Budapest entitled “Írdsái,” Hungarian composer Béla Bartók describes folk music as a “transforming work of natural power which functions spontaneously.” Although it is doubtful the music-making body of which he is speaking would understand his meaning, he later defines folk music, or “peasant music,” in more applicable terms. “Peasant music in a narrower sense is the entirety of such peasant melodies that belongs to one or several uniform styles.... It is the instinctive product made by the mass of the people without every kind of learning.”² Like other art music composers of his day, Bartók embraced the concept of nationalism, drawing on folk melodies in many of his major works. However, he criticized others for lacking the “spirit” of folk music. Mineo Ota, author and Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Tokyo, writes in the *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, “Mere use of certain melodic or rhythmic formulas of folk music did not make sense to [Bartók], if it was without a deep understanding of the materials.”³

Béla Bartók’s “spirit” of folk music as it applies to early America is more clearly described by the plainer voice of folk revivalist and activist Pete Seeger. In an interview

¹Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook*. (Sioux Falls, SD: George B. German Music Archives, 1983), VII.

²Béla Bartók, “Írdsai” (Budapest:Editio Musica, 1990), 11.

³Meneo Ota, “Why is the ‘Spirit’ of Folk Music so Important?: On the Historical Background of Béla Bartók’s Views of Folk Music,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* (2006): 34.

with *Guitar World Acoustic Magazine*, he explains that the term folk music “was invented in the middle of the nineteenth century to mean the music of the peasantry class, ancient and anonymous.”⁴ While his definition parallels that of composer Belá Bartók, Seeger goes on to describe specific features of American folk music, explaining folk music as a process. For example, a musician may write new words over preexisting music which may be hundreds of years old. These lyrics often reflect everyday experiences from the “down and out” of society, and may also convey political messages. Finally, the lyrics and melody are combined with a simple harmonic progression which allows the lyrics to stand out prominently.⁵

While Seeger’s description of folk music seems rigid or methodical at first glance, the “spirit” of American folk music lies in his allusion to the strong connection to personal experiences. One example of such music, “The Little Old Sod Shanty on My Claim” tells the story of the early pioneer giving up the civilization of the east to endure the unforgiving prairie:

My clothes are plastered o’er with mud, I’m looking like a fright,
And everything is scattered ‘round the room
Still I wouldn’t give the freedom that I have out in the west,
For the comfort of the eastern man’s own home.⁶

This variation of Will S. Hay’s “Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane,” made popular in 1871, is a prime example of the folk musician’s use of a preexisting melody to tell his own story. Although the tune is not original, the lyrics are specific to the circumstances

⁴David Thurmaier, “Pete Seeger, Bruce Springsteen and American Folk Music,” *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* (2006).

⁵David Thurmaier, “Pete Seeger, Bruce Springsteen and American Folk Music,” *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* (2006).

⁶Federal Writers’ Project of Nebraska, *Folklore Pamphlets I: Cowboy Songs* (1937), 4.

of the early settler, demonstrating the connection between song and personal experience, and the “spirit” of folk song Belá Bartók worked to incorporate into his own music.

The Forgotten State

The folk revival of the 1930s caused valuable parts of American cultural heritage to resurface. In the realm of music, field recordings, compilations, and related research reawakened the interest in learning, performing, and preserving early American folk music. In 1932, John A. Lomax began work on his compilation for Macmillan publishers in New York, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*.⁷ Lomax’s field recordings and the resulting publication were not the first of their kind, but the book’s success led to numerous other compilations of this sort. As the depression dragged on into the latter 1930s, government aid played a part in furthering Lomax’s cause. The New Deal pumped government dollars into the Works Progress Administration, in turn allocating funds to the Archive of American Folk Song, which had survived on donations since 1928. The new funding employed field recorders to venture to all fifty states, capturing folk songs and the stories behind them for the Library of Congress.⁸

The government’s role in the folk revival aided in the preservation of folk songs from nearly every portion of the country. However, parts of the United States were not thoroughly documented in field recordings and research, and were thus excluded from national collections of folk music. South Dakota, which had still been considered the southern half of the Dakota Territory at the time folk songs became popular, was one of these parts. In 1939, however, field recorder for the WPA, Nicholas Ray, recorded a mere

⁷John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Cannondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983) 609.

⁸John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Cannondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983) 610.

twelve minutes of stories and folk songs in Mitchell, SD.⁹ Unfortunately, the majority of these songs had been recorded in other states and not one was determined to contain regional text. In her bicentennial essay entitled “Music in Iowa and South Dakota,” Lynn Huenemann quotes Dakota historian, Herbert S. Schell: “early settlers were too busy making a living to devote much attention to the creative arts.”¹⁰ But despite its absence in many compilations, South Dakota has a rich folk music history which remains to be thoroughly researched and compiled into a comprehensive work. Huenemann reasons, “perhaps the objective historian in this case misread the inner values of those stalwart souls as they carved out new lives in a new land.”¹¹ To support her criticism of Schell’s statement, Huenemann overviews native tribal music, cowboy and pioneer ballads, and hymns, all of which enriched the musical tapestry of the upper Midwestern plains.

The unique cultural conditions of the Dakota Territory allowed for four distinct “categories” of folksongs to develop within or migrate to the territory. Each of the following categories corresponds to a mass of common people which created and utilized the body of music: The Sodbuster, The Cowboy, The Miner, and The Shanty-boy. The first category which is presented is that of the “sodbuster,” or early homesteader. Shortly after the Homestead Act of 1862, American settlers and foreign immigrants arrived in their schooners and covered wagons, staked claims, and busted sod to start new lives on the prairie. Though many were hopeful on the way to their new homes, the feelings appear to have subsided shortly after arriving on the plains. One Kansas settler wrote, “‘Them the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.’ Well, he ain’t done very much for us Kansas

⁹Ironically, South Dakota field recorders in the 1930s were mainly concerned with preserving music of the Lakota, Hutterites, and Mennonites because they believed that these groups of people would die out.

¹⁰Lynn Huenemann. “Music in Iowa and South Dakota,” (1976.)

¹¹Lynn Huenemann. “Music in Iowa and South Dakota,” (1976.)

fellers but chasten us with sand storms, chinch bugs, cyclones, dry weather, blizzards, and grasshoppers. He must love us a terrible sight.”¹² The Dakotan settler shared sentiments with the downtrodden Kansas “feller,” likely enduring harsher winters and fewer cyclones. Thus, the general tone of the first category of South Dakota folk song is of hardship and regret.

While the early settler was enduring the elements, the open range from Texas to Montana brought cowboys and their ballads through the Dakota Territory at least once annually. Thus the second category of South Dakota folk song is that of the cowboy. Very few cowboy songs likely originated in South Dakota, but many contain references to the area. “Roll On, Little Dogies” was included in a Nebraskan Folklore Pamphlets of the late 1930s:

Last night as I lay on the prairie,
And looked at the stars in the sky,
I wondered if ever a cowboy
Would drift to that sweet by and by.¹³

In general, cowboy songs contain a wide range of topics. Love interests, stories of cattle drives, and legendary characters are all common in this category.

Shortly before the cowboys were passing through western South Dakota, the great gold rush of 1875 greatly diversified the population of the native-owned Black Hills, creating the third category of South Dakota folk song. The prospect of a quick fortune brought new emigrants from the east, struggling farmers from Nebraska, Kansas, and the South, and finally, those undesirable individuals who came to the wild and raucous west to escape the law. Along with the prospectors came the railroad workers, bankers, and

¹²Charles C. Lowtherm, Dodge City, Kansas quoted in *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 233.

¹³Federal Writers’ Project of Nebraska. *Folklore Pamphlets I: Cowboy Songs* (1937.)

entertainers who would support the mining towns, and in most cases, would find more success than the miners.¹⁴ From this environment spouted the discontented song and verse of the miner and the foreboding love song of the outlaw:

Never a day but out of somewhere
My lonely campfires bring thoughts of you
Never a night regret but your arms surround me
Just as they used to do.¹⁵

While ballads of the prairie settler, the cowboy, and the miner were all sung within the state, the neighbors to the east were enjoying “The Golden Age of Lumbering,” felling spruce and pines and celebrating it in song. The sudden growth and development of the nation resulted in an ever increasing demand for lumber, most of which came from the northern woodlands of the United States and parts of Canada. In 1919, folklorist Franz Rickaby began his adventures collecting folk songs from logging camps in Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The resulting work, *Ballads and Songs of a Shanty-boy*, was a pioneering effort to preserve folk songs in the Midwest. Innumerable ballads of tragedies in the woods and on the river were collected by Rickaby. But beyond the dangers of logging, the shanty boys sang of love and playful evenings in town. This chorus from “The Festive Lumberjack” is representative of the lighter side of upper Midwest folk song.

He’s a wild rip-snortin’ devil ever’ time he comes to town.
He’s a porky, he’s a moose-cat, too busy to set down.
But when his selver’s registered and his drinks is comin’ few,
He’s then as tame as other jacks that’s met their Waterloo.¹⁶

¹⁴Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 149.

¹⁵“Diary of Jane Hickok.” Clarence Paine Collection.

¹⁶Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 95.

Folk Music Preservation in South Dakota

Prairie laments, cowboy ballads, mining songs and shanty-boy songs are all represented in nationally known collections, but they are seldom associated with the area that would later become the state of South Dakota. As the material found in this collection establishes, the area does, indeed, have an interesting cultural history, and subsequently diverse musical traditions. So why was the state neglected during the folk revival in the 1930s? The neglect could perhaps be attributed to the lack of dense population, or the outside belief that the state was simply barren and uninhabited. Furthermore, as historian Herbert Schell's comment brings to light, if those within the state are not aware of their own folk music history, then how can those outside of the state be expected to take notice of it?

This is not to say that no person has ever studied or attempted to preserve South Dakota folk music. In more recent years, coordinated steps have been taken to centralize documents relating to folk history. The George B. German Music Archives were created in 1978 in conjunction with the South Dakota Friends of Traditional Music.¹⁷ Consisting of live concert recordings, books on relevant topics, and invaluable collections of mining songs and cowboy poetry, the archives reside in a few different locations in Sioux Falls. In the far western portion of the state, the Adams Museum houses an impressive collection of Deadwood historical artifacts and information, and also plays a role in Black Hills tourism.¹⁸ While some believe this combination is detrimental to the preservation of true historical facts, the museum archives do hold bits and pieces of state history that

¹⁷George B. German was a cowboy singer, composer, and radio personality working at WNAX in Yankton, SD from the 1950s up until the early 1980s.

¹⁸Information regarding the Adams Museum was obtained during a phone interview with archivist Arlette Hanson by the author. However, follow-up calls and emails inquiring about further information or a possible visit elicited no response.

would otherwise be lost. The Adams Museum also funded the 2007 recording “Deadwood Songbook.” The recording reflects the research of Black Hills musician, Hank Harris, whose intention was to recreate music of the 1870s Black Hills gold rush.¹⁹ Finally, the National Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota houses a small collection of regional materials, though precious few date before the 1930s. Among the relevant materials are community sing-a-long songbooks and early schoolhouse textbooks containing folk songs from various ethnicities that settled in South Dakota.

Aside from Folk Music Archives and the Adams Museum in Deadwood, the work of individual researchers has proved to be the best source of folk music history in South Dakota. Clarence Paine, librarian at South Dakota State University during the 1940s and 1950s, conducted extensive research on historical Deadwood figures, uncovering a virtually unknown song believed to be written by Calamity Jane for her murdered lover Wild Bill Hickok, and briefly researching songs with regional text. More recently, freelance historian and co-founder of the George B. German Music Archives, David Kemp has collected and researched mining songs and verse from the state’s historical papers. His is likely the largest and most thoroughly researched collection that this compilation draws upon.

Uniting Folk History of South Dakota

Of the many local sources that were consulted, those discussed above were the only sources that produced usable material. Though they are few, each contributed a piece of valuable South Dakota folk music history. The following material strives to unite these pieces, along with relevant folk history of border states, into one compilation, and

¹⁹In a phone interview, Harris stated that the purpose of the project was to capture all early forms of music that were heard in Deadwood after the gold rush and recreate them in his recording. He said, however, that he only included songs that he personally liked.

through their union, provide unprecedented evidence of South Dakota's rich folk music traditions.

For the purposes of this collection, the term "folk music" follows closely with Bartok's definition, describing the music of the common man and having many of the characteristics laid out by Pete Seeger which were discussed earlier. However, this compilation does not include all forms of folk music found within the state of South Dakota. While the "peasant" or common man expressed himself in the lyrics of his ballads, so did he express himself in instrumental melody. Instrumental songs, often played on fiddle, guitar, or hammer dulcimer, are not included in this compilation. Another form of music which is not included in this compilation is Native American folk music. Perhaps the largest body of folk tunes which can be directly linked to the Dakotas did not come on a covered wagon or horse, but has been at home on the plains for thousands of years.

Aside from their classification as folk music and their presence in South Dakota, the four categories of folk song that are included in this compilation share certain characteristics. Each folk song was likely written or played between the 1860s and the early 1920s. Although many national compilations such as John Anthony Scott's *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* and Irwin Silber's *Songs of the Great American West* do not include the date a particular song was collected, each folklorist generally sets boundaries in the introduction. Although he does not specify when each tune was collected, Franz Rickaby opens his introduction to *Songs and Ballads of the Shanty-boy* by stating that all songs included were sung between the 1870s

and 1900. Furthermore, the songs included in this compilation are either written in, or translated into, English.

Through all of this, maintaining the “spirit” of the folk music is of utmost importance. Thus, these songs of the settlers, cowboys, miners, and shanty-boys have been mindfully handled, and will be presented as they were discovered, along with any addition information which could be found. Through acquaintance with these songs, South Dakotans and Americans alike may gain a greater understanding of the music that followed the settlers across the nation, and came to rest on the open prairie, the dense forests and the Black Hills.

Sodbusters and Cowboys

In the 1860s and 1870s, “going west” meant pushing into the grasslands and hills of the central United States. The promise of 160 acres of land under the Homestead Act of 1862 encouraged thousands to leave the comfort of the Eastern United States or the oppression of their homelands and start over. As Norm Cohen writes in *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration*, the few who made it to the Midwest were “those who felt crowded if they could see the smoke from their neighbor’s chimney.”²⁰ Furthermore, only the hardiest of Midwestern settlers homesteaded in the Dakota Territory. There were actually several settlements in the southeastern tip of the territory prior to 1862, but mother nature and the Yankton Sioux Indians drove most of them out. It was not until the late 1860s that the lure of land and railroad access brought the true Dakotan settlers who would permanently make the territory their home.

Though the land was incredibly fertile, the elements would present more opposition than any hopeful settler was prepared for: “summer heat and winter frost...drought and hail and the natural orneriness of the prairie soil.”²¹ “Dakota Land” is based on the tune of an old hymn “Bealuh Land” by John R. Sweney, and satirizes the Dakota homesteader’s situation. Like many songs, the original text was adapted to reflect the circumstances of the lyricist. In all the hardship, this song attests to the settler’s ability to maintain a sense of humor.

²⁰Norm Cohen, *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 155.

²¹Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 233.

Dakota Land

We've reached the land of desert sweet,
Where nothing grows for man to eat;
The wind it blows with feverish heat
Across the plains so hard to beat.

Chorus:

O Dakota land, sweet Dakota land,
As on thy fiery soil I stand,
I look across the plains
And wonder why it never rains,
Till Gabriel blows his trumpet sound
And says the rain's just gone around.

We've reached the land of hills and stones
Where all is strewn with buffalo bones.
O buffalo bones, bleached buffalo bones,
I seem to hear your signs and moans.

We have no wheat, we have no oats,
We have no corn to feed our shoats;
Our chickens are so very poor
They beg for crumbs outside the door

Our horses are of bronco race;
Starvation stares them in the face.
We do not live, we only stay;
We are too poor to get away.²²

Before any settler experienced the harshness of the Dakota Territory, he or she first had to survive the journey. Beyond relentless weather the pioneer had rivers to ford, wagon wheels to repair, and sick children to attend. Oxen and cattle were swept away in strong currents, and without a doctor on hand, many young travelers succumbed to illness. In addition to these obstacles, settlers also had to be wary of Native Americans. Although fur traders had maintained amiable relations with Indians of the upper Midwest

²²Louise Pond, *Folk-Song of Nebraska and the Central West: A Syllabus*, vol. 9 (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Academy of Sciences, 1915), 28.

for decades, the late 1860s brought an influx of pioneers to land Native Americans had hunted and inhabited for thousands of years. And as John Anthony Scott wrote in *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story*, the Native Americans were prepared to defend their land and the buffalo herds that were their livelihood: “Indian bands prowled around the caravans and sometimes attacked, decimating the number of pioneers, plundering their possessions, and stampeding their cattle.”²³

Known for their fierce and relentless battle tactics, the Sioux Indians of the Dakota Territory were especially feared. This memorable ballad, entitled “Sioux Indians,” was collected by John Lomax and accounts of one such encounter from the pioneer’s perspective. The last verse suggests the ballad was written by one who was passing through the upper Midwest en route to Oregon. This speaks to the audacity of those few pioneers who, instead of passing through, chose to homestead on Sioux Indian land.

Sioux Indians

I’ll sing you a song though it may be a sad one,
Of trials and troubles, and where first begun.
I left my dear family, my friends, and my home,
Across the wide deserts and mountains to roam.

I crossed the Missouri and joined a large train,
Which bore us o’er mountains and valleys and plains;
And often at evening out hunting we’d go
To shoot the fleet antelope and wild buffalo.

We heard of Sioux Indians all out on the plain,
A-killing poor drivers and burning their train,

²³John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Carbondale, IL:Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 179.

A-killing poor drivers with arrow and bow,
When captured by Indians no mercy they'd show.

We traveled three weeks til we came to the Platte,
We pitched our tents at the head of the flat,
We spread out our blankets on the green grassy ground,
While our horses and oxen were grazing all round.

While taking refreshments we heard a loud yell,
The whoop of Sioux Indians coming out of the dell;
We sprang to our rifles with a flash in each eye,
"Boys," says our brave leader, "we'll fight til we die."

They made a bold dash and came near to our train,
The arrows fall round us like hail and like rain,
But with our long rifles we fed them cold lead,
Till many a brave warrior around us lay dead.

We shot their bold chief at the head of the band,
He died lie a warrior with gun in his hand;
When they saw their bold chief laying dead in his gore,
They whooped and they yelled and we saw them no more.

We hitched up our horses and started our train,
Three more bloody battles this trip on the plain;
And in our last battle three of our brave boys fell,
And we left them to rest in a green shady dell.
We traveled by days, guarded camp during night,
Till Oregon's mountains looked high in their might;
Now at Pocahantas beside a clear stream
Our journey is ended in the land of our dream.²⁴

Upon arriving in the Dakota Territory, the settler found no forests to provide lumber for a home, only tall prairie grass. Thus, the first homes were constructed of sod bricks.

"With a spade he cut the sod furrows into three-foot lengths. Then it was like laying bricks--pile up the sod, chink the joints with earth, leave openings for a door and a window. Roof poles came from the willows a few miles up the creek. A layer of grass on

²⁴John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Carbondale, IL:Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 179.

the crisscrossed poles, a layer of sod on the top, and it was done. Later he would get a door and window and his wife would cover the shaggy walls with sheets of newspaper.”²⁵ While the material was windproof, fireproof, cool in summer, and warm in winter, it was also pervious to water. “Under a sod roof you got wet long after the rain was over. Saturated soil would drip for days. Sometimes a sodbuster’s wife held an umbrella over the stove while she turned the pancakes.” The tune for “The Little Old Sod Shanty on My Claim” was taken from William S. Hayes’s “Little Old Log Cabin,” immensely popular in 1871. While many versions of the song are found in national compilations, the text from *The Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets* is attributed to Emery Miller, a Nebraskan whose friends claim he wrote the song while holding down a claim.

The Little Old Sod Shanty on My Claim

I am looking rather seedy now while holding down my claim,
and my victuals are not always carved the best;
And the mice play shyly round me as I nestle down to rest
In my little old sod shanty on my claim.

The hinges are of leather and the windows have no glass,
While the board roof lets the howling blizzards in,
And I hear the hungry coyote as he slinks up through the grass
Round the little old sod shanty on my claim.

Yet, I rather like the novelty of living in this way,
Though my bill of fare is always rather tame,
But I’m happy as a clam on the land of Uncle Sam,
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.

But when I left me Eastern home, a bachelor so gay,
To try and win my way to wealth and fame,
I little thought I’d come down to burning twisted hay
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.

²⁵Walter Havighurst, quoted in *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 218.

My clothes are plastered o'er with dough, I'm looking like a fright,
And everything is scattered round the room,
But I wouldn't give the freedom that I have out in the West
For the table of the Eastern man's old home.

Still, I wish that some kind-hearted girl would pity on me take,
And relieve me from the mess that I am in;
The angel, how I'd bless her if this her home she'd make
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.

And we would make our fortune on the prairies of the West,
Just as happy as two lovers we'd remain;
We'd forget the trials and troubles we endured at the first
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.

And if fate should bless us with now and then an heir
To cheer our hearts with honest pride of fame,
Oh, then we'd be contented for the toil that we had spent
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.

When time enough had lapsed and all those little brats
To noble man and womanhood had grown,
It wouldn't seem half so lonely as round us we should look
And we'd see the old sod shanty on our claim.²⁶

The Dakota Territory officially opened for white settlement in 1858 following a treaty with the Yankton Sioux Indians. Although the first attempt to settle in the southeastern corner nearly failed, the population grew exponentially beginning in the late 1860s. By 1890, an unprecedented forty-three percent of the population consisted of foreign-born people, including Norwegians, Canadians, Irishmen and Germans.²⁷ The Irish Norwegians largely constituted the first settlement boom, migrating from Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. The last settlement wave was made up of Germans, who

²⁶Norm Cohen, *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1937), 157.

²⁷Norm Cohen, *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1937), 156.

were known for their depth of knowledge and skill with farming.²⁸ Joining the numerous Norwegians, Irishmen and Germans were the Polish and English among others, some from settlements within the United States and some straight from the homeland.

Naturally, each culture brought its own customs, folklore, and instruments. Iowa vocal teacher C. A. Fullerton incorporated several foreign folksongs into her 1900 compilation for children, *Choice Songs and Practical Instruction in Public School Music*. With a high percentage of students speaking another language, folk songs may have been an important way to connect students from different countries. In the introduction to her book, the author stated: “In sending out this book it is hoped that it may aid in hastening the day when the language of music will be understood and its ennobling influence felt in every home.” “The Moon” is a simple German folksong translated by Frederick Manley. “Swiss Song” is described as a two part song with the translator unknown. Finally, “The Little Ole” is based on a Hans Christian Anderson’s Norwegian folk tale of the little man who brings dreams to children. This tune, translated by S. D. Rodholm, is included in “Harmony Around the World,” a South Dakota Extension Service pamphlet.

The Moon

Good ev’ning, dearest lady Moon, where sail you thro’ the sky?
“I go to light the woodlands that darkling lie.

“I go to play a about the beds where babes in slumber rest,
And throw my beams of silver round birdlings’ nests.”

“I go to cheer all wanderers along their darksome way,
I go to light the places where fairies play.”

“I sail, dear child, across the heav’ns that nightly I may show
of my Creator for all below.”²⁹

²⁸John Hudson, “Two Dakota Homestead Frontiers,” *Annals of Association of American Geographers* (1973): 452.

Swiss Song

When the morning beams arise, Yo le le, yo lo la!
Brightening the rosy skies, Yo lo lay, lo la!
From the couch we quickly spring, Idle sloth away we fling,

Yo lo lay lo lay lo la! Yo lo lay, yo lo la,
Yo lo lay lo lay lo la! Yo lo lay lo la!

Tempted by the fragrant air, Yo lo le, yo lo la!
For the fields we soon prepare, Yo lo lay, lo la!
Glory gilds the lofty trees Branches quiver in the breeze

Yo lo lay lo lay lo la! Yo lo lay, yo lo la,
Yo lo lay lo lay lo la! Yo lo lay lo la!³⁰

The Little Ole

The little Ole with his umbrella,
All Children love him, the friendly fellow.
He comes unseen and he makes no noise;
He puts to bed little girls and boys.

This strange umbrella he spreads above them,
It's full of pictures, and children love them,
And when the child into dreamland sails,
He tells them wonderful fairy tales.

He tells of beautiful stars that guide us,
And lovely angels that walk beside us,
And fairies dancing so merrily
That everybody would like to see.

And all the children who mind their mothers
And always try to be good to others,
Shall under Ole's umbrella hear
Sweet angel voices so soft and clear.

²⁹C. A. Fullerton, *Choice Songs and Practical Instruction in Public School Music* (Cedar Falls, IA: C. A. Fullerton Co., 1900), 41. The author attributes a large number of songs to the "Modern Music Series" in the introduction, but does not specify which ones.

³⁰C. A. Fullerton, *Choice Songs and Practical Instruction in Public School Music* (Cedar Falls, IA: C. A. Fullerton Co., 1900), 41.

When nights is over and day is breaking
With rosy cheek and smile they waken;
A kiss for mother and a hug for dad
And thanks to God for the dreams they had.

C. A. Fullerton likely found a teaching situation similar to that facing any teacher in the Dakota Territory. In most cases, one room school teachers had minimal training if any. Classrooms were filled with children of all ages and ethnicities. “Teaching Public School” is a tribute to the pioneer women who, in the words of pioneer teacher Margaret Owen, would teach, rear, and lead the “wind-blown tumbling weeds” of children who gathered in the school yard every morning.³¹ Owens taught in the only schoolhouse in her township near Ipswich, Dakota in the 1880s. Much as the song suggests, she started teaching as a single woman, but caught the eye of a man who would later become her husband. With author of text and tune unknown, “Teaching Public School” is based on the tune, “Comin’ Through the Rye.”

Teaching Public School

If a body meets a lassie comin’ down the street,
With her dinner pail a-swingin’, lookin; nicely neat.
Can she bide in South Dakota, mark it as a rule.
She’s a lass that earn her money, teachin’ public school

At the early peep of morning’ swift she hies away,
Through the prairie dews a-trippin’ blithely on her way.
Gown so neat and face so bonnie, smilin’ crisp and cool,
Faith, I’d like to be a laddie just to go to school.

Yet she feels the sense ‘o duty tho her heart be light;
An she keeps the youngsters steady, guides them true and right.
Though the boys and girls be merry, they must mind the rule;
When the South Dakota lassie teaches public school.

³¹Margaret Owen, “Dakota Pioneers,” *The North American Review* (1930): 205.

If a laddie seeks a lassie for to be his bride;
Let him come to South Dakota, where the fairest 'bide.
Every laddie looks for beauty, and he'll be no fool;
Gin he takes the pretty lassie a-teachin' public school.³²

The Populist movement of 1890 to 1896 resounded especially well with farmers on the northern great plains. After staking a claim and taming the vast grasslands with the plow, hopeful farmers discovered they had worse adversaries than the elements. Declining wheat prices paired with extortionate practices of railroads, speculators, and the middle man, left little left for the farmer. Lastly, the banker entered the picture, advancing the farmer capital at exorbitant rates of interest, eventually resulting in the Populist movement of 1890.³³ South Dakota, which had just been recognized as a state, was at the center of the national movement, hosting the 1900 convention in Sioux Falls. Music played a major role in the movement, permeating the pages of the state's forty-three Populist newspapers, and livening party gatherings. *In A Living Tradition: South Dakota Song Writers*, David Kemp quotes John Hicks' *Populist Revolt*: "Particularly did those farmers love to sing. Parodies of familiar verses that could be sung to familiar tunes served the purpose best."³⁴ The People's Party of U.S.A, or populists, ran candidates in the election of 1892, sending "hayseeds," or farmers from the country, into the polls.³⁵ "The Hayseed," printed in the *Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets* and based on the tune, "Rosin the Beau," was a sort of anthem in the election.

³²Marshall County Sentinel, February 28, 1895 printed in *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota Arts Council, 1983), 12.

³³John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Carbondale, IL:Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 267.

³⁴Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 7.

³⁵Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 240.

Taken from the Populist newspaper, *The Marshall County Sentinel*, “Wandering Willie” satirizes South Dakota’s Secretary of the Treasury, William Taylor. In 1895, the appointed official ran off with the contents of the young state’s treasury. The tune was written by Henry Clay Work. On a lighter note, “Just Before the Drawing, Darling,” with music written by George Root, describes the Populist ideal of “a piece of land and a chance for a better life with one’s loved ones.”³⁶ The song was prevalent in many states with slight variations in text. Unfortunately, the authors of “Wandering Willie” and “Just Before the Drawing Sweetheart” remain unknown. The text of “The Hayseed” is attributed to Arthur Kellog.

The Hayseed

I once was the tool of oppression,
and as green as a sucker could be,
And monopolies banded together
to beat a poor hayseed like me.

Chorus

To beat a poor hayseed like me,
To beat a poor hayseed like me,
The monopolies banded together
To beat a poor hayseed like me.

The railroads and old party bosses
Together did sweetly agree;
And they thought there would be little trouble
In working a hayseed like me.

In working a hayseed like me, etc.

But now I’ve roused up a little
And their greed and corruption I see.
And the ticket we vote next November
Will be made up of hayseeds like me.

³⁶Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 8.

Will be made up of hayseeds like me, etc.³⁷

Wandering Willie

Oh have you seen our wandring Willie in his journey through your state?
He wears a gripsack on his shoulder and he walks with a waddling gate.

Yes walks with a waddling gait, Oh walks with a waddling gait.
His grips well filled with solid cash as he walks with a waddling gait.

He reached his hand into the treasury and cleaned up ev'ry cent.
Then giving a wink to the boys he knew away our Willie went.
Away our Willie went, Away our Willie went.
With his waddling gait and well filled grip, Away our Willie went.

The boys, he hoped, would touch him light, for very well he knew;
He's passed it 'round in elegant shape, to pull the party through.
Yes, pull the party through, Oh pull the party through.
He had hung out late, with this waddling gait, to pull the party through.

Then tear-fully they took Willie's hand, as he passed from the door.
Said hath to Kip and tom to Coe not lost, but gone before.
Yes, only gone before, oh merely gone before.
With his waddling gait, we'll share his fate, not lost, but gone before.³⁸

Just Before the Drawing, Sweetheart

Just before the drawing sweetheart, I am waiting for a claim.
Way out here in Dewey County, way out here upon the plain.
As I gaze upon the prairie, and this promised land I view;
Just before the drawing sweetheart, I am thinking most of you.

Way out here in Dewey County, way out here upon the plain.
Way out here upon my homestead, where they way it never rains.
Just before the drawing, sweetheart, many they are coming here.
They have left their homes and families, they have left their sweethearts dear.

They are coming for the drawing, they are waiting for a claim.
Where they'll take their own dear loved ones, and no more will ever roam.
Now my darling watch the paper, and if you should see my name;

³⁷Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 241.

³⁸Marshall County Sentinel, February 28, 1895 printed in *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 11.

You will know we have a homestead, you will know we have a claim.

Then my sweetheart you get ready, they to Pierre you may come.
We'll go in a prairie schooner, to our Dewey County home.
Way out here in Dewey County, where they way it never rains;
You will find no boys a waiting, just to prove up on our claim.³⁹

While settlers were still staking their claims in the 1870s to 1890s, an estimated 40,000 cowboys drove more than ten million head of cattle from Texas to Montana, and finally to eastern markets.⁴⁰ In the Dakota Territory, this caused several violations of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The treaty originally allowed the Sioux Indians to remain on their land west of the Missouri River. Inevitably, they were forced to give up lands west and south of the Missouri River in northern Dakota, and eventually the Black Hills of south-western Dakota.

Following the land opening, and in many cases prior to the opening, the cattle industry flourished in the Dakota Territory. By 1893 Belle Fourche, South Dakota was believed to be the world's largest cattle shipping point.⁴¹ Thus, the lone figure of a man in a saddle riding into the sunset was not only a stereotype of the western plains, but of western South Dakota. But as Irwin Silber wrote in *Songs of the Great American West*, "before he became a figure of romance, the cowboy was the working-stiff of the plains."⁴² Cowboys came from various backgrounds. Many were veteran confederate soldiers from the Civil War, while others turned from the declining lumbering and mining industries. Perhaps the distinct characteristics of the cowboy ballad are a result of these

³⁹Pierre Weekly Free Press, October 1909, printed in *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 10.

⁴⁰Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967),159.

⁴¹John Hudson, "Two Dakota Homestead Frontiers," *Annals of Association of American Geographers* (1973): 453.

⁴²Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967),159.

diverse backgrounds. More likely, however, these characteristics can be attributed to the nature of a cowboy's toil. The long hours in a saddle and isolation of cowboy camps showed through the tune and lyrics of the ballad. Also present in the song is a playfulness and sense of humor that could only come from the enjoyment of one's work.

Much like folksongs of settlers, cowboy ballads were often variations of those sung by sailors, lumbermen, and in some cases, their English forefathers. "The Cowboy's Dream" as printed in *The Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets* is also known as "Roll On Little Dogies" or "The Cowboy's Meditation." Sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," the song metaphorically refers to Judgment day as the "great roundup." "Good-bye, Old Paint" was collected by John A. Lomax from a cowboy in Montana before World War I. The tune moves to a common cowboy rhythm which mimics the sauntering of a horse. With the only variation from verse to verse being the third line, the song is good for improvising and, as Scott writes, it could go "jogging on forever."⁴³

The Cowboy's Dream

Last night as I lay on the prairie,
And looked at the stars in the sky,
I wondered if ever a cowboy
Would drift to that sweet by and by.

Chorus

Roll on, roll on;
Roll on, little doggies, roll on, roll on,
Roll on, roll on;
Roll on, little doggies, roll on.

The raid to that bright, happy region
Is a dim, narrow trail, so they say;
But the broad one that leads to perdition

⁴³John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 263.

Is posted and blazed all the way.

They say there will be a great roundup,
And cowboys, like doggies, will stand,
To be marked by the Riders of Judgment
Who are posted and know every brand.

I know there's many a stray cowboy
Who'll be lost at the great, final sale,
When he might have gone in the green pastures
Had he known of the dim, narrow trail.

I wondered if ever a cowboy
Stood ready for that Judgment Day,
And could say to the Boss of the Riders,
"I'm ready, come drive me away."

For they, like the cows that are locoed,
Stampede at the sight of a hand,
Are dragged with a rope to the roundup,
Or get marked with some crooked man's brand.

And I'm scared that I'll be a stray yearling--
A maverick, unbranded on high—
And get cut in the bunch with the "rusties"
When the Boss of the Riders goes by.

For they tell of another big owner
Whose ne'er overstocked, so they way,
But who always makes room for the sinner
Who drifts from the straight, narrow way.⁴⁴

Goodbye, Old Paint

Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne,
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne.
I'm leavin' Cheyenne, I'm off to Montan'
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne.

Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne,
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne.
I'm aridin' old paint, I'm leadin' old Dan.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm leavin' Cheyenne.

⁴⁴Federal Writers' Project of Nebraska, *Folklore Pamphlet I: Cowboy Songs* (1937), 10.

Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne,
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne.
I'm off to Montan' to throw the houlihan.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne.

Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne,
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne.
They feed in the coulees, they water in the draw.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm aleavin' Cheyenne.⁴⁵

While “A Cowboy’s Dream” and “Goodbye, Old Paint” were created and sung out on the open range, “Pride of the Prairie” came from the musical epicenter, Tin Pan Alley. Ragtime composer George Botsford was born in Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory in 1874. His early years on the prairie played an important role in shaping his music. Thus, “Pride of the Prairie” is a prime example of how original cowboy music came to influence professional composers, and went on to inspire the country-western style of music that became popular in the mid twentieth century.⁴⁶

Pride of the Prairie

On the wild and woolly prairie,
Not so far from old Pueblo Town,
Lived a little girl named Mary,
Eyes of blue and tresses of brown.
O'er the plains there came a cowboy.
He said, “Let's name our wedding day.”
She bowed her head and whispered,
“Now, boy,” And on their broncos they rode away.
They rode away, one summer day.

Chorus

Pride of the prairie, Mary, my own,
Jump beside me, ride to my home.
My heart's been lassoed, no more to roam,

⁴⁵John Anthony Scott, *The Ballad of America: The History of the United States in Song and Story* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 263.

⁴⁶Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 18.

Pride of the prairie, Mary, my own.

He held her bronco while she mounted,
He asked her, "May I steal a kiss?"
He stole more than she ever counted,
And hand in hand she answered this,
"You stole a kiss, you stole a kiss."⁴⁷

⁴⁷Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 18.

Songs of the Black Hills

In the early 1800s, the first rumors of gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming began circulating.⁴⁸ Up to that time, only fur traders and travelers had dared to penetrate the mysterious land, which had long been considered sacred ground by the Sioux Indians and their predecessors in the area. However, this all changed in the fall of 1874, in what Irwin Silber calls “one of the grandest swindles ever perpetrated on the American public.”⁴⁹ The 1873 business panic caused bank failures, foreclosures, and massive unemployment. Consequently, the railroads, the Northern Pacific in particular, were looking for ways to stimulate business. As it turns out, a gold rush was what the desperate entrepreneurs concocted.

The treaty of 1868 had ceded the Black Hills to the Sioux Indians “so long as the green grass shall grow,” but in the summer of 1874, General George A. Custer broke the treaty, leading an expedition from Fort Lincoln near Billings, Montana, down through the hills to “learn something of [their] nature and possibilities.”⁵⁰ Though the expedition itself was not likely part of the railroad’s scheme, the presence of miners in Custer’s band of explorers undoubtedly was part of the plot. Gold was discovered among the rocky hills and rushing streams of the Black Hills. However, the news did not reach the rest of the nation until the fall of that year.⁵¹ Thus, the Black Hills Gold Rush of 1874 did not actually take place until the spring of 1875.

⁴⁸Hyman Palais, “Black Hills Miners’ Folklore,” *California Folklore Quarterly* (1945):255.

⁴⁹Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 149.

⁵⁰Hyman Palais, “Black Hills Miners’ Folklore,” *California Folklore Quarterly* (1945): 255.

⁵¹David Kemp, “‘The Dreary Black Hills’: A 19th Century Western Mining Ballad,” *JEMF Quarterly* (1978): 181.

Although Custer had already gained the status of national hero due to the discovery, he would gain even greater attention in his death. The ballad “Custer’s Last Charge” is an ode to the battle that eventually took the life of General Custer, three hundred of his soldiers, and an undocumented number of Sioux Indians in the Big Horn Mountains. The lyricist and composer are unknown. The anti-Sioux sentiments apparent in the ballad are just the beginning of a cultural war that many would argue is still waging today.

Custer’s Last Charge

Across the Bighorn’s crystal tide, against the savage Sioux,
A little band of soldiers charged, three hundred boys in blue,
In front rode blond-haired Custer, pet of the wild frontier,
A hero of a hundred fights, his deeds known far and near.

“Charge, comrades, charge! There’s death ahead, disgrace lurks in our rear!
Drive rowels deep! Come on, come on!” came his yells with ringing cheer.
And on the foe those heroes charged: there rose an awful yell,
It seemed as though those soldiers stormed the lowest gates of hell.

Three hundred rifles rattled forth, and torn was human form;
The black smoke rose in rolling waves above the leaden storm.
The death groans of the dying braves, their wounded piercing cries,
The hurling of the arrows fleet did cloud the noonday skies.

The snorting steeds with shrieks of fright, the firearms’ deafening roar;
The war song sung by the dying braves who fell to rise no more.
O’er hill and dale the war song waved ‘round craggy mountain side,
Along down death’s dark valley ran a cruel crimson tide.

Our blond-haired chief was everywhere ‘mid showers of hurling lead,
The starry banner waved above the dying and the dead.
With bridle rein in firm-set teeth, revolver in each hand,
He hoped with his few gallant boys to quell the great Sioux band.

Again they charged, three thousand guns poured forth their last-sent ball;
Three thousand war whoops rent the air; gallant Custer then did fall.
And all around where Custer fell ran pools and streams of gore,
Heaped bodies of both red and white whose last great fight war o’er.

The boys in blue and their savage foe lay huddled in one mass,
Their life's blood ran a-trickling through the trampled prairie grass,
While fiendish yells did rend the air and then a sudden hush,
While cries of anguish rise again as on the mad Sioux rush.

O'er those strewn and blood-stained fields those goading redskins fly;
Our gang went down three hundred souls, three hundred doomed to die,
Those blood-drunk braves sprang on the dead and wounded boys in blue,
Three hundred bleeding scalps ran high above the fiendish crew.

Then night came on with sable veil and hid those sights from view,
The Bighorn's crystal tide was red as she wound her valleys through.
And quickly from those fields of slain those gloating redskins fled—
But blond-haired Custer held the field, a hero with his dead.⁵²

The word of “gold” quickly spread to every struggling corner of the nation; the race was on. Irwin Silber writes: “From the soup lines of eastern cities, from the deserted farms of Kansas and Nebraska . . . from the played-out mines of California and the southern most cattle ranches of Texas, the prospectors came, swarming over the hills with pick and pan in search of fortune.”⁵³ Although not mentioned by Silber, those who flocked to the Black Hills also included immigrants from “practically every nation and social class around the world.”⁵⁴ In addition to attracting a plethora of cultures, the wild and open hills attracted criminals and vagabonds fleeing the law.

Mining camps eventually grew into functioning towns with all the amenities and many of the conveniences of a Eastern city. Entrepreneurs learned from the California gold rush that the real money came not to the prospector, but those who sold him

⁵²Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 274.

⁵³Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 149.

⁵⁴Hyman Palais, “Black Hills Miners’ Folklore,” *California Folklore Quarterly* (1945): 255.

supplies, fed him, banked his wealth, and entertained him.⁵⁵ Thus, the amenities and conveniences of a city included saloons, gambling parlors, and brothels. It was in such establishments that many mining songs and ballads debuted and evolved. “The Dreary Black Hills” appeared in print in the 1870s attributed to a Dick Brown. However, the origination of the tune and the existence of its composer have caused some confusion among historians.

Surprisingly, the story that seems to stand up to criticism involves music, murder, and a love interest. A shortened version of the story, as told by John S. McClintock in his book *Deadwood Dick*, reads as follows: Dick Brown was supposedly a handsome man, and a proficient banjo player with an excellent baritone voice.⁵⁶ In Laramie, WY, he came across the attractive and talented Fannie Garretson, an actress and piano player. The two headed for the mining camps of the Black Hills, leaving Fannie’s lover, Ed Shaunnessay to brood over their split. However, Shaunnessay followed the couple, and finding them on stage together, threw something, (perhaps an axe as Brown claimed, or perhaps a bunch of paper) at Brown in rage. At this attack, the musician promptly set down his banjo, picked up his revolver, and “killed Shaunnessay on the spot.”⁵⁷ Dick Brown was later acquitted of the murder for self defense, and fled the region.

In years following the printing of “The Dreary Black Hills,” “Deadwood Dick” or Dick Brown would become a character in writer Edward Wheeler’s dime novels and a legendary outlaw among story tellers, making it difficult to discern the fictional character

⁵⁵Irwin Silber, *Songs of the Great American West* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 149

⁵⁶David Kemp, “The Dreary Black Hills”: A 19th Century Western Mining Ballad,” *JEMF Quarterly* (1978): 185.

⁵⁷John S. McClintock *Pioneer Days in the Black Hills: Accurate History and Facts Related by One of the Early Pioneers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000) 129.

from the actual man. In his article for the *JEMF Quarterly* entitled “‘The Dreary Black Hills’ A Nineteenth Century Western Mining Ballad,” historian David Kemp concludes that Dick Brown was indeed an actual performer who graced the stage of Deadwood’s “Melodeon” with voice and banjo, and is likely responsible for composing the ballad.⁵⁸

Regardless of its composer’s story or existence, “The Dreary Black Hills” has become the most widely recorded song of the Black Hills area. The content of the ballad warns hopeful miners and settlers of the bleak and difficult situation in the hills. As Kemp points out, folklorist John Lomax believed the ballad was received in a light-hearted manner by seasoned miners who had already conquered their fears.

The Dreary Black Hills

Kind friends you must pity my horrible tale,
I’m an object of pity I’m looking quite stale.
I gave up my trade selling Rights Patent Pills,
To go hunting gold in the Dreary Black Hills.

Chorus

Don’t go away, stay at home if you can.
Stay away from that city, they call it Cheyenne.
For old Sitting Bull or Comanche Bill,
They will lift off your hair in the Dreary Black Hills.

The round-house in Cheyenne is filled ev’ry night,
With loafers and bummers of ev’ry sad plight.
On their backs is no clothes, in their pockets, no bills,
Each day they keep staring for the Dreary Black Hills.

When I came to the Black Hills no gold could I find,
And I thought of the free lunch that I left behind.
Through rain, sleet, and snow: I froze to the gills,
And they cal me the orphan boy of the Dreary Black Hills.

One morning so early, so early in May,

⁵⁸David Kemp, “The Dreary Black Hills”: A 19th Century Western Mining Ballad,” *JEMF Quarterly* (1978): 185.

I met Kit Carson a-goin' away.
He was goin' away with Buffalo Bill.
He was goin' a-minin' in the Dreary Black Hills.

Oh, I wish that the man who first started this sell,
Was a captive, and Crazy Horse had him in—well,
There is no use in grieving, or swearing like pitch.
But the man who would stay here is a song of a bitch.

So now to conclude, this advice I'll unfold.
Don't come to the Black Hills a-lookin' for gold.
For Big Wallapie and Comanche Bill,
Are securing, I'm told, in the Dreary Black Hills.

Perhaps two of the most famous outlaws of the Black Hills were Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. Though their rough days of drinking and gambling in Deadwood saloons were only partially documented, it is believed that at some point during their acquaintance, a love affair developed. Though Wild Bill Hickok was murdered years before Calamity Jane passed away, the couple is buried side by side on Mount Mariah, in Deadwood, SD. Supporting the existence of their relationship, the diary of Calamity Jane surfaced in 1941 along with her supposed daughter. Jean Hickok McCormick claimed not only to be the daughter of Calamity Jane and Bill Hickok, but that the two had been married.⁵⁹

In the years following the diary's discover, extensive research began as to its authenticity. While much of the information contained in the diary matched up with historical documents, Hickok McCormick's account of her own life was deemed fanciful. Among her claims was that she had met her mother once while Calamity was traveling

⁵⁹James D. McLaird, "Calamity Jane's Diary and Letters: Story of a Freud," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*. Autumn-Winter 1995, 22.

with “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.”⁶⁰ Historians believe that Calamity Jane never toured with the show after all. Regardless of the diary’s authenticity, the contents are indeed intriguing. Among the contents is “Song of my Heart” of which Calamity writes “this is the song I always sing when I ride nights through the Sioux camps just in case they do not recognize me. I wrote it in memory of your father Bill Hickok. I call it the song of my heart.”⁶¹ The melody is not included in the diary.

Song of my Heart

Never a day but out of somewhere,
Lonely, my campfires bring thoughts of you.
Never a night regret but your arms surround me
Just as they used to do.

Sometimes I sail away in my dreams
And find you away out there.
I feel your tears upon my lips,
I reach for hand to cling to.

You leave me groping in the dark,
Oh God, what could my lonely hours
Bring through long years.....
Having lost you and everything.

As an outlaw, miner, or entertainer, life was not easy during the gold rush. In his article for the *California Folklore Quarterly*, entitled, “Black Hills Miners’ Folklore,” Hyman Palais includes several stories detailing the hardships of “tenderfoots,” or those without previous knowledge or experience mining for gold. Beyond hardships of the trade, the luck of the beginner is often in play in mining stories.⁶² One story tells of a

⁶⁰James D. McLaird, “Calamity Jane’s Diary and Letters: Story of a Freud,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*. Autumn-Winter 1995, 22.

⁶¹“Diary of Jane Hickok.” Clarence Paine Collection.

⁶²Hyman Palais, “Black Hills Miners’ Folklore,” *California Folklore Quarterly* (1945): 256.

foolish tenderfoot who chooses a very unlikely mining claim, and carries each pan of dirt a long distance to wash it in the nearest stream. Low and behold, after weeks of no yield, the miner hits it big, making nearly \$100 a day on his claim. Another story tells of a group of African Americans from Montana. Having just come to the area, the men ask a mischievous miner where to dig. The seasoned miner tells them to start digging on top of a nearby hill, or what he believes to be the least likely place to find gold. Again, the tenderfoots triumph, making a fortune on top of “nigger hill.”

The majority of the surviving ballads and songs of the Black Hills deal not with lucky strikes or raucous nights, but reveal the darker side of the times. While “The Dreary Black Hills” is the best known ballad conveying the difficult life of a miner, other ballads and songs share the same theme with a more serious message. “Just from Dawson” was probably composed around the turn of the century when miners were traveling between the Black Hills and gold strikes in the Yukon Territory. A close variation of “Bingen on the Rhine” by Caroline Norton, the ballad is the last words of a dying miner spoken to a close friend. The author of the text is unknown.

Just From Dawson

A Dawson City mining man lay dying in the ice,
He didn't have a woman nurse, he didn't have the price;
But a comrade knelt beside him as the sun sank in repose,
To listen to his dying words and watch him while he froze.

The dying man propped up his head above four rods of snow,
And said: “I never saw it thaw at 98 below.
Take this little pinhead nugget that I swiped from Jason Dills,
And send it home to Deadwood, to Deadwood on the hills.”

“Tell the fellow in the home land to remain and have a cinch,
That the price of patent pork-chops here is 80 cents per inch.
And I speak as one that’s been here scratching around to find the gold,
And at ten percent of discount now could not buy up a cold.

“Tell my sweetheart not to mourn for me with sorrow too intense,
For I’m going to a warmer and far more cheerful hence.
Oh, the air is growing thicker and the breezes give me chills.
Gee! I wish I was in Deadwood, in Deadwood on the hills.

“Tell my friend and tell my enemies if you ever reach the East,
That the Dawson City region is no place for man or beast.
That the land’s too elevated and the wind too awful cold,
And the hills of South Dakota yield as good a grade of gold.

“Now so long,” he faintly whispered. “I have told you what to do.”
And he closed his weary eyelids, and froze solid P. D. 2.
We procured an organ box and C.O. D.’d the bills
And sent the miner home that night to Deadwood on the hills.⁶³

Shortly after the Black Hills gold rush began, the Homestake Gold Mine was established by a small partnership of men. After it was purchased by experienced mining tycoon, George Hearst, the mine grew into a large scale operation, employing those who had no land or were unsuccessful mining on their own. Along with a corporate mine came unions and disgruntled workers. The Western Federation of Miners, a forerunner of the Industrial Workers of the World, was especially active in the Black Hills. In *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters*, historian David Kemp emphasizes the federation’s role in publishing newspapers in mining camps. “The newspapers would feature local and national news, women’s news and affairs, some sports and almost always articles on union and socialist activities in the area and the country.”⁶⁴ Newspapers were also outlets for creative writing, poetry, and songs. Popular poems were sometimes parodied, and

⁶³John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan, 1934) 440-441.

⁶⁴Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983),14.

Protestant hymns took on new lyrics, all praising the virtues of the union and socialism.⁶⁵

“The Wage Slave” by Stanley Fitzpatrick points out the injustices of mining industry employment, comparing it with slavery.

“Somebody’s Boy We Know” was written during the lockout of the Western Federation of Miners Union by the Homestake Mine in 1908. Composed by Mrs. S. R. Smith and Helen Grant, the song was published as loose sheet music by one of author’s husbands, S. R. Smith, a furniture maker and undertaker in Lead.⁶⁶

The Wage Slave

The negro’s free, but in his place
The wage slave bows his haggard face,
The power of gold holds full control;
It “owns” its victims’ life and soul;
It owns the mother, woe-worn, wild,
Who cannot feed her starving child;
It owns the woman, gaunt and thin,
By want dragged down to ways of sin;
It owns the mass of toiling men:
It fills each lowest, vilest den,
Where vice and crime; where sin and shame
Are stamped on souls with brands of flame.

It gives the low the power to rule,
The toiling millions but their tool—
The helpless tool of cunning knaves
Who make free men their cringing slaves:
The sons of toil who should be free,
Yet bend to gold their silence down
Before a master’s haughty frown.

O men of toil, on sea and land,
Who feel the tyrant’s iron hand,
No longer yield your manhood up
And groaning drink the bitter cup,

⁶⁵Bruce Preheim, Jim Plucker, and David Kemp, *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters Songbook* (Sioux Falls, SD, George B. German Music Archives, 1983), 15.

⁶⁶David Kemp. *Poetry of the Miners from the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries*. (2004.)

While your taskmakers wring from you
The just reward to labor due.
Ye are not babes, but men full grown—
Arise and take what is your own.
The negro's free on Southern Plains;
Let white-wage slaves now break their chains.⁶⁷

Somebody's Boy We Know

Way out among the western pines, down in the perilous mines;
Men brave and bold are digging for gold, counting their lot in hard lines.
Just toiling on for mother and home, a dear wife and babes of their own,
A flash then a dash, with a terrible crash! Some brave boy's labor is done.

Chorus

He may not be your boy, we know,
He may not be my boy, Ah no,
Who mangled and torn, to the surface is borne,
But he's somebody's boy we know.

Sadly we gaze on his dear face, fearing a loved one to trace,
Now lifeless and cold, who digging for gold, was yesterday here in his place.
Cover the dear one over with care, gently and tenderly bear,
The poor mangled form, to the home now forlorn, they're tearfully waiting him there.

Tenderly trusting lay him away, come with your flowers some day;
Let mem'ry recall, the brave boys who fall, at their post, in the mines far away.
Ah 'tis but the brave who will dare, the secrets of nature to share,
And graves 'neath the pines, of the dead from the mines, green of the laurel should wear.

⁶⁷Stanley Fitzpatrick, "The Wage Slave," *Equality*, August 16, 1899, page 1, column 1.

The Shanty-boys in the East

The lumbering trade began in America almost as soon as British colonists arrived. The ample forests of the north-east coast provided lumber, a desirable commodity which served as a means of exchange for the needed goods from England. As Franz Rickaby points out in the introduction to his compilation, *Songs and Ballads of the Shanty-Boy*, “by the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when Canadian lumbering was practically just beginning, the American Colonies had been over a hundred years ‘in the business.’⁶⁸ It was not until 1836 and 1837 that the industry first entered Minnesota boundaries. Thirty years later, the industry rapidly accelerated in Michigan, Wisconsin, and eventually, Minnesota.⁶⁹ Known as “The Golden Age of Lumbering,” the 1870s through the 1890s were the climax of the lumbering industry in the United States. Large fortunes were made by few, while the “shanty-boy” roamed the country much like the cowboy; but his toiling was of a different kind: felling, chopping, and transporting lumber from the Midwest to wherever there was demand.

During this “golden age,” the life of a “shanty-boy,” or lumberman was much romanticized. “His axe bit deep as it shouted and his saw-blade sang in the brittle air. The soft aroma of the woods at peace sharpened to an acrid redolence, acute, insistent-- the cry of wounded pine.”⁷⁰ Despite this description of the great conqueror of the pine, the actual life of a shanty-boy was considerably difficult. Lumbermen worked long hours in the coldest months of winter for little pay. Furthermore, dangers in the forests and on

⁶⁸Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) xvii.

⁶⁹Agnes Larson, “On the Trail of the Woodsman in Minnesota,” *Minnesota History*, (1932): 350.

⁷⁰Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) xix.

the rivers always loomed. But the spirit of these working men was such that through it all, they took great pride in their work. This is evident in the vast numbers of ballads and folk songs attributed to shanty-boys. In the preface to his compilation, Rickaby states, “No group ever celebrated himself in song and ballad more than did the shanty-boys of the Golden Age.”⁷¹ Although this “celebration” is evident in many ballads, it is especially present in “Jim Porter’s Shanty Song,” as sung by Mrs. J. S. Murphy of Minto, North Dakota. The last stanza of the song allowed for individual crews to adapt the song to suit their own crew. Versions named after the crews of Jim Lockwell and Fred Seargant have also been found. As is the case with most lumbering ballads, the author and composer are unknown.

Jim Porter’s Shanty Song

Come all ye jolly good shanty-boys, come listen to me song.
For it’s all about the shanties and the way they get along.
For a jollier crew of fellows never can you find
Than those real good old shanty-boys a-cutting down the pine.

The choppers and the sawer they lay the timbers low,
The skidders and the swampers they holler to and fro.
Next comes the sassy loaders before the break of day.
“Come, load up your teams, me boys!” And to the woods they sway

For the broken ice is floating, and our business is to try.
Three hundred able-bodies men are wanted on the drive.
With cant-hooks and with jam-pikes these noble men do go.
And risk their sweet lives on some running stream, you know.

On a cold and frosty morning they shiver with the cold.
The ice upon their jam-pikes, which they can scarcely hold.
The axe and saw does loudly sing unto the sun goes down.
Hurrah, my boys! For the day is spent. For the shanty we are bound.

Arriving at the shanty with cold and with wet feet,

⁷¹Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) vii.

Pull off your boots, me boys, for supper you must eat.
Then supper being ready, to supper we must go,
For it's not the style of one of us to lose our hash, you know.

Then supper being over, to the apartments we must go.
We'll all load up our pipes and smoke till all is blue,
To nine o'clock or thereabout our bunks we then do climb.

.....

At four o'clock in the morning our foreman he will say,
"Come, roll out, ye teamsters! It's just the break of day."
The teamsters they get up, and their things they cannot find.
They'll blame it on the swampers, and they'll curse them till they're blind

But as springtime rolls on, how happy we will be,
Some of us arriving home, and others far away.
It takes farmers and sailors, likewise merchants too,
It takes all sorts of tradesmen to make up a shanty crew.

So now my song is ended. Those words they say are true.
But if you doubt a word of it, go ask Jim Porter's crew.
For it was in Jim Porter's shanty this song was sung with glee.
So that's the end of me shanty song. It was composed by me.⁷²

At the end of every day, lumberjacks would pile back into camp, peel off their wet boots and gear, and sit down to supper in the close warmth of the shanty. The shanty was a low, dark building of logs. Mud and moss kept the wind and snow from blowing in, and windows were rare.⁷³ Despite the smell of sweat and the need to stoop, the shanty and the warm open fire was welcoming at the end of a hard day. Even the hardest of men was exhausted, but on some evenings, especially Saturday evenings, smoking, story-telling, singing, and sometimes stag dances accompanied by the fiddle or accordion entertained until nine.⁷⁴ It was during this time that the "emotional thaw" set in, and as

⁷²Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 69.

⁷³Agnes Larson, "On the Trail of the Woodsman in Minnesota," *Minnesota History*, (1932): 352.

⁷⁴Theodore Blegen, "With Axe and Saw: A History of Lumbering in Minnesota," *Forest History* (1963): 3.

Rickaby suggests, “a great many songs were, in the words of an old shanty-boy, ‘as fine as any you’ll hear.’”⁷⁵ Rickaby adds that on two occasions, he was told that after the participating men had formed a circle, each man had to either tell a story or sing a song. If a man chose to sing a song, he was allowed to sing an old one. If he chose to tell a story, he had to tell a new one. Thus, the content of stories and ballads mixed and evolved as it passed from man to man. This version of “The Flat River Girl” was collected from Mr. Arthur Milloy of Omemee, North Dakota. Though none of the three knew him directly, the character of “Jack Haggerty” was believed to be an actual lumberjack by Mr. Milloy and two others that sang the song for Rickaby. The ballad is a prime example of how story-telling sometimes blurred the line between truth and fable.

Flat River Girl

I’m broken-hearted raftsman, from Granesville I came.
I courted a lassie, a lass of great fame.
But cruel-hearted Cupid has caused me much grief.
My heart it’s asunder, I can ne’er find relief.

My troubles I’ll tell you without more delay.
A comely young lassie my heart stole away.
She was a blacksmith’s only daughter from Flat River side,
And I always intended for to make her my bride.

I bought her rich jewels and the finest of lace,
And the costliest of muslins it was her I’d embrace.
I gave her my wages for her to keep safe.
I begrudged her of nothing that I had myself.

My name is Jack Haggerty where the white waters flow.
My name it’s engraved on the rocks on the shore.
I’m a boy that stands happy on a log in the stream.
My heart was with Hannah, for she haunted my dreams.

⁷⁵Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) xxii.

I went up the river some money to make.
I was steadfast and steady, I ne'er played the rake.
Through and⁷⁶ I am very well known.
They call me Jack Haggerty and the pride of the town.

One day on the river a letter I received,
That it was from her promises she would be relieved.
She'd e wed to a young man who a long time delayed,
And the next time I would see her she would not be a maid.

Then adieu to Flat River. For me there's no rest.
I'll shoulder my peavy and I'll go out West.
I will go to Moskeegan some pleasures to find,
And I'll leave my own darling on Flat River behind.

So come all ye jolly raftsmen with hearts stout and bold,
Don't depend to the women; you're left if you do.
For if you chance to meet one with dark chestnut curls,
You will think of Jack Haggerty and his Flat River girl.⁷⁷

During the winter months, logs would pile up on the ice and banks of rivers and streams. During the early spring thaw, “drivers” and “cruisers” would shepherd the logs downstream to their destinations. While this was often a dangerous affair, the river was a valuable source of transportation which required no animals or fuel. “The Crow Wing Drive” was written to commemorate a trip taken by “White Pine Tom,” the author, and “Arkansas,” who was supposedly Ed Springstad, who sang the song for Franz Rickaby. The Crow Wing River, Bemidji, and Brainard are all located in Minnesota. In addition, the characters named in the song were all good friends of Springstad. “Long Jim Quinn” was identified as a foreman, while Humphrey Russell was the oldest engineer in the service of Minnesota & International Railroad. Rickaby states that the author’s tendency to include familiar names and localities “usurps the entire song and impoverishes

⁷⁶The names of two close towns were inserted here.

⁷⁷Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 6.

it.”⁷⁸ After the first stanza’s initial statement that a trip would take place, the remaining stanzas have little substance to support or elaborate on said trip. The song is sung to the tune of Casey Jones, indicating that it was likely composed after the turn of the twentieth century.

The Crow Wing Drive

Says White Pine Tom to Arkansaw,
“There’s one more drive that I’d like to strike,”
Says Arkansaw, “What can it be?”
“It’s the Crow Wing River for the old Pine Tree.”

Says Arkansaw, “Now if that’s the case,
I can put you in the race.
Come with me in the mornin’ an’ we’ll begin,
For I’ve a job a-pushin’ for Long Jim Quinn.”

In the mornin’ we boarded the M & I.
Out friends in Bemidji we bid good-bye.
Humpy Russell took us down the line
And landed us in Brainard right on time.

There was White Pine Tom and young Lazzard,
And Mikey Stewart and his tow big pard;
Billy Domine and the Weston boys,
And there was others from Bemidji that could make some noise.⁷⁹

Following the drive in the spring, lumbermen would set down their axes, peaveys, cant-hooks, and saws, to head back to their other life. This other life may have included work on the railroad, farm, sawmill or sea.⁸⁰ In some cases, as many shanty-boy ballads relate, it may also have included a love interest or a wife and children. “The Festive

⁷⁸Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 212.

⁷⁹Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 99.

⁸⁰Theodore Blegen, “With Axe and Saw: A History of Lumbering in Minnesota,” *Forest History* (1963): 12.

Lumberjack was supposedly written in the off season on a farm near Crystal, North Dakota. Ed Springstad, of Bemidji, MN sang the song for Rickaby, claiming to have written it with the help of a Negro named Bill. Springstad related that he had supplied the lumberjack vernacular such as “porky,”⁸¹ and “moose-cat,”⁸² and the inner nature of the lumberjack, while the poetically talented Bill had strung them together in verses.⁸³ Though the song depicts a wild and careless drunk, in his article for *Forest History*, Theodore Blegen claims that this behavior was not as common as folklore has led many to believe. “There were hell-raising times along the skid roads, and bartenders and prostitutes unquestionably took a toll on the lumberjacks, but it would be misleading to characterize these episodes as normal or typical of the lumberjack experience.”⁸⁴ He goes on to explain how, more often than not, shanty-boys left the forest only to promptly begin work elsewhere. Regardless of Blegen’s claims, the romantic ideal of the rambunctious lumberjack blowing all his earnings in the village pub is preserved in the verses of many lumbering ballads.

The Festive Lumber-jack

I’ve been around the world a bit, an’ seen beasts great an’ small.
The one I mean to tell about for darin’ beats ‘em all.
He leaves the woods with his bristles raised the full length of his back.
He’s known by men of science as the festive lumber-jack

Chorus:

He’s a wild, rip-snortin’ devil ever’ time he comes to town.
He’s a porky, he’s a moose cat, too busy to set down.
But when his silver’s register’d an’ his drinks is comin’ few,

⁸¹Porcupine.

⁸²Anyone possessing great ability or strength.

⁸³Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 212.

⁸⁴Theodore Blegen, “With Axe and Saw: A History of Lumbering in Minnesota,” *Forest History* (1963): 12.

He's then as tame as other jacks that's met their Waterloo.

While out in camp he's very wise, he'll tell you of his plans.
He's figgered out an' knows he'll beat the long white-aproned man.
He means to cut out drinkin' booze an' climb right up in fame,
And within a year of time will own a handsome little claim.

He'll go down to the city with his time-check in his hand.
He's as busy as a bedbug, for an instant couldn't stand
Until he gets his pile o' silver, which will vanish soon from sight,
For he intends to log a bit, an' he will do it right.

One dozen drinks o' whiskey straight an' the jack feels pretty fair.
The heavy loggin' then begins, but he's loggin' with got air.
His peakers rise above the clouds; the cross-haul man below
Works by a code, for they couldn't hear his "Whoa!"

Every jack's a cant-hook man; no others can be found.
They do some heavy loggin', but they do it best in town.
They're loved by all pretty girls, who at their feet would kneel
If they could win that darlin' chap that birls the crooked steel.

But here's a proposition, boys: when next we meet in town,
We'll form a combination and we'll mow the forest down.
We then will cash our handsome checks, we'll neither eat nor sleep,
Nor will we buy a stitch o' clothes while whisky is so cheap.

The earliest lumberjacks came from New England and Canada. Among them were New Yorkers, French, and Scotch men. Later came a few German, Irish, and Norwegians. The Scotch were widely respected as natural born woodsmen and would often quickly move up in command. The French-Canadian was also said to be especially adept with the axe and saw, and furthermore, was responsible for bringing a large arsenal of songs wherever he went.⁸⁵ While the Irish, Scotch, and French-Canadian were all strong and enthusiastic singers, the Norwegians, who accounted for the last wave of workers to the forests of Minnesota, did not uphold the same tradition of singing.

⁸⁵Agnes Larson, "On the Trail of the Woodsman in Minnesota," *Minnesota History*, (1932): 351.

Perhaps the most profound statement in Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-boy* attributes the decline of singing traditions in lumber camps to the stolid, reserved Norwegian. "It was evident that some grim change was taking place, killing the song in the hearts of workers, not only in the forests, but abroad in the world as well."⁸⁶ However, around the same time that the Norwegian was arriving, so was the industrial revolution, bringing the efficiency and utter strength of the machine. "Ole from Norway" gives an account of a Norwegian immigrant as he makes his way to a Midwestern lumber company. The phrase "a-chasing ties down the stream" refers to the job of a lumber cruiser. Lumber companies would pile logs on the frozen river, and float them downstream in the spring as a means of transportation. This text was collected from a Mrs. Flo Hastings of Laramie Wyoming without any tune. Rickaby states that "the words were probably poured into the mould of some music-hall tune."⁸⁷

Ole from Norway

I just come down from Minnesota,
I've been in this country three years.
When I got off at the depot,
Oh, how the people they cheer!
They say, "Here comes Ole from Norway!
He's been on a visit up there,
His sister she lives in Dakota,
And his father has got light hair."

Chorus

And they call me Ole and Ole,
But Ole is not my name.
Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, just the same.
They say I'm a Norsk from Norway,

⁸⁶Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) xx.

⁸⁷Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 221.

Some lever po Lutfisk ock Sil.
They say I'm a rat and I better go back to Norway.

I got one fine job in the river
A-chasing the ties down the stream.
With a big pole in hand, oh, wasn't it grand?
It seemed just like a dream.
When the ties make a bend down the river,
I give a big whoop and a yell,
My feet went co-splash in the water,
And I think I bane gone to--well--⁸⁸

Though not overlooked by Franz Rickaby or other folklorists of his time, the ruthless destruction of the lumbering boom is not necessarily elaborated on in many accounts of lumbering folklore. By the 1930s, only a third of Minnesota lay under forest, whereas three fourths of the state was originally deep forest. Theodore Blegen explains in his article for *Forest History*, “With Axe and Saw: A History of Lumbering In Minnesota”: Forests were swept away by a generation that exploited the resources of nature as it found them and met needs as fast as forests, men, machinery, and ingenuity permitted.”⁸⁹ “The Falling of the Pine” is a ballad from the time when “square timber logging” was popular. The process, which involved squaring the log with the axe before dragging it from the forest, reached its height just as the Golden Age was beginning. The ballad shares the prideful and upbeat spirit of “Jim Porter’s Shanty Song,” but also demonstrates the “progress at any price” attitude that became synonymous with the American dream of the day. Sung by M. C. Dean of Virginia, Minnesota, “The Falling of the Pine” was collected by Franz Rickaby between the years of 1918 and 1925.

⁸⁸Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 134.

⁸⁹Theodore Blegen, “With Axe and Saw: A History of Lumbering in Minnesota,” *Forest History* (1963): 3.

The Falling of the Pine

Come all young men a-wanting of courage bold undaunted,
Repair unto the shanties before your youth's decline.
The spectators they will ponder and gaze on you with wonder,
For your noise exceeds the thunder in the falling of the pine.

The shanty is our station and lumbering our occupation,
Where each man has his station, some for to score and line.
It is nine foot of a block we will bust at every knock,
And the wolves and bears we'll shock at the falling of the pine.

When the day it is a-breaking, from our slumbers we're awakened.
Breakfast being over, our axes we will grind.
Into the woods we do advance, where our axes sharp do glance,
And like brothers we commence for to fall the stately pine.

For it's to our work we go through the cold and stormy snow,
And it's there we labor gayly till bright Pheobus does not shine;
Then to the shanties we'll go in and songs of love we'll sing,
And we'll make the valleys ring at the falling of the pine.

When the weather it grows colder, like lions we're more bolder,
And while this forms grief for others, it's but the least of mine;
For the frost and snow so keen it can never keep us in,
It can never keep us from the falling of the pine.

When the snow is all diminished and our shanty work all finished,
Banished we are all for a little time,
And then far apart we're scattered until the booms are gathered,
Until the booms are gathered into handsome rafts of pine.

When we get to Quebec, O me boys, we'll not forget,
And our whistles we will wet with some brandy and good wine.
With fair maidens we will boast till our money is all used.
And, my boys, we'll ne'er refuse to go back and fall the pine.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Franz Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926) 84.

Further Research

As stated in the introduction to this compilation, large portions of folk music from the Upper Midwest are not included in the previous pages. In order to make this compilation complete, instrumental music must undoubtedly be explored and included. Existing research and material on this subject lies largely in community songbooks of the 1920s and 1930s and in Philip Martin's *Farmhouse Fiddlers: Music and Dance Traditions in the Rural Midwest*.⁹¹ In addition, the songs in this compilation need to be more thoroughly researched. Of the included songs which were not taken from Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of a Shanty-boy*, "The Dreary Black Hills" is the only piece which has been written on in depth by another author.

While this compilation only includes songs which were written in or translated to English, songs and ballads in other languages accounted for much of the first folk music in the Upper Midwest. Folk songs from Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, and Holland were the precursors of early American folk music. Future research should expand upon the individual influence that each native body of music had on folk music from South Dakota and its border states.

Finally, music of the indigenous peoples of the Upper Midwest must be included in further research. *Songs of the Teton Sioux* by Harry W. Paige includes transcriptions and explanations of Sioux Indian folk songs which were likely sung in the Dakotas. In addition to research and compilations that are already published, The University of South Dakota Oral History Center has recordings of Native American songs which have yet to be transcribed. Consulting each of these sources and incorporating them into South

⁹¹Several community songbooks printed by South Dakota State University and 4-H Extension clubs reside in the National Music Museum in Vermillion, SD.

Dakota folk history is the first step toward a *comprehensive* compilation of the state's folk history.

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THE BLACK HILLS

As Sung by DICK BROWN.

Kind folks you will pity my horrible tale;
I'm an object that's nasty, and looking quite stale;
I earn up my trade, selling Wagon's Patent Pills,
To go digging for gold in the dreary Black Hills.

Chorus—So don't go away, also I know if you can,
The song from that city, they call it Cheyenne,
For old Sitting Bull, and Comanche Bill
Will raise up your hair in the dreary Black Hills.

In Cheyenne the Round House is filled up every night
With pilgrims of every description in sight;
No clothes on their backs, in their pockets no bills;
And yet they are striving out for the Black Hills.

Chorus—So don't go away, &c.

When I came to the Black Hills, no gold could I find,
I thought of the time I had lost for a while;
Through rain, hail and dust, nearly froze to the skin—
They call me the orphan boy of the Black Hills.

Chorus—So don't go away, &c.

Ou, I wish that the man who first started this sell
Was a copier, and sang Horse and Gun in—well,
There is no use in guessing, or swearing like a cat,
But the man who would stay here is a—— of a——

Chorus—So don't go away, &c.

So now to conclude, this advice I would give;
Don't come to the Black Hills looking for gold,
For Big Wallpie and Comanche Bill,
Are standing, I'm told, in the dreary Black Hills.

Chorus—So don't go away, &c.

Published and Sold Wholesale and Retail by BELL & Co.,
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tioners and Postal Agents, 615 Broadway Street, San Francisco.

Additional Material

The following songs are taken from Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of a Shanty-Boy* published by Harvard University Press of Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1926.

"The Shanty-man's Life" was collected by Franz Rickaby from Mr. A. C. Hannah of Bemidji, Minnesota between 1916 and 1925.

A Shanty-man's Life

Oh a shanty-man's life is a wearisome life, altho' some think it void of care,
Swinging an axe from morning till night in the midst of the forests so drear.
Lying in the shanty bleak and cold stormy wintry winds blow,
And as soon as the daylight doth appear, to the wild woods we must go.

Oh, the cook rises up in tehi middles of the night saying, "hurrah, brave boys, it's day."
Broken slumbers offtimes are passed as the cold winter night whiles away.
Had we rum, wine, or beer our spirits for to cheer as the days so lonely do dwine,
Or a glass of any shone while in the woods alone for to cheer up our troubled minds.

But transported form our lass and our sparkling glass,
these comforts we leave behind,
Not a friend to us so near as to wipe the falling tear
When sorrow fills our troubled minds.

But when spring it does set in, double hardships then begin,
When the waters are piercing cold,
And our clothes are dripping wet and fingers benumbed,
And our pike-poles we scarcely can hold.
Betwixt rocks, shoals, and sands give employment to all hands,
Our well-banded raft for to steer,
And the rapids that we run, oh, they seem to us but fun,
For we're void of all slavish fear.

Oh, a shanty-lad is the only lad I love,
and I never will deny the same.
My heart doth scorn these conceited farmer boys
who think it a disgraceful name.
They may boast about their farms, but my shanty-boy has charms
so far, far surpassing them all.
Until death it doth us part he shall enjoy my heart,
Let his riches be great or small.

“The Persian’s Crew” was collected by Franz Rickaby from M. C. Dean or Virginia, MN between 1916 and 1925.

The Persian’s Crew

Sad and dismal is the story that I will tell to you,
About the schooner Persian, her officers and crew
They sank beneath the water’s deep, in life to rise no more,
Where wind and desolation sweeps Lake Huron’s rock-bound shore.

They left Chicago on their lee, their songs they did resound;
Their hearts were filled with joy and glee, for they were homeward bound.
They little thought the sword of death would meet them on their way,
And they so full of joy and life would in Lake Huron lay.

In mystery o’er their fate was sealed. They did collide, some say.
And that is all that will be revealed until the Judgment day.
But when the angels take their stand to sweep these waters blue,
They will summon forth at Heaven’s command the Persian’s luckless crew.

No mother’s hand was there to soothe the brow’s distracted pain.
No gentle wife for to caress those cold lips once again.
No sister nor a lover dear or little ones to moan,
But in the deep alone they sleep, far from their friends and home.

Her captain, he is no more; he lost his precious life.
He sank down among Lake Huron’s waves, free from all mortal strife.
A barren coast now hides from view his manly, lifeless form,
And still in death is the heart so true that weathered many a storm.

There was Daniel Sullivan, her mate, with a heart as true and brave
As ever was compelled by fate to fill a sailor’s grave.
Alas! he lost his noble life; poor Daniel is no more.
He met a sad, untimely end upon Lake Huron’s shore.

O Daniel, Dan, your many friends mourn the fate that has on you frowned.
They look in vain for your return back to Oswego town.
They miss the love-glance of your eye, your hand they’ll clasp no more,
For still in death you now do lie upon Lake Huron’s shore.

Her sailor’s names I do not know, excepting one or two.
Down in the deep they all did go, they were a luckless crew.
Not one escaped to land to clear the mystery o’er,
Or to lie adrift by Heaven’s command in lifeless form ashore.

Now around Presque Isle the sea birds scream their mournful notes along,

In chanting to the sad requiem, the mournful funeral song,
they skim along the waters blue and then aloft they soar
O'er the bodies of the Persian's crew that lie along the shore.

The following songs are taken from “Let’s Sing: South Dakota Community Song Book” by Willis E. Johnson, published by South Dakota State University Press in 1922.

When You and I Were Young, Maggie
I wandered today to the hill, Maggie,
To watch the scene below -
The creek and the creaking old mill, Maggie,
As we used to, long ago.
The green grove is gone from the hill, Maggie,
Where first the daisies sprung;
The creaking old mill is still, Maggie,
Since you and I were young.

Chorus

And now we are aged and grey, Maggie,
And the trials of life nearly done,
Let us sing of the days that are gone, Maggie,
When you and I were young.
A city so silent and lone, Maggie,
Where the young, and the gay, and the best,
In polished white mansions of stone, Maggie,
Have each found a place of rest,
Is built where the birds used to play, Maggie,
And join in the songs that we sung;
For we sang as lovely as they, Maggie,
When you and I were young.

Chorus

They say that I'm feeble with age, Maggie,
My steps are less sprightly than then,
My face is a well-written page, Maggie,
And time alone was the pen.
They say we are aged and grey, Maggie,
As sprays by the white breakers flung,
But to me you're as fair as you were, Maggie,
When you and I were young.

Kind Words Can Never Die

Kind words can never die; cherished and blest,
God knows how deep they lie, stored in the breast;
Like childhood's simple rhymes, said o'er a thousand times,
Go through all years and climes, the heart to cheer.

Kind words can never die, never die, never die;
Kind words can never die, no, never die.

Sweet thoughts can never die, though, like the flow'rs,
Their brightest hues may fly in wintry hours;
But when the gentle dew gives them their charms anew,
With many an added hue they bloom again.

Sweet thoughts can never die, never die, never die;
Sweet thoughts can never die, no, never die.

Our souls can never die, though in the tomb
We all may have to lie, wrapped in its gloom;
What though the flesh decay, souls pass in peace away,
Live though eternal day, with Christ above.

Our souls can never die, never die, never die;
Our souls can never die, no, never die.

Li'l 'Liza Jane

I've got a gal and you've got none, Li'l Liza Jane,
I've got a gal that calls me "hon," Li'l Liza Jane.

Oh Eliza, li'l Liza Jane
Oh Eliza, li'l Liza Jane

Liza Jane done come to me, Li'l Liza Jane,
We're as happy as we can be, Li'l Liza Jane.

Come my love and live with me, Li'l Liza Jane,
I will take good care of thee Li'l Liza Jane.

House and a lot in Baltimore, Li'l Liza Jane,
Lots of children running out the door, Li'l Liza Jane.

I've got a gal and you've got none Li'l Liza Jane.
I've got a gal that calls me "hon," Li'l Liza Jane.

The following were taken from Folk Songs Out of Wisconsin by Harry B. Peters, published by State Historical Society of Wisconsin, in Madison, WI, 1977.

“Paper of Pins” was collected by Franz Rickaby in an unknown year from Mary Laycock or Grand Forks, ND. It is sung by alternating the female and male voices.

Paper of Pins

I'll give to you a paper of pins,
If that is the way that love begins,
If you will marry me, me, me,
If you will marry me.

No, I'll not accept a paper of pins,
If that is the way that love begins,
And I'll not marry you, you, you,
And I'll not marry you.

I'll give to you a crown of green,
That you may look like any queen, etc.

I'll give to you a dress of red,
All bound 'round with golden thread, etc.

I'll give to you a coach and six
With every horse as black as pitch, etc.

I'll give to you the key to my heart,
That you and I may never part, etc.

I'll give to you the key to my chest,
That you may have money at your request, etc.

“Samual Small” was collected by Franz Rickaby from Fanny Boulden of Larimore, ND in 1923. Miss Boulden said she learned the song from young people and students who sang it at her home. Rickaby also collected a manuscript of the song from Dr. Harry Whitecomb of Grand Forks, ND. It was annotated thus: “The ballad of a deck-hand about to be hung for the killing of his work-mate, and sung from the scaffold. The blanks in the last stanza are left blank in the singing also.”

Samual Small

Oh my name is Samuel Small, Samuel Small
Oh my Name is Samuel Small
And I hate ye one and all

You're a gang of muckers all
Damn your eyes.

Oh I killed a man they said, so they said
Yes, I killed a man they said
For I cracked him on the head
And I left him there for dead
Damn his eyes.

So they put me in the quad, in the quad
Yes they put me in the quad
With a chain and iron rod
And they left me there, by God
Damn their eyes

And the parson he did come, he did come
And the parson he did come
And he looked so --- glum
With his talk of kingdom come
Damn his eyes

And the sheriff he came too, he came too
And the sheriff he came too
With his boys all dressed in blue
They're a gang o' muckers too
Damn their eyes

So it's up the rope ye go, up ye go
So it's up the rope ye go
With your friends all down below
Saying, "Sam, I told you so"
Damn their eyes

Saw my Nellie in the crowd, in the crowd
Saw my Nellie in the crowd
And I hollered right out loud,
"Needn't look so --- proud
Damn yer eyes"

So this'll be my knell, be my knell
So this'll be my knell
Hope to --- you go to hell
Hope to --- you sizzle well
Damn your eyes!

The following songs were taken from The Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets published by the Federal Writers' Project in Nebraska in 1937.

The Horse Wrangler
(Also Known as the Tenderfoot)

I thought one spring just for fun
I'd see how cow-punching was done,
And when the roundups had begun
I tackled the cattle-king.
Says he, "My foreman is in town,
He's at the plaza, and his name is Brown,
If you'll see him, he'll take you down."
Says I, "That's just the thing."

We started for the ranch next day;
Brown augured me most all the way.
He said that cow-punching was nothing but play,
That it was no work at all,--
That all you had to do was ride,
The sun of a gun, oh, how he lied.
Don't you think he had his gall?

He put me in charge of a cavyard,
And tolk me to work too hard,
That all I had to do was guard
The horses from gotting away;
"Go gather around you a crowd of young cowboys,
And tell them the story of this my sad fate;
Tell one and the other before they go further
To stop their wild roving before 'til too late.

"Oh muffle your drums, then play your fifes merrily;
Play the Dead March as you go along.
And fire your guns right over my coffin;
There goes an unfortunate boy to his home.

"It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing,
It was once in the saddle I used to go gay;
First to the dram-house, then to the card-house,
Got shot in the breast, I am dying today.

"Get six jolly cowboys to carry my coffin;
Get six pretty maidens to bear up my pall.
Put bunches of roses all over my coffin,
Put roses to deaden the clods as they fall.

“Then swing your rope slowly and rattle your spurs lowly,
And give a wild whoop as you carry me along;
And in the grave throw me and roll the sod o’er me,
For I’m a young cowboy and I know I’ve done wrong.

“Go bring me a cup, a cup of cold water,
To cool my parched lips, “the cowboys said;
Before I turned, the spirit had left him
And gone to its Giver—the cowboy was dead.

We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly,
And bitterly wept as we bore him along;
For we all love our comrade, so brave, young and handsome,
We all loved our comrade although he’d done wrong.

Sam Bass

Sam Bass was born in Indiana, it was his native home,
And at the age of seventeen, young Sam began to roam,
Save first came out to Texas, a cowboy for to be—
A kinder-hearted fellow you seldom ever see.

Sam used to deal in race stock, one called the Denton mare;
He matched her in scrub races and took her to the fair.
Sam used to coin the money, and spent it just as free;
He always drank good whiskey wherever he might be.

Sam left the Collins ranch, in the merry month of May,
With a herd of Texas cattle the Black Hills for to see;
Sold out in Custer City, and then got on a spree—
A harder set of cowboys you seldom ever see.

On their way back to Texas they robbed the U.P. train,
And then split up in couples and started out again;
Joe Collins and his partner were overtaken soon,
With all their hard-earned money they had to meet their doom.

Sam made it back to Texas, all right up with care,
Rode into the town of Denton with all his friends to share.
Sam's life was short in Texas, three robberies did he do;
He robbed all the passenger mail and express cars too.

Sam had four companions, four bold and daring lads,
They were Richardson, Jackson, Joe Collins and Old Dad;

Four more bold and daring cowboys the Rangers never knew,
They whipped the Texas Rangers and ran the boys in blue.

Sam and another companion, called "Arkansas" for short,
Was shot by a Texas Ranger by the name of Thomas Floyd;
Oh, Tom is a big six-footer and thinks he's mighty fly,
But I can tell you his racket—he's a deadbeat on the sly.

Jim Murphy was arrested and then released on bail;
He jumped his bond at Tyler and then took the train for Terrell;
But Mayor Jones had posted Jim and that was all a stall,
'Twas only a plan to capture Sam before the coming fall.

Sam met his fate at Round Rock, July the twenty-first,
They pierced poor Sam with rifle balls and emptied out his purse.
Poor Sam he is a corpse and six foot under clay,
And Jackson in the bushes trying to get away.

Jim had borrowed Sam's good gold and didn't want to pay,
The only shot he saw was to give poor Sam away.
He sold out Sam and Barnes and left their friends to mourn—
Oh, what a scorching Jim will get when Gabriel blows his horn.

And so he sold out Sam and Barnes and left their friends to mourn—
Oh what a scorching Jim will get when Gabriel blows his horn.
Perhaps he's got to heaven, there's none of us can say,
But if I am right in my surmise, he's gone the other way.

The following song is taken from *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* by Edith Fulton Fowke, published in Austin, TX by University of Texas Press in 1970.

“The Grand River” was collected from Johnny Flanagan of Erinsville, Ontario in 1960. However, the song was also collected by Franz Rickaby from a North Dakota Woman in the early 1900.

The Grand River

It was down on the Grand River near a place called Lake Chayere.

Four young men got in a boat and forward they did steer.
Their intention was to row the falls, their course they did pursue,
Their boat ran with quick motion, and from it they went through.

A small boy standing on the beach that awful sight did view.
Staightway to their dear parents the message quicklie flew.

Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters too,
Came running down unto the bank to see if it was true.

Both day and night it sounded amongst those hellish springs,

But nothing of their bodies in any shape were seen
Until nine days were over their floating corpses were spied
Amongst those hellish rocks where the watery waters flow.

The following song was taken from *Our Singing Country* by John and Alan Lomax, published in Mineola, NY by Dover Publications in 2000.

“The Crooked Gun” was collected from Mrs. Minnie Floyd, of Murrell’s Inlet, SC, 1937. Some of the stanzas were collected from Barbara Bell of Minneapolis, MN.

The Crooked Gun

One pleasant summer morning it came a storm of snow,
I picked up my old gun and a-hunting I did go.
I came across a herd of deer and I trailed them through
I trailed them to the mountains where straight up they flew.

I went up yonder river that ran up yonder hill,
And there I spied a herd of deer, and init they did dwell;
Soon as the buck they saw me, like devils they did run
To the bottom of the river and squat upon the ground.

Then I went under water, five hundred feet or more.
I fired off my pistols, like cannons they did roar.
I fired away among the buck, at length I killed one;
The rest stuck up their brustles, and at me they did come.

Their horns being in full velvet, as high as Eygpt’s mass,
And they did throuh my body like streaks of lightening pass.
When they had thus quite riddled me that bulldogs might run through,
I being so enraged the, my naked sword I drew.

I fought them with my broadsword, six hours I held them play,
I killed three hundred and fifty, and the rest they ran away.
I gathered up my venison, and out of waters went;
To seek and kill all those that fled, it was my whole intent.

Just as I stood a-gazing, the sun came rolling by;
I gathered up my venison, and so merrily I did ride.

Just as the sun was going down, he gave a sudden twirl,
And I could hold on no longer, so I fell in another world,
As Providence provided, I fell upon the moon,
And in the course of a day or so he brought me safe at home.

I gathered up my money for venison and for skin;
I carried it into my barn, it wouldn’t half go in.
The rest I gave unto the poor, bright guineas out of hand.
Now don’t you think that I can live a noble gentleman?

The following songs were taken from C. A. Fullerton's Choice Songs and Practical Instruction in Public School Music published by C. A. Fullerton Co. in Cedar Falls, IA in 1900.

"Sleep, Baby, Sleep" is a German Folk tune.

Sleep, Baby, Sleep

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy father guards the sheep,
Thy mother shakes the dreamland tree,
And from it fall sweet dreams for thee;
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Sleep, baby, sleep!
The large stars are the sheep,
The little ones the lambs, I guess,
The gentle moon the shepherdess,
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Our Savior loves His sheep,
He is the Lamb of God on high,
Who for our sakes came down to die,
Sleep, baby, sleep!
Sleep, baby, sleep!

The following song was taken from Norm Cohen's *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration* published in Westport, CT by Greenwood Press in 2005.

"Country Song" was collected from Marie Schlapkohl of Sysart, IA as sung by her father in the 1880's.

Country Song

Our home is in Iowa westward toward the setting sun,
Just between tow mighty rivers where the flowing waters run;
It has towns, it has citites, it has many noble streams,
It has ninety-nine countries, will you join and sing their names?
Lyons, Osceola, Dickinson, where the Spirit Lake we see;
Howard, Winneshiek, and Allarmakee so fine
Mkes eleven northern counties on the Minnesota line.
Clayton, Dubuque, Jackson, Clinton, together with Scott and Muscatine,
Lee, Louisa, and Des Moines on the Eastern line are seen.

Research Statement

Through the creation of this compilation I have had the privilege of working closely with museums across the state of South Dakota, in many cases, conducting original research in archives and dark basements alike. The process has enlightened me to the benefits of working in the locality of which I am researching, and also to the drawbacks of focusing on a topic which has not yet been explored in depth.

The first few months of my research almost solely utilized the University's interlibrary loan program, local collection, and online research journals. I began by exploring national compilations such as those by the John and Alan Lomax, Irwin Silber, and Franz Rickaby, searching for any song or text related to the upper Midwest region of the country. Finding little that I could positively identify as folk music from South Dakota, I began a more local approach, pursuing leads I had received from professors and acquaintances.

In January of 2010, I made my first trip to the Black Hills with aspirations of visiting three museums in Deadwood and Spearfish and the Deadwood Public Library. Upon finding the Days of '76 museum closed for the season and the High Plains Heritage Museum closed for special events, I headed to the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce to speak with Historical Preservationist Michael Runge. Runge not only gave me valuable contacts and suggestions, but provided me with a digital copy of the original printing of "The Dreary Black Hills" featured in Appendix (number here). The following day, I visited the Adams Museum, but was unable to speak with any of the archivists or curators. I then spent the afternoon in the Deadwood Public Library beginning the daunting task of going through microfilm of the historic Black Hills newspapers dating back to June of 1876. Thankfully, I abandoned the project after a few days only to find that historian David Kemp had already extracted all poetry and verse from the newspapers for his project *Mining Songs and Poems*. He truly embodies the determination and perseverance of the stalwart pioneer as the collection of newspapers contains hundreds of microfilm rolls all to be viewed on a forty-year old temperamental machine.

By Michael Runge's suggestion, I later visited the Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls, SD in search of the George B. German Collection. Although the collection only showed up in the catalogs of the Courthouse Museum and the National Music Museum in Vermillion, SD, I found the documents to be housed almost anywhere and everywhere but in these two museums. Part of the collection was indeed in the national music museum, but an even larger portion was found in the little known George B. German Music Archives, while another portion was housed in a private residence.

After visiting the Courthouse Museum archives, I moved on to another location in Sioux Falls. The archives at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana University yielded valuable documents from the Clarence Paine collection. The supposed "Diary of Calamity Jane" and a few pieces of folk music were found among Paine's extensive research on Deadwood historical characters. After receiving suggestions from archivists at both of the Sioux Falls museums, I contacted historian David Kemp, who played a huge part in my research.

Beyond co-founding the South Dakota Friends of Traditional Music in the 1970s, Kemp has conducted independent research on "The Dreary Black Hills," mining songs,

cowboy poetry and music, and Irish music in South Dakota. He also founded the George B. German Music Archives which published *A Living Tradition: South Dakota Songwriters* with the help of the South Dakota Arts Council. Kemp also conducted interviews for the South Dakota Oral History Project during the 1970s. I accompanied him to the Oral History Center to identify a few of his interviews. Although the recordings did not yield any material that was used for this compilation, I found the collection to contain Native American Folk songs and traditional fiddle tunes which were likely from the time period this project addresses.

My final research stop was the National Music Museum in Vermillion, SD. Dr. Margaret Banks has compiled a file of regional music which includes parts of the George B. German Collection. C.A. Fullerton's *Choice Songs and Practical Instruction in Public School Music* and several South Dakota Extension songbooks were also included in the collection.

During the research period I also spoke with singer/songwriter Hank Harris, who for the sake a project for the Deadwood Adams Museum also became a sort expert on South Dakota folk music from the Black Hills gold rush period. I was relieved to find that his research experience took much the same course as mine had, beginning with national compilations, microfilms, and local museums.

Throughout the process of visiting museum archives and making personal connections with others who were interested in South Dakota folk music, it occurred to me that had I not made the physical trips to museums and gotten in touch with the right people, I would not have run across much of the material that makes up this compilation. Though I spent months searching through online databases, library and museum catalogs, and books from libraries across the United States, I had run across only a small amount of material from Upper Midwest, let alone the state of South Dakota. At one point during my research, I wondered if anyone had ever written anything on South Dakota folk music. As I later learned, research on folk music had indeed been conducted by a few individuals, but was not available through modern research means, such as online research journals or library catalogs.

Upon completing this portion of my research, I have become aware of the drawbacks of extensively researching local topics. First of all, online findings are deceiving. Although I found little information on the internet, it was no indication of what research and material actually existed. Secondly, the research community in South Dakota is not centralized. Although additional research and collections may indeed exist, I was unable to locate them. I fear that much of the material that has been preserved still remains neglected in the attics and basements of South Dakota citizens.

I have also found there to be benefits in working with specific local topics. Although I originally believed I could find much of what I needed in books and journals, the project turned out to be quite hands-on. However, these outings to museums and archives, and interviews with historians and musicians have been very enjoyable, and also suggest that new frontiers in historical research still exist.

The following individuals and organizations have aided me in the completion of this compilation.

David Kemp, Historian, Sioux Falls, SD.

Amanda Jensen, Collections Assistant, Augustana's Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.

Michael Runge, City of Deadwood Historical Preservationist, Deadwood, SD.

Dr. Margaret Banks, Archivist, The National Music Museum, Vermillion, SD.

Arlette Hanson, Curator/Archivist, The Adams Museum and House, Deadwood, SD.

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Richard Muller, Marketing Instructor, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD.

Hank Harris, Singer/songwriter, Rapid City, SD.

Nolan Liebe, Graduate Student, University of South Dakota Oral History Center.
Vermillion, SD.

Andrea Graham, Folk Arts Consultant, South Dakota Arts Council.

The preceding thesis was presented at the following locations in the spring of 2010.

April 6 th SD	Farber Hall, University of South Dakota	Vermillion,
April 7 th SD	Idea Fest, University of South Dakota	Vermillion,
April 23 rd SD	Center for Western Studies, Augusta College	Sioux Falls,

The enclosed recording contains the following songs from this compilation performed and recorded by the author.

“The Little Old Sod Shanty on My Claim”

“The Little Ole”

“Wandering Willie”

“The Colorado Trail”

“The Dreary Black Hills”

“The Falling of the Pine”