

EDITOR'S CORNER

The articles in this issue of *Heritage of the Great Plains* present interesting insights into a variety of cultural and natural forces— economic, military, and meteorological—that have affected life on the plains. Most of us think of the 1930s, with its combination of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, as one of the most trying times for inhabitants of the plains, but severe economic downturns have recurred often in plains history, in many cases in conjunction with drought. Kevin Sweeney's article tells of the time when the plains were still unsettled by Euro-Americans, and the nomadic native peoples could cope with drought by following game and seeking water holes. Ironically, in the later nineteenth century it was the white settlers who were forced by drought to become somewhat nomadic as they abandoned homesteads to return to the east while the federal government provided aid to help the Indians settled on reservations, whose hunting grounds and mobility had been greatly diminished. In the 1930s it was generally federal aid from the New Deal that helped plainsdwellers keep going, although, as Amy Helene Forss points out, there were occasional instances when private enterprise and communities combined their efforts for mutual survival.

If one argues that the Little Big Horn was the climax of what Nebraska poet John Neihardt called "the battle for the bison pastures," then the denouement is surely the massacre at Wounded Knee. Hugh Reilly's article looks into contemporary press coverage of the Ghost Dance, a movement born of cultural desperation, that provided the setting and the occasion for Wounded Knee. From the perspective of over a century later, it is fascinating to see how differently two newspapers from a major plains city covered the story—and to consider the effect of the press on public attitudes toward military conflict in general. Pacifism during a time of war-fueled patriotism, especially a conflict such as World War II, can present a dilemma. Is it right to conscientiously object to military service when the nation itself faces a genuine threat to its survival? Nicolas A. Krehbiel's article gives us an often overlooked perspective, that the alternative service of conscientious objectors could result in benefits to society that complemented the sacrifices made by those who served in the military.