



*Badger Clark*

## *Dakota Images*

Badger Clark's father, a Methodist minister, moved his family from Iowa to a homestead in Aurora County, Dakota Territory, in 1883, when Badger was three months old. Before Badger graduated from high school, the Clarks had lived in Mitchell, Huron, and Deadwood. Badger attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, and, at the age of 19, went to Cuba, hoping to strengthen his health.

Four years on a ranch near Tombstone, Arizona, gave Badger the rapport with the life style of the cowboy that he drew from in his more than two hundred poems and thirty short stories. Two of his verses—"The Job" and "The Cowboy's Prayer"—have become national anthology favorites. During the administration of Governor Leslie Jensen, Badger Clark was appointed Poet Laureate of the State of South Dakota, a post that he held for almost twenty years.

Badger lived in a cabin on the hillside near Legion Lake in Custer State Park. "Badger Hole," as he called it, was erected with his own hands. It was given to the state after his death in 1957.

Badger Clark believed in America, and "Lead, My America" shows this faith well:

Lead, my America, daughter of nations,  
Destined to lead from the day of your birth,  
Fruit of the dreaming of all generations,  
Sister in blood to the tribes of the earth.

Lead, my America, over new sod,  
Breaking a trail toward the mountains of God.

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