



*William H. H. Beadle*

## *Dakota Images*

William Henry Harrison Beadle, superintendent of public instruction for six years, promoted the South Dakota educational system by implementing restrictions on the sale of school lands. He was born in Parke County, Indiana, on 1 January 1838 and received his civil engineering degree from the University of Michigan in 1857. He entered the Union army during the Civil War and was awarded the rank of brigadier general. After leaving the service, he attended law school at the University of Michigan in 1867.

In 1869 Beadle received the political appointment of surveyor-general for Dakota Territory and moved to Yankton, the territorial capital. He wrote the *Codes of Dakota* seven years later and served in 1877 on the territorial legislature, which adopted the codes. Then, in 1879 Governor W.A. Howard appointed Beadle to the office of superintendent of public instruction. Having seen the school lands in other states frittered away because of inadequate safeguards, he wrote the section in our state constitution that insured that none of this land could be sold for less than ten dollars an acre. He also prosecuted squatters who were crowding onto school sections.

General Beadle became president of the state normal school at Madison in 1889. He held that position for sixteen years until advanced age forced him to accept a history teaching position at the college. He died on 13 November 1915 in San Francisco where he was visiting his only daughter, Mrs. Mae Beadle Frink. Because of Beadle's foresight, the interest and rental income from the sale and leasing of school lands, which amounted to millions of dollars, has helped finance public education in the state.

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