

## The Upper Missouri River Valley Matures

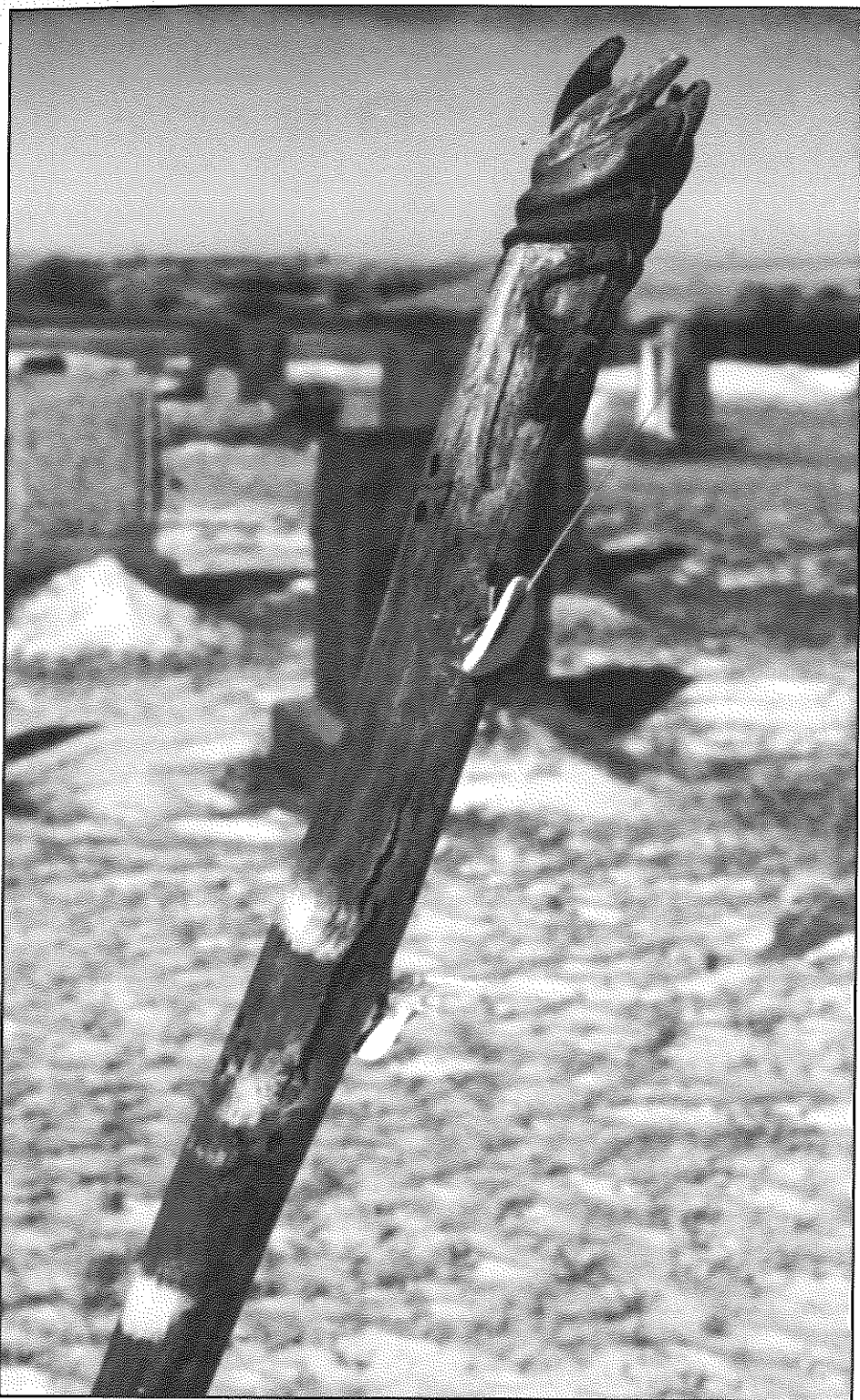
### Introduction

In 1857, no organized white communities existed on the Dakota side of the Big Sioux River; however, a cluster of French Canadians lived near the confluence of the Big Sioux and the Missouri. Sioux Indians spread their camps near trading posts and on plains between the Big Sioux and Fort Randall, moving about as food needs dictated. The United States military presence at the fort required that a road be surveyed and laid out across those unfamiliar lands.

When Dakota Territorial Governor William Jayne approved the organization of counties on April 10, 1862, courageous settlers, hopeful entrepreneurs and intrepid adventurers populated in ever-growing numbers the five counties through which the Military Road passed. On the following pages an abbreviated history of Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, and Charles Mix Counties appears with focus on the people and their communities, then and now.

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A male crowd gathers outside the Capitol of Dakota Territory built in 1862 on 4th and Capitol in Yankton. The 24x40 foot two-story frame building served as legislative hall and social gathering spot.



A traditional memorial decorates an Indian grave in Presbyterian Hill Church Cemetery.