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State Historical Society notes 100th anniversary of Gen. Beadle Statue in Capitol

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota State Historical Society notes that Nov. 27 marks the 100th Anniversary of the unveiling of the Gen. William Henry Harrison Beadle statue in the South Dakota State Capitol.

The Beadle statue currently stands in the eastern hallway of the second floor of the State Capitol.

In 1909, the state Legislature resolved that a marble statue of Gen. W.H.H. Beadle, “Father of South Dakota Public School System,” be placed in the Capitol at Pierre. The South Dakota Education Association sponsored the drive to collect money for the proposed statue.

South Dakota schoolchildren throughout the state donated nickels and pennies for the sculpture, and the resulting fund drive raised about \$4,600, which more than covered the purchase and installation of the statue.

The sculptor chosen for the Beadle statue was H. Daniel Webster. Webster was commissioned to produce a number of works throughout the United States and was seen at the time as an up-and-coming American sculptor.

The Pierre *Daily Capital Journal* reported nearly 1,500 people, including Gen. Beadle, attended the unveiling ceremony at the State Capitol on Nov. 27, 1911. The Capitol City Orchestra played at the event, and Pierre First Congregational Church Rev. O.O. Smith gave an invocation.

State Historical Society Director Doane Robinson gave a report on the funds collected for the statue, and Prof. George M. Smith of the University of South Dakota gave an address titled, “The Work and Place of the Teacher of Modern Life.” Miss Kathryn French, of Elk Point, and Mrs. Mae (Beadle) Frick, a daughter of Gen. Beadle, drew aside the two large American flags covering the statue.

William Henry Harrison Beadle was born in a log cabin in Parke County, Ind., on Jan. 1, 1838, to James and Elizabeth (Bright) Beadle. He received his civil engineering degree from the University of Michigan in 1861. A Civil War veteran, President Grant appointed Beadle as U.S. Surveyor General for Dakota Territory in 1869.

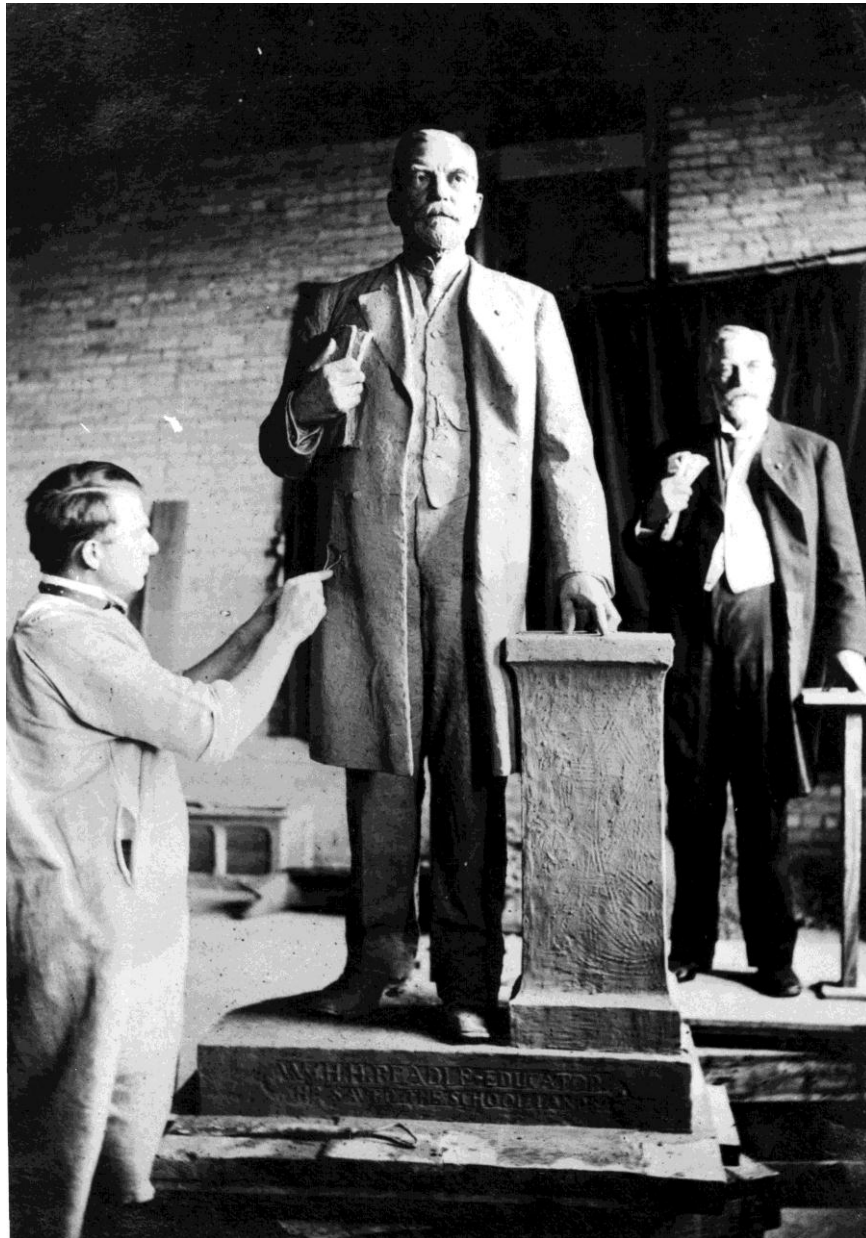
Beadle wrote the *Codes of Dakota*, served in the 1877 Territorial Legislature, and Gov. W.A. Howard appointed him in 1879 as superintendent of public instruction.

Beadle wrote the section in the South Dakota Constitution assuring that no school land could be sold for less than \$10 an acre. He was elected the first president of the SDEA and later became president of the Madison State Normal School (now Dakota State University) in 1889, holding that position for 16 years.

Beadle died on Nov. 13, 1915, in San Francisco, and is buried at Riverside Cemetery in Albion, Mich.

In 1937, a bronze replica of Webster's sculpture of Beadle became the first statue of a South Dakotan in the National Statuary Hall at the nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Caption: H. Daniel Webster stands next to the clay and plaster model of General William Henry Harrison Beadle, who is posing at right in the basement of the original Washington High School in Sioux Falls. The Tennessee marble statue was placed in the State Capitol in November 1911. (Photo courtesy of the South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives)



The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.