

VIDEO SCRIPT

TITLE: East River, West River

SERIES: Dakota Pathways: A History

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V I S U A L

A U D I O

FADE IN:

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|--|---|
| 1. Open | <u>Nat Sound Up and Under</u>
<u>Music</u>
<u>Music Under</u> |
| 2. Corn field. | <u>Narrator: East River...</u> |
| 3. Grazing Country. | West River. |
| 4. More contrasting shots, the Missouri. | South Dakotans seem to be always talking about East River and West River, and visitors sometimes have no idea where those places are. The names have to do with the Missouri River, the great water that runs through the middle of our state. |
| 5. MAP:South Dakota highlighting East River | Everything east of the Missouri is...East River. |
| 6. MAP:South Dakota highlighting West River | The other side is West River. |
| 7. Sioux Falls, farm land, small town midwestern Main Street, rain on crops. | The reason South Dakotans talk so much about the two parts of their state is that life, in many ways, is different from one half to the other. East River feels like the Midwestern part of the United States: corn and soybean fields, towns fairly close together, plenty of rain most years. |
| 8. Minneapolis and Vikings football. | East River people, if they want to visit a big, out-of-state city, might choose Minneapolis. Each fall, they're most likely to be Vikings football fans. |
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9. Denver and Broncos football.

10. West River scenics
11. East River scenics

12. Farmers in farm implement or seed caps, ranchers in cowboy hats.

13. Northern California pine forest
14. Southern California beach.
15. WS Minneapolis.

16. WS Minnesota lakes.

17. New York City.

18. Hudson River valley.

19. Building rainclouds

In the West, Denver is the big city people like to visit, and the Broncos are the most popular football team.

Of course, none of this holds true all the time. There are some ranches East River, and some farms West River. There are years when it rains too much West River and not enough East River. You can even find Vikings fans in Rapid City, and Broncos fans in Sioux Falls.

But the expected differences between Midwest and West hold up much of the time—right down to the way folks dress.

South Dakota isn't alone in being a state split this way. Californians say things are greatly different between north and south in their state. In Minnesota, people talk about the metro area, where millions of people live in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

The rest of Minnesota they call outstate.

New Yorkers have New York City and...
upstate.

How did South Dakota get divided between East River and West River? Well, it all started with something we talked about earlier.

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| 20. Rain falling on crops | Rain. |
| 21. Re-creation of traveling American Indians with travois, | American Indians who crossed the plains knew they found less rain and snow the farther west they traveled. European explorers and fur trappers noticed the same thing in the 1700s and 1800s. |
| 22. Fur trappers. | |
| 23. Globe or Map showing meridian markers. | European people measured the world east to west with imaginary lines on their maps and globes called meridians. The 98 th meridian runs right through South Dakota... |
| 24. POP-UP FACT: "Meridians of longitude measure the planet east to west, and parallels of latitude measure it north to south." | |
| 25. MAP: showing the 98 th meridian coming down through South Dakota. | near the towns of Aberdeen, Redfield, Huron, and Mitchell. The 98 th meridian, people in the 1800s believed, was especially important. |
| 26. Old-time farm with horse-powered plow. | East of the 98 th there was usually plenty of rain, and farms would likely develop and succeed, along with towns. |
| 27. Badlands. | But old-timers called the country on the other side of the 98th meridian, "west of 20 inches," meaning west of where it rained at least 20 inches of water most years. Without that much rain, people believed, lots of farms would fail—or never get started in the first place. Some people called the region the Great American Desert... |
| 28. Coyotes. | lonely, dangerous, and likely to stay that way. |
| 29. Rattlesnake. | |
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30. Re-creations of old-time farming techniques.

But even where the rains came regularly, life was a challenge. Settlers who came to eastern South Dakota in the 1860s and 1870s worked harder on their farms than most of us can imagine today. Every spring, with horses and mules, they plowed and dragged their fields so the soil would be as powdery as possible for planting.

31. Old time farming: Planting

Then they planted...wheat, corn, soybeans, barley, oats—all called crops.

32. Old time farming: weeding

All summer long they protected their crops by pulling weeds that could destroy their plants. All the time they knew there was no protection from other crop-killers...

33. Dark Hail clouds.

like hail.

34. Close-ups Grasshoppers

Or grasshoppers and beetles.

35. CU Beetles.

36. Various stages of old time haying.

At the same time, during the hottest part of the year, farm families were cutting, tying and storing the hay in haylofts.

37. POP-UP FACT: Hay is grass, or a flowery plant called alfalfa, that's dried so it remains good food for animals in the winter.

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38. Dairy cows, milking, kids doing chores.

39. Old time Barn-raising.

40. Railroad shots, and stills or re-created scenes representing the populist movement.

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The animals that ate the most eastern South Dakota hay were dairy cows, which farmers milked twice a day, every day of the year. Farms almost always had chickens, and lots of them raised pigs. The first farm work most kids did was feeding animals and giving them water. And in the fall, when crops were done growing, everyone did something to help gather the corn, beans, and grain—work called harvesting. Farm tasks were never finished and, said one farmer, the way members of these families showed they loved one another was by their hard work.

When an especially big job came along, or when illness made it so a farmer couldn't get things done, neighboring farmers came over to work even more.

Of course, when it came time to sell their crops, milk, animals, and other products, farmers believed they should get most of the money. Sometimes, though, it seemed like railroads that hauled the products, and other companies farmers did business with, took most of the money. So in 1890 farmers got together at Huron and started an organization that became known as the Populist Party. It was a political party, like Democrats and Republicans. Populists fought for fair railroad prices and for fair farm prices controlled by the government.

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41. PHOTOS: of farming communities and people a hundred years ago.

42. DISSOLVE TO: PHOTOS: Reservation life Circa 1900

43. CU: Bison herd running

44. CU: American Indians riding horses on hunt. Or paintings of the same.

45. CU: Old time plow breaking hardpan western soil.

46. PHOTOS: Old-time Texas cowboys.

47. PHOTOS: Longhorns. Cattle drive

48. MAP: US showing cattle drive routes

49. DISSOLVE TO: WS Bison grazing (large herd)

50. DISSOLVE TO: Cattle grazing (large herd)

Hard work, neighbors helping neighbors, getting involved in politics so that things would be fair for even the smallest farm business...all this made South Dakotans proud to be farmers. The United States government looked at the farmers' success and decided the best thing that could happen to Oglala, Brule, Minneconjue, and other Lakota speaking American Indians was to become farmers. It was something entirely new to these people, whose parents and grandparents had fed themselves by being fine hunters...

especially bison hunters. But almost all the bison had been killed by outside hunters who wanted their valuable skins. So there was little choice but to try farming. Unfortunately, the Oglala, Brule, and Minneconjue were living on reservations far west of 20 inches of rain, out in West River. Not only were these people expected to learn everything about farming immediately, but they were to grow crops without enough water. It was impossible.

About the same time, another people, far to the south in Texas, found something that grew well West River.

Cattle. Not dairy cows for milk, but cattle for beef. Texas cattlemen learned they got better beef if they herded their animals hundreds of miles north, to a land they called Dakota, to grasslands that once fed bison. Moving the cattle north were some of the most famous characters in American history: cowboys.

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51. PHOTOS: Old-time, cowboys

(Authentic cowboy trail songs.)

52. WS: Cattle grazing...dissolving into dead cattle after the 1888 blizzard. Old-time haying.

At first, cattlemen thought West River got so little snow that animals could eat grass year round. Then came harsh winters of 1886, 1887...and especially 1888. Grass was buried under heavy snow, thousands and thousands of cattle died, and lots of cattlemen returned to Texas to stay. Those who remained started ranches where they cut hay, just like East River farmers, so they could feed their animals through snowy winters.

53. Re-creation of old-time branding, with irons in open flames.

The first ranches had no fences. Ranchers burned marks—called brands—into their cattle. Each ranchers' brand was different, so they'd know who owned each animal when the cattle got mixed together on the big, unfenced prairie. Cattlemen liked the idea of using the whole West River grassland, and they opposed anyone who wanted fences...

54. Barbed-wire fences.

especially folks who wanted to move in and raise sheep, which required fencing. But fences went up anyway, some built by cattlemen themselves, because they learned there was good money in raising sheep.

55. Sheep.

Some years sheep made more money, and some years cattle did. It was smart to have both.

56. PHOTOS: Historical shots of homesteaders arriving West River, and of their sod houses.

In the early 1900s, ranchers looked on in disbelief when the United States government started opening up West River land for farmers. Not enough rain, the ranchers said.

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57. PHOTOS: Plowing with horses and mules.

But the government predicted "rain would follow the plow," meaning if enough crops were planted, the plant life would put moisture into the air and create regular rainfall.

58. Deserted homestead West River
Hot sunny sky,

If it worked—if rain followed the plow—West River would soon look just like East River. But it didn't happen. Most West River farms dried up, failed, and were bought by ranchers for cattle and sheep.

59. Orman Dam.

60. POP-UP FACT: "Moving water into dry land so it can be farmed is called irrigation."

West River farms that succeeded were mostly along rivers and creeks, or in areas where dams were built to supply water for crops. Or wells dug to bring water up from the aquifers.

61. Rodeo.

Just like farming, ranching became a proud tradition, with its own customs and celebrations.

62. Aerial view of a ranch.

And while ranches...

63. Aerial view of a farm.

and farms are different in lots of ways, they combined to create the number-one money-maker ever for South Dakota: agriculture. Agriculture means growing plants or animals to sell as food...

64. Shearing wool.

or as other products, like wool.

65. Barge full of grain or ship docks loading grain.

For more than a hundred years, the state's agricultural products have been sold around the world.

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66. Early tractors.

67. POP-UP FACT: "To this day, how much power a tractor has is measured by how many horses would be needed to match it—called horsepower."

68. Hay-baler

69. Cultivator.

70. Harvester.

71. Close-up of a running cultivator, showing its moving parts.

72. Shots of farm machines at work, viewed across big, lonely fields.

73. WS thriving farm yard

74. DISSOLVE TO: deserted farmyard

75. Anything representing the 1980s farm crisis.

Both farms and ranches changed in the 1900s because of machines, beginning with tractors more powerful than horses and mules.

Machines were developed for cutting hay...

killing weeds...

and harvesting crops.

The machines made farm work easier in some ways, but also made it necessary for farmers and ranchers to be good mechanics, able to keep the machines running.

The machines made it possible to farm or ranch bigger and bigger pieces of land, sometimes creating more work, not less. And because machines could do the work of many men and women, agriculture grew lonelier and lonelier. Starting in the 1960s, lots of farmers and ranchers and their families moved to town as big farms and ranches bought out smaller ones.

The fields were still full of crops and animals. But some country houses and barns, once full of life and work, stood empty.

In the 1980s prices for farm and ranch products were low. At the same time, banks were charging lots of money for borrowing money...

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76. Farm or ranch auction.

and some farmers and ranchers had borrowed lots of money to pay for the latest equipment. All this added up to a sad situation where even more families, both East River and West River, had to give up on agriculture.

77. Historic stills and headlines from farm crisis, black and white.

Part of a song inspired by the farm crisis.

78. Active modern farming aerial shot

But while agriculture has changed, it remains South Dakota's number one business. It's likely to remain so for years to come.

79. Farm products being loaded on trucks at grainery.

Agriculture is also the number one thing people from away know about South Dakota.

80. A green farm at mid-summer.

And for those of us who live here, it's what makes East River feel like East River...

81. Cattle being driven down a dusty trail.

and West River like West River.

82. Close

Close.
