L. Frank Baum lived in Aberdeen, South Dakota, from September 1888 until April 1891. During this period, he ran a store called Baum’s Bazaar for a little over a year, and when that enterprise failed, he tried his hand at publishing a weekly newspaper named the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer.* Baum managed to keep the paper going until March 1891, but in the end, it, too, proved to be a financial failure. Feeling defeated, Baum left Aberdeen that April and moved to Chicago, where he eventually achieved fame as a children’s author. Even though Baum had little success as an Aberdeen businessman, the experiences he gained while living on the Dakota prairie provided him with material and insights that he would later draw upon in his stories.

The literary critics and biographers who have studied Baum are not in complete agreement as to how his Dakota years influenced his writings. Some critics argue that the opening scenes in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), which Baum places in Kansas, are really set in South Dakota. Michael Patrick Hearn takes this position in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz,* stating that these scenes “are largely Baum’s recollections of the great gray prairie of the Dakota Territory (now South Dakota).”¹ The historian Nancy Tystad Koupal takes a somewhat different

Baum had become a well-known author by the time this publicity photograph was taken in 1902. Although his Dakota experiences were ten years in the past, he continued to draw on them in creating works for children.

L. FRANK BAUM
AUTHOR OF
"FATHER GOOSE--THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ"

position. She agrees that Baum drew on his Dakota experiences when writing his Oz books, but she argues that he did not use Kansas as a "stand-in for Dakota." In an article titled "The Wonderful Wizard of the West," Koupal emphasizes Baum's creative use of political events that occurred in Aberdeen during his time there. She points out, for example, that "Baum's perceptions of woman suffrage, something he examined in his second Oz novel, are . . . heavily drawn from his Dakota days."

Although there is plenty of room for debate on the influence of Baum's Dakota years on his Oz books, there is no disputing the influence these years had on the Dakota fairy tales that he published in 1905 and 1906. Two of these tales, "The Discontented Gopher" and "The Enchanted Buffalo," ran in a magazine called the Delineator in 1905. The others were published in 1906 as part of a series of little books known collectively as the Twinkle Tales. The series consists of six books: Mr. Woodchuck, Bandit Jim Crow, Prairie-Dog Town, Prince Mud-Turtle, Sugar-Loaf Mountain, and Twinkle's Enchantment. Baum wrote these tales under the pseudonym of Laura Bancroft, and he intended them for beginning readers. All have Dakota connections except for Sugar-Loaf Mountain, which takes place in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. However, the Dakota setting is integral to only two of them—Prairie-Dog Town and Mr. Woodchuck. In the others, the Dakota setting serves as a starting point for tales that take place primarily in pretend worlds.

Baum's Dakota fairy tales date from a period in his career when he was experimenting with many different forms of writing. The tremendous success he had with The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and its sequel, The Marvelous Land of Oz (1904), resulted in pressure to write more Oz books, but he did not want to be known only for his Oz stories. Shortly after publication of The Land of Oz, he wrote a novel for adults titled The Fate of a Crown (1905), a play titled The Woggle-Bug (1905), a non-Oz fantasy titled Queen Zixi of Ix (1905), a boys' adventure story called Sam Steele's Adventures on Land and Sea (1906), a girls' story called Aunt Jane's Nieces (1906), and a farcical fantasy titled John Dough and the Cherub (1906).

During this same period, he wrote stories for major American periodicals, becoming an especially frequent contributor to the Delineator. This popular women's magazine, which began in 1873 as a monthly periodical dedicated to women's fashions, started including fiction after Charles Dwyer took over the edi-

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4. After the first few printings, the titles of the first two Oz books were shortened to The Wizard of Oz and The Land of Oz.
5. A comprehensive bibliography of Baum's work can be found in Hearn, Annotated Wizard, pp. 365-78.
Fashion, fiction, and household hints filled the pages of the Delineator, a popular women's magazine. The May 1905 issue, pictured here, carried Baum's Dakota animal fairy tale "The Enchanted Buffalo."
Dwyer accepted a Christmas story written by Baum titled "A Kidnapped Santa Claus" and included it in the December 1904 issue of the magazine. In the next issue, the Delineator announced that it would publish a series of original animal fairy tales written by Baum. One of these stories ran every month from January through September in a special section of the magazine called "Stories and Pastimes for Children." Baum apparently intended to collect his animal fairy tales into a book, but this plan was not implemented during his lifetime. The stories faded into obscurity until Frank Joslyn Baum and Russell P. MacFall wrote several pages about them in To Please a Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum, which came out in 1961. Eight years later, MacFall compiled all nine into a book first published by the International Wizard of Oz Club in 1969 under the title Animal Fairy Tales. In 1988, Books of Wonder produced a facsimile of the nine Delineator articles.

Most of Baum's animal fairy tales are fanciful stories set in nondescript places, such as a tropical jungle. Some are influenced by Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Books, which came out in 1894 and 1895. Since Baum had never visited a tropical jungle, he borrowed from Kipling's descriptions of jungles in India. The two stories that take place on the Dakota prairie, however, have vivid settings, complete with realistic details that he remembered from his years at Aberdeen. In contrast with animals from the other seven stories, the animal characters in the Dakota tales likewise share many qualities exhibited by real animals. Although they have the ability to speak, they often behave in ways that are consistent with the behavior of the

actual animals that inhabit the prairie. In his introduction to *Animal Fairy Tales*, MacFall observed that in spite of allegory and fantastic plots, the two tales set in Dakota “benefit from the telling realism of a familiar background, an element which the others lack. In 1904, Baum had never seen an elephant or giraffe or tiger outside of a circus, and what he wrote about their jungle habits must have come from general reading and a lively imagination.”

The first of Baum’s Dakota fairy tales to see print was “The Discontented Gopher,” which appeared in the *Delineator* in March 1905 as the third in the series. This story begins with Mama Gopher summoning her three children. She informs them that spring has arrived and it is time for them to leave her burrow and seek their own fortunes. She then explains that the Gopher Fairies have provided her with a single magic talisman, which is hidden in one of the three nuts that are spread out before the youngsters. The children each select a nut, and Zikky, the youngest, picks the one with the talisman. The mother explains that the talisman “will grant you one of two things: Contentment or Riches.” Zikky, of course, chooses riches. He then scurries off across the prairie, following a mysterious “golden light” that is reminiscent of the famous yellow brick road.

Rather than riches that humans might covet, such as money or jewels, Baum provides Zikky with “riches” that a typical gopher would appreciate. Finding a vast supply of corn kernels that some farmers had spilled while they were planting, Zikky digs out a storehouse and fills it with the corn, after which he lives a life of leisure. Eventually, however, he becomes bored with his easy life: “Then he grew discontented, as people of great wealth and no active interests are apt to do. He began to find existence dull and uninteresting. There seemed to be something lacking, in spite of his riches. He wondered what it could be. He was healthy; he was fat; his home was comfortable; his storehouses would supply food for a lifetime; he had no enemies to bother him. Yet he was discontented.”

10. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
11. Ibid., p. 58.
Zikky’s restlessness causes him to leave the safety of his burrow and investigate a nearby farm. This decision leads to a series of horrible events that nearly result in his death. Everything that happens to him, however, is consistent with the experiences of real gophers that Baum had observed near Aberdeen. Zikky is shot at by a farmer, attacked by a dog, and struck with a stick by a boy. Finally, the same boy cuts off his tail, telling a friend, “They pay a bounty of two cents for Gopher tails, in Aberdeen.” Zikky somehow manages to drag himself back to his burrow where he collapses, “sobbing and broken-hearted.” From then on, he often chants to himself the following little mantra: “Contentment is best!”

When writing “The Discontented Gopher,” Baum incorporated a dynamic that often occurs when wilderness areas are converted into centers of organized agriculture. This type of transition usually disrupts long-established ecosystems, frequently
resulting in unexpected problems for the farmers responsible for the change. During the period that Baum lived in Aberdeen, the surrounding prairie was being plowed under and planted with wheat, corn, and other cash crops. Because the land had never been cultivated, it was quite fertile. For a number of years, the region produced good crops of high quality grain, and the farmers prospered. However, the wildlife that had inhabited the prairie before the advent of agriculture still lived in the area and, in many cases, saw the farmers’ crops as new food sources. This response resulted in conflict between the farmers and the native wildlife. Among the animals that presented a problem to Dakota farmers were gophers and prairie dogs. The government responded by initiating a campaign to eradicate these “pests” from the prairie. This overarching conflict provided Baum with a realistic backdrop for his fairy tale. In some ways, “The Discontented Gopher” is a gopher-versus-farmer story told from the gopher’s point of view.

Baum also had a more personal reason for encouraging his young readers to see the world through the eyes of a gopher. The author abhorred cruelty to animals, and it troubled him when one of his own sons became a zealous participant in the war on gophers and prairie dogs. His second son, Robert, tempted by the government bounty paid for the tails, soon became proficient at killing the animals. Through this tale and some of his other stories, Baum tried to encourage all children to be kind to animals even if the animals are sometimes classified as pests.

“The Enchanted Buffalo,” the second animal fairy tale that Baum set on the Dakota prairie, initially appeared in the May 1905 issue of the Delineator. Unlike the gopher story, “The Enchanted Buffalo” takes place before the railroads crossed the Dakota Territory, before the settlers began plowing up the prairie, and before the great buffalo herds were decimated. Although buffaloes were not a common sight around Aberdeen during

13. For more information about the early boom years of agriculture in the area around Aberdeen, see Marc M. Cleworth, “Twenty Years of Brown County Agricultural History, 1880-1899,” South Dakota Historical Collections 17 (1934): 17-67.

Baum's time there, buffalo stories were still an important part of the local culture. Most originated among the Sioux (the Dakota, Lakota, Nakota) Indians. Hunting buffalo played a key role in the lives of the Sioux, and they told many stories that featured these nomadic beasts. Apparently inspired by these tales, Baum created his own about a buffalo herd that gets caught up in political intrigue.

In the beginning of “The Enchanted Buffalo,” King Dakt, the leader of the herd, is nearing the end of his reign. Several younger bulls hope to take his place once the old king dies. One, whose name is Barrag, forms a secret alliance with a magical spirit known as O Pagshat, the “Evil Genius of the Prairies,” and together they plot to assassinate King Dakt. One spring day, Barrag finds Dakt alone and quickly carries out the planned assassination. He then proclaims himself to be the new king, but to his surprise, Dakt’s young son, Oknu, challenges his right to rule. Since Oknu is not fully grown, the elders in the herd decide that a contest between Barrag and Oknu should be postponed until Oknu is older. Barrag again consults O Pagshat, who gives Barrag the power to transform Oknu into another creature that might be more easily defeated. Barrag turns Oknu into a panther, thinking that he could easily crush his skull with one blow of his hoof. Oknu, however, escapes the crushing blow, jumps onto Barrag’s back, and sinks his teeth into his neck. Unable to shake the panther off his back, Barrag goes on a wild dash across the prairie until he finally collapses and dies. Upon Barrag’s death, Oknu resumes his true buffalo form. It takes him a year to find his herd, but when he rejoins them, all seven hundred members accept him as their new king.

The animal characters featured in “The Enchanted Buffalo” are all associated with the native wildlife found on the Dakota prairie. The buffalo, more accurately known as the American bison, once ruled the prairie. Although Baum anthropomorphized these creatures, bison really do tend to organize themselves in loose herds with the bulls fighting for prominence in

15. For examples, see Julian Rice, Ella Delorias The Buffalo People (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994).
16. MacFall, Animal Fairy Tales, pp. 85-95.
V.—THE ENCHANTED BUFFALO

HIS is a tale of the Royal Tribe of Okolom—the mighty buffaloes that once dominated all the Western prairies. Seven hundred strong were the Okolom—great, shaggy creatures herding together and defying all enemies. Their range was well known to the Indians, to lesser herds of bison and to all the wild animals that roamed in the open; but none cared to molest or interfere with the Royal Tribe.

Dakt was the first King of the Okolom. By odds the fiercest and most intelligent of his men, he founded the Tribe, made the Laws that directed their actions and led his subjects through wars and dangers until they were acknowledged masters of the prairie.

Dakt had enemies, of course; even in the Royal Tribe. As he grew old it was whispered he was in league with Pagosh, the Evil Genius of the Prairies; yet few really believed the lying tale, and those who did but feared King Dakt the more.

The days of this monarch were prosperous days for the Okolom. In Summer their feeding grounds were ever rich in succulent grasses; in Winter Dakt led them to fertile valleys in the shelter of the mountains. But in time the great leader grew old and gray. He ceased quarreling and fighting and began to love peace—a sure sign that his days were numbered. Sometimes he would stand motionless for hours, apparently in deep thought. His dignity relaxed; he became peevish; his eye, once shrewd and compelling, grew dim and glazed.

Many of the younger bulls, who coveted his Kingship, waited for Dakt to die; some patiently, and some impatiently. Throughout the herd there was an undercurrent of excitement. Then, one bright Spring morning, as the Tribe wandered in single file toward new feeding grounds, the old King lagged behind. They missed him, presently, and sent Barrag the Bull back over the hills to look for him. It was an hour before this messenger returned, coming into view above the swell of the prairie.

"The King is dead," said Barrag the Bull, as he walked calmly into the midst of the tribe. "Old age has at last overtaken him."

The members of the Okolom looked upon him curiously. Then one said: "There is blood upon your horns, Barrag. You did not wipe them well upon the grass."

Barrag turned fiercely. "The old King is dead," he repeated. "Hereafter, I am the King!"

No one answered in words; but, as the Tribe pressed backward into a dense mass, four young bulls remained standing before Barrag, quietly facing the would-be King. He looked upon them sternly. He had expected to contend for his royal office. It was the Law that any of the Tribe might fight for the right to rule the Okolom. But it surprised him to find there were four who dared dispute his assertion that he was King.

Illustrated by Charles Livingston Bull, "The Enchanted Buffalo" was the second of Baum's Dakota fairy tales to appear in the Delineator.
rutting season. MacFall saw the inclusion of a panther in the story as a fantasy element. In his introduction to Animal Fairy Tales, he states, “Black panthers are not native to the western prairies, but magic makes them so.” However, cougars (which are sometimes called panthers) did, in fact, live on the prairie during the time that the buffalo herds roamed free. The cougars were especially common near the Black Hills area of present-day South Dakota. Since mountains are mentioned several times in the story, the inclusion of a panther is not inconsistent with the prairie setting.

Baum’s descriptions of the vast stretches of open land are smoothly incorporated into his plot and add a touch of reality to an otherwise fantastic tale. A good example of Baum’s use of the prairie setting comes near the end of the story when Barrag is running away from the herd with the panther on his back: “The prairie is vast. It is lonely, as well. A vulture, resting on outstretched wings, watched anxiously the flight of Barrag the Bull as hour by hour he sped away to the southward—the one moving thing on all that great expanse. The sun sank low and buried itself in the prairie’s edge. Twilight succeeded, and faded into night. And still a black shadow, leap by leap, sprang madly through the gloom.” Taken together, “The Discontented Gopher” and “The Enchanted Buffalo” reveal a side to Baum’s writing that is a bit grittier and more serious than his upbeat Oz books.

In contrast, the six books in the Twinkle Tales series are more similar in tone to the Oz books, filled with touches of humor and flights of fancy. However, because these stories were originally intended for beginning readers, they are written on a simpler level. The fact that Baum published them under the pseudonym of Laura Bancroft suggests that the author saw

18. MacFall, Animal Fairy Tales, p. 10.
20. MacFall, Animal Fairy Tales, p. 92.
these stories as appealing primarily to girl readers. He often used female pseudonyms when writing for girls, employing the name Edith Van Dyne, for example, when he wrote the series that began with *Aunt Jane's Nieces*. In the case of the Twinkle Tales, he had some misgivings about using a pseudonym, for he was proud of the stories and wanted to take credit for them. According to Michael Patrick Hearn, Baum hoped to republish the six Twinkle Tales along with *Policeman Bluejay* (1907), which is a sequel to *Bandit Jim Crow*, in one volume titled *Baum's Wonder Book*, but this project never came to

pass. In 1911, Baum’s publishers, Reilly and Britton of Chicago, collected the original six books and brought them out in a single volume titled *Twinkle and Chubbins: Their Astonishing Adventures in Nature-Fairyland*, but Laura Bancroft was still listed as the book’s author. In 1987, Hearn arranged to have the International Wizard of Oz Club, Inc., republish *Twinkle and Chubbins*, and this time the book finally appeared under Baum’s own name.22

Like *The Wizard of Oz*, most of the Twinkle Tales feature a girl who lives on a farm in the middle of the prairie. Her name is Twinkle, and she lives with her parents near the tiny town of Edgeley, North Dakota. Baum was familiar with the real Edgeley, located about sixty miles north of Aberdeen, because he had visited there a number of times. His wife’s sister, Julia

![Maud Baum’s sister, Julia Gage Carpenter, had settled with her family in Edgeley, the town that became the setting for the Twinkle Tales. From left are Julia, her children Harry and Magdalena, and husband James D. (“Frank”) Carpenter.](image-url)
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With its modest house and rows of young trees, this farm near Edgeley typified the homesteads that dotted the flat prairie north of Aberdeen.

Gage Carpenter, and Julia’s husband, Frank, had moved to the Edgeley area in 1882 as homesteaders and struggled to support themselves and their children through farming. Twinkle’s parents also work at farming, but these fictional characters are more successful at this occupation than the Carpenters ever were.

Of the six Twinkle stories, the Dakota prairie figures most prominently in *Prairie-Dog Town*. Although this story is not the first in the series, it is the one that introduces the reader to Edgeley, opening with an amusing description:

On the great western prairies of Dakota is a little town called Edgeley, because it is on the edge of civilization—a very big word which means some folks have found a better way to live than other folks. The Edgeley people have a good way to live, for there are almost seventeen wooden houses there, and among them is a school-house, a church, a store and a blacksmith-shop. If people walked out their front doors they were upon the little street; if they walked out the back doors they were on the broad

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prairies. That was why Twinkle, who was a farmer's little girl, lived so near the town that she could easily walk to school.\textsuperscript{24}

As the story progresses, Twinkle and her friend Chubbins, the son of the local schoolteacher, go on a community picnic. While everyone else is eating and relaxing, Twinkle and Chubbins wander off across the prairie and discover a prairie-dog town. Intrigued by the mounds of earth, they decide to lie quietly nearby and wait for the animals to "stick their heads up."\textsuperscript{25} Up until this point, the story is completely realistic, but the rest of the tale is full of fantasy elements.

While they are waiting, a prairie dog emerges from one of the mounds and begins to talk with the children. He informs

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Baum, \textit{Twinkle and Chubbins}, pp. 137-38.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 148.
\end{itemize}
them that an entire subterranean town lies beneath their feet. Twinkle and Chubbins want to visit it, but they are far too large to enter. A prairie-dog magician named Presto Digi solves the problem by shrinking the children to his size. The children then explore the lilliputian world of the prairie dogs, where they learn that the animals' underground community is similar to the above-ground world they had left behind. Nothing too exciting happens, but the children get to know a prairie-dog family and are the guests of honor at a zany luncheon sponsored by the town's mayor. The story ends with the children returning to the surface where Presto Digi restores them to their normal size. The final lines suggest that the children were simply dreaming: “Do you think we've been asleep?” Twinkle
asks. Chubbins replies, “Course not. . . . It’s easy ‘nough to know that, Twink, ’cause I’m sleepy now!”

The conclusion of *Prairie-Dog Town* brings to mind another story in which a child falls asleep and then dreams of going on an underground adventure. That story, of course, is Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). In both stories, the protagonists drift off while resting outdoors, follow an animal into a magical subterranean world, interact with anthropomorphic creatures, experience dramatic changes in size, participate in an unusual afternoon luncheon (called a tea party in *Alice*), and finally wake up back in the same place where their adventures started.

Mr. Woodchuck, the other Twinkle Tale that makes extensive use of the Dakota setting, also shares characteristics with Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. In the beginning of Mr. Woodchuck, Twinkle's father decides to trap a woodchuck that has been eating his crops. Twinkle eagerly accompanies her father while he sets the deadly steel trap near the animal's hole. She lingers near, hoping to catch a glimpse of the woodchuck. While she is waiting for the creature to appear, she falls asleep in the grass. What follows is a dream sequence that combines the sort of fantasy elements found in Alice with a moral message about the importance of treating animals with kindness.

The dream begins with Twinkle observing a jackrabbit, "dressed in a messenger-boy's uniform," delivering a telegram to Mr. Woodchuck. Like Carroll's White Rabbit, this rabbit is in a hurry. He thrusts the telegram into Mr. Woodchuck's hands and dashes off. The woodchuck reads the telegram and learns about the trap. Noticing Twinkle, he takes her into a beautiful garden, much like the garden in Alice. Once there, Mr. Woodchuck and Twinkle have an interesting conversation, which causes the girl to begin to see the world from a different point of view:

"It's very pleasant in this garden," said Twinkle. "I don't mind being here a bit."

"But you can't stay here," replied Mister Woodchuck, "and you ought to be very uncomfortable in my presence. You see, you're one of the deadliest enemies of my race. All you human beings live for or think of is how to torture and destroy woodchucks."

"Oh, no!" she answered. "We have many more important things than that to think of. But when a woodchuck gets eating our clover and the vegetables, and spoils a lot, we just have to do something to stop it. That's why my papa set the trap."

"You're selfish," said Mister Woodchuck, "and you're cruel to poor little animals that can't help themselves, and have to eat what they can find, or starve. There's enough for all of us growing in the broad fields.

The woodchuck concluded that the land had "belonged to the wild creatures long before you people came here and began
to farm. And really, there is no reason why you should be so cruel. It hurts dreadfully to be caught in a trap.”

Like Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Mr. Woodchuck concludes with a surreal court proceeding. Twinkle is put on trial for her role in the setting of the trap. Presiding over the court is Judge Stoneyheart, an old and wise woodchuck who realizes that Twinkle is dreaming. Nonetheless, he condemns her as an enemy of the peaceful animals. He argues that Twinkle must remember her dream, and he is of the opinion that "people don't

remember dreams unless the dreams are unusually horrible."\(^{29}\)
To insure that she does not forget the lessons that she has learned, he sentences her to step on the same type of trap that her father had set. Just as she is about to put her foot in the trap, she wakes up. That evening, she implores her father never to set another trap. The father agrees, and the trap "was never used again."\(^{30}\)

Even though *Prairie-Dog Town* and *Mr. Woodchuck* have similar plots, they differ in tone and theme. *Prairie-Dog Town* is a breezy and fanciful tale that ends without imparting a moral message. *Mr. Woodchuck* is a more focused and serious story that clearly is intended to cause children to question some of society's prevailing practices concerning the treatment of animals. In terms of theme, *Mr. Woodchuck* has more in common with "The Discontented Gopher." Both stories deal with the interactions between animals and humans, and both encourage the reader to feel empathy for the animals as they struggle to exist alongside the more powerful humans.\(^{31}\)

Baum's Dakota fairy tales not only provide evidence of his sympathetic interest in the lives of prairie animals, but they also reveal the various ways that Baum made creative use of his familiarity with Dakota geography. The landscape of the prairie figures in all these stories. However, the emotions associated with the prairie vary from tale to tale. In "The Discontented Gopher" and *Prairie-Dog Town*, the characters seem intrigued by the vast open space. In the beginning of "The Discontented Gopher," Zikky experiences a sense of exhilaration as he dashes across the prairie, while in *Prairie-Dog Town*, Twinkle and Chubbins find the prairie to be a wondrous place full of hidden secrets for curious and observant children to discover. In "The Enchanted Buffalo," however, the prairie is portrayed as a lonely and daunting place, especially when separated from one's community. Although the prairie landscape is only peripheral to *Mr. Woodchuck*, the story's human characters—especially the father—see the prairie as a sort of adversary. Like

29. Ibid., p. 62.
30. Ibid., p. 68.
31. Baum's desire to teach children to be kind to animals can also be seen in *Policeman Bluejay* (Chicago: Reilly & Britton Co., 1907), the sequel to *Bandit Jim Crow*. 
many Dakota homesteaders, the father tends to regard the prairie as enemy territory that must be conquered and cultivated.

In these tales, Baum also drew on his knowledge of Dakota history and culture. Three of them—"The Discontented Gopher," *Prairie-Dog Town*, and *Mr. Woodchuck*—deal in one way or another with the early history of agriculture in Dakota. Although Baum never attempted to farm the prairie himself, he knew much about the topic. He often discussed the ups and downs of agriculture with friends and neighbors and wrote a number of pieces on it for the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*. In "The Enchanted Buffalo," Baum incorporated some of the elements of Sioux history and lore that he had absorbed from living in a region where the Sioux still exerted a major influence. Baum, like most of the settlers who moved to the Dakota prairie during the 1880s and 1890s, harbored racist attitudes toward Indians;\(^{32}\) but at least in this story, he paid homage to the Sioux tradition of telling magical stories about the buffalo and the other wild animals of the plains. Baum's Dakota fairy tales, when placed within the context of the entire body of his published writings, are fairly minor works. Still, they provide ample evidence that Baum could find inspiration in real places, such as the Dakota prairie, as well as create imaginary places, such as Oz.

\(^{32}\) Koupal, Preface to *Our Landlady*, pp. x-xi; Artz, *Tour of L. Frank Baum's Aberdeen*, p. 5.