

Robert G. Duffett, Ph.D.
President, Dakota Wesleyan University
Mitchell, S.D.
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South Dakota and the GI Bill of Rights: Institutions and Individuals

Al Neuharth, founder of *USA Today* and CEO and chairman of Gannett, entered the University of South Dakota in the fall of 1946. Almost 60 years later, at the dedication of the Al Neuharth media center, he described himself as "...one of the ragtag bunch of a couple of thousand World War II vets who invaded this campus [the University of South Dakota] under the GI Bill."¹

That same fall Harold Hall of Parker, South Dakota, resumed his studies up the road in Brookings. After leaving the Army and putting two crops in the fields back in Parker, Hall was delighted at the generosity of the GI Bill. Four years before, in his first year at State, he barely had time to study. He worked three part-time jobs just to pay for college.

Bomber pilot George McGovern wasted no time finishing his college education. He returned to Dakota Wesleyan University and graduated in 1946. By the fall of 1946, he was both a seminary student at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, and pastor of Community Methodist Church in nearby Diamond Lake. The GI Bill paid McGovern's tuition, books, and fees both at Wesleyan and Garrett Seminary.

Dwight Opperman, born in Perry, Iowa, was in the Army Medical Corps during the war. To be near his parents after they relocated to Mitchell, Opperman entered Dakota Wesleyan University in the fall of 1947. His goal was law school. Happily, like Neuharth in journalism, McGovern in ministry, and Hall in physics, the GI Bill paid all of Opperman's tuition, fees, books and supplies up to \$500 a year, at Wesleyan and later at Drake University Law School.²

Neuharth's term "invasion" of the World War II vets was an apt description. This attack was not confined to Vermillion, but included Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell and South Dakota State College in Brookings, too. Fall enrollment for 1944-45 was 472 at USD, 166 at DWU and 492 at SDSC.³ Two years later (1946-47) enrollment at USD was 1,661 (more than 1,000 were GI Bill vets), 440 at DWU (half were GI Bill vets) and 2,613 at SDSC (1,276 were GI Bill vets).⁴ In two years, enrollment almost quadrupled at USD, almost tripled at DWU, and increased over five fold at State.⁵ The surging enrollment quickly overturned the gender ratio at all three schools. The period of 1942-45 saw three female body presidents, a female editor of *The Volante* and an all female band at the university.⁶ The *South Dakota Collegian* estimated a gender ratio of 20 female students for every male student on the Brookings campus.⁷ And in a satirical editorial lamenting the lack of men on the DWU campus, the editor suggested changing DWU's name to "Dr. Edge's [president of Wesleyan at the time] Finishing School for Girls." Apparently, a former DWU student serving overseas in the war did not sense the humor or satire. Somehow he got a copy of that particular issue of the *Phreno Cosmian* somewhere in the world and wrote a blistering letter. George Covert spent a year and a half at Wesleyan before the war and complained that just because men left for the service does not mean that the name of the university should be changed. Said Covert, "We want to return to Wesleyan after the war, but if its going to be a girls' finishing school we'll be lost . . . I'd hate to say to my grandchildren . . . I played football for a finishing school for girls."⁸

By 1946-47, two-thirds of the students at Wesleyan were men, 60% of the USD enrollment was returning veterans, and men outnumbered women three-to-one at both Vermillion and Brookings.⁹

Neuharth, McGovern, Hall and Opperman were literally part of a returning "hoard" of GIs that quickly overwhelmed these struggling South Dakota colleges. Under the deprivations of a world-wide depression and war, their arrival could not have come at a worse time. Charles Dickens' opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times," could be applied to this situation at Vermillion, Mitchell, and Brookings. The swelling student body, bringing with it federal cash, was a boon to the three colleges. But the colleges were ill-prepared to assimilate that many students that quickly. President Lyman Jackson of SDSC complained that the college could do little for more than six years due to declining appropriations from the South Dakota Legislature. State College received \$348,600 in appropriations for the 1925-27 Biennial,¹⁰ but only \$275,000 in appropriations for the 1946-47 school year, despite the burgeoning enrollment.¹¹ State appropriations decreased from the late 1920s to the 1940s; the result was deferred maintenance, equipment that was not replaced or properly maintained, staff salary reductions, and staff terminations or resignations. President Jackson estimated that State College needed an immediate \$1 million appropriation from the legislature just to "catch up."¹²

The University was in similar straits.

Although Wesleyan did not receive state appropriations, President Joseph H. Edge also complained not only of a lack of funds for deferred maintenance, but also that when the funds were available, the escalating costs of labor and material pushed the price of repairs higher than the allotted funds.¹³

Neuharth, Hall, McGovern, and Opperman came to the University, State College, and Wesleyan at a time when the physical campus needed major repairs, equipment was lacking or in poor repair, the faculties were decimated due to personnel needs of the war, and funds from the

legislature or private sources were paltry for more than a decade. It may not have been the "worst of times" for these three colleges, but the task of educating so many was daunting given the cultural situation in America and South Dakota for the last two decades (1929-1945).

In 1947 Neuharth, Hall, McGovern and Opperman did not know each other. They were among the 68,000 South Dakotans who served in World War II. All were born between 1922 and 1924, grew up or went to school within 40 miles of each other, and then went on to distinguished careers. Their only common link, besides geography and their veteran's status, was that they all were benefactors of Public Law 346, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly called the GI Bill of Rights.

President Franklin Roosevelt signed the GI Bill of Rights into law on June 22, 1944. Only two weeks before, the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. The heaviest fighting in both the Pacific and Europe lay ahead.

The bill was unanimously passed by both houses of Congress. The legislation that President Roosevelt signed on that warm June day in Washington competed with more than 600 other bills that sought to help the 15 million GIs¹⁴ when demobilized. Some of the bills restricted federal support to only wounded or disabled GIs. Others sought educational and job training benefits, priority in hiring in both private and federal sectors, unemployment compensation, and 'mustering out' pay. The title of PL 346 signaled its goal – readjustment to civilian life when the war was through.

The original version of the bill provided benefits to both men and women (60,000 women received educational benefits). Soldiers and sailors who completed at least 90 days of active service after September 16, 1940, were not dishonorably discharged, and whose education was interrupted by reason of entrance into the service would:

- ◆ receive one year of education at an institution of their choice;
- ◆ receive from the VA the cost of tuition, lab fees, books, supplies and other expenses up to \$500 per year; and
- ◆ receive a subsistence allowance of \$50 per month if single or \$75 a month if married.¹⁵

By today's standards, \$500 a year for tuition and fees is a small amount. In 1944, Harvard charged \$400 a year for tuition.¹⁶ After the GI Bill became law, The American Legion¹⁷ and the Veterans of Foreign Wars continued to lobby Congress for more generous benefits. The bill was amended to include *all* vets who wanted to attend college, even those who did not attend college before induction. Educational benefits and monthly subsistence were increased and extended for up to 48 months.¹⁸

By the time Al Neuharth, Harold Hall, George McGovern, and Dwight Opperman returned to college in 1946 and 1947, any WWII veteran admitted to an accredited or state-recognized public or private college could choose any major, course of study, or vocation. And, the best part? Uncle Sam paid virtually the entire tab!

Contextual Factors and the GI Bill

Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California-Berkeley, points out how federal support of the magnitude of the GI Bill was unprecedented in American higher education. Historically, federal support for higher education was limited to the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862 that created America's land grant colleges (e.g., South Dakota State, Iowa State, and Ohio State), established the military academies (West Point and Annapolis), and sponsored basic research at universities during WWII. Most American universities were founded and supported by religious groups or the state government. Even the land grant colleges and military academies

were accountable not to the federal government, but to their respective state or branch of service.¹⁹

Why, then, did the federal government choose this activist approach that was so inconsistent with past policies? The historical evidence presents a constellation of reasons. From the perspective of 60 years, two reasons are paramount.

The first and foremost reason may be the most surprising: The federal government was fearful that social chaos would accompany demobilization attenuated by a collapsing economy. In a 1943 Fireside Chat, President Roosevelt warned that when the war ended, veterans "must not be demobilized into an environment of inflation and unemployment, to a place on a bread line, or on a corner selling apples. We must, *this time*, [emphasis mine] have plans ready – instead of waiting to do a hasty, ineffective and ill considered job at the last moment."²⁰

Clearly, the President conjured images of the Great Depression and the demobilization problems that followed World War I. His words were not melodramatic. Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, Administrator of Veterans Affairs and of Retraining and Re-employment, Office of War Mobilization, predicted that millions would lose their jobs at war's end. Due to the size and scope of WWII, converting the economy from a war-time to peace-time economy would be unprecedented in American history.²¹

Harry Colmery, past American Legion National Commander and chief author of the GI Bill, testified before the House Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation. This committee conducted hearings on the GI Bill. In his testimony, Colmery said that he saw troubled times ahead. Only in England, after World War I, did men in uniform **not** overthrow their governments.²² This comparison could not be missed. Unless something was done for returning vets, they too could create mayhem. American Legion National Commander Warren H. Atherton

used a national radio address to caution the American people that returning veterans could make or break the country, restore democracy or scrap it.²³

In addition, Roosevelt's future concerns about demobilization after WWII were based on bitter experience. As Undersecretary of the Navy in the Woodrow Wilson administration, he observed the lack of demobilization planning that contributed to some of the social, labor, and racial unrest that followed the Great War.

Fears of a reprise of the economic conditions of the 1930s after the war were widespread. Even as late as 1947, the same year Neuharth, Hall, McGovern and Opperman returned to college, *Fortune* magazine surveyed the nation's top 15,000 business executives. Almost 60% of them anticipated an extended major depression with large scale unemployment during the next decade.²⁴

Simply put, both support for the GI Bill and the generous provisions thereof were not due to federal beneficence, altruism or appreciation for the sacrifice of the veterans. Rather, the bill was seen as a possible means to keep thousands of veterans out of the work force with something meaningful to do until the peacetime economy stabilized. The prospect of 15 million veterans returning to a sluggish and possibly depressed economy frightened Roosevelt, policy makers and Congress. Given these concerns, PL 346 perhaps should have been called not the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, but the Economic Readjustment Act of 1944.

If the economy and social dislocation from unemployed veterans were the primary concerns of the President and Congress, veterans' groups and the general population were more concerned about rehabilitation for wounded vets and readjustment to civilian life for able-bodied returning vets. The brilliance of The American Legion was its unitary approach to veterans' needs after the war. Their view was that all vets would need help after the war even if the

assistance was nothing more than "mustering out" pay for lost wages in service to the country. Hence, the Legion's legislative and lobbying plan was simple, comprehensive, and clear: "to give the men who were fighting the opportunity they deserved to restore them as nearly as possible to the position they might have held if they had not been called to serve America."²⁵ Unlike other veterans' groups' proposals and bills presented to Congress, The American Legion sought provisions for demobilized vets that included rehabilitation for those wounded and readjustment provisions for those who were able bodied.

In the middle of the war, Commander Atherton told Congress and the nation the story of "the forgotten battalion." This battalion was a collection of severely wounded GIs now back in America who were having a difficult time receiving proper medical and rehabilitative treatment. He testified about actual cases known to the various posts of the Legion throughout the country. Examples included Bill Smith (name changed) paralyzed by a Japanese bomb at Guadalcanal and Troy Lucas (name changed) who lost his leg in Tunisia. Tragically, they returned home in mid-war "to delay, neglect, and disillusion." Everyone wants to do something for vets after the war, Atherton thundered, but what about the wounded now?²⁶

In light of pressing needs for rehab services during the war and expected readjustment needs after the war, on September 23, 1943, the 25th National Convention of the American Legion authorized the naming of a special committee "to develop an overall program for the complete aid to the veteran from the time of his [sic.] discharge until final rehabilitation."²⁷ Although Legion members did not use the appropriate legislative term, they clearly wanted an omnibus bill for all vets. Various resolutions suggested that the bill should include adequate medical care, unemployment compensation, educational and vocational training, home and farm loans, and furlough pay.

Founded after WWI, the Legion advocated for federally financed farm loans for WWI vets. But as the American economy turned from an agricultural to an industrial one in the 1920s, the Legion realized the irrelevance of its plan. It shifted direction from farm loans to cash bonuses. The rationale was to compensate WWI vets for the earnings differential between what they received while in uniform and what they might have earned in civilian work. This cash bonus was included in the Bonus Bill passed by Congress in 1924 over President Calvin Coolidge's veto. Cash bonuses would be paid to WWI vets in 1945. With the onset of the depression and concomitant large scale unemployment, drought in the Midwest farm belt, and collapsing agricultural prices, WWI vets organized themselves to petition the federal government to expedite cash bonus payments. The Patman Bonus Bill, named after Texas House of Representatives and Legion member Wright Patman, authorizing immediate payments, passed the House but not the Senate in 1932. By the spring and summer of 1932, months before the 1932 presidential election, thousands of WWI vets marched on Washington, D.C., demanding an immediate bonus payment.

They officially called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force but were more commonly known as the "Bonus Army." They even created their own camp or "Hooverville" outside the city limits. President Hoover thought the "Bonus Army" and the 'camp' were threats to public safety and ordered the Army, in his words, "to clean up the situation." Under General Douglas MacArthur the situation was cleaned up, but at a steep political and public relations price. Later, Hoover himself said not only did Roosevelt misrepresent the bonus incident for political purposes in the 1932 presidential campaign, but so did Democratic orators for the next 20 years, despite refutations and proof to the contrary.²⁸ Hoover was vilified as a murderer and enemy of the veterans.

The 'situation' of the Bonus Bill and Army can be directly linked to the GI Bill in three ways. First, the Legion gained experience in lobbying on behalf of veterans. Their chief concern was federal policy for WWI veterans not politics. However, policy could not easily be separated from politics then or in the WWII period. This 'policy and politics' experience would be immeasurably important in 1942-43. Second, Roosevelt not only was acquainted with but also used smoldering veteran grievances to unseat an incumbent president. A decade later he was the incumbent president. With the much larger size of the WWII Army, Navy and Marines, there was greater potential for veteran grievances to become a political issue in the 1944 presidential campaign. Therefore, he wanted to be proactive on veteran issues before they could spin out of control like they did under Hoover. Third, the Legion's argument for a cash bonus for WWI veterans would take on a new shape linked to educational and subsistence benefits. The WWI cash bonuses, David Kennedy argues, were a precursor to the GI Bill in WWII.²⁹

With ideas from the Legion membership, successful lobbying experience from WWI, and a conceptual framework from WWI that still made sense in 1943-44, a drafting committee led by National Commander Warren Atherton and chief author of the bill Harry Colmery literally wrote the bill during the Congressional recess in December 1943.

The American Legion Bill was introduced in the House on January 11, 1944, by John Rankin (D-MS), Chair of the Committee on Veterans' Legislation, and Edith Nourse Rodgers (R-MA). "Champ" Clark Bennett (D-MO.), Chair of the Veterans' Subcommittee to the Senate Finance Committee, with nine co-sponsors including South Dakota Republican Senator Chandler (Chan) Gurney, introduced the bill in the Senate the next day.

Why did the Legion's bill, and not one of the other 600 bills or the President's recommendations, become the GI Bill of Rights? What is clear in retrospect is that the benefits

enumerated and the Legion's effective lobbying efforts on behalf of the bill eventually won support from all sides. It certainly helped that the Legion claimed that the bill came directly from Roosevelt's ideas! The president discussed the need to plan for demobilization but never came up with a workable plan. Bills, proposals, and recommendations from other sources were piecemeal. Only the Legion offered a comprehensive, omnibus bill. Their boast squares with the historic evidence. "The Legion conceived it; the Legion drafted it and fought for it – fought indeed against early opposition of other major veterans' organizations."³⁰

Roosevelt and other New Dealers thought the Legion bill was too excessive and expensive. Other veterans' groups wanted Congress to focus on wounded and disabled vets. They feared the omnibus bill went too far and threatened benefits for those who needed them the most.³¹ Many educational leaders were highly critical. Harvard President James Conant said the GI Bill was "distressing." The chief problem of the bill was its populist approach that would encourage the least capable to flood American colleges. There were no measures to determine who would qualify. Conant favored a more selective (some would say elitist) version that reserved federal funds to the most intellectually promising veterans. For this reason Conant argued that American universities did not support the GI Bill. His critique of the GI Bill was consistent with his understanding of the role of higher education in America. He also saw the coming implications for higher education and he did not like them. The bill made no attempt to discern who could or could not benefit from higher education.³² Conant was blind to his own prejudices and uncritical of the measures he advocated for assessing intellectual merit. If Conant was "distressed" about the GI Bill, Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, was condescending. The bill was too generous and failed to distinguish between those who can avail themselves (i.e., have the intellectual talent) and those who cannot. Further, educational

institutions "as the big-time football racket shows" cannot resist money. Universities will take all the students they can get and expel no one. Further, only those who *cannot* get a job will attend college. Under the GI Bill, Hutchins averred, a college education would be a substitute for a dole, another public works project and turn universities into 'hobo jungles.'³³

If the Legion faced critics, including the administration, leading university presidents, and other veterans' groups, how did the bill unanimously pass both houses of Congress?

It seems that the comprehensive nature of the bill actually helped in getting the bill passed. It addressed most issues circulating around Congress regarding demobilization. Additionally, the American Legion was a superb lobbyist and had strong posts (chapters) in every congressional district. They used these local posts to "encourage" diffident members of Congress. Finally, William Randolph Hearst strongly supported of the GI Bill by using three reporters and all his newspapers in the lobbying effort. The American Legion not only thanked Mr. Hearst in public resolutions, but also awarded him its Distinguished Service Medal.³⁴

Despite the strong support for and generous provisions of the bill, what is most surprising is that at the time few thought many vets would take advantage of the educational benefits. Other parts of the bill provided employment opportunities, unemployment compensation, mortgages for farms and homes, and job training. It was these non-educational portions of the bill, some predicted, that would attract the most interest.

Between 1943 and 1945, the War Department surveyed a representative sample of officers and enlisted men to determine who would attend college after the war. The results of the survey suggested that between 7 and 12% planned to return to a school. Therefore, VA Administrator Frank T. Hines estimated that only about 700,000 veterans, distributed over several years, would become college students.³⁵

How wrong these estimates were. In the fall of 1947, when Neuharth was at the University of South Dakota, McGovern at Northwestern University, Opperman at Dakota Wesleyan University, and Hall at South Dakota State College, 1,150,000 veterans, nearly half of the students enrolled in college during the 1947-48 school year, jammed into American colleges and universities.³⁶ By the time the GI Bill's education benefit officially ended, 37 % of all veterans enjoyed its benefits, not the 7 to 12% as predicted. At the college level alone, a total of 2,232,000 vets used their GI Bill, more than three times the estimate.³⁷

The Impact of the GI Bill on South Dakota Colleges and American Society

From the perspective of 60 years the GI Bill had a transforming impact on the colleges themselves and the general American culture.

Perhaps the most enduring and transforming impact of the GI Bill is most often overlooked. What was supposed to be a temporary partnership of the federal government with American colleges, public and private, became permanent. As mentioned above the federal government had a very limited role in American higher education. As the land grant college of South Dakota, only SDSC claims a direct and significant link to the federal government. Dakota Wesleyan University was a college founded by the Dakota Conference of the Methodist – Episcopal Church. The University was founded both as a university of the Dakota Territory and the State of South Dakota.

Seeking both to serve the nation and sustain enrollment, DWU tried to imitate its larger state schools. President Edge and Chair of the Board Dr. Byron A. Bobb traveled to Washington, DC, to offer Wesleyan's cooperation to the Armed Forces "in any way."³⁸ Wesleyan already had a civilian pilot training program sponsored by the federal government and

conducted by the university and the Mitchell Flying Service. Any full-time college student at DWU could enroll. After passing courses in aviation, meteorology, and navigation taught by Wesleyan science faculty, and passing flight instruction, a student would receive a pilot's license. All enrollees had to sign a pledge to enter military service for additional training if needed.³⁹

Later Wesleyan became a V-1 training center for the United State Navy. The V-1 program was a voluntary enlistment program. Midway through the second year of college the Navy proctored a comprehensive exam. Top scorers went to Navy Aviation School, followed by Deck and Engineer Officers' School. The remainder went on active duty in the Navy. The advantage to DWU students in the program was the guarantee of two full years of college and exemption from the draft.⁴⁰

After the war Wesleyan continued its partnership with the federal government. The GI Bill guaranteed the cost of tuition up to \$500 a year. Treasurer of DWU Harmon Brown proposed to the Veterans' Administration in Sioux Falls that the actual cost of tuition at Wesleyan was twice what the school charged. Although the published tuition rate was \$4.00 per credit hour, the actual cost was \$8.21 per credit hour, including expenses. The VA accepted the financial logic and entered into a contract with DWU to pay the larger amount for tuition and expenses.⁴¹ President of the University of South Dakota, I.D. Weeks, entered into the same type of agreement with the VA but with a slightly different financial twist. In an exchange of telegrams with the President of the University of Minnesota, Weeks affirmed his intention to seek VA approval to charge out-of-state tuition rates for South Dakota residents who qualified for the GI Bill. Since the university was subsidized by the state, the out-of-state tuition rate was a more accurate reflection of the full cost of tuition.⁴² The VA agreed with Weeks' financial logic, but it created a public relations problem throughout the state. How do you explain,

because of the GI Bill, the university is really not "gouging" South Dakota veterans by charging them twice as much as non-veteran South Dakota residents? Given the volume of his correspondence on that issue, it was not an isolated problem.⁴³

The GI Bill of Rights began a federal-college partnership that continues today in various forms. Since then, federal presence and partnership with American higher education includes national defense student loans, Pell Grants, student loans backed by the federal government, the TRiO program for underserved students, the Title III Program, and federally sponsored research grants. Before the GI Bill, most colleges had little relationship with the federal government. After WWII and the GI Bill, few colleges are independent of the federal government, including private, church related colleges.

Despite dire predictions to the contrary, the Veterans actually were a surprisingly positive presence on campus. A month before President Roosevelt signed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, Dean of the Faculty at DWU, Dr. Earle E. Emme, warned the Board of Trustees that GIs returning to Wesleyan would change the campus in negative ways. Returning vets will be married, handicapped, misfits, psycho-neurotics and morally burned out. Many would want a college degree as a reward for military service, not for educational accomplishment.⁴⁴ Happily, the historical evidence suggests a very different response when the vets returned to the three South Dakota colleges. The biggest problem the colleges faced was not psycho-neurotic, morally burned out GIs, but something more mundane – housing. President Weeks and J. H. Julian, Dean of Students, said to the Regents of South Dakota that the housing of men was the number one problem at the University.⁴⁵ To help meet this need the Federal Housing Authority made available to USD, Wesleyan, and State, house trailers previously used at Army, Navy and Marine bases and ordnance plants. USD received 133 trailers, Wesleyan 15, and State 50.

Trailer parks sprang up overnight. These trailer courts were called Vets Villa and University Park at USD, Trailer Town at Wesleyan and Trailer Lane at State.⁴⁶ Here again, the growing partnership between the federal government and colleges helped alleviate the most significant problem the colleges faced as the GIs returned to college.

The trailers were similar at all campuses – cramped. They measured 7½' by 22' for married students and 15' x 19' 10" for couples with children.⁴⁷

Gordon Rollins began his 42-year-career at DWU on September 1, 1946. A treasurer, vice president and acting president, he well remembers the returning GIs and Trailer Town. None of the trailers had bathrooms or showers. One of the trailers became a communal bathroom and shower, one side for men the other for women. Since Trailer Town was adjacent to Science Hall, the back door of Science Hall was kept unlocked every night in the event all toilets were being used.⁴⁸ Vets Villa and University Park at USD and Trailer Lane at State had similar types of facilities.

Those who lived in the villages had varied responses to the cramped living space and communal bathrooms and showers. One wife of a veteran at USD said she was skeptical about spending a long, cold winter in a grey box trailer. But the friendships made it a grand place.⁴⁹ You learn how to get along with others and develop community spirit by living in Vets Villa or University Park.⁵⁰ Vern Caldwell, manager of Vets Villa, thought that the vets and their wives liked living in the trailers.⁵¹ Mary Ann Lewis wrote a regular column entitled "Trailer Town Talk" in the *Phreno Cosmian*. She had little use and a different opinion of the government supplied trailers. She called them ". . . junk heaps dragged from the defense lot."⁵²

Additionally, USD pressed the Armory into use as a men's dorm, encouraged the fraternities to house more members, and sought members of the Vermillion community to

provide room and board in private homes to university students.⁵³ The Brookings Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored a door to door canvas of all Brookings residents seeking to find rooms for students.⁵⁴

All other areas of college life were as crowded as the trailer villages. The *South Dakota State Collegian* used three metaphors to describe the fall 1946 registration at State: ". . . a three ring circus, rodeo, and five o'clock subway rush hour."⁵⁵ University classrooms and the library were crowded, student cars lined the curb⁵⁶ and class sizes were three to four times as large as the previous year.⁵⁷

Despite serious impediments for either a quality or satisfying educational experience, the GIs did well academically. Longtime Dean of the Law School at USD, Marshall McKusick, "was astounded" by the quality of students supported by the GI Bill who were applying to the law school. "They are earnest and conscientious."⁵⁸ Dr. Arthur Pardee, Dean of the College of Arts and Science at USD commented that the vets are satisfied with their academic programs. They appreciate the liberal arts.⁵⁹ Loyd C. Swenson, a professor at Southern Normal College in Springfield, South Dakota, surveyed 18 State faculty members on the academic performance of the veterans as compared to the non-veterans. Of the 18 faculty, 10 said the vets were better students, four said the non-vets were better students, and four said there was little difference.⁶⁰ An editorial in *The Volante* confirmed Swenson's study on the academic performance of the GIs in Vermillion. The editorial complained that every course now requires more effort, homework, and midnight oil than last year. The vets are good students and working hard. They are forcing competition in the classes and the rest of us must study harder to keep up.⁶¹

Not only did the veterans do well in the classroom, despite age and family obligations, they participated in "regular" campus activities. The Vets Club at SDSC was the newest, largest

and most influential and interacted with the entire student body, not just themselves.⁶² An end of year (1946-47) editorial in the *South Dakota Collegian* commended the vets for their classroom performance, commitment to learning and their great contributions to clubs and the general welfare of South Dakota State College.⁶³ *The Jack Rabbit* expressed similar feelings. In a romantic way the yearbook proclaimed, "Yes, 1946 was a wonderful year with the boys back home."⁶⁴

The 1947 USD Yearbook, *The Coyote*, was dedicated to the veteran students. The writers used superlatives to describe the 1946-47 school year. This was a renaissance year at USD. The veterans awakened the school. Social life and tradition blossomed anew. In all activities, veterans slipped into waiting niches and put new life in extracurricular programs.⁶⁵

With the veterans' academic and extracurricular accomplishments well established, how did they respond to the behavior rules of the three colleges? After seeing the world and fighting in the largest war in history, how did the vets respond to college regulations geared to small town, 18-year old, South Dakota kids? Mary Ann Lewis asked a penetrating question that reflected student behavior and attitudes at Wesleyan. What would the Board of Directors of Wesleyan from 10 years ago think about Trailer Town, crying babies on campus, cigarettes smoked and crushed on the venerable sidewalks of a Methodist institution, and language never heard on the campus of Wesleyan until the GIs returned?⁶⁶ Lewis asked a profound question and pointed out a problem that Wesleyan probably would rather ignore. Some GIs subtly but directly challenged the norms of behavior, especially at Wesleyan, whose behavioral norm for students was shaped by the Methodist Church.

The historical evidence suggests that Methodist or not, the GIs were going to make up their own minds on how to live their lives. This independent spirit caused some problems on the

Wesleyan campus. In November 1949, Professor of Chemistry Dr. Marcus A. Chase (who had a Doctorate of Theology) reported to the board that the student body, for the first time in three years, seems to be the way Wesleyan students ought to be and were in the past.⁶⁷ He did not qualify what he meant. Since the three previous years were mostly made up of veteran students, why was Dr. Chase impressed by this traditional age first year class? Despite the high academic achievement of the GI Bill vets, was his concern over student behavior?

During this same three-year period, dancing, smoking, and drinking became larger issues. Dancing was problematic at Wesleyan for some time. Institutional historian Violet Goering said it contributed to the termination of at least two DWU Presidents. Earl A. Roadman decided to permit on-campus dancing in 1933. This decision created a firestorm among conservative Methodist clergy and became a factor in his resignation in 1936. Leon Sweetland succeeded Roadman and quickly suspended on-campus dancing and imposed strict rules for student conduct. Students rebelled, were defiant, and petitioned the board requesting policy changes. Sweetland resigned. His presidency lasted one year.⁶⁸ One set of conservative pastors led the ouster of Roadman, another set of pastors supported the students against Sweetland.

Twelve years later President Samuel M. Hilburn decided to follow Roadman's path and again permitted social dancing on campus as a means to improve the campus recreational program. Soon after the decision was made, a group of students came to one of the dances after partaking, in the words of the dean, ". . . too freely of some alcoholic beverage . . ." and created a real problem on campus.⁶⁹ The problem of dancing, drinking, and smoking continued. President Hilburn appointed two faculty/student committees on drinking and smoking. He told the board that he now believed the problem of drinking and smoking could be effectively addressed.⁷⁰ Apparently, smoking and drinking was such a problem, it heretofore, could not be effectively

dealt with!! Earlier in his report to the board, Hilburn stated that supervision was more capable in the boys' dorm. "The contrast indeed, with the first year I was here [1946], is so great to be unbelievable."⁷¹

Pulling together the various pieces from primary data suggests significant problems, at least in the eyes of DWU administrators, with alcohol and smoking, and to a lesser extent, dancing. There seems to be an interesting correlation that may say something about how the vets responded to the behavioral expectations at Methodist Wesleyan. When the GIs were most numerous, the administration expressed greater concern about alcohol and smoking in their report to the board. When their numbers diminished, so did administration's concerns for these issues.

A more restrictive Dakota Wesleyan University would have problems with GIs who did not conform to campus behavioral norms. But what is surprising at State and USD is the restrictive policies at that time for women students.

In 1946, at State, a panel discussion was held on women's curfew. The topic was whether curfew for women should be extended on weekends to 1:00 a.m. from the present curfew of midnight. The consensus was that curfew hours should be extended to either Friday or Saturday night, but not both, depending on which night had the most social events.⁷²

All dances and picnics sponsored by any State student club had to be authorized by the administration and be chaperoned by two or more faculty. Dances must conclude by 11:00 p.m. and any off-campus date brought to the dance had to be approved in advance by the administration. Under no circumstances were students to receive visitors of the opposite sex in private rooms – anywhere.⁷³

The University had similar regulations that surprisingly changed little from the late 1930s to the early 1950s. The 1940-41 "Student Handbook of Information" specified that no woman could stay in a house where male students lived. They must register where they were going, the time they left, and when they returned to the dorm during evenings, and had a 10:00 p.m. curfew on weeknights and a midnight curfew on Friday and Saturday. University women could not visit a fraternity house or attend a dance unless an approved chaperone (at least one married faculty member) was present and the activity was approved by the Dean of Women. The only substantive change for women during the decade of the 1940s happened during the 1949-50 school year – the year Al Neuharth graduated from USD. Curfew was extended to 12:30 a.m. on Friday, 1:30 a.m. on Saturday, and 11:00 p.m. on Sunday.⁷⁴

What is glaring about these housing regulations at State and the University throughout the decade of the 1940s is how little change there was. The presence of the GIs did not lead to change in visiting hours in women's dorms, curfew liberalization for women, or more relaxed fraternization between the genders. And, the double standard prevailed. There were few housing regulations, and no curfews, for male students!

Given the different institutional expectations for men and women and the variety of views on appropriate student behavior, State and the University navigated this tension in a creative way. The data suggests a faint and early version of "Don't ask, don't tell." Amy Dunkel in her book, *The College on the Hill: A Sense of South Dakota State University History*, tells the story of a dance at the ag barn during the height of the GIs return to campus. Someone "spiked" the cider, a clear violation of university policy, and another proceeded to give a glass of the "liquid contraband" to the Dean of the College of Agriculture. He liked it so well he went back to the punch bowl several times.⁷⁵ Lee Engen is a member of the famous "44 Kings," a last man

club for which a half-pint of Seagrams Whiskey waits the last person living from the group. This group of 44 State students was called to active duty earlier than expected in March of 1943.

Most returned to State to finish their degrees after the war. Reminiscing about the GIs return to State, Engen credits the administration with being pretty smart. He thinks they purposefully segregated single returning vets in one wing of Scobey Hall and put it off-limits to freshmen and sophomores. Why? Because the vets might leave a bottle of whiskey lying around. Said Engen:

You had to take your hat off to the administration. They were very tolerant of all these veterans. We done things that if you had even thought about 'em before, you would have been kicked out. We set a bar up for dances, we had drinks. But nobody got out of line. There weren't any fights, there wasn't any body who got all boozed up They let us do things we were used to doing.⁷⁶

The evidence from the three schools is clear. The veterans did not challenge campus behavioral standards. This perhaps was due to their recent involvement in military culture. At the same time, they did not conform to college rules either. The historical record is scant on confrontations with administration, disciplinary proceedings or punishment of veterans for violating university rules. The significant number of GI students, their age and experience of war, led State and University officials to "not ask" what they did; the GIs did "not tell" what they did, and for the most part, all got along.

The GI Bill transformed American culture in three unintended ways: by providing greater access to college, by breaking down social barriers prohibiting college attendance, and by enhancing economic opportunity through higher education.

Access to college – Simply put, the most enduring impact of the GI Bill was that it forever changed the notion that a college education was for the social elite. No longer would a college education be defined in terms of social pedigree. For three centuries, college was for

those who came from a select social and economic background or wanted to become a doctor, lawyer, minister, teacher, or nurse.

In the years before the war fewer than 10% of traditional college-age youth (18-24 years of age) attended college. By 1948, 15% did, a 50% increase in a decade. But the significant change was yet to come. By 1970, nearly a third of all college-age youth in America, the children of WWII vets, attended college.⁷⁷ In one generation, the percentage of American youth attending college tripled.

At first glance, who would have thought Neuharth, Opperman or Hall would attend college? Neuharth grew up in a single-parent family. His father died in a farm accident when he was two years old. His mother only went to school through third grade. Opperman's father was a pipefitter on the Milwaukee Railroad who did not finish grammar school. Hall's dad graduated from high school and his mother was a registered nurse. Although Hall was the valedictorian at Parker High School, there was no means to pay for college. Only George McGovern's father, the Rev. Joseph McGovern, was a college graduate.

Neuharth, Opperman, Hall and McGovern knew what they wanted to do – journalism, law, physics and ministry (later a history professor), respectively. The GI Bill provided each of them and their generation, unlike previous generations, the means to accomplish their dreams – at government expense. In the process, the bill changed a three-century precedent of educational expectations in one generation. College was not for the economic elite; it was for the masses.

Social Barriers – A second transforming consequence of the GI Bill was the indirect assault on religious, gender and racial exclusionary admissions policies. A sordid chapter in America's higher education story is the barring of women and African Americans from some private and public universities. Many private colleges had Jewish quotas that intentionally kept

Jewish enrollment low. John Rankin shepherded the House version of the GI Bill through his committee and the House. Later, in conference committee he almost "killed" the bill that he so skillfully navigated through Congress getting every vote! He disagreed with two provisions of the Senate's version of the GI Bill. First, it contained what was called the 52-20 measure, an unemployment compensation provision that provided veterans \$20 a week for 52 weeks if they could not find work. Second, he thought the VA should have administrative oversight of the program. The Senate bill, which The American Legion supported, gave administrative oversight, under VA supervision, to the United States Employment Service. The administrative disagreement belied the real reasons. Rankin opposed unemployment compensation for any veteran but particularly for African American veterans. In Rankin's mind, such provisions, the same for whites and African Americans, would encourage African Americans and the "lazy chisley types of veterans" to remain unemployed for at least a year.

The slight difference of administrative oversight between the House and Senate versions of the GI Bill should not have threatened its very existence. Rankin was too well acquainted with the substance of the bill and in the process of passing a bill through Congress to make this kind of objection so late in the legislative process. The best explanation for his actions seems to be his inability to move beyond his racist views. The Bill was a threat to the "Jim Crow" social order of the South. The bill treated African Americans the same as whites – quite radical at the time.

Under the rules at that time a House/Senate conference committee of seven members from each body was constituted to work through the differences. The bill would die if two provisions were not met. First, a majority of committee members from both the House and Senate conference committee must agree to the language of the bill. Second, a majority of

members from each body must vote for the bill. All seven senators and three from the House voted for the Senate's version of the bill. Three House members voted against it. Although the vote was 10-3 for the Senate's version, it was still deadlocked in the House conference committee 3-3. And, under the rules, unless the deadlock was broken, the GI Bill of Rights would be defeated even though it was unanimously passed by both houses of Congress.

To add even more drama, one member of the House conference committee, Representative John S. Gibson (D-GA), was sick and in southern Georgia when conference committee deliberations were taking place. Before he returned to Georgia he gave John Rankin a proxy vote in favor of the GI Bill regardless of the compromises worked out with the Senate. However, Representative Rankin refused to accept his proxy vote. Despite days of negotiations, positions were entrenched and it looked like the GI Bill was going down to defeat in Conference Committee, at the hands of the man who shepherded it through his own committee and the House. A possible final conference committee meeting was set for 10:00a.m. Saturday, June 10, 1944. Members of the conference committee who favored the bill told Legion representatives that they did not believe they could long hold their coalition together past the Saturday meeting. The deadlock continued and by 6:00 p.m. on June 9, 1944, the decision was made to find Representative Gibson and bring him to Washington for the 10:00 meeting the next morning.

Literally, an all points bulletin was issued to locate Representative John Gibson somewhere in south Georgia. By enlisting the help of friendly newspaper editors; telephone operators, one whose husband landed at Normandy a few days before and wanted to find Gibson so he could cast his vote to pass the GI bill for her husband; radio station announcers; the Georgia state police; and Eastern Airlines officials, he was found! He literally was whisked away to a waiting plane in Jacksonville, Florida, bound for Washington, D.C. He arrived in the

nations' capital at 6:30 a.m. and walked into the conference committee meeting at 10:00 a.m. Blisteringly mad, he complained that congressional courtesy was thwarted by not counting his affirmative proxy vote for the bill. He threatened to hold a press conference after the vote and expose anyone who did not vote for the GI Bill of Rights. The vote was quickly taken. It passed unanimously. The logjam was broken. On June 12, 1944, the Senate approved the GI Bill of Rights unanimously, the House gave its unanimous approval on June 13, and President Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944.⁷⁸

There were no "Jim Crow" restrictions, Jewish quotas, or gender restrictions in the bill. If a soldier or sailor qualified, Uncle Sam paid benefits.

It is a stretch to suggest that the GI Bill eliminated Jewish admission quotas at Ivy League schools, opened the universities of Mississippi and Alabama to African Americans, or was a harbinger to 1960s feminism. The bill, however, sent a subtle but direct, social message. Equal benefits were provided for all who qualified, regardless of religion, gender, or race.

Because of the GI Bill, African American land grant colleges almost doubled in enrollment between 1940 and 1950. And between 1930 and 1950 the number of African American college students almost quadrupled. From the distance of six decades, this enrollment growth was fueled by the "color-blind" nature of the GI Bill even when major American universities continued racial exclusionary admissions practices! Despite high levels of poverty, under-funded schools, and inadequate health care, the African American vets did well in both the black and predominantly white universities.

Opportunity – Al Neuharth graduated from the University of South Dakota in 1950. He became a journalist extraordinaire. In 1989 he ended his career as CEO and chairman of

Gannett, the largest newspaper company in America. He founded *USA Today*, the most widely read, and arguably, most imitated newspaper in America. He retired a multimillionaire – "the butcher boy" from Alpena, who cut meat to help pay his way through his first year in college – before the GI Bill.

Dwight Opperman left Dakota Wesleyan University in 1948 to go to law school at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. He graduated in 1951 and began his career at West Publishing in St. Paul, Minnesota that same year. He worked for West his entire career, retiring as both CEO and chairman of the company. He sold West in 1996 making himself and others a fortune.

George McGovern left seminary after the 1946-47 school year and walked across the street, taking his GI Bill benefits with him to begin work on his Ph.D. in history at Northwestern University. He returned to Dakota Wesleyan University as a professor and launched his political career. He was a Congressman and Senator from South Dakota and the Democratic Party's 1972 candidate for President.

Harold Hall earned three degrees in physics through the GI Bill – his B.S. from South Dakota State College, a master's degree from the University of Oregon, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. He worked with Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb, on designing that hydrogen bomb. He finished his career as a vice president for Xerox. Along the way he tried to help Xerox PARC, the research and development arm of Xerox, bring the personal computer and Ethernet (Internet) to commercial application.

In 1964 Cyril F. Brickfield, Deputy Administrator of Veterans Affairs in the Veterans Administration, estimated the total cost of the education and training provision of the GI Bill for both WWII and Korean War Veterans at \$19 billion. By the mid-1960s, 20 years after the inception of the GI Bill, the Departments of Labor and Commerce estimated that the GIs who

took advantage of the educational benefits paid \$20 billion in additional taxes to the federal government due to better paying jobs courtesy of the GI Bill.⁷⁹

Within 20 years, beneficiaries of the GI Bill already paid back more to the public treasury than the government paid out to fund the GI Bill! In 1964, Opperman and Neuharth were not CEOs of their companies, McGovern was a first-term Senator and not yet a candidate for president, and Hall was not yet at Xerox. The best earning years of these four men, as well as most of the other GIs who went to college on the GI Bill, were still ahead. Clearly, this bill actually produced money for the federal government.

Why was the GI Bill of Rights so popular and successful? One among a number of reasons was that the individual, not the government or college, decided what was best for him or her. Federal law set the rules and standards and provided the means. It did not tell the GI what to study or where to attend school. The GI could choose the university that best met his or her needs. It was governmental assistance without governmental regulation for either the individual or the institution. The GI Bill paid for careers as diverse as journalism, physics, politics, ministry, and law. GIs could attend institutions as diverse as Dakota Wesleyan University, the University of South Dakota, Garrett Biblical Institute, Drake University, Northwestern University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Wisconsin.

Public Law 346, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the GI Bill of Rights, is a classic federal bureaucracy success story. Four GIs from the Mitchell, South Dakota, area could choose the university and career that was best for them. Uncle Sam, who sent them to war, picked up the tab for their individual educational choice, and the individuals themselves, the universities they attended, the United States economy, and our social communities shared in the wealth of this investment.⁸⁰

Endnotes

¹ Al Neuharth, "Cynics, Skeptics, Free Press, Fair Press," Dedication address, Al Neuharth Media Center, Vermillion: The University of South Dakota, September 25, 2003.

² Al Neuharth interview by Robert G. Duffett, May 13, 2004. Harold Hall interview by Robert G. Duffett, May 19, 2004. George McGovern interview by Robert G. Duffett, May 27, 2004. Dwight Opperman interview by Robert G. Duffett, May 25, 2004. I possess copies of these interviews. Other primary and secondary biographical information on these men include: Al Neuharth, Confession of an S.O.B. Arlington: Newseum, 1989. Harold Hershey Hall, An Autobiography Freeman, South Dakota: Pine Hill Press, 1995. George McGovern, Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern New York: Random House, 1977. Robert Anson, McGovern: A Biography. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1972. The West Reporter Volume 34, Number 11, November 1988. Dwight D. Opperman: 20 Years of Leadership. St Paul: West Publishing, 1988. Annual Report of the American Judicature Society, 2002.

³ The Volante, November 19, 1948, p. 3. Student newspaper of the University of South Dakota. I. D. Weeks to Paul Dickensheet, August 8, 1947. USD Archives. President Series, I. D. Weeks. Box 60. File: Veterans.

Violet M. Goering, Dakota Wesleyan University: Century I (Freeman, South Dakota: Pine Hill Press, 1996), 125.

Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the Regents of Education of the State of South Dakota to the Governor, V. 29, 1944-46, P. 6. South Dakota State University Archives.

Howard J. Kramer. South Dakota State University: A History 1884 to 1975 (Brookings: South Dakota State University, 1975), 90-91.

⁴ Cedric Cummins, The University of South Dakota: 1862-1966 (Vermillion: Dakota Press, 1975), 312. I. D. Weeks to Paul Dickensheet, August 8, 1947.

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Thirtieth Biennial Report of the Regents of Education of the State of South Dakota to the Governor, V. 30, 1946-48, p. 17-20. South Dakota State University Archives.

⁵ Cummings, The University of South Dakota, pp. 247, 312.

Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, November 20, 1945, p. 507.

Thirtieth Biennial Report to the Governor, pp. 17, 20.

⁶ Cummings, The University of South Dakota, p. 237.

⁷ South Dakota Collegian, October 3, 1945, p. 1. Student newspaper of South Dakota State College.

⁸ Phreno Cosmian, May 23, 1943, p. 2. Student newspaper of Dakota Wesleyan University.

⁹ Cummins, The University of South Dakota, 247.

The Volante, November 19, 1948, p. 3.

Minutes of DWU Board of Directors Meeting, November 20, 1945, p. 507.

Thirtieth Biennial Report to the Governor, pp. 17-20.

¹⁰ South Dakota Collegian, December 6, 1944, p. 1.

¹¹ Ibid., April 25, 1945, p. 2.

¹² Kramer, South Dakota State University: A History, p. 96.

¹³ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, November 20, 1945, p. 508.

¹⁴ Throughout this paper I use the terms GIs, vets, and veterans as synonyms. These terms refer to all 14 million plus soldiers and sailors who The American Legion, Congress, and the Administration had in mind as they crafted the GI Bill of Rights.

¹⁵ Frank T. Hines, "Education and Rehabilitation of Returning Veterans with Special Reference to the Provisions of Public Laws 16 and 346," Journal of Educational Sociology 19 (October 1944): 73-80.

¹⁶ The Official Register of Harvard University states that tuition was \$200 per session in both 1944 and 1945. Then, Harvard was on a trimester system. Total cost of attending Harvard was between \$820 and \$1,350 per year. This included two full semesters of tuition (\$200 per semester), lodging, board, and medical and infirmary fees. The Register itself lists both a 'low' and 'average' cost estimate of attending, hence the difference in the above figures. A Harvard student who qualified for the GI Bill would be given up to \$500 for tuition, books, and expenses and up to \$75 a month subsistence allowance. The total benefit would be \$1,400, more than enough to pay for the 'average' not the 'low' cost of attending the university. The above figures

are from of The Official Register of Harvard University, Vol.XLII, No.14, June 16, 1945. Cambridge: Published by Harvard University: 7.

¹⁷ Throughout this paper I use the term Legion to refer to the American Legion organization.

¹⁸ Keith W. Olson, "The GI Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," American Quarterly 25 (December, 1973): 596-610.

¹⁹ Clark Kerr, "Expanding Access and Changing Missions: The Federal Role in U.S. Higher Education," The Educational Record (Fall 1994): 27-31.

²⁰ The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ed. Samuel I. Rosenman, 1943 volume, The Tide Turns (New York: Harper and Brothers 1950) 333.

²¹ Hines, "Education and Rehabilitation of Returning Veterans with Special Reference to the Provisions of Public Laws 16 and 346": 73.

²² United States Congress, House Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation. 78th Congress. Second Session. Hearings on H.R. 3817 and S. 1767, March 30, 1944 (Washington: GPO, 1944):396.

²³ Olson, "The GI Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," 598.

²⁴ "The Management Poll," Fortune 35 (February 1947): 34.

²⁵ David Camelon, "I Saw the GI Bill Written: The Fight for Mustering Out Pay," Part I, The American Legion Magazine, 47, (September 1949): 47. Camelon was a Washington correspondent for the Hearst Newspapers assigned by William Randolph Hearst to report about the passage of the GI Bill.

²⁶ IBID.,12-13. See also Thomas A. Rumer, The American Legion: An Official History: 1919-1989. New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1990: 243-248.

²⁷ IBID.,47.

²⁸ Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, vol.3, The Great Depression: 1929-1941 (New York; The Macmillan Company, 1952), 229-230.

²⁹ David Kennedy, Over Here: The First World War and American Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 363.

³⁰ Camelon, "I Saw the GI Bill Written," Part I: 47.

³¹ Omar B. Ketchum et al. to Senator Bennett C. Clark, Chair of the Veterans' Subcommittee to the Senate Finance Committee, 16 February 1944. Cited in David Camelon, "I Saw the GI Bill Written: A Surprise Attack," Part 2, The American Legion Magazine, 47, (October, 1949): 19. Ketchum, Chief Capitol Hill Lobbyist for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, later became an enthusiastic supporter of the American Legion GI Bill of Rights. He led the VFW in working side by side with the American Legion to secure passage of the GI Bill. Paul G. Wolman, VFW Commander-in-Chief during 1930-31 and a member of the Jewish War Veterans said that history was made with the unity of The American Legion with the Veterans of Foreign Wars in order to secure passage of the GI Bill of Rights. See Herbert M. Mason, "Rallying the Home Front: VFW and the GI Bill" Veterans of Foreign Wars Magazine, June/July, 1999, 12-18.

³² James B. Conant, "Annual Report of the President of the University," January 10, 1944; The Official Register of Harvard University, 41(September 28, 1944):5-26. "Annual Report of the President of the University," January 8, 1945; The Official Register of Harvard University, 44(July 7, 1947):5-23. "Annual Report of the President of Harvard University," January 14, 1946; The Official Register of Harvard University, 45(December 1, 1948):5-26."Annual Report of the President of the University," January 13, 1947; The Official Register of Harvard University, 45(May 20, 1948):5-31. By 1947 President Conant had a different view about the GI Bill. In his Annual Report he praised the academic quality of those Harvard students supported by the GI Bill. In terms of intellectual ability and force of character, Conant said, we have never had such a student body. Seriousness of academic purpose and intensity of effort is a matter of daily comment. Conant was long concerned about encouraging America's "best and brightest" to become university professors. He knew that business, law, medicine, and ministry would attract sufficient talent to their professions. He was less sanguine about university teaching. If America generally and Harvard specifically could not attract enough qualified candidates to university teaching, then higher education throughout the country would teeter. In 1947 Conant observed that the generous financial provisions of the GI Bill attracted many of Harvard's "best and brightest" to the Ph.D. tract and eventual careers as university teachers. He speculated that universities would have to increase the numbers and size of scholarships for Ph.D. study to attract the same caliber of students now in graduate school at Harvard because of the GI Bill. From viewing the GI Bill as "distressing" to saying that it brought to Harvard its best student body and seeing it as a model and incentive to attract able candidates to the Ph.D. program and eventually to university teaching, Conant went from critic of the GI Bill to cheerleader.

³³ Robert M. Hutchins, "The Threat to American Education," Collier's, 114 (December 30, 1944):21.

³⁴ Camelon, "I Saw the GI Bill Written," Part 2: 51.

³⁵ Olson, "The GI Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," 601.

³⁶ Kenneth A. Simon and W. Vance Grant, Digest of Educational Statistics 1968 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968): 68. See also, U.S., Congress, House, *The*

President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions, A Report on Veterans' Benefits In the United States, Staff Report IX, Part B: Readjustment Benefits: Education And Training, And Employment And Unemployment, 84th Congress. Second Session. 1956, H. Print 291, p. 26. See also, Olson, "The G.I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," 602.

³⁷ Olson, "The GI Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," 602.

³⁸ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, May 24, 1943, p. 459.

³⁹ Phreno Cosmian, November 24, 1940, p. 1.

Tumbleweed, Yearbook of Dakota Wesleyan University, 1940, p. 56.

⁴⁰ Phreno Cosmian, March 24, 1947, p. 1.

⁴¹ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, May 27, 1946, p. 527.

⁴² Presidential Series, I. D. Weeks. USD Archives, Box 60. File: Veterans and Veterans Hospital.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, May 22, 1944, pp. 487-88.

⁴⁵ Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report to the Governor, pp. 60-61.

⁴⁶ The Volante, November 3, 1945, p. 1.

Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, December 18, 1945, p. 516.

South Dakota Collegian, October 3, 1945, p. 4.

⁴⁷ The Volante, November 3, 1945, p. 1, and February 17, 1946, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Gordon Rollins interview by Robert G. Duffett, July 21, 2005. I possess a written copy of the interview.

⁴⁹ The Volante, November 28, 1947, p. 4.

⁵⁰ The Coyote, The 1947 yearbook of the University of South Dakota, p. 56.

⁵¹ The Volante, December 11, 1945, p. 1.

⁵² Phreno Cosmian, October 3, 1947, p. 3.

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- ⁵³ Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report to the Governor, pp. 60-61.
- ⁵⁴ South Dakota Collegian, March 13, 1946, p. 6.
- ⁵⁵ South Dakota Collegian, October 2, 1946, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ The Coyote, 1947, pp. 4-5.
- ⁵⁷ The Volante, October 8, 1946, p. 2.
- ⁵⁸ Thirtieth Biennial Report to the Governor, p. 58.
- ⁵⁹ Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report to the Governor, p. 45.
- ⁶⁰ South Dakota Collegian, May 28, 1947, p. 2.
- ⁶¹ The Volante, November 8, 1946, p. 2.
- ⁶² The Collegian, April 16, 1947, p. 2.
- ⁶³ Ibid., May 28, 1947, p. 2.
- ⁶⁴ The Jack Rabbit, The 1946 yearbook of South Dakota State College, pp. 6-7.
- ⁶⁵ The Coyote, 1947, pp. 4-5.
- ⁶⁶ Phreno Cosmian, November 3, 1947, p. 3.
- ⁶⁷ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, November 15, 1949, p. 2.
- ⁶⁸ Goering, Dakota Wesleyan University, p. 52.
- ⁶⁹ Minutes of the DWU Board of Directors Meeting, May 29, 1950, pp. 45-46.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 52.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² The Collegian, February 19, 1946, p. 1.
- ⁷³ South Dakota State College Student Handbook, 1939-40, pp. 20-21. South Dakota State University Archives.
- ⁷⁴ Student Handbook of Information: 1940-41, The University of South Dakota, pp. 57-58.

Student Handbook of Information: 1949-50, The University of South Dakota, p. 36.

⁷⁵ Amy Dunkle, The College on the Hill: A Sense of South Dakota State University History, Sioux Falls, Pine Hill Press, 2003, p. 344.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Historical Statistics of the United States, 2 volumes (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975): 383.

⁷⁸ This fascinating story about Democracy, House and Senate rules and traditions, racism, the importance of one vote and how a popular bill was almost defeated, is told in great detail by an eyewitness to the events. See David Camelon, "I Saw the GI Bill Written: The Wild Ride From Georgia," Part III, The American Legion Magazine, 47, (November, 1949): 18, 19: 43-48

⁷⁹ United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Veterans' Administration. 89th Congress. First Session. 10 August 1965, 19848. Cyril F. Brickfield, "The GI Bill Paid Off," Employment Service Review, Department of Labor, (June, July 1965).

⁸⁰ I would like to thank the following people who helped me find the primary data used in this paper. Their help was immeasurable. Thanks to Laurie Langland, DWU University Archivist; Jodie Barker, DWU Public Services Librarian; Gayla Koerting, USD Special Collections Librarian; Crystal Gamradt, SDSU Archivist; and Stephen Van Buren, SDSU University Archivist.