

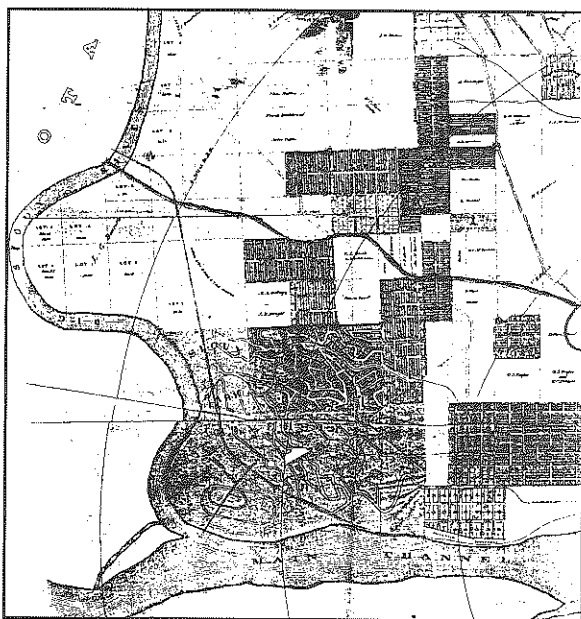
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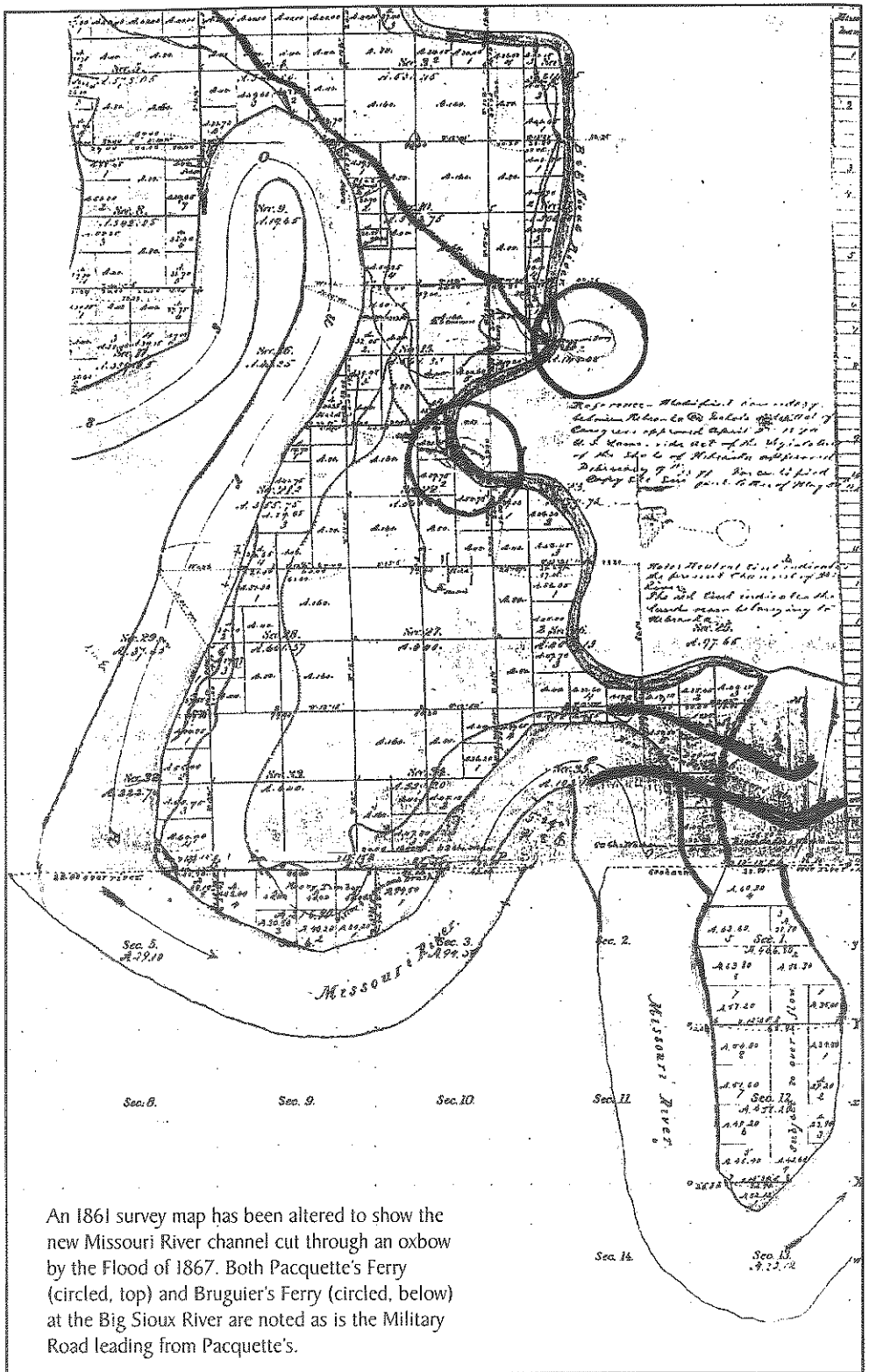
The Military Road - Its Evolution

The Sioux City to Fort Randall Military Road began as an expedient trail with focus on providing the shortest and safest route between two locations: Sioux City, Iowa, where a federal government warehouse had been built along the Missouri River, and Fort Randall, a military fort newly established 150 miles upriver to provide protection for settlers and a base for the military. Changes to the road gradually occurred as settlers rushed into the territory, forcing newly-elected county governments to plat new Territorial and Settlers Roads, many of which in turn would be vacated in favor of newer and better routes. This chapter deals not only with the first road but also with changes required by the influx of settlers in Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, and Charles Mix Counties.



A smudged map of Sioux City, Iowa, locates the Military Road as it meanders west through twisting hills to the ferry crossing at the Big Sioux River.

Lumber for homes and other buildings on a treeless prairie often had to be hauled for long distances over primitive trails.



An 1861 survey map has been altered to show the new Missouri River channel cut through an oxbow by the Flood of 1867. Both Pacquette's Ferry (circled, top) and Bruguier's Ferry (circled, below) at the Big Sioux River are noted as is the Military Road leading from Pacquette's.

Military surveyor Lieutenant G.K. Warren began surveying the Military Trail known as the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road in the spring of 1856, as ordered by General Wm. Harney, commander at Fort Randall. Warren's efforts provided a practical route which commenced in Sioux City at the government warehouse near where Perry Creek emptied into the Missouri River. Freight wagons loaded with supplies must first cross nearby "Hell's Acre," a lively city block so-named for the licentious behavior said to occur there, and then meander through more than six miles of hills in a northwesterly direction before reaching Pacquette's Ferry at the Big Sioux River.

Paul Pacquette had won the government contract for what was considered a military necessity over competitors Bruguier and Cournoyer in the largely French Canadian Big Sioux Point community. The Turnley License awarded to Pacquette was dated December 18, 1855, and signed by P.T. Turnley. It read as follows: (sic)

*Mr. Paul Pacquette,
Sioux City, Iowa.*

You are authorized to put a good ferry boat on the Sioux River and will be paid what is right and reasonable for crossing government troops, wagons, teams and other property. The general commanding directs me to say in this connection that you must not molest the friendly Indians, nor sell any of the Indians spirituous liquors.

Respectfully, Your obt. Servt.

By spring 1857, wagons and the military were following the newly-surveyed route to Fort Randall which loosely paralleled the Missouri River. Government expeditions had located or dug little watering places, usually eight to ten miles apart, along the way as travelers passed through or near the Twelve Mile House (Jefferson), Fourteen Mile House, Elk Point, Burbank, Vermillion, Vermillion River by ferry, James River originally by ford but soon by ferry, Lakeport area, and central Bon Homme and Charles Mix Counties. The trail terminated at the White Swan location adjacent to the Missouri where a ferry provided access to the fort. The territory was devoid of white settlements at that time except for trading posts along the river.

The river itself was instrumental in creating changes. A major Missouri River flood in 1867 cut through the narrow neck of an oxbow shaped like a colossal letter S located a short distance above the mouth of the Big Sioux River. Not only did tumultuous water and ice remove fifteen miles from the Missouri's length but also the calamity created McCook Lake in South Dakota. Did the cutoff land belong to Dakota or Nebraska? A Union County sheriff eventually served a legal process which was met by armed Nebraskan resistance, culminating in a fight in which sheriff was wounded and offender arrested. The offender was tried in a Dakota court, which hints at the outcome. (*Kingsbury I*, p204)

As an aftermath of the Flood of 1867, the government engineer in charge of improvements on the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road made an interesting discovery. Flood waters of two to six feet were deeper in the "Bottoms" between the Vermillion and James Rivers than land near the Missouri River.

The catastrophic Missouri River Flood of 1881 removed a half-mile wide neck of an oxbow near Vermillion, cutting off eighteen miles of river and stranding the young town three miles from navigable water.

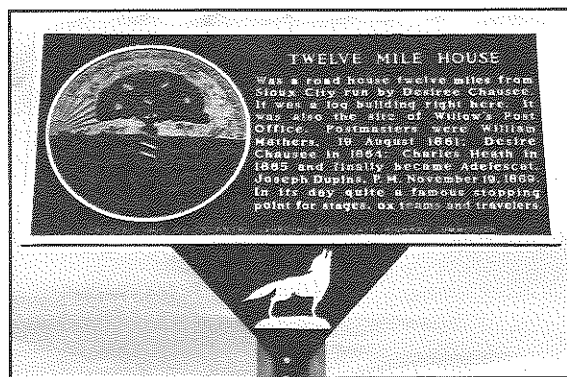
Union County

The first regular stop on the Military Trail from Pacquette's Ferry was the Twelve Mile House (precursor to today's Jefferson). A historical sign erected in 1966 by Calanthe La Brech and the South Dakota State Highway Commission tells the town's history. (sic)

Was a road house twelve miles from Sioux City run by Desiree Chausee. It was a log building right here. It was also the site of Willow's Post Office. Postmasters were William Mathers, 19 August 1861; Desire Chausee in 1864; Charles Heath in 1865 and finally became Adelescat, Joseph Dupins, P.M. November 19, 1869. In its day quite a famous stopping point for stages, ox teams and travelers.

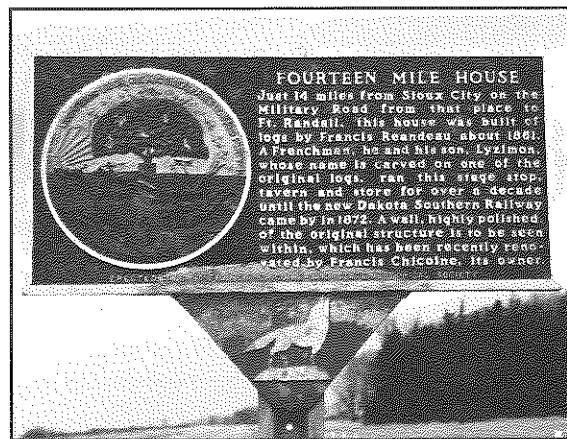
The next well-known stopping place along the trail, Fourteen Mile House, was barely two and one-half miles up the road. Francis Chicoine and the South Dakota State Historical Society erected a historical sign, also in 1966, on the site. (sic)

Just 14 miles from Sioux City on the Military Road from that place to Fort Randall. This house was built of logs by Francis Reandeau about 1861. A Frenchman, he and his son Lyzimon, whose name is carved on one of the original logs, ran this stage stop, tavern and store for over a decade until the new Dakota Southern Railway came by in 1872. A wall, highly polished, of the original structure is to be seen within, which has been recently renovated by Francis Chicoine, its owner.

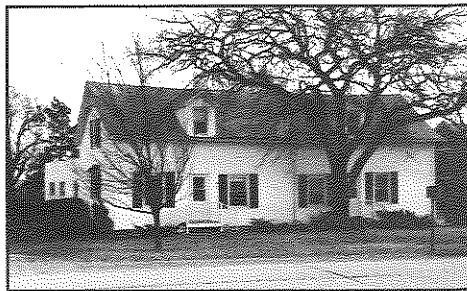


Left: The Twelve Mile House originally was the site of Willow's Post Office, later became known as Adelescat, and finally Jefferson.

Below Left: A sign erected in 1966 by Francis Chicoine and South Dakota State Historical Society marks the site of the once popular stage stop, tavern and store known as Fourteen Mile House.



Below Right: Renovations to the Fourteen Mile House completed prior to 1996 create a contemporary look. The Fourteen Mile House sign, barely visible (far right) remains along the road.

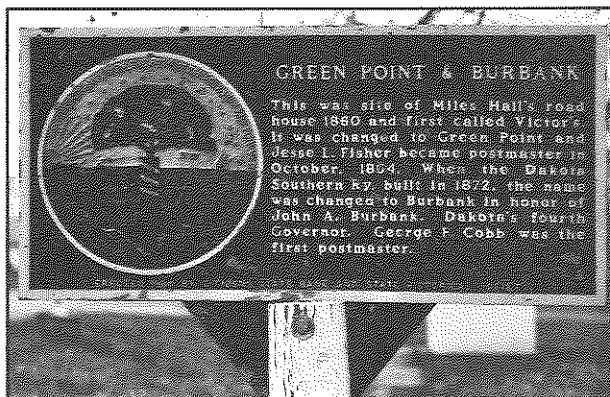


A "round-about" and well, in those days located at the east edge of present Elk Point, marked another favorite stop.

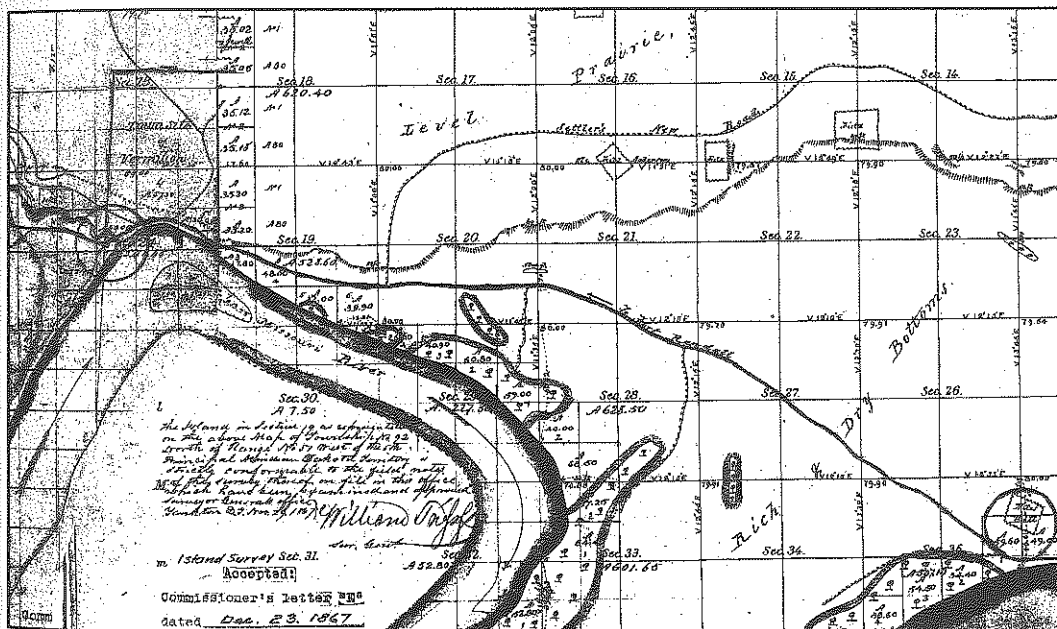
Clay County

The distance from Elk Point to Miles' Road House at Burbank in Clay County was about seven and one-half miles. A sign erected in 1966 at Burbank by Citizens State Bank and the South Dakota Historical Society states the following: (sic)

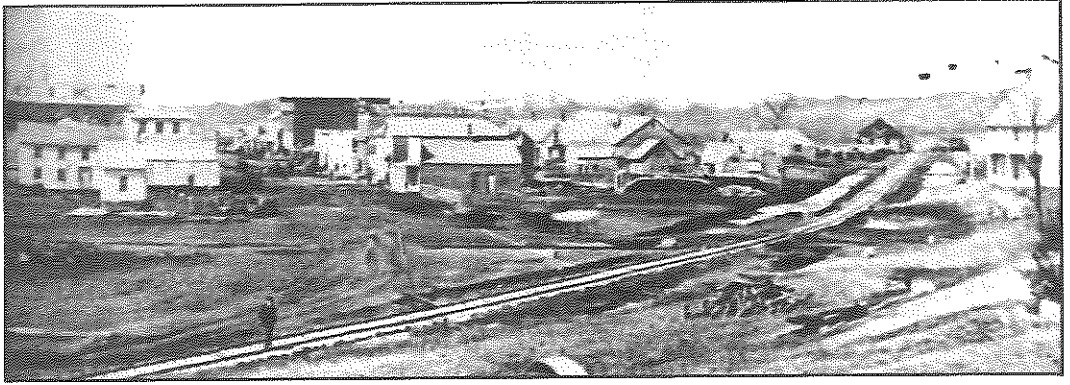
*Green Point & Burbank.
This was site of Miles Hall's road house 1860 and first called Victor's. It was changed to Green Point and Jesse L. Fisher became postmaster in October, 1864. When the Dakota Southern Ry. built in 1872, the name was changed to Burbank in honor of John A. Burbank, Dakota's fourth Governor. George F. Cobb was the first postmaster.*



A sign positioned in Burbank in 1966 by Citizens State Bank and State Historical Society indicates the approximate location of Green Point and Miles Hall's Road House on the Fort Randall Road.



An early blurred Clay County survey map of the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road notes Miles Hall's Road House (circled, extreme lower right) en route to Vermillion. Note how near the Missouri River flows next to the town then located below the bluff. Also circled (upper left) is a ferry site near junction of Vermillion and Missouri Rivers.



Vermillion grew into a modest village at river level before the Flood of 1881 destroyed almost everything including Carl Jensen's Drug Store (near center).

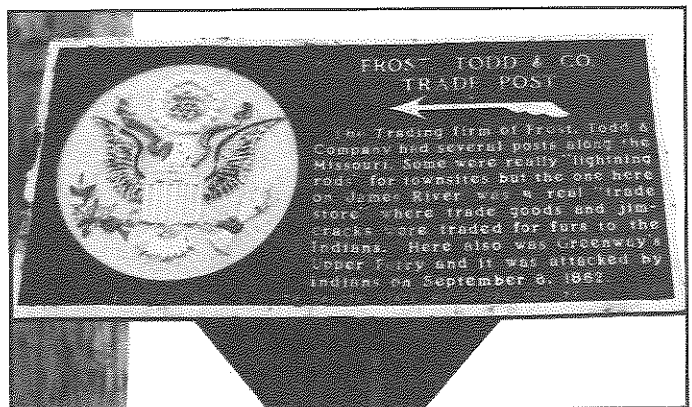
From Burbank the Military Trail meandered northwesterly about six and one-half miles to Vermillion. The village was then located below the bluff at the level of the Vermillion River, which emptied there into the Missouri. The Vermillion River was not fordable, and a ferry operated by Arthur C. Van Meter, a Virginia native then about twenty years old, was already in service in 1857.

Arthur C. Van Meter was an early settler of Vermillion. He and his native wife operated a store/cabin at the ferry site. For two years prior, Van Meter had hauled mail weekly from Sioux City to Fort Randall on horseback, leading a pack horse.

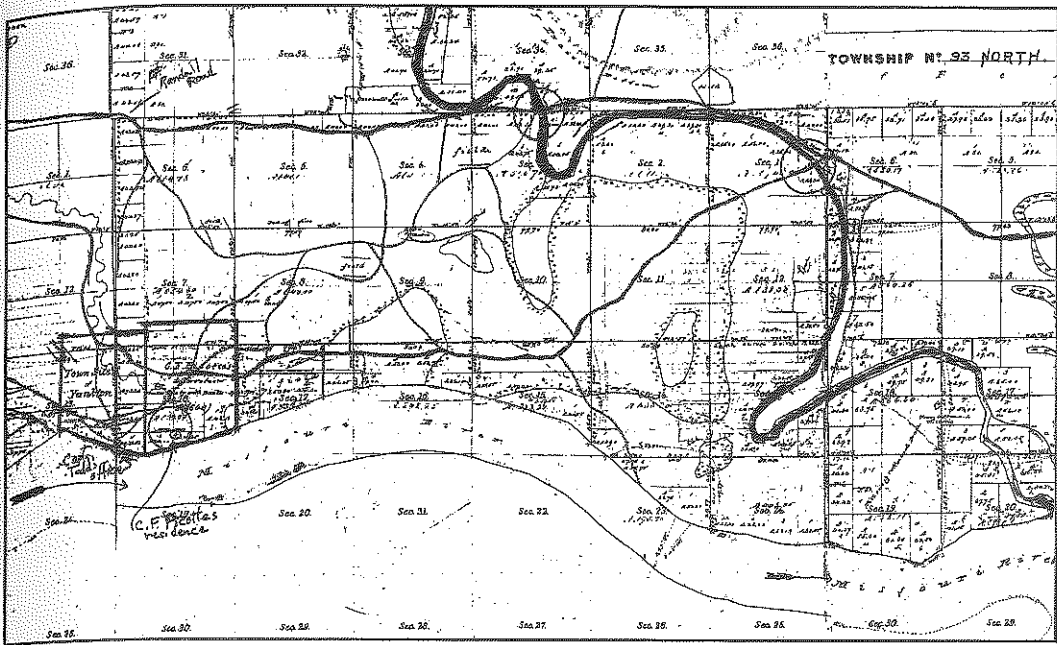
Yankton County

The James River provided the next major obstacle to travelers. A historical sign erected along the river by the South Dakota State Historical Society in 1960 about three miles northeast of Yankton on Old Highway 50 marks the site of the Frost, Todd & Company Trade Post and Greenway's Ferry. (sic)

The Trading firm of Frost, Todd & Company had several posts along the Missouri. Some were really "lightning rods" for townsites but the one here on James River was a real "trade store" where trade goods and jimcracks were traded for furs to the Indians. Here also was Greenway's Upper Ferry and it was attacked by Indians on September 6, 1862.



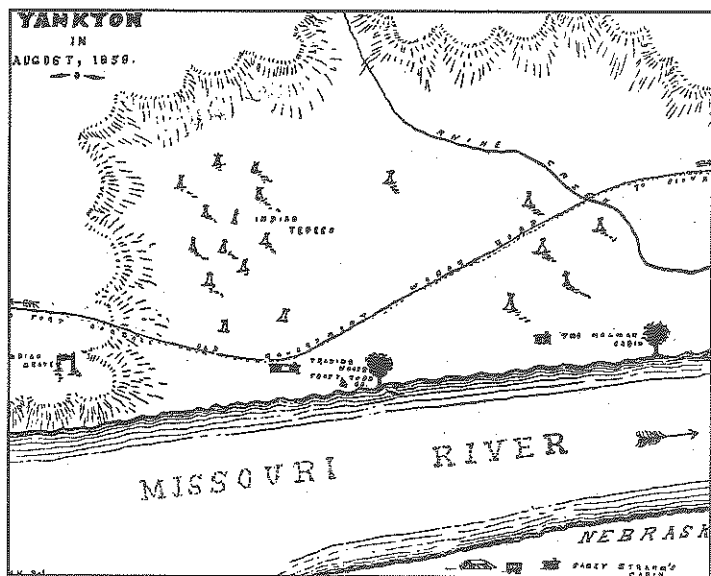
Greenway's Upper Ferry operated on the James River in 1860 alongside the Frost, Todd & Company Trade Post.



An early Yankton County survey map shows locations of both Greenway and Stange Ferries (circled). From Greenway's, the Military Road bypassed Yankton several miles north as indicated on earliest maps, while the branch from Stange's Ferry, which began operation in 1859, dipped into Yankton passing through Picotte's "Reservation" at about Main (8th Street). Note Picotte's residence (circled, left center) and Captain Todd's office.

William P. Lyman built and operated the first James River ferry and trading post in 1857 for Frost, Todd, and Company. James M. Stone was manager in 1858 and J.B. Greenway took over operations in 1860.

In November 1858, when Stone managed the ferry, according to Kingsbury's 1915 *History of South Dakota*, Edward Atkinson and Lewis H. Kennerly, business partners of Frost, Todd & Company, traveled in their own conveyance following the Military Trail from Pacquette's Ferry at the Big Sioux River to the company's post at Yankton



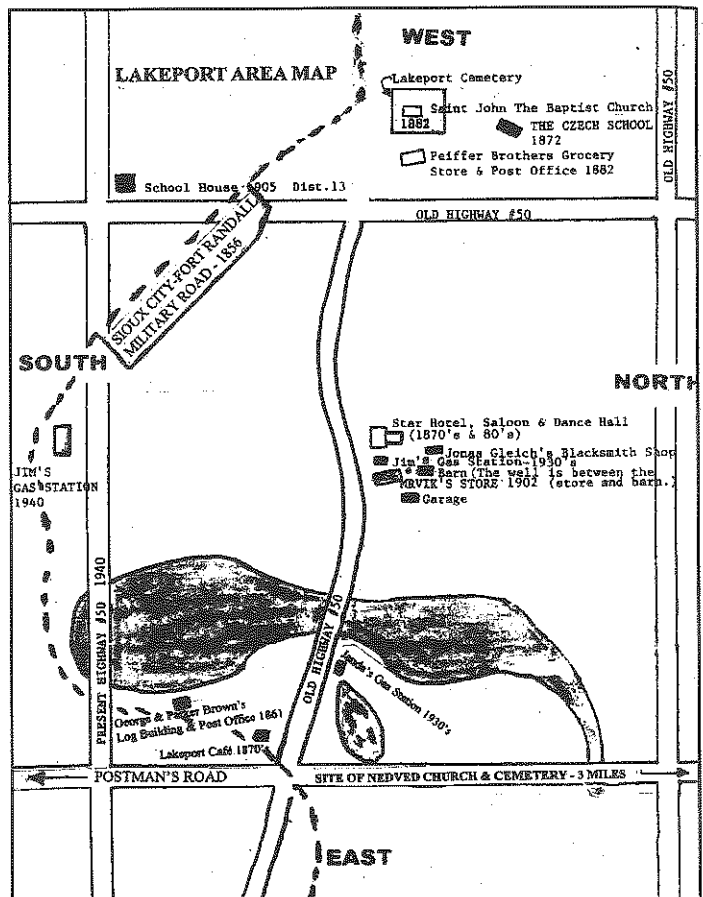
Indian tepees dot a primitive 1859 sketch of Yankton drawn by John R. Hanson as he remembered it many years later. The Fort Randall Road, noted as "Old Government Wagon Road," veers near the C.J. Holman cabin, lower right, and the Frost-Todd Trade Post, center near river.

for a sumptuous lunch. They proceeded to Major Lyman's post some distance up Chief Smutty Bear's Valley west of Yankton where flour was selling for ten cents a pound. The following day the party returned to Sioux City, once again crossing the James River at Stone's Ferry, reportedly having sighted more than a thousand Indians in the vicinity.

Territorial Legislators were quick to grant Greenway and his heirs a license for five years to operate a ferry on the Dakota River inside the boundaries of the Greenway farm in Section 34-94-55 "when they had a good reliable boat." Toll for a two-horse wagon cost thirty cents with lesser sums for smaller vehicles, etc. Legislators later awarded a 25-year license to John Stange to ferry on the Dakota River adjoining his land. He was to put up a \$500 performance bond and could have in addition to tolls for animals, five cents per cwt. for merchandise and fifty cents per 1,000 feet of lumber. (*SDHC, vol. 25, p252*)

It is likely that the Frost, Todd and Company Trading Post established at Yankton along the Missouri River was one of only two habitations when the first Sioux City to Fort Randall Road passed three miles north. A drawing of Yankton in 1859 as pioneer John R. Hanson much later remembered it shows both the trading post and the cabin of father and son W.P. and C.J. Holman, said to be first settlers. The Holmans were representatives of trade post speculators from Sioux City; however, Indians burned their first cabin and drove them away, only temporarily, as they returned several months later.

Also pictured on Hanson's rudimentary map are eighteen tepees and an Indian grave site, all located well west of Marne Creek. The "Old Government Wagon Road," as it is labeled, entered Yankton from the east, dipping down to about a quarter mile north of the trading post, then slanting back northwest where it rejoined the original trail. Today's 8th Street, noted on early maps as "Main Street" may have been the first government route through Yankton. Today's railroad tracks loosely follow the same line through town.



Brothers George and Parker Brown built a hotel along the Military Road in the Lakeport area about nine miles northwest of Yankton. A sketch drawn by local historian Romaine Pesicka, assisted in 1982 by a former resident of the area, locates the Road in relation to today's altered Highway 50.

Travelers on the original Sioux City to Fort Randall Road likely stopped in an area of lakes nine miles northwest of Yankton to water and rest their stock. This location would in 1861 become Lakeport, where brothers George and Parker Brown built a log hotel. In December that year Companies A, B, and C of the Fourteenth Iowa Infantry camped by a lake in that area on their way to Fort Randall to relieve soldiers who wished to serve in the Civil War. The Lakeport site would become popular to soldiers, civilians and settlers alike. Today only the historic chalkstone St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and Cemetery remain nearby.

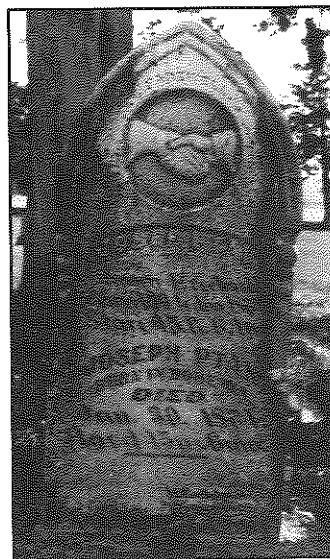
Bon Homme County

Not until the early 1870s did Hawlejek, a stage stop and post office, appear on the map along the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road. Bohemian immigrant Josef Ptak built the log cabin/post office on his homestead two miles west of the Bon Homme-Yankton County border with intentions (never realized) of founding a village. When General George Custer and his Seventh Cavalry passed by in 1873, neighbors in the largely Bohemian community gathered at the stage stop to enjoy the spectacle. Ptak died at age 45 and became first burial in the Ptak National Cemetery, the only remaining testament to his dream.

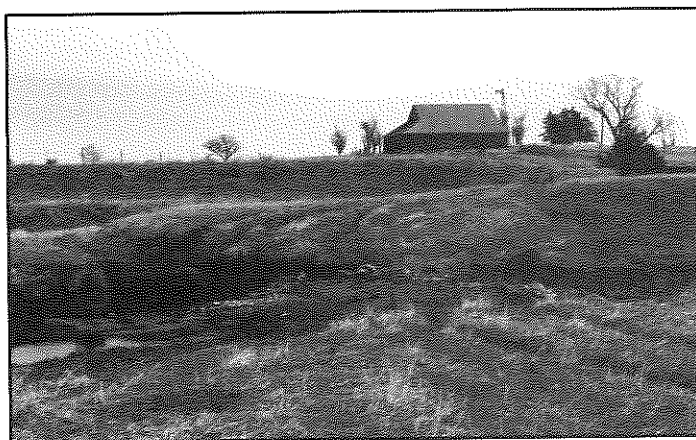
Snatch Creek, on earliest maps named Scalp Creek, crossed the Military Trail a few miles west of the Hawlejek stop. Possible rock crossings remain in an oxbow adjacent to Highway 52 in spite of punishment doled out over the years by bruising waters occasioned by heavy rainfall and melting snows. Bon Homme Village, established in 1859, was located on the Missouri River little more than one mile southeast of Snatch Creek and would be visited by General Custer while waiting for high waters to recede. Very soon roads branched off the original trail, not only to the tiny village but also to the river communities of Springfield and Running Water.

Emanuel Creek, the next hurdle, continues to bisect central Bon Homme County, growing in width and depth as it nears its junction with the Missouri River several miles south of original Fort Randall Road crossings.

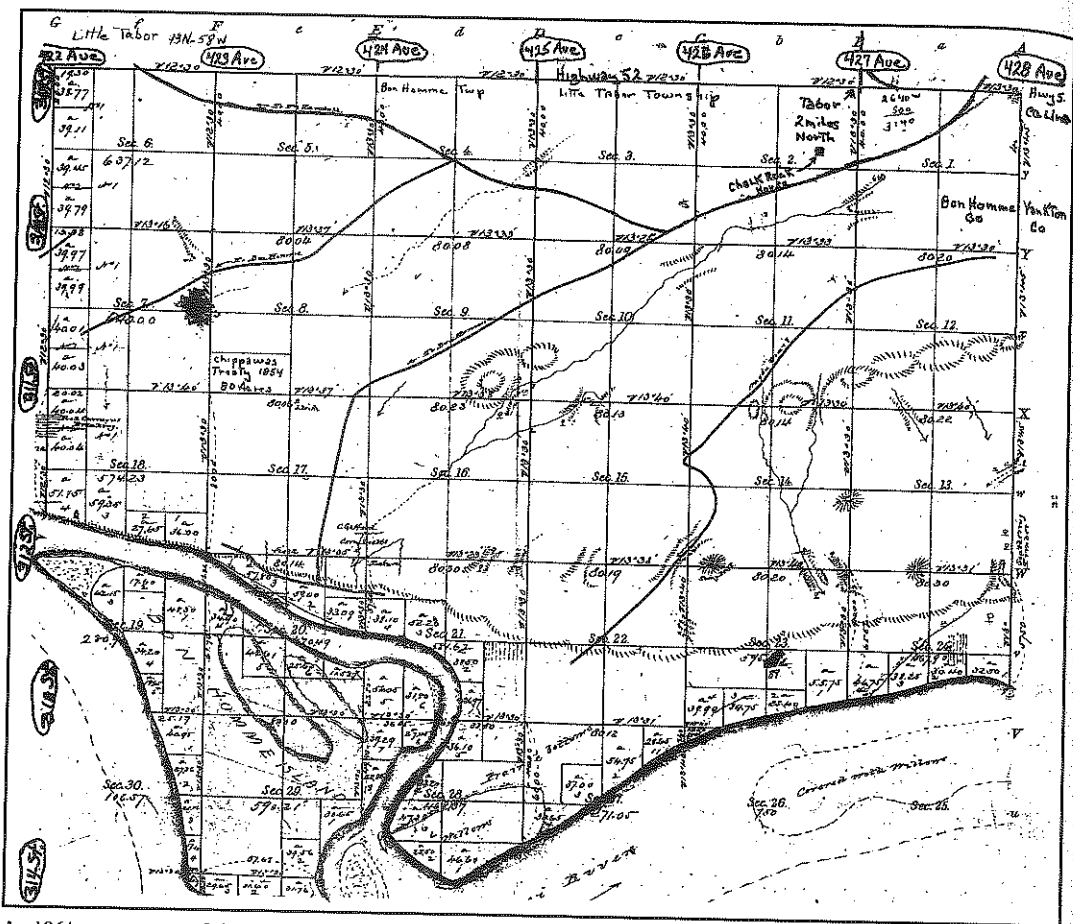
Challenging terrain bordered the banks of Choteau Creek, at both its main branch in Charles Mix County and along "Dry Choteau," the eastern border not only of the



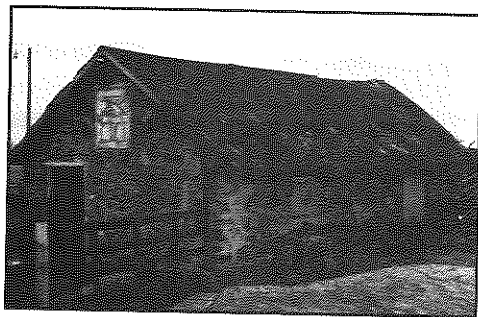
An aged tombstone in the family Ptak National Cemetery bears testimony in Czech and English to the short life of Josef Ptak, born in Bohemia, died January 30, 1874, aged 45 years, 6 months.



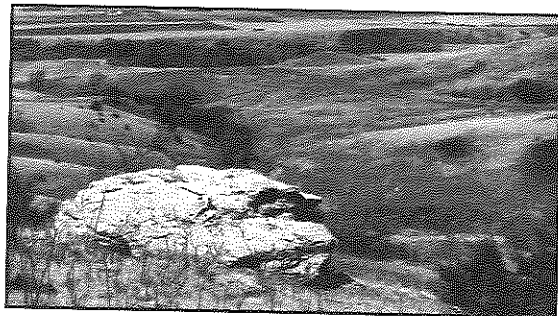
Deep ruts lead to and from a rock crossing in natural prairie over Emanuel Creek four miles southwest of Tyndall on the original Fort Randall Road.



An 1861 survey map of the eastern border of Bon Homme County along the Missouri River shows branches leading from the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road toward Bon Homme Village. Note Bon Homme Island at lower left. (Current 911 streets and avenues have been added.)



In 1996 an aged roadhouse continued to serve as an outbuilding on a farm southwest of Avon near the Brownsville Military Road Crossing over Dry Choteau Creek.



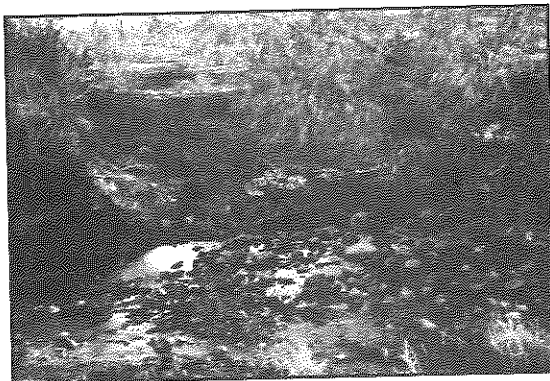
From steep hills in Bon Homme County a panoramic view of Charles Mix County emerges before descent begins to the Brownsville Crossing at Dry Choteau Creek (marked by trees, top center). Traces of original Military Road remain (upper right).

county but also of the Yankton Sioux Indian Reservation. On earliest maps the original trail departed Bon Homme County at a point called Brownsville on Dry Choteau Creek. An alternate route turned south before crossing at that point and proceeded to lower ground near the junction of both branches of the creek, or farther still to crossings at the village of Andrus and Tackett's Station, where because of its proximity to the Missouri River, a substantial rock crossing was required.

Charles Mix County

Gullies, ravines and otherwise rough terrain tested travelers headed for Greenwood or White Swan on either the Military Trail branch near the river or the original Fort Randall Road passing through central Charles Mix County. The military, fur traders, horses, wagons and livestock were forced to skirt hills and cross creeks, in the process creating side-by-side ruts, rain-softened and deep in summer and rough and hard in winter. Visual indicators of their struggles remain on a gently inclining field adjacent to Highway 46 near today's Fort Randall Casino. Distinct ruts disappear temporarily under an aged Indian church and cemetery at the crest of the hill and reappear in pastures on the downward slope towards Pickstown, only to be lost in disturbed soils near the town's golf course.

After descending to river level, facilities and ferry at White Swan were originally accessible only from the north and west. In the winter of 1863, volunteer soldiers at Fort Randall with little to do hand-dug a passable road called "The Dugway" into chalk-



Top: An accumulation of rocks near a degraded bank at Dry Choteau Creek may be the actual rock crossing into Charles Mix County and the Yankton Sioux Reservation.

Center: Just across Dry Choteau Creek into Charles Mix County, suitable camp grounds encouraged travelers to rest before tackling an incline. (Note imposing Bon Homme County hills in the background.)

Below: A degraded bank once supported wagon trains at an important rock crossing over Choteau Creek. (John Blaha land, 1996)



Soldiers with little to do at Fort Randall in the winter of 1863-1864 cut "The Dugway" through chalkstone bluffs between White Swan and Greenwood saving several miles of travel. Note a man, possibly two, seated one above the other on top the bluff.



The silhouette of the chalkstone bluff remains remarkably similar in 1996. Note eroded remains (front center) of the "Dugway" still well above river level.



Looking westward toward Fort Randall Dam in 1996, the author ponders activities once taking place on the "Dugway."

stone bluffs bordering the river between Greenwood and White Swan, shortening the distance between the two sites by more than a dozen miles. Eroded remains of "The Dugway" bearing initials of many passersby are visible but not easily accessible.

For travelers whose destination was Fort Randall, only a ferry boat ride over the Missouri River or a dangerous crossing on ice remained before journey's end.



Looking back to the northeast from an Indian Church situated at the crest of a hill, persistent deep wagon ruts emerge from a harvested field located seven miles west of Wagner opposite Fort Randall Casino on Highway 46.



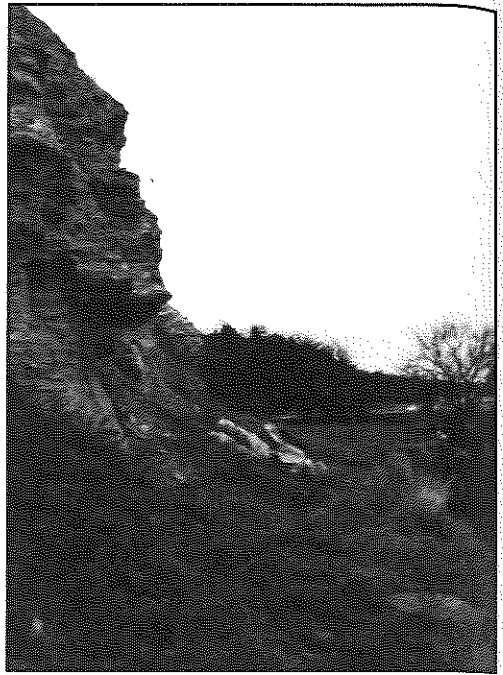
From Highway 46 looking southwest, the same ruts disappear under a church moved to its present location after the Military Road was abandoned. Note Indian Cemetery among cedar trees at left.



Travelers along Fort Randall Military Road wound down more than a mile through gullies and rough land in a native pasture owned in 1996 by Richard Dvorak to Saint Frances Bay and river level. Barely visible behind trees on the Pickstown golf course is Fort Randall Dam and beyond, Lake Francis Case.



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Government Bridges

Changes were inevitable as engineers studied ways to improve the Military Road. Of prime importance was the placing of bridges over the Big Sioux, the Vermillion, and the James Rivers. In 1865, Congress provided \$25,000, a sum presumed sufficient for construction of those bridges. Twenty-three-year-old lawyer Gideon C. Moody, native of Cortland, New York, who had come to Yankton in May 1864, was appointed superintendent of the huge project. He was said to have bristled when the Territorial Legislature requested an itemized accounting of what appeared to be slow-moving construction. As an employee of the federal government, he seemed to feel his work was outside the bounds of their responsibility. In fact, progress was slow through no fault of Moody's.

When Moody began operations on June 1, 1865, timber was scarce and more expensive than expected. Work was delayed at the Big Sioux River site by inability to secure ironwork for the superstructure. Construction called for timber posts on good foundation, length of bridge to be 500 feet, width 16 feet, with support from seven piers, each 50 feet high. Piers were to be protected from floating ice by twenty cords of stone. (*Kingsbury I*, p404)

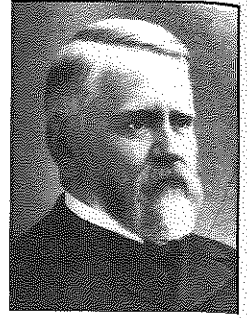
In 1866, Moody and his successor A.B. Miller experienced the vagaries of Midwestern weather. The two, caught in a blizzard on the road near the James River, became lost but luckily found a barn in which they exercised all night to keep from freezing. Even so, both suffered frostbite to hands, feet and faces.

Congress provided additional funds of \$10,000 in 1866, by which time Moody had resigned and become involved in politics. A.B. Miller, Interior Department Engineer, succeeded Moody but died suddenly before work could be completed. Contractors were tardy, spring floods were damaging, and repair and replacement of lost materials took the remainder of allotted funds.

For example, material for the James River Bridge came from Chicago via Council Bluffs, thence steamboat. The Flood of 1867 damaged the new bridge's superstructure by lifting it off its piers. Expensive material floated some distance downriver before being grappled and rescued. Yankton County came to the federal government's assistance that year by offering to complete the work and care for the bridge until Congress could make needed appropriations.

Governor A.J. Faulk covered the subject of government roads in his December 1866, message in the following manner: (edited for brevity)

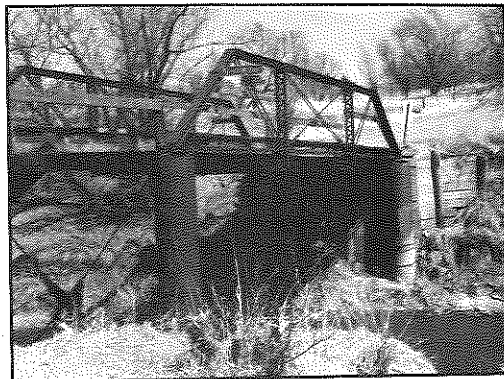
"I am gratified to be able to inform you that ... the chief outlay heretofore has been in bridging the Big Sioux, Vermillion and James Rivers, which work is making encouraging progress... The superintendent tells me that the bridge over the Big Sioux will be completed before the close of December, that over the Vermillion in January, and that over the James in the early part of the ensuing spring... that portion (of the road) between Yankton and Sioux City is already completed so far as laying out, grading and bridging are concerned, with exceptions I have named... the proper termination of this road is Virginia City, Montana"



Gideon C. Moody, lawyer, legislator, United States District Court Judge, and first superintendent in charge of building bridges over the Big Sioux, Vermillion, and James Rivers, came to Yankton in 1864.

The Big Sioux Bridge was completed in July 1867, the Vermillion Bridge a few months later, and in early 1869, the James River Bridge, then under the direction of Superintendent John Lawrence, was opened to traffic.

The building of bridges in the territory continued to challenge county governments. In 1904, Bon Homme County commissioners supported construction of twenty-five bridges to add to or replace those already in use. Thirteen more were planned for 1905, the year the location of the boundary line between Bon Homme County and Charles Mix County was fixed. Two popular bridge building companies then vying for contracts were Canton Bridge Company and Iowa Bridge Company. A respectable number of historic bridges remain in the Upper Missouri River Valley today, several on the National Register of Historic Places.



An original bridge over Dry Choteau Creek near Andrus is registered as a historical landmark.

Surveyor General George D. Hill

The Sioux City to Fort Randall Road generally followed the originally surveyed trail until acts from Washington, particularly the passing of the Organic Act on March 2, 1861, required changes. Surveying of the territory between Sioux City and Fort Randall became a necessity. Townships must be created and section lines drawn in order to build territorial roads wherever such lines be practicable, the Homestead Act stated.

On March 2, 1861, Abraham Lincoln appointed William Jayne governor of newly established Dakota Territory. Other federal territorial appointees included George D. Hill as Surveyor General. Hill, like many political appointees, was young, unmarried, and ambitious. He was over six feet tall, corpulent, jovial, fond of alcohol, and said to have an unflinching instinct for speculation with expectations of making a personal fortune. Hill was accused of selling surveying contracts to highest bidders, usually non-resident friends from his home state of Michigan. (Contracts were to be awarded only to bona fide resident surveyors.) Before he was replaced in 1869 by Wm. Henry Harrison Beadle, Hill's reputation was stained by unscrupulous methods he had used to achieve his goals but, on the positive side, he was acknowledged as having encouraged immigrants and others by pamphlets and persuasive speeches to share his faith in the natural resources of the land.

Land surveys in the mid-1860s were commonly accomplished using primitive methods, sometimes with no more tools than a wagon wheel, one man driving the wagon, one holding a magnetic compass, and a third counting the revolutions of the wheel. The number of crooked section lines might have been fewer had even that method been properly followed. However, land surveys conducted under Hill's direction carefully noted on maps the exact location of the original Sioux City to Fort Randall Military Road, recording in field notes the number of chains and links from the Road to both north and south section lines. (One link measured 7.92 inches, 100 links equaled one chain, and one chain measured 66 feet.)

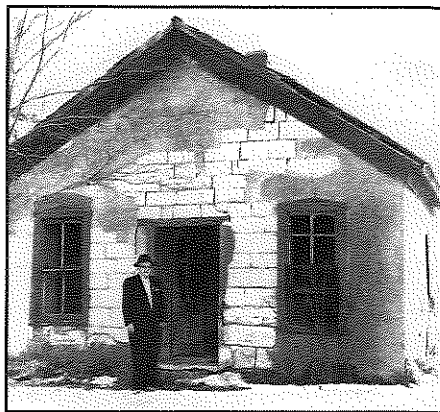
The need for surveyors was great, and professionals from the East jumped at the opportunity to accept contracts. The firm of Ball and Darling secured more than one major contract and immediately set about work. Employee William Miner later described what work and life was like on the primitive prairies for himself and his fellow surveyors. Miner stated that eight men made up the surveying party and all walked except for the driver of the wagon which carried their supplies and instruments. Instructions included starting at a point on the Big Sioux River 30 miles north of Sioux City where a standard line in Iowa stopped between Townships 94 and 95 North, then running that standard west to the eastern boundary of the Yankton Sioux Reservation. This point occurred at a place on Choteau Creek identified as Sherman's Ranch.

Ball and Darling was ordered to do enough "town line" and subdivision work using the rectangular system approved by the government, until funds were exhausted. The men were charged with noting and defining grants awarded by the Yankton Treaty of 1858 to Frost, Todd, & Company at different localities, the full section awarded at Yankton to Charles F. Picotte, and a few other like grants in the Sioux Point region. They subdivided two fractional townships at Yankton, two at Vermillion, and one at Elk Point, all areas near to or over which the Military Trail crossed. Finally, with a foot of snow on the ground, the firm ran all the subdivision lines at Big Sioux Point. Miner returned on foot from the Sioux City area to Yankton, broke but happy to find lodging with sympathetic proprietor Bramble at his little store and food at Mrs. H.C. Ash's Eatery. Miner would become a prominent citizen of Yankton.

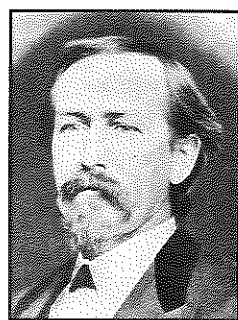
Moses Kimball Armstrong

It was Surveyor General George D. Hill who in 1862, awarded a surveying contract to a young man from Milan, Ohio, who would become a leading citizen of Yankton and the state of South Dakota. Moses Kimball Armstrong, 1832-1906, arrived in the Yankton vicinity on October 12, 1859, and camped with friends near the ferry landing on the James River. He was well educated, an active first class surveyor and civil engineer, respected journalist, and successful politician. Like many who came from the East seeking adventure, he found frontier life with its genial companions and all its attractions to be enjoyable in spite of deprivations.

Armstrong's first surveying job, which lasted until 1870, was to survey townships of government land, and divide them into sections and quarter-sections. During that period and later, he was deeply involved in politics, railroad organization, and Yankton businesses. He also managed the full section of city property awarded by the government to Charles F. Picotte for his assistance in negotiating the Yankton Treaty of 1858. (A



Bramble's Store, Downer T. Bramble, proprietor, was located riverside near today's Walnut Street. The first business in Yankton, it soon moved "uptown" and became known as Bramble-Miner Store. A son of the original owner visited the old building in 1961 during Yankton's Centennial year.



Moses K. Armstrong ably served Yankton and Dakota Territory as surveyor, politician and respected citizen.

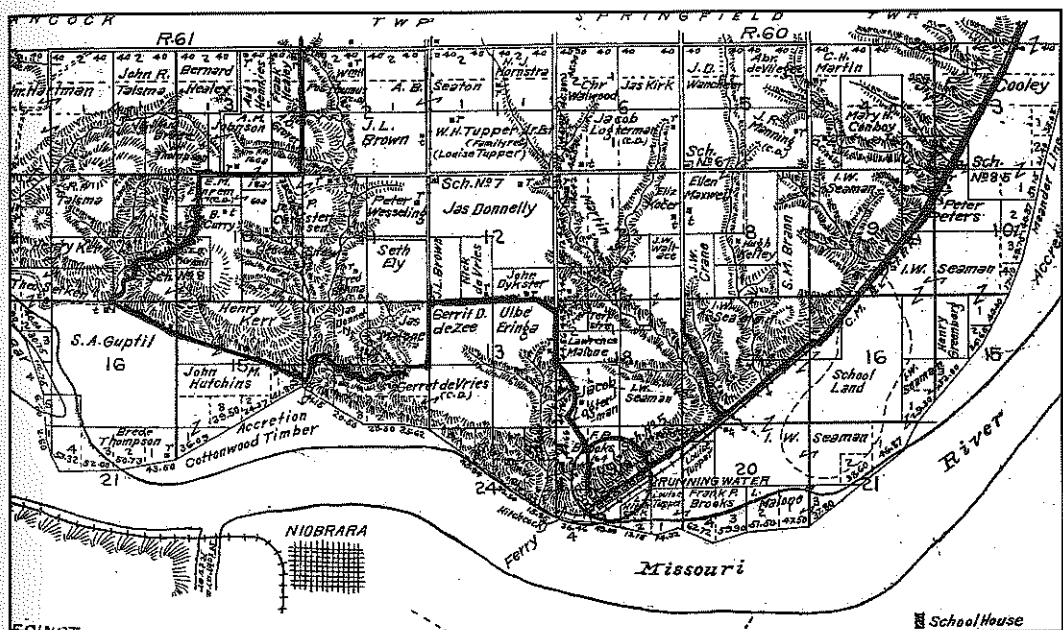
branch of the Military Trail crossed Picotte's property.) In 1866, Armstrong surveyed township lines in Charles Mix County, and in 1869 was re-hired to correct the boundary line of the reservation ten years after it had been drawn by another surveyor. Additional surveying would be required in 1873 in order to correctly distribute 40-acre land allotments provided to the Yankton Sioux.

Territorial Roads

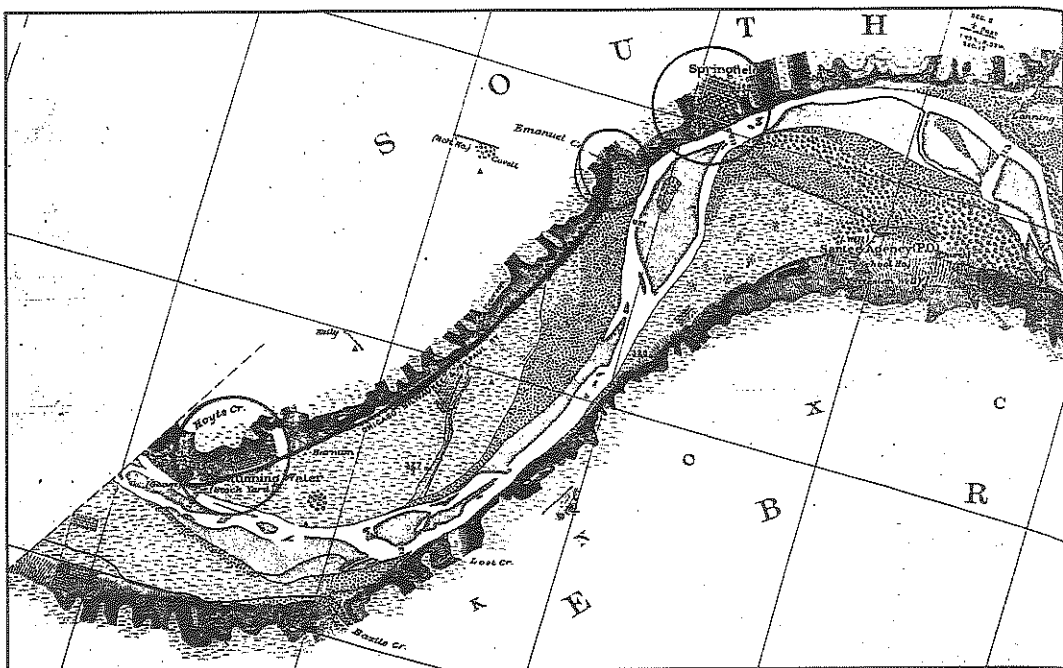
When the 1862-1863 session of the Legislative Assembly met at Yankton, members were faced with imposing decisions. The lengthy title of the manual recording the session is *General Laws, and Memorials and Resolutions of the Territory of Dakota Passed at the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly, commenced at the town of Yankton December 1, 1862, and concluded January 9, 1863, to which are prefixed the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, and the Act Organizing the Territory.*

Under the heading of "Territorial Roads," Chapter 54 contained "An act to locate and establish a territorial road from Yankton to Fort Lookout," and Chapter 55 noted "An act to locate a territorial road from Yankton to the Big Sioux River." Both were approved January 9, 1863. Legislators appointed commissioners in Cole (Union), Clay and Yankton Counties to locate "so much of said (new) road as passes through the county," and made provisions for payment of expenses.

Chapter 65 of the same legislative session presented a "Memorial to Congress for the establishment of a mail route from Mankato, in Blue Earth County, State of Minnesota, via Madelia, Sioux Falls, Upper James Crossing, Yankton, Smutty Bear's Camp, Bon Homme, Wannari, Tufts-ville, (or Neshuda), Philbrick's Crossing, (or Choteau), and Greenwood to Fort Randall in Dakota Territory."



The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad reached its terminus at Running Water Village (circled) in 1880 at a time when few roads were improved.



Trains to Running Water ran through bottom lands from the Springfield Railroad Depot located along Emanuel Creek two miles west of town from 1880 to 1930. (Missouri River Commission map, 1892)

The need for roads was vast. An essay titled "Land Records and What They Have to Tell about the Earth" prepared in 1991 by Fred Leetch for a college geography class noted that on August 30, 1862, Dakota Territorial Governor Jayne cited the need for territorial roads. A portion of his proclamation stated, (sic)

"...Those who lived in the outer areas of the settlements wanted a road built between the river towns of Yankton and Shannon. While only few homes were on the flat prairie, many settlements lined the valley route along the river except a four mile stretch in Smuty Bear's woods. With such a road the main line of travel would accommodate a forty mile stretch of settlement between the Territorial Capital at Yankton and the village of Shannon." (Shannon would later be renamed Running Water.)



The "Bottom Road" parallels the abandoned railroad route from Springfield to Running Water. In 1998, high waters in Lewis and Clark Lake made the popular shortcut nearly impassable; however, the road recovered and remains a popular route for sportsmen and sightseers.

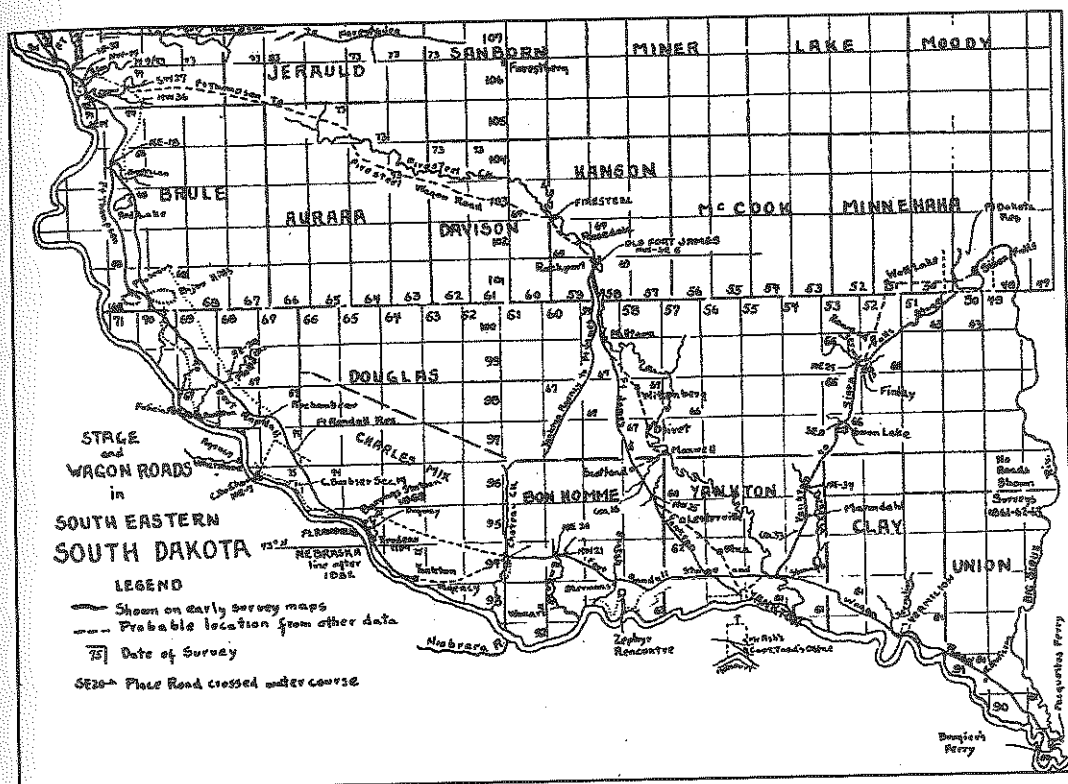
New roads began following section lines in accordance with the rectangular surveying system and soon the Fort Randall Military Road became obsolete. County commissioners now

were challenged to provide suitable territorial roads and bridges to replace outmoded wagon and stagecoach trails. It was not long before earliest roads were vacated, others established. One that has persisted is the gravel and dirt "Bottom Road" between Springfield and Running Water in Bon Homme County which continues to provide not only a short cut but also wildlife viewing and fishing opportunities.

Stage Coach Roads

As quickly as suitable roads were created, stage coach companies planned routes, mostly using two and four-horse hitches. In 1860, the first regular stage line, subsidized by the government, ran from Sioux City to Fort Randall generally following the Military Trail. The C.E. and D.T. Hedges Company operated a daily run from Sioux City to Yankton, which would become a major hub, and one tri-weekly run to Fort Randall carrying mail, mining supplies and miscellaneous provisions. The Thompson Line also carried freight and passengers over bone-rattling rutted trails. Stops would allow for change of horses and rest, perhaps food and drink for passengers.

By 1875, a stage line headed diagonally northwest on the Firesteel Trail, destination the short-lived military Fort James at Firesteel, then county seat of Davison County. The trail branched from the Military Road a few miles northwest of Yankton to follow high ground on the west bank of the James River, dipping down for stops at Odessa, Scotland, Olivet, Milltown, Rockport and Rosedale. The run from Yankton took one long day.

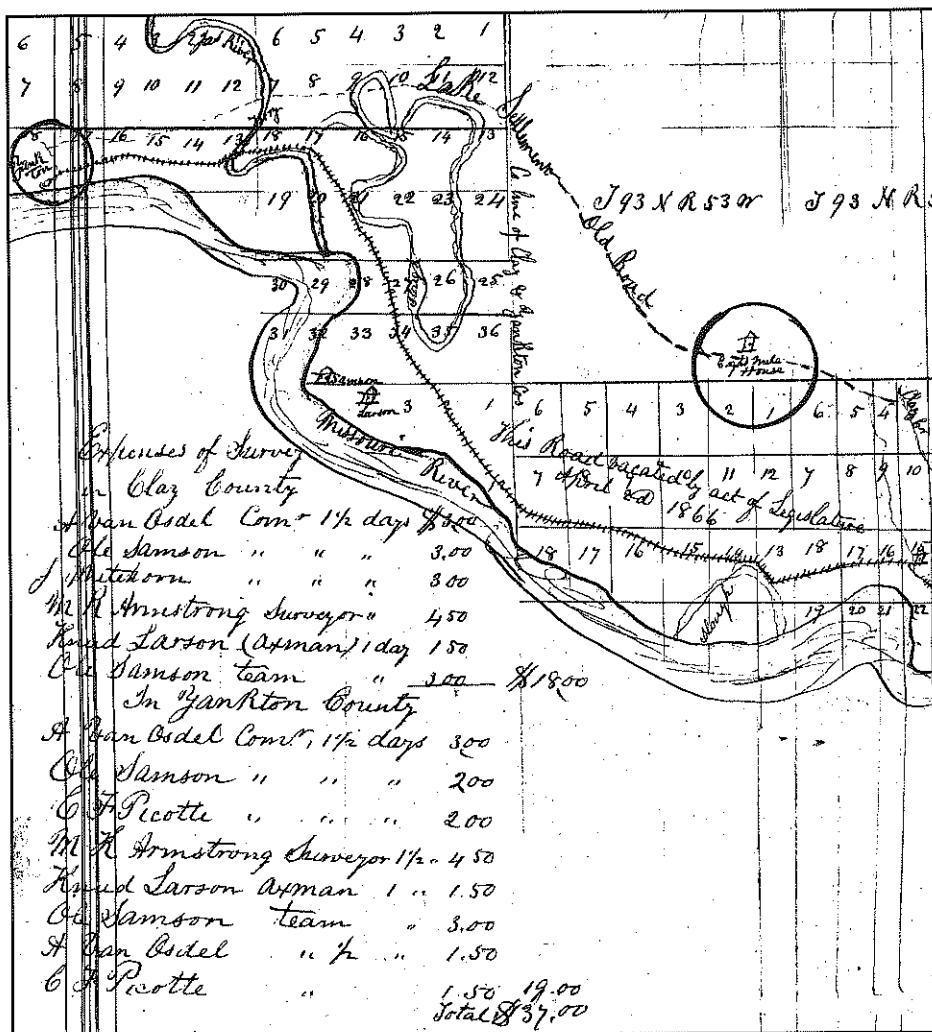


A map of stage and wagon roads in southeastern South Dakota as surveyed in 1875 clearly indicates routes then in use including the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road beginning at Pacquette's Ferry on the Big Sioux River.

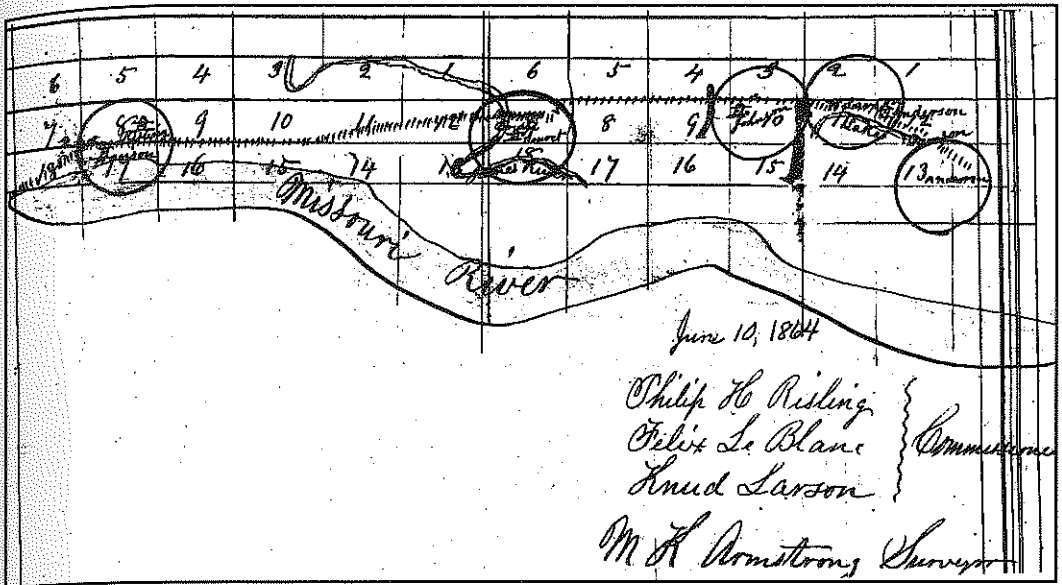
Moses Armstrong reminisced with chagrin about a stage coach ride he had taken in 1868 from Yankton to Sioux City. Because the coach was full (women and large trunks occupying seats) he sat on the floor squarely over the hind axle, his head bobbing up and down in frosty air like a churn dasher while the remainder of his body bounced all over. The trip ended by his walking ahead of the coach for four miles, leading the way in a snowstorm!

County Commissioners' Duties

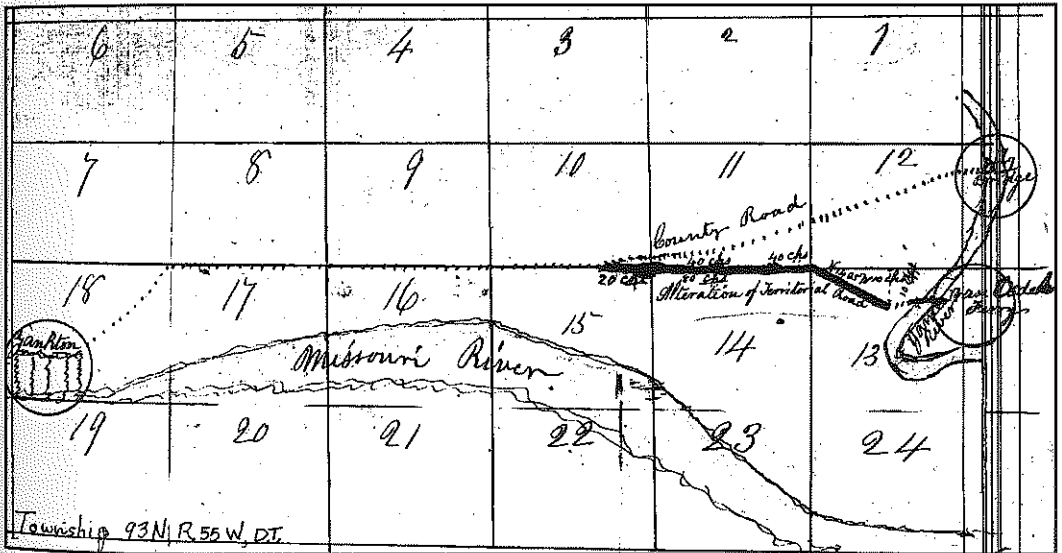
Because Yankton served as territorial capital from 1862 to 1883, Yankton County Courthouse records reflect major evolvement of roads in the area. Photocopies of early surveys follow, some bearing smudges and scratch-overs as changes were recorded. Many contain topographical symbols of interest as well as names and locations of early residents.



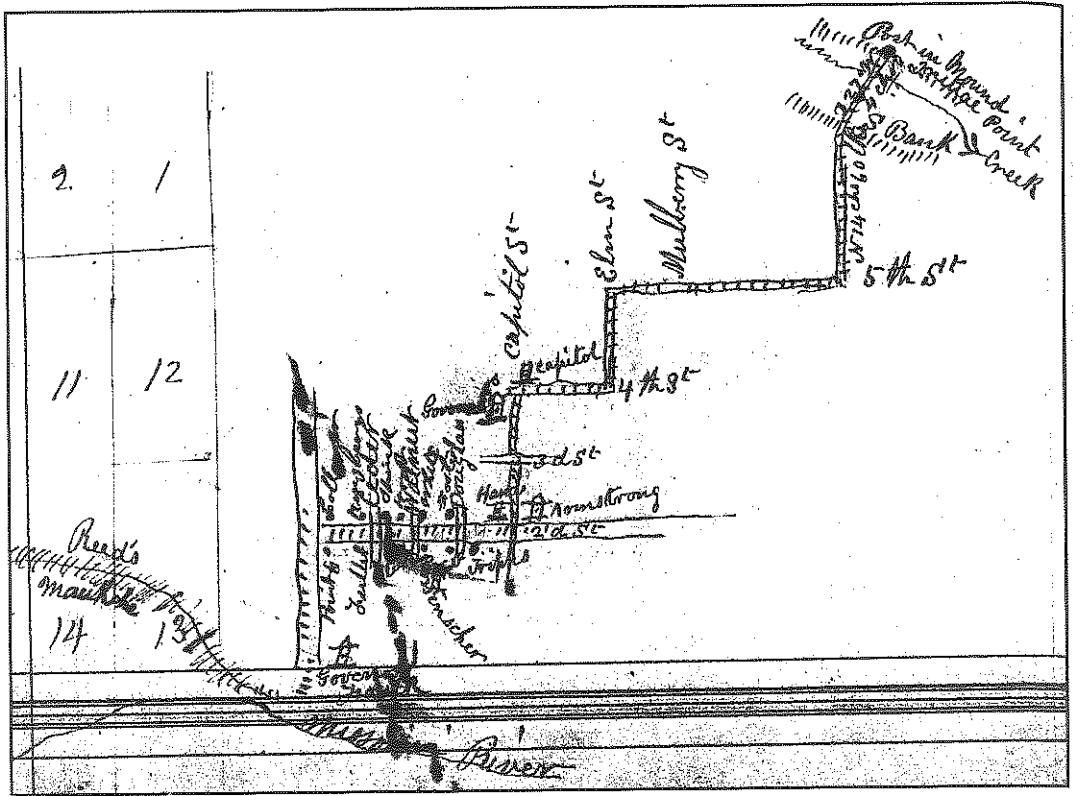
A Yankton County 1864 survey map already indicates a planned replacement for "Old Road" which had passed along Eight Mile House (circled) in Clay County and near "Lake Settlement" (Gayville) en route to Yankton (circled, far left).



A new territorial road planned in Yankton County in 1864 marks a "bridge" (circled) over the James River near the home of "Bouret." Also circled are homes of Hanson, Johnson, Anderson, and Samson.

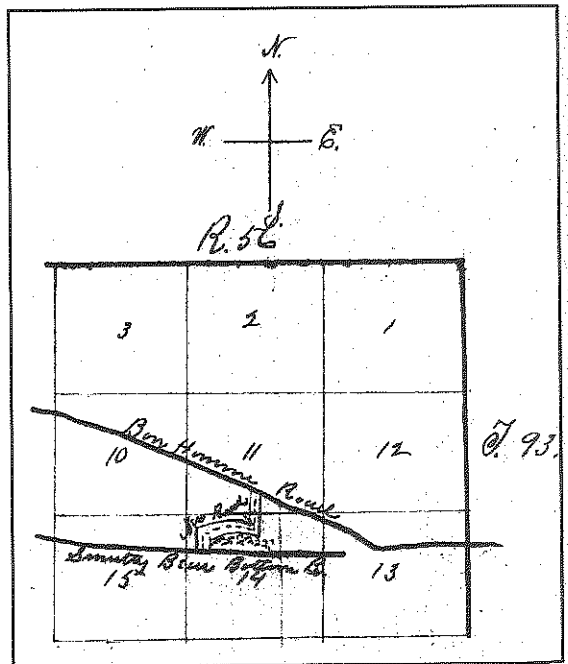


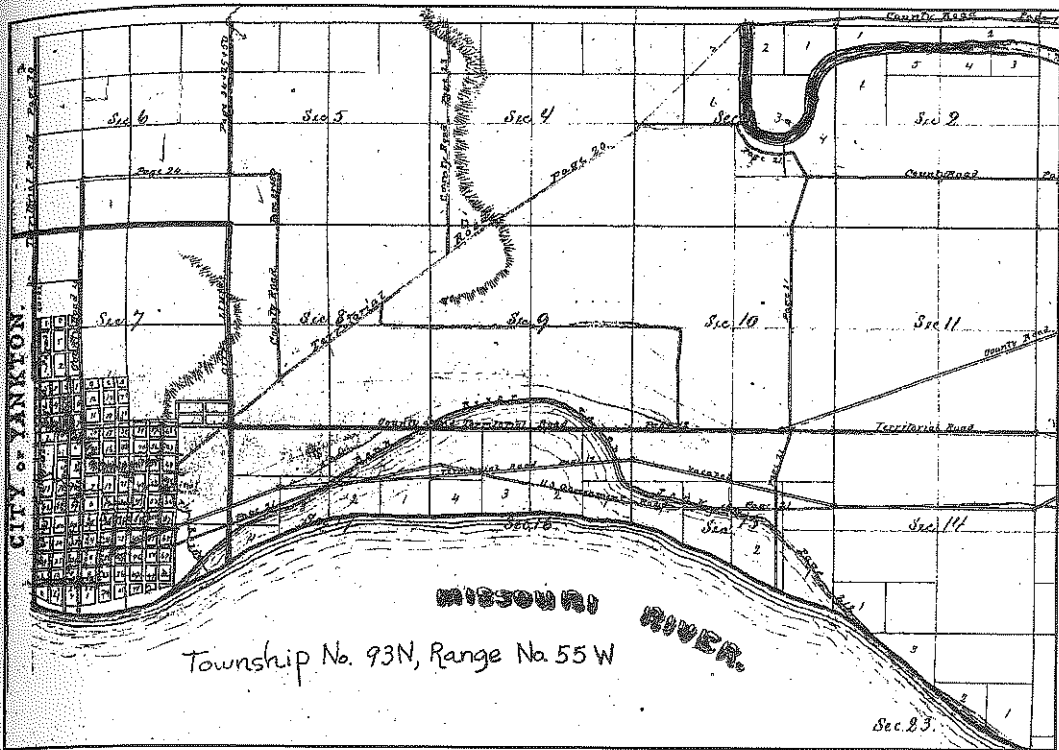
A Yankton County survey map dated June 2, 1865, notes Van Osdel's Ferry on the James River (circled) a short distance below a bridge (circled) connected to a county road.



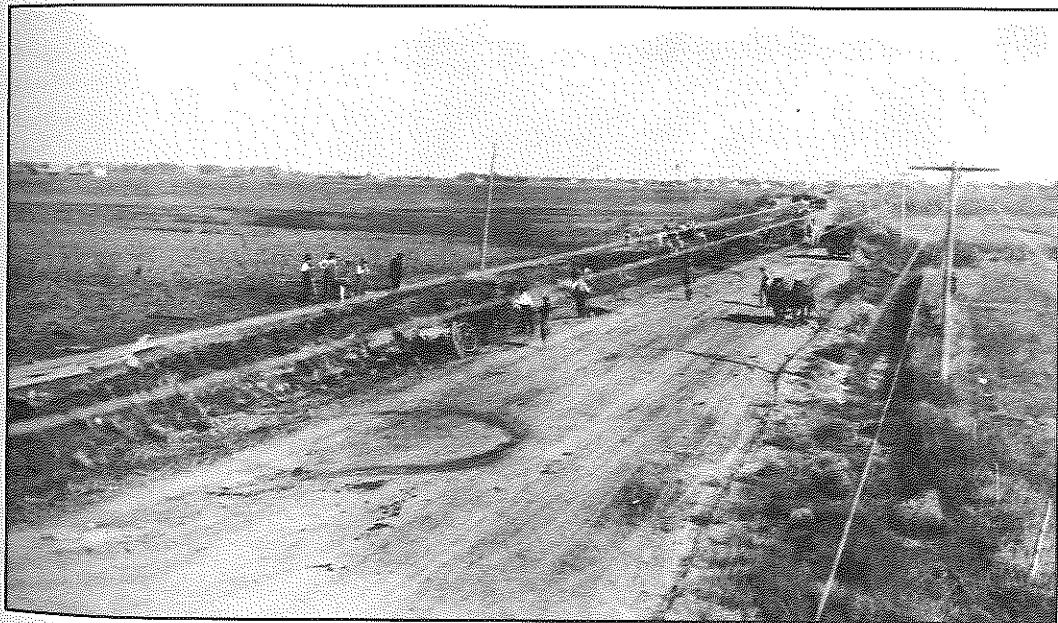
A smudged plat of Yankton drawn April 1867 pinpoints locations of the capitol building and homes of several prominent residents including Armstrong and Governor Faulk as well as rural locations of Reed and Mauksch.

Right: In 1873, Yankton County Commissioners platted a new road through bluffs and gullies to connect Smutty Bear Bottoms west of Yankton to the established Bon Homme Road. A legal petition pertaining to the request for a connecting road was filed in the Yankton County Courthouse on June 9, 1870, okayed September 23, 1870, and platted July 19, 1873. It is included here because names of involved landowners may be of interest. The petition reads as follows: "Petition to Yankton County Commissioners from landowners M.K. Armstrong, T.W. Brisbine, Jacob Brauch, M.B. Robertson, Chas. Long, Adolf Mauksch to ask for road from western limits of city of Yankton to bottomlands near residence of Washington Reed: S. from point in Sec. 11, T93 R56 on quarter line between lands owned by Armstrong and Brisbine to top of bluff, thence W. along top of bluff to ravine near W. line of Brauch's land Sec. 14, T93 R56, thence down said ravine intersecting road already opened at foot of said bluff."

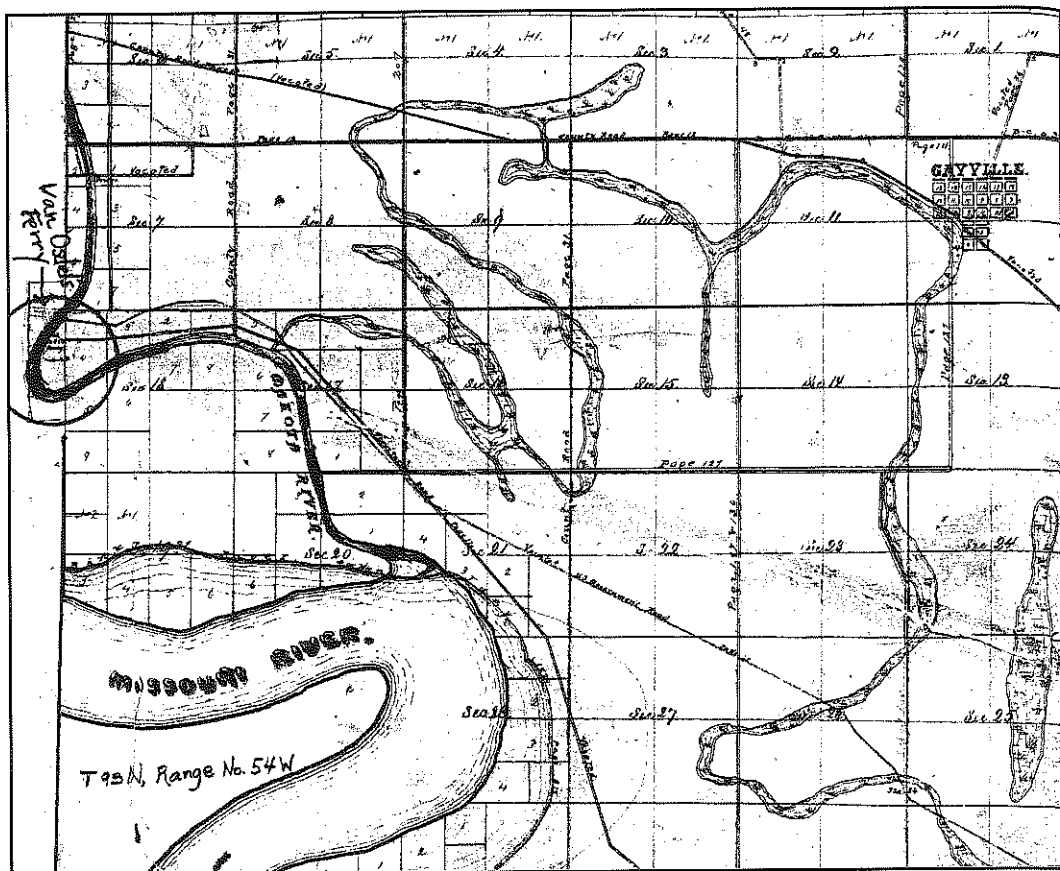




An undated plat of a growing Yankton illustrates the complexity of constructing roads to meet public demands.



Road building was an intensive labor project. Hand laborers and teams of horses build the Washington Highway in Bon Homme County in 1914.



Gayville is already established on this undated survey map showing Van Osdel's Ferry near an oxbow located close to the mouth of the Dakota (James) River (circled, far left).