Building Diversity: A Photographic Survey of South Dakota Architecture, 1913-1940

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In South Dakota architectural history, the period between 1913 and 1940 was a time of great diversity in architectural styles, wide vacillations in the amount of money available for building, and a slow evolution in design orientation. Although these dates correspond more closely to important events in political, economic, and military history than to milestones in architectural history, the architecture of the era was, nonetheless, a manifestation of cultural historical trends. A survey of South Dakota architecture designed by architects reveals these broader cultural movements and ideas as reflected

in the academic building tradition of this quarter century.

Nineteen thirteen marked the midpoint of what has been called the cultural American Renaissance. At that time, the United States was a country at the height of political, military, and economic self-assurance. By the end of the 1930s, the nation was just emerging from a devastating depression that had taken with it the love for architectural ornamentation, historical details. and handcrafted design. The self-confidence of the American Renaissance had given way to an austere, unadorned, and practical sensibility. The Modern movement, born in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, gave those qualities architectural expression and swept America with an extraordinary vigor. As a result, buildings constructed after 1940 were fundamentally different from those of the pre-1940 era.

The American Renaissance movement of 1885 to 1930 redefined classical architecture and its numerous derivative styles. In order to understand this reevaluation of the classical, it is necessary to understand the first period of classical revival in the United States, which occurred between 1775 and 1830. Both periods drew upon the classical, or ancient Greek and Roman, architecture for inspiration, but the manner in which the classical was interpreted varied greatly between the two eras. Architects of the earlier period attempted to create an architectural style appropriate for a new republic and looked to antiquity for suitable democratic models. However, by the late nineteenth century, the romantic view of ancient Greece and Rome had given way to the desire for an image befitting a powerful nation. American architects of the later era, therefore, looked more to the cultivated and civilized past of Europe and the age of the Renaissance for their models. In short, the classicism of the 1775 to 1830 era reflected the style of a republic; classicism of the 1885 to 1930 era reflected the style of an empire.

Between the two periods of classicism lay the pioneer age of architect-designed building in South Dakota. In contrast to the severe symmetry and clear rationality of the classical styles, architecture of the mid- to latenineteenth century celebrated the picturesque and the romantic. South Dakota's earliest architects, Wallace L. Dow and Joseph Schwarz, worked in these richly ornamented and colorful styles. Both employed in many of their buildings rusticated or rock-faced Sioux quartzite, round-arched Romanesque details, and irregular floor plans. Further, the picturesque styles of the era—Romanesque, Stick, Shingle, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Gothic Revival, to name a few—made little attempt to reproduce faithfully their historical sources. Instead, designs were bold, almost freehand, interpretations.

During the 1913-1940 era, styles other than the classical also made their appearance. Many architects became interested in the vernacular, or nonarchitect-designed, traditions of other countries. In contrast to nineteenth-century vernacular revivals, these designs tended to be more historically correct or academic. Also, several entirely new styles such as Prairie School,

park-building Rustic, and Art Deco emerged.

This period of South Dakota architectural history is important for the changes not simply in the styles of buildings but in the practice of architecture as well. While two individuals, Wallace L. Dow and Joseph Schwarz, dominated the nineteenth century, the period between 1913 and 1940 witnessed the emergence of major architectural firms in the state. Furthermore, while Dow had learned architecture through the apprenticeship system, twentieth-century architects learned through a combination of college training and apprenticeship, the system that survives to this day. A final change occurred in 1925, when South Dakota, like other states, instituted a formal registration system for architects through the State Board of Engineering

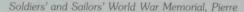
and Architectural Examiners. Quite simply, architecture evolved from a trade

into a profession.

By World War I, South Dakota architects had fully accepted the classical revival styles. Generally, architectural historians divide the American Renaissance period of classical revival architecture (1885-1930) into several different styles, including: Neo-Classicism, Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts Classicism, Georgian, and Colonial Revival.

Neo-Classicism

The style most commonly recognized today is the Neo-Classical, which was used for Carnegie libraries, banks, and many courthouses. Characteristically, the Neo-Classical style included a rectangular shape, which, in some buildings, was expanded to a monumental size. These buildings were commonly constructed or faced with light-colored stone, such as grey, beige, or white marble or sandstone. Smooth-faced ashlar blocks gave the structure a monumental simplicity and precise finish. Another striking feature was the large portico, capped with a triangular pediment, which dominated the front facade or wall of the building. Indeed, the rest of the front facade was left blank or treated as a flat, two-dimensional plane. As in all classical revival buildings, facades and interior floor plans were symmetrical.





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An elegant example of the Neo-Classical style is the SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' WORLD WAR MEMORIAL building in Pierre. In this building, all the visual emphasis is on the protruding entrance bay with its large portico, while the flanking wings have simple rectangular windows and a flat wall surface. This flat plane is broken only by the decorative panels over the windows and by the corner quoins (visually distinctive blocks on the corners of the building). The pediment motif appears over the three principal doorways.

Built between 1931 and 1932, the building was designed by the Sioux Falls architectural firm of Hugill and Blatherwick. George C. Hugill moved to Sioux Falls from Chicago and in 1921 joined with Wilfred F. Blatherwick, who, like Hugill, had been educated in Illinois. Skillful designers, the men had commissions across the state for churches, schools, residences, courthouses, and libraries. Among their most adventuresome designs was the school in Kadoka, built in the 1930s in the Pueblo style. This vernacular revival style developed in the American Southwest and was unusual for this part of the country. The firm later evolved into Fritzel, Kroeger, Griffin and Berg, until recently one of the major architectural firms in South Dakota.

The Neo-Classical style was used most successfully for one- and two-story buildings, which were more horizontal than vertical in shape. Yet the style was so popular that it was adapted to buildings for which it had not been originally intended. An example of this was the skyscraper, or "tall building," as it is sometimes called. Erecting structures of great height became possible after the invention of steel skeletal construction. This revolutionary form of building, which carried the weight of the structure not on the exterior, loadbearing walls, but on a fairly light, interior steel skeleton, was first used on a wide scale in Chicago after the Great Fire of 1871. While tall buildings or skyscrapers were necessary in densely populated urban centers, in smaller towns such as Sioux Falls the cost of tall buildings was seldom justified. Thus, it was not until 1917 that South Dakota completed its first steel skeletal-frame building. Not surprisingly, the firm that designed the building. E. Jackson Casse, had its offices in Chicago. Begun in 1915, the SECURI-TY BANK BUILDING did not open until 1917, due to steel shortages caused bu World War I.

E. Jackson Casse Company selected a Neo-Classical style for the Security Bank Building. Yet, in this commission, there was no protruding portico or flat-surfaced flanking wings. Instead, the building was arranged in a three-part composition that alluded to the classical column. The four main floors, given a strong vertical emphasis with the use of unarticulated or flat pilasters (a two-dimensional representation of a column), referred to the shaft of the column. Finally, the sixth story and cornice corresponded to the capital. Throughout the building were classical details, including the columns flanking the main entry and the pedimented motif in the cornice. While this rein-

terpretation of the Neo-Classical embraced the new size and scale of building, the fit was never perfectly-comfortable. Therefore, in other cities, skyscrapers adapted more forthrightly vertical styles such as the Art Deco and Gothic Revival styles, which complimented the great height of the buildings.

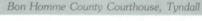
Security Bank Building, Sioux Falls



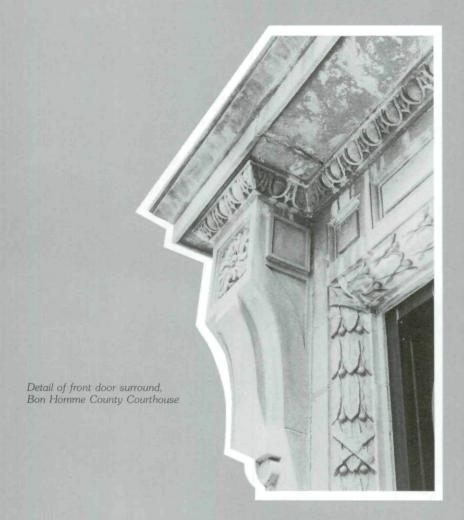
Renaissance Revival

While the Neo-Classical was an austere and often monumental version of the classical revival, the Renaissance Revival was a more highly embellished and decorative branch of classicism. In many buildings, the two styles merged, making it impossible to attribute a single stylistic label to such structures. Generally, however, Renaissance Revival buildings were more square or boxy than Neo-Classical buildings and appeared smaller and more intimate in scale. Among the examples of Renaissance Revival found in the state are many public buildings, especially post offices and courthouses.

An early example of a Renaissance Revival-style building in South Dakota is the BON HOMME COUNTY COURTHOUSE, built in 1914. The architect was either Joseph Schwarz, the prolific early Sioux Falls architect, or his son, who was also an architect named Joseph. Schwarz used many features of Renaissance Revival in the building, including the deeply scored joints between the stones in the first floor and a separate visual treatment for each floor of the building. In addition, the columns were not free-standing and



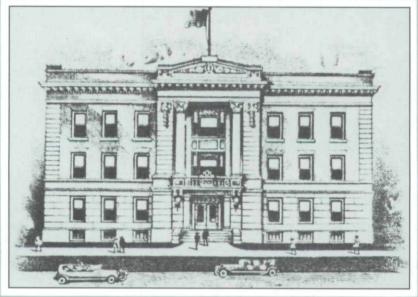




supporting a portico but were recessed into a loggia (a covered recessed walkway, which, in this building, was merely decorative and not functional). Decorative details were often a graceful mix of floral and classical details.

Another significant feature of the courthouse was the ornamental interior. Presently painted in bright pastel colors, the interior is also enriched with pilasters and elaborate cornices painted in vivid shades. As was typical for many courthouses, the Bon Homme County commissioners hired a well-known artist, Axel Edward Soderberg of O. J. Oyen Studios of LaCrosse,

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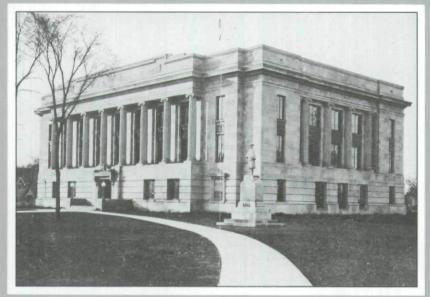


Deuel County Courthouse, Clear Lake

Wisconsin, to produce two murals. Completed soon after the building was finished, the murals depicted a pioneer wagon train and a homesteader breaking the prairie sod.

Many Renaissance Revival-style courthouses followed this Schwarz commission. For example, two years later, in 1916, the Saint Paul, Minnesota, firm of Buechner and Orth designed the DEUEL COUNTY COURTHOUSE. This courthouse was equally as graceful as the Bon Homme County building. However, in this structure, Buechner and Orth added swags and moldings that were more organic and floral in design, giving the building an almost jewel-box appearance. The interior was also highly decorated and included five Soderberg murals. This time, however, the artist worked in a simplified version of High Renaissance painting, a vein that was more traditional for a courthouse commission. The titles of the murals in the dome—Justice, Harvesting, Engineering, and Learning—were suitable abstract.

As the Deuel County Courthouse example illustrates, not all architects who worked in South Dakota were residents of the state, although most practiced within the Midwest or Northern Plains region. Firms from Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Sioux City, Des Moines, Omaha, and Chicago all designed



Codington County Courthouse, Watertown

major buildings in the state. Charles W. Buechner and Henry Orth were immigrants from Germany and Norway who formed a partnership in Saint Paul in 1902. Among their other South Dakota commissions were banks, courthouses, and theaters in the eastern section of the state. They were active in South Dakota between 1912 and 1928.

The last magnificent example of Renaissance Revival-style courthouses is the CODINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, built in 1929. This building was the work of one of South Dakota's most talented architectural firms, Perkins and McWayne of Sioux Falls, who collaborated in this commission with Ursa Freed, an architect with offices in both North and South Dakota. While the exterior of the building was a well-executed large-scale example of the style, it was the interior of the building that showed the Renaissance Revival to its fullest advantage. The interior was a rich mixture of colored marble and gilt, crowned with a jewel-colored stained-glass dome. Two murals by New York artist Vincent Adoratti complemented this decoration perfectly. Unlike the other courthouse murals, which were pleasing but rather pedestrian paintings, Adoratti's Justice and Power and Wisdom and Mercy were a full-blooded homage to High Renaissance art, complete with well-modeled human figures and rich blues, golds, pinks, and gold leaf.





Wisdom and Mercy mural. Codington County Courthouse

Beaux Arts Classicism

Beaux Arts Classicism, a third style in the classical revival group, was rarely employed in South Dakota. Few buildings had budgets lavish enough to warrant this highly decorated style, which was most often used for large, elaborate commissions such as art museums and large urban courthouses. One rare and quite simple exception in the state was the GRAND LODGE LIBRARY OF THE ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS, also known as the Sioux Falls Masonic Temple. Commissioned in 1923, the lodge was completed in 1925. The architects were the accomplished and versatile team of Hugill and Blatherwick.



Grand Lodge Library of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Sioux Falls

A more highly embellished version of the Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts Classicism had several hallmarks that can be identified in looking at the Masonic Temple building. These include paired columns flanking the front entry; the decorated and animated cornice, in this case embellished with classical amphora, or vases; the raised entrance; and molded panels above and below the windows. The style was so similar to the Renaissance Revival that in very simple examples, such as the Masonic Temple, the two styles are difficult to distinguish.

Georgian Revival

One of the most graceful and pleasingly domestic versions of the classical revival was the Georgian Revival style. The use of wood and brick distinguished this style, employed primarily for houses, churches, sorority houses, and clubhouses. The name referred to the era of the English king George III and the red-brick buildings trimmed in classical details that were popular

during his reign.

An example of the style is the JOHN TRIERWEILER HOUSE in Yankton. The South Dakota architectural firm of Kings and Dixon designed the house, which was built in 1926 and 1927. Set back from the street on a slight rise, the building presents itself to the observer in a formal manner. Yet, the use of red brick and delicately scaled classical revival ornament make the house inviting. The design, typical of the style, was symmetrical and the overall appearance square or slightly rectangular, an effect created by the hipped, red-tiled roof. Although the red tile was somewhat incongruous, it was not an uncommon feature. Another common detail was the flanking one-story pavilions, which were often used as sunrooms, libraries, or even garages. The fanlight over the door and the small attached portico completed the catalog of Georgian features.

Floyd F. Kings and Walter J. Dixon had established a firm in Mitchell by 1920 and worked on and off with one another throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to the Trierweiler House, the partners designed numerous courthouses, college buildings, schools, and libraries. They were best known

for their skillful use of the Art Deco style.

Unlike the early South Dakota architect Wallace L. Dow, whose strong, almost single-style, orientation made his buildings easily recognizable, many of the firms working in the 1913 to 1940 era employed radically different styles. In contrast to Dow, who reshaped a style to suit his own design interests, these more formally trained architects attempted to produce historical-



John Trierweiler House, Yankton



State Theatre, Sioux Falls

ly correct or academic designs. While some architecture, such as the work of Perkins and McWayne, was recognizable because of the exceptional versatility and skill of its designers, other buildings tended to look slightly flat, anonymous, and uninspired. This was especially true when some architects attempted to work in a wide range of styles. Thus, while the Trierweiler House is a good example of the Georgian Revival, it is by no means the most accomplished. Indeed, the building's correctness leaves the viewer a little bored by its timidity.

Another example of the Georgian, which, in this case was mixed with architectural details of the Renaissance Revival, was the STATE THEATRE in Sioux Falls. Dating from 1925, the theater was designed by the firm of Buechner and Orth. Although the first floor has now been altered, the State Theatre had a finely embellished facade of brick with terra-cotta-and-wood trim in the Georgian/Renaissance Revival style. The interior had additional Georgian trim and the pastel colors that were favored in the Georgian style. In fact, it was the light-handed use of classical detail that made the building more Georgian than Renaissance Revival.

Colonial Revival

The Colonial Revival was one of the most enduring of the classical styles. Used most often for residential architecture, it was employed in both grand and modestly scaled buildings. The Henrietta and Ruth Bach House in Sioux Falls is a simple version of the style. The combination of brick and wood, multi-paned windows, simple gabled dormers, and highly simplified classical moldings were hallmarks of the later (1930s) Colonial Revival residential style. This house dates from 1936, and the architect was Harold Spitznagel.



Henrietta and Ruth Bach House, Sioux Falls

While the classical revival predominated in public as well as private commissions during this era, it was by no means the only design influence on buildings. Vernacular revival architecture reappeared during this period, and many delightful and even exotic buildings resulted. Although the state had examples of many twentieth-century vernacular revival styles—Pueblo, Chateauesque, French Provincial, and Egyptian, to name a few—two styles were especially popular. These were the Mediterranean Villa and the English Vernacular Revival styles.

English Vernacular Revival

A charming example of the English Vernacular Revival style is the A. H. BROWN LIBRARY, built in Mobridge in 1929. Constructed of beige brick, this small-scaled building displayed a few small classical features, typical of English buildings. The steeply pitched roof, metal casement windows, asymmetrical massing, and low, intimate openings were all characteristics of the style.

The library's designer was George Fossum, an Aberdeen architect who had received his education from Dakota Wesleyan College and Armour Technical in Chicago. He first advertised his firm in 1909 and remained active into the 1930s, practicing, for a time, in partnership with Charles L. Browne. Fossum's other commissions included Lincoln Hall (1917) at Northern State

College and the YMCA building and city hall in Aberdeen.

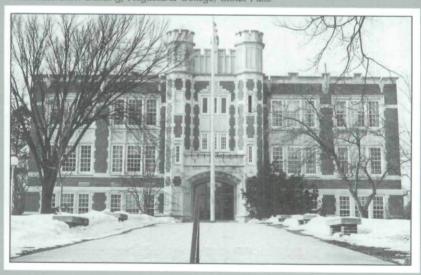
A different version of the English Vernacular Revival, sometimes called the Jacobethan style, was used for the AUGUSTANA COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. This was the first building erected for the college after its consolidation with Lutheran Normal School. Designed by Perkins and McWayne of Sioux Falls, the structure dates from 1920. The overall orientation of the design and the style are rectangular. Windows, quoins, and door surrounds are highlighted in stone, while the walls of the building are red brick. A large Tudor arch surrounds the front door. Battlements, balustrades (a type of railing), and shields or coats of arms (in this case, an owl and the letters A and C) decorate the front wall. As in the A. H. Brown Library, the windows are casements.

The firm of Perkins and McWayne was one of the most prolific and talented in the history of South Dakota. After graduating from Purdue University, Albert McWayne came to South Dakota and registered with the State Board of Engineering and Architectural Examiners as an architectural engineer. He apparently worked as both an architect and an engineer and had designed commissions on his own prior to 1917, when he first advertised as a member of a firm named Livermore and McWayne. In 1918, McWayne formed a partnership with Robert Perkins. Perkins also worked on his own occasionally, but together, the pair produced exceptional works in a wide range of styles and for a great variety of purposes. In addition to many residences, they designed the courthouses for Douglas County (1927) and Lyman County (1925) as well as the Shriver-Johnson Department Store (1918) and Longfellow Elementary School (1915), both in Sioux Falls. Occasionally, the team joined with other architects, notably Chenoweth and Rittinghouse of Rapid City, and they also did considerable business outside of South Dakota. In all their works, they showed a mastery of academic styles and a great sensitivity to proportion and scale.



A. H. Brown Library, Mobridge

Administration Building, Augustana College, Sioux Falls



Mediterranean Villa

Mediterranean Villa was another style that captured the imagination of South Dakota architects. One of the first examples of this style in the state was CENTRAL FIRE STATION, built in 1913 in Sioux Falls. Designed by the younger Joseph Schwarz, the building had a Mediterranean Villa tower and Renaissance Revival details and was constructed of the Schwarzes' much-

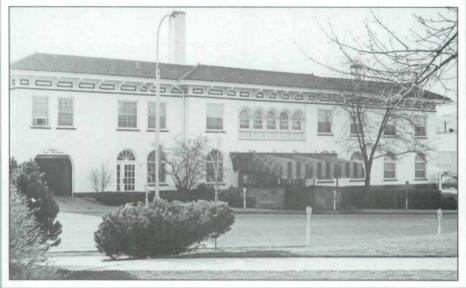


Central Fire Station, Sioux Falls

loved Sioux quartzite. Indeed, after many other architects had abandoned the pink quartzite in favor of the more classically correct limestones, sand-stones, and marbles, the Schwarzes continued to use quartzite for other classical revival buildings such as the Sioux Falls Carnegie Library (1913). While most Mediterranean Villa structures had light stucco facades, Schwarz insisted on pink quartzite for the fire station, which was perhaps the first architect-designed fire station in the city.

During this period, architects had begun to design other types of buildings not previously considered worthy of an architect's skill. The **L. D. MILLER FUNERAL HOME** in Sioux Falls, designed by Perkins and McWayne, was another example of a new type of architect-designed building. Constructed in 1923 in the Mediterranean Villa style, the Miller Funeral Home had white stucco walls, a tile roof, and Italian Renaissance Revival features such as the pronounced cornice panels and small loggia on the second floor. The building was notable for its functional plan and such elegant details as the colored-glass skylight in the chapel and crafted metal light fixtures. Its pleasing scale and inviting style blended into the city streetscape.

Another important development during this period was the residential suburb. In older, larger cities, suburbs grew along with streetcar lines and mass transit systems. However, once again, Sioux Falls' relatively small size



L. D. Miller Funeral Home, Sioux Falls

restricted its suburban growth to a ring of residential neighborhoods scattered around the central business core. In the 1920s, widespread use of the automobile led to a boom in residential building in the city. Robert Perkins developed one of the most exclusive of these suburbs, or neighborhoods, called Riverview Heights.

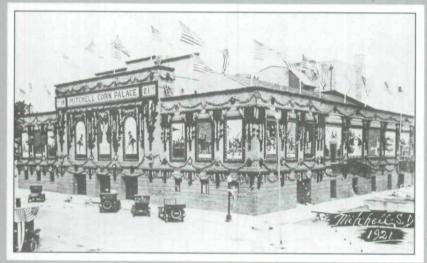
The GEORGE AND NELLE STEVENS HOUSE in Riverview Heights was designed by Perkins and built in 1926. This building was a more academically correct version of the Mediterranean Villa style, complete with entrance tower, tile roof, and stucco walls. The rambling plan accommodated the needs of the owners for many differentiated rooms, including an attached garage.

Stevens House, Sioux Falls



Some architecture during this period was created for entirely new types of functions. The Mitchell CORN PALACE provides a lively illustration. Originally constructed for the Corn Belt Exposition in 1892, the palace was rebuilt several times for later harvest festivals. Then, in the early 1920s, the city of Mitchell decided to erect an entirely new structure and hired George W. Rapp of Rapp and Rapp of Chicago. This firm had a reputation for designing extravagant theaters and movie palaces; among their commissions was Radio City Music Hall in New York City. While the structure of the 1920-1921 Corn Palace was quite simple, the corn murals provided color and drama. Oscar Howe, a native South Dakota artist, designed the murals each year from 1948 to 1972.

Corn Palace, Mitchell



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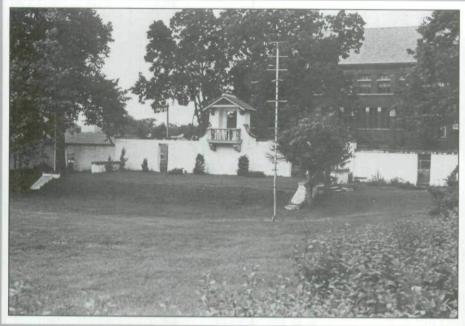
Landscape Design and Park Architecture

Another major trend in architecture during the 1913 to 1940 era was the emergence of landscape architecture as a separate design profession. Not all designers, however, were trained professionally. One example of landscape design in an urban setting was Terrace Park in Sioux Falls. The land for the park was acquired in 1916, and in 1926 plans were laid to build a JAPANESE GARDENS in the park. Joseph Maddox, park caretaker between 1918 and 1936, designed and oversaw the construction of the Japanese Gardens. Much of the labor to build the gardens, which were completed in 1932, was provided by a public works program. While the gardens were a rather fanciful adaptation, the stone lanterns and stepped terraces capture some of the feel of a traditional Japanese landscape.

South Dakota also benefited from the work of a landscape architect who trained under the father of the landscape architecture movement, Frederick Law Olmstead. His pupil, Phelps Wyman, was educated at Cornell University and Boston Technical Institute before opening his own firm in Minneapolis. In 1913, Wyman received the commission to design the GARDEN TERRACE THEATRE on the campus of Yankton College. Another commission came in 1922, when he designed the second STATE GAME LODGE

Japanese Gardens, Terrace Park, Sioux Falls



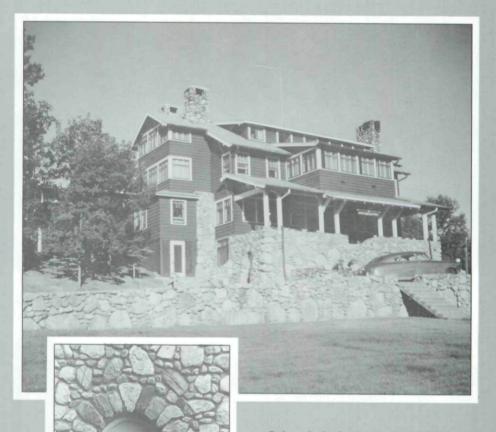


Garden Terrace Theatre, Yankton College, Yankton

at Custer State Park in the Black Hills; it is believed that Wyman may have designed the landscaping around the lodge, as well. Following in Olmstead's footsteps, Wyman created meandering, naturalistic designs that blended with the native vegetation of the area. For the theater, Wyman called upon the romantic Mediterranean Villa style and for the game lodge, the Rustic park style.

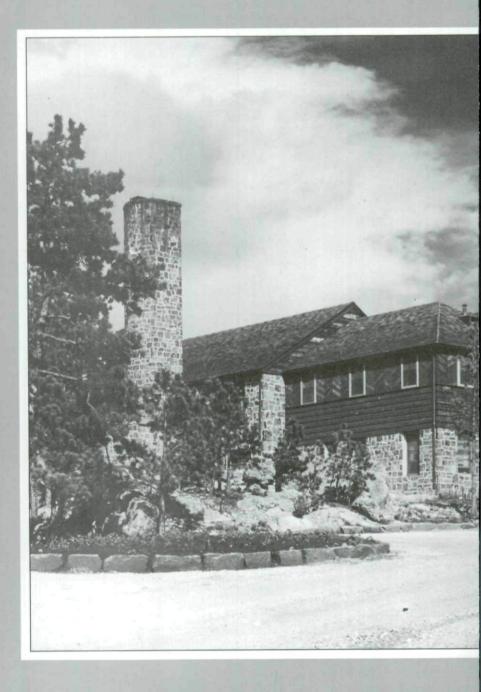
Ironically, the Great Depression of the 1930s provided work for many architects. Indeed, the supervising architect for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in South Dakota was Joseph J. Schwarz, son of the famous pioneer architect. Many schools, park facilities, airport terminals, and community halls were designed for the WPA, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Public Works Administration.

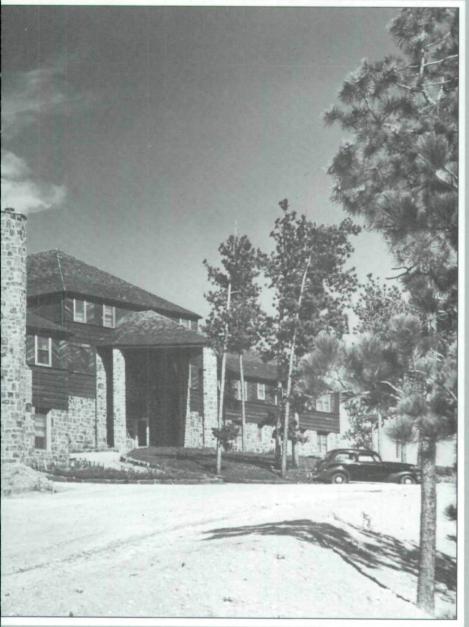
Among the notable depression-era park commissions were the second SYLVAN LAKE LODGE and CUSTER STATE PARK MUSEUM, both in Custer State Park and both designed by Harold Spitznagel, a Sioux Falls architect. A native of South Dakota, Spitznagel studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania. In 1930, he opened his practice in Sioux Falls in association with John Schoening. Spitznagel went on to become one of the most popular and prolific architects in the state. Among his well-known commissions were the Sioux Falls City Hall (1936) and the Hollywood Theatre (1939) in Sioux Falls. His firm continues today under the name of Spitznagel, Incorporated with offices in South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Colorado.



State Game Lodge, Custer State Park (top), with doorway detail (inset)

Sylvan Lake Lodge, built in 1937 and situated on a rocky ridge, was difficult for the visitor to comprehend in a single glance, for there were many delightful details, such as the romantic western and American Indian motifs in the lobby and dining room, to take in. A common characteristic of the Art Deco style, which was used for this building, was the repetition of basic geometric shapes in various sizes or in a stepped or ziggurat fashion. In this structure, Spitznagel repeated the motif of the triangle jutting out from a flat, rectangular wall. Typical of park structures, the building used native stone for foundations and





Sylvan Lake Lodge, Custer State Park



Custer State Park Museum

In the Custer State Park Museum, built between 1934 and 1936, Spitznagel allowed the stonework to run wild. This form of masonry is appropriately called "cyclopean." referring to the wild nature and massive size of the ancient oneeyed giant, Cyclops. The building appears to be barely standing; it seems, rather, to emerge out of a pile of rubble. This rough and naturalistic use of stone and informal massing of the building combine with the dark wood, low-pitched roof, and wide overhanging eaves to make the man-made building blend in with the natural landscape of the park.



Another architect who left his imprint on park and recreational architecture in South Dakota was Howard Baker. Between 1930 and 1941, Baker designed the WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (1936) and several other structures at the park. Once again, public works builders, in this case the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), constructed the buildings. In contrast to the fanciful designs of Spitznagel and Wyman, Baker chose the English Vernacular Revival style but rusticated the effect with local sandstone and dark wood trim. Baker's work was a pleasing combination of rough materials held in check with a precise sense of order. This modified example of the official National Park Service Rustic style was deemed appropriate for wilderness recreational architecture. Baker was first an assistant architect and later the supervising architect of the National Park Service's San Francisco office.

Administration Building, Wind Cave National Park





Spink County Courthouse, Redfield

Art Deco

In addition to designing park buildings, architects designed many South Dakota county courthouses during the 1930s. Art Deco, which reached the height of its popularity during the Great Depression, was the favored architectural style for courthouses built in this decade. However, the basic form and massing of the buildings evolved out of the Renaissance Revival buildings of the 1910 to 1929 era. The SPINK COUNTY COURTHOUSE provides an example.

Built in 1927, this courthouse had a three-part division of space, with a central protruding bay (or unit) and two flanking recessed bays. While many Renaissance Revival details survived on this building, the flatness and simplicity of the ornamentation emphasized the simple massing and volumes of the structure. Designed by Beaver Wade Day of Saint Paul, the Spink County Courthouse was a transitional building, bridging the gap between the more elaborate and sculptural buildings of the 1910s and 1920s and the uncomplicated geometric Art Deco courthouses of the 1930s.

The HUGHES COUNTY COURTHOUSE, built in 1934, also employed simple Renaissance Revival-style details such as the molded panels over the doors and highly stylized pilasters for the middle floors. Yet, in its austere and flat-



Doorway detail, Hughes County Courthouse





surfaced design, the building owed more to Art Deco-style architecture. The building was designed by Hugill and Blatherwick.

Kings, Dixon and [D. Floyd] Rasser Associates designed the 1934 McCOOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE. Although the structure retained the basic plain box shape and tripartite (three-part) composition on the front facade, the building had more boldly Art Deco features, such as the pilasters capped with ziggurat capitals.



McCook County Courthouse, Salem

Perhaps the most bold and exuberant of the Art Deco county courthouses was the JERAULD COUNTY COURTHOUSE. Erected in 1930 and designed by Perkins and McWayne, the courthouse had the basic shape of the previous examples but assumed a strongly vertical emphasis from the highly stylized pilasters. The capitals of the pilasters were a series of fan- or flame-shaped designs. In addition, the designer's self-confident humor was evidenced in the stylized, classically-inspired volutes (scrolls) flanking the front entry.



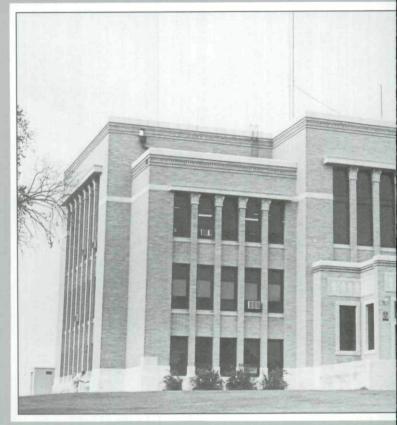
Jerauld County Courthouse, Wessington Springs

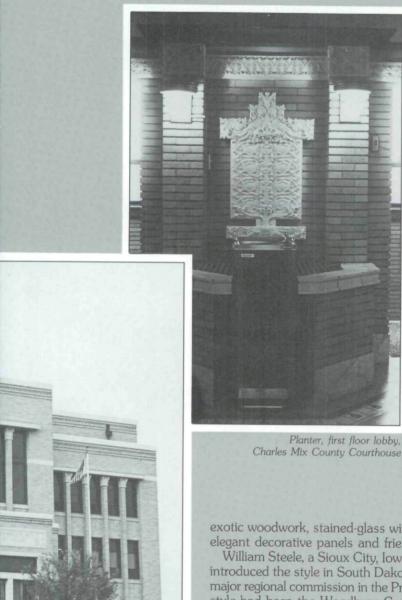
Prairie School

Another architectural style that appeared in the late 1890s, at about the same time as the classical revival styles, was the Prairie School. This style, the design orientation of which is closer to modern sensibilities, grew out of the work of two pioneer architects, Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. Wright began his career working for Sullivan, and both men spent an important part of their working lives in Chicago.

Prairie School-style buildings were generally low, one- and two-story structures composed in broad, horizontal planes. They were constructed in a series of irregular, massed blocks grouped around a massive fireplace or core block. On the interior, the plan was a series of free-flowing and intersecting rooms; often, the rooms were distinguished by a change in level rather than separation by a wall. From this idea evolved the present-day split-level ranch house. The interiors had low ceilings and extraordinarily crafted details, such as

Charles Mix County Courthouse, Lake Andes





Charles Mix County Courthouse

exotic woodwork, stained-glass windows, and elegant decorative panels and friezes.

William Steele, a Sioux City, Iowa, architect, introduced the style in South Dakota. His first major regional commission in the Prairie School style had been the Woodbury County Courthouse in Sioux City. Two former colleagues from Louis Sullivan's office, William Purcell and George Elmslie, assisted Steele in designing this remarkable structure, commissioned in 1915.

Two years later, Steele completed the CHARLES MIX COUNTY COURT-HOUSE in Lake Andes. Although the courthouse had a basic tripartite composition, each bay was composed of a series of narrow, layered, rectangular units. While the windows and pilasters emphasized the height of the building, narrow horizontal bands of terra cotta counterbalanced the verticality. The panels over the door, molded capitals on the pilasters, and the interior trim featured beautifully crafted Prairie School decoration. These designs were a combination of floral and geometrical patterns. Completing the interior decoration were lovely stained-glass windows of largely clear, leaded glass with a light application of color.

George Elmslie's and William Purcell's work with Steele in Sioux City led to several commissions in South Dakota for the Minneapolis-based architects. The earliest was the O. L. Branson and Company Bankers Building in Mitchell, dating from 1919. Elmslie was noted for his fine decorative ornamentation, and the Branson Building had an exceptional multi-colored terracotta panel over the door. This building adhered more closely to the tenets of the Prairie School style than did the Charles Mix County Courthouse. The building was horizontal in emphasis, with the rectangular panels having a wider horizontal than vertical dimension. A band of windows across the front also gave the design a strong horizontal thrust.



O. L. Branson and Company Bankers Building, Mitchell

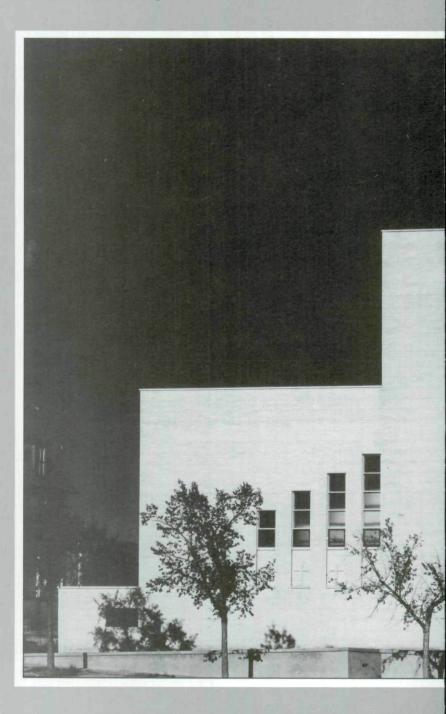
Two later works in the careers of Purcell and Elmslie were FORBES and LOOK HALLS at Yankton College. The structures were built in 1930 and 1932 as a science building and a men's dormitory. Both halls were long, horizontal compositions in which individually molded concrete trim took the place of terra-cotta panels (perhaps this was a cost-cutting concession to the realities of the Great Depression). On the interior, Elmslie used simple, but well-conceived stained-glass windows in geometric designs.

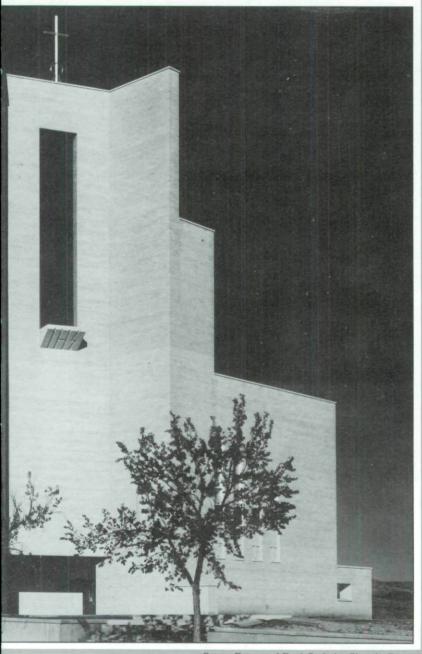


Pilaster detail, Forbes Hall

Forbes Hall, Yankton College, Yankton







Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Pierre

One final commission marked the end of the Prairie School era in South Dakota. This building also illustrated the influence of the Modern movement on architects and heralded a new approach to architecture that was austere, less ornamental, and more symbolically functional. SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH, built in 1940 in Pierre, was designed by Barry Byrne, another Frank Lloyd Wright apprentice.

Byrne had become interested in the architectural reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church and designed many Catholic churches that attempted to reorient the worshiper's sense of religious space. Abandoning the strict hierarchy of the basilica plan, Byrne created designs that were less

formal and divided the space into open, airy planes.

The Modern movement in architecture stripped buildings of their ornament and emphasized, instead, the manner in which they were constructed. Architects highlighted the new industrial materials from which the buildings were constructed by using metal I-beams, cast-aluminum moldings, and flat sheets of plywood painted white as functional decoration. On the interior, separate formal rooms gave way to a free-flowing space of unrestricted views and half walls.

Barry Byrne used only a portion of the modern design vocabulary in creating Saints Peter and Paul Church. The most obvious modern elements were the sheer, flat, unadorned walls and the lack of decorative moldings around windows and doors. Still, the building owed much to the Prairie School sensibility. The walls, for example, were a series of rectangular slabs clustered around the bell tower as in Prairie School-style designs, while their bold juxtaposition and non-perpendicular angles derived from the Modern movement. Situated as most Catholic churches were, on the highest point of ground, Saints Peter and Paul Church stands as the final architectural landmark of the between-the-wars era in South Dakota.

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