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In The Tracks Of The

OUTLAWS

New Book Looks At The Shady Elements That Were Part Of Life In Dakota Territory

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Many Yankton residents drive down Burleigh Street every day, but how many of them know it is named after a man who made “fraud a family enterprise”?

It’s stories like those of Dr. Walter Burleigh, lurking just below the surface of the state’s modern veneer, that the book “South Dakota Outlaws and Scofflaws” unveils. It was written by *South Dakota Magazine* staff members John Andrews, Roger Holtzmann, Bernie Hunhoff and Katie Hunhoff and released this fall.

In chapter after chapter, they chronicle the lives of the questionable characters who populated the Dakota Territory while it was settled by Europeans.

As the territorial capital, Yankton was home to many of those “outlaws and scofflaws” who made their way to the frontier in an attempt to build a new life and perhaps a fortune — sometimes by any means necessary.

Burleigh is among the figures featured in the book.

After helping Abraham Lincoln win the state of Pennsylvania during the election of 1860, Burleigh was appointed by the new president as the Indian agent for the Yankton Sioux.

The authors explain just how Burleigh made “fraud a family enterprise” during a chapter called “The Yankton Ring.”

“He appointed his father-in-law, Andrew Faulk, as the Yankton Agency’s chief clerk, kept his daughter on the payroll as a teacher, even though there was no school on the reservation, and paid his 13-year-old son \$80 a month as a clerk,” they write.

When an investigator looked into the enterprise as part of a congressional inquiry, he seemed impressed by just how much payroll padding, graft and nepotism Burleigh was able to manage in his operation. Ultimately, Burleigh was able to put questions about the Yankton Agency behind him with some deft political maneuvering, according to the book.

Despite his dubious contributions to the history of the area, Burleigh has a street named after him. If only we could all be so lucky, right?

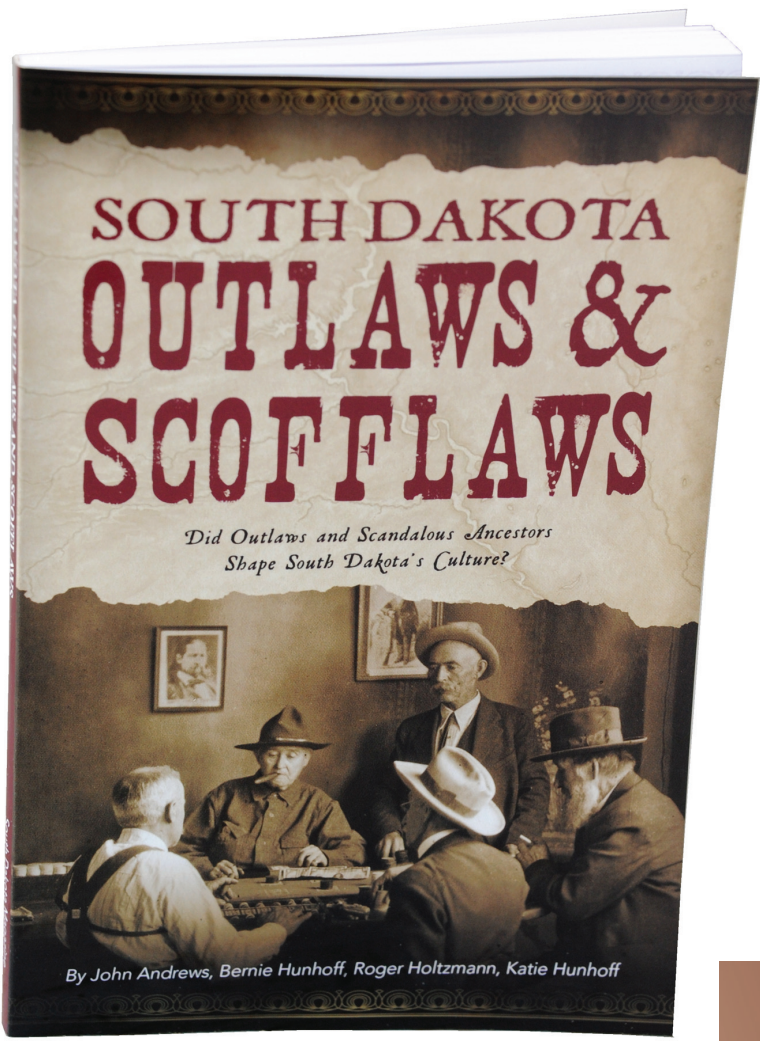
In a recent interview at the *South Dakota Magazine* office in Yankton — which was originally a home built by John Pennington, one of the carpet-bagging politicians written about in the book — the authors said the idea for the book came from a feature on outlaws and scofflaws done in their publication about a year ago.

“We had so much material that we decided it was a perfect book sitting in front of us,” stated Andrews. “We expanded what we had, added some new stuff and came up with this.”

While doing the research, he said it wasn’t uncommon to get lost in the reading. Sometimes Andrews would have to slap himself as a reminder that there was writing to be done, he joked.

“One of the coolest things I found happened when I was working on the chapter about Jack McCall (who was hanged in Yankton in 1877 for the murder of Wild Bill Hickok)” Andrews said. “I found out that a *Press & Dakotan* reporter had ridden with him from the jail to the gallows. It was really interesting to have that first-hand account of McCall’s last half-hour.”

The authors have found that many people share their fascination with the “Old West” and its inhabitants.



“You wouldn’t want (many of the individuals featured in the book) as your neighbor, and you wouldn’t want them to marry your daughter, but they make for interesting stories,” Holtzmann said. “They do outrageous things and, in many cases, they get away with it. You don’t necessarily admire them, but it’s very interesting.”

Because they were settling the frontier, there is a certain amount of romanticism attached to early outlaws that is not true of most criminals today, added Katie Hunhoff.

“Most of us are law-abiding citizens who only dream about what it’s like to break the rules of society,” she continued. “So it’s fun to read about people who did for different reasons.”

Some of the characters are just doing what they can to get ahead, Andrews said.

“They take advantage of the situation in order to do that,” he stated. “There’s nothing right about it. But we look back kind of half-heartedly and say, ‘He paid this guy \$200 to take people in a wagon from this town so he could build his own town.’ We thought about that when we were trying to settle on the time frame for the book. We decided that we had to keep this back in the territorial days.”

Occasionally, it was difficult to separate fact from fiction, the authors admitted.

“Take Calamity Jane, for example,” Holtzmann said. “She had adventures, but making up stories to get drinks in bars was her stock and trade. She contributed to muddying the waters about her own story.”

He was reminded of the line from the John Ford film, “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance” — “This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.”

“I think the legend is part of the entertainment value,” Holtzmann stated.

Bernie Hunhoff said some of the stories in the book have been wrestled with in the magazine on various occasions. The best example is the story of Murdo MacKenzie, whose son was shot in a LeBeau bar. The shooter was ac-

quitted of any crime, and it is believed that MacKenzie was later responsible for burning the former town about 70 miles north of Pierre to the ground.

“We’ve gone round and round with that story, and every time we do it, somebody adds something,” Bernie stated. “The last time we did it, somebody greatly objected to the idea that (MacKenzie) burned the town down and suggested using a book from a cowboy from the time as a source. We went to the source, and it confirmed our version. So you can even read that first-person account in different ways.”

During those approximately 20 years that the Dakota Territory was settled, Bernie said all types of people were thrown together and tried to build a civilization.

“Many of these people coming from other places probably didn’t come from the establishment and were a little rebellious or didn’t trust the establishment — especially the immigrants from other countries,” he stated. “I’m sure most people weren’t happy with the violence and were shocked by it. That’s why it only last 15 or 20 years.”

Katie Hunhoff said she hopes people have as much fun reading the book as the authors had writing it.

“The Dakota frontier attracted every type of person imaginable, but mostly men and women desperate enough to leave any comforts they had for an uncertain future,” she stated. “The trip out West was not for the faint of heart. And once people arrived, they quickly discovered the frontier was dangerous at worst and uncertain at best, forcing men and women to take risks and find ways to survive. We can’t escape our past, so we encourage readers to embrace our heritage, the good and the bad.”

“*South Dakota Outlaws and Scofflaws: Did Outlaws And Scandalous Ancestors Shape South Dakota’s Culture?*” is available at [southdakotamagazine.com](http://southdakotamagazine.com) or by calling 1-800-456-5117.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at [twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage](https://twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage)



KELLY HERTZ/P&D  
Roger Holtzmann, John Andrews, Katie Hunhoff (pictured from left to right) and Bernie Hunhoff (not pictured) of *South Dakota Magazine* recently authored the book “South Dakota Outlaws and Scofflaws: Did Outlaws And Scandalous Ancestors Shape South Dakota’s Culture?” It chronicles the lives of the questionable characters who populated the Dakota Territory as the frontier was settled.

Welcome to the World

The following babies were born at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in November 2012:

ADAM	EMERSYN	JABARI	MARKYS
ANNABELLE	EMERY	JANESSA	MILES
AVA	EMERY	JETT	MYLES
AVERY	ESTELLA	KATIE	NORA
AYDEN	GRADY	KENDRICK	PAYGE
BODEY	GREGER	KESTIN	PRESTON
BRODI	HAILEY	KIANNA	REMINGTON
BRYNLEE	HOLDEN	KOBI	SYLER
CHESNEY	ISABELLA	KYZEN	TREYSON
COOPER	ISSAC	LUKE	WESTON
DREYSON	IZAYAH	LYKEN	

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