

Dakota Images

As South Dakota's governor from 1901 to 1905, Charles N. Herreid presided over a period of increased agricultural production. During his two terms, Herreid focused on maintaining that economic prosperity for the state's farmers.

Born 20 October 1857 near Madison, Wisconsin, Herreid spent his childhood on his parents' farm before attending Galesville University in the late 1870s. After teaching for a year, he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin where he received a bachelor of law degree in 1881. That same year, he married Eunice Jeanette Slye and began practicing law in Madison. In 1884, Herreid traveled to Dakota Territory to assist a client and decided to move there after being taken with the rolling prairie landscape. He soon helped found the town of Leola, where he eventually became president of the Bank of Leola, established a law practice, and took on partial ownership of the *Leola Blade*. In 1889, he was elected McPherson County's register of deeds and, later, judge of the probate court.

Herreid officially entered state politics in 1892 when he was elected lieutenant governor under Charles M. Sheldon. In presiding over the state senate, he became known for his organizational skills. This reputation led to his appointment as chairman of the Republican State Committee for the 1898 election. Two years later, voters elected Herreid governor. He oversaw the expansion of roads and education and created the Office of History, the foundation for the South Dakota State Historical Society. Early in his first term, however, he faced problems with local railroads as the state courts invalidated Populist efforts to decrease freight and passenger rates. Recognizing that high transportation prices would negatively affect local farmers, he led Republican efforts to have the railroad companies reduce their rates voluntarily.

After his two terms as governor, Herreid moved to Aberdeen and returned to practicing law. He acted as South Dakota's food administrator during World War I and served as the State Historical Society president between 1923 and 1925. Following a bout with pneumonia that weakened his heart, he reduced much of his public activity. Herreid died in Aberdeen on 6 July 1928 at the age of seventy and is buried in the city's Riverside Memorial Park.



Charles N. Herreid