

# VIDEO SCRIPT

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**TITLE: Stories From The Skies**

**SERIES: Dakota Pathways: A History**

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**PRODUCER: Jim Sprecher**

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**SCRIPT NUMBER: 2**

**DATE: September 14, 2003**

**V I S U A L**

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**A U D I O**

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1. OPEN MONTAGE (:20) Kids at Cultural Center with guide
2. WS: Car traveling down country road...white clouds, blue sky.
3. WS: Airliner taking off into beautiful sky over Sioux Falls.
4. WS: Treeless sky
5. DISSOLVE TO: Harvey Dunn painting with beautiful sky.
6. WS Low Angle: Cathedral spires in Sioux Falls.
7. WS: Crazy Horse Memorial in Custer, against skies.
8. XCU: Rain on young corn crop.
9. XCU: Rain on puddle with cloudy sky reflection on water.
10. WS: Tornado tearing up land.
11. WS: Lightening from storm clouds.
12. MS: Pheasant flying up into pretty sky.
13. MS: Bi-plane doing aerial stunts.
14. WS: Brooding but colorful sunset.
15. MONTAGE: Sky shots, fast moving clouds, ending in time-lapse sunrise.

NAT SOUND UP AND UNDER  
MUSIC UP.  
MUSIC UNDER  
NARRATOR:  
No matter where you travel in South Dakota...  
...no matter how you travel, you can't help noticing the sky.  
On the treeless prairies, the sky looks immense.  
That's why South Dakota artists have painted it big and colorful.  
The sky serves as a backdrop for our most inspiring buildings  
and monuments.  
From the skies have come both life-giving rains...  
and life-threatening dangers.  
South Dakota skies deliver sport...  
stories...  
and mysteries.  
MUSIC UP AND UNDER

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16. DISSOLVE TO: Photo of Black Elk.

NARRATOR:

A holy man of the Oglala people—Black Elk—described meeting spirits from the sky.

17. PHOTO MONTAGE: Curtis Collection of Medicine men or other appropriate images/artwork

VOICE OF "BLACK ELK":

"...and these two men were coming from the clouds, head-first like arrows...each now carried a long spear, and from the points of these a jagged lightning flashed."

18. MS: Sun beams through after-storm clouds. (Very mystical) (Note: If could be Bear Butte or Black Hills all the better.)

NARRATOR:

Black Elk said he himself was carried into the sky on a cloud, so he could gain understanding from the spirit world.

19. MONTAGE: Bear Butte against moody clouds and sky.

South Dakota skies have inspired religious thinking for as long as people can remember. What we call Bear Butte, the Cheyenne people call Noaha-voose, and the Oglala and other Lakota speaking people call Mato Paha. It is holy to many American Indian people. Cheyenne religion tells of a man named Sweet Medicine who climbed Noaha-voose long ago, up toward the sky, and met the Creator.

20. AERIAL SHOTS Bear Butte at Sunset.

21. POP-UP FACT: "The Cheyenne name, Noaha-voose, means 'where people are taught.' In Lakota, Mato Paha means 'Bear Mountain because it looks like a sleeping bear.'"

22. Pop-up Fact: "Noaha-voose", Bear Butte in English, rises from the western South Dakota prairies."

23. DISSOLVE TO: CU Bookshelf with early South Dakota titles: "Giants In The Earth," "Son of The Middle Border," "Little House On The Prairie"

In a similar way, South Dakota skies inspired the state's earliest authors. Some said the sky here was so big and overpowering that it made people feel small and lonely. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote the curve of a prairie sky is like the inside of a bowl.

24. CU: PHOTO: Laura Ingalls Wilder at 60+ years old

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25. WS: Autumn sky
26. MWS: Flock of geese flying through autumn sky.
27. CU: Book Cover "Little House" book
28. POP-UP FACT: "Laura Ingalls Wilder is best known for her "Little House" books."
29. ON CAMERA: Kent Meyers against a nice sky, reading his own words.
30. WS: 9 year old boy (follows storyline)
31. MS: Black clouds rising.
32. WS: Tornado bearing down across the plains.

- VOICE OF "Laura Ingalls Wilder":
- "The sky downturned a brazen bowl above me,  
And clanging with the calls of wild gray geese,  
Winging their way into the distant southland  
To 'scape the coming storms in rest and peace."
- NARRATOR:
- Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote that poem in 1930. Modern South Dakota authors also describe the sky. Authors like Kent Meyers.
- KENT MEYERS ON CAMERA:
- "When I was about nine years old I was pounding nails in the lumber pile fifty yards from the house when something..."
- KENT MEYERS VOICE OVER:
- ...an overbearing silence, a quality of light, a dash of cold air against my neck—caused me to glance up. I saw a black cloud looming behind the grove on the western horizon, perspective eliminated by its size, distance swallowed by its speed. I dropped my hammer and ran."
- NARRATOR:
- And sometimes, in South Dakota, there's good reason to run from the sky.
- NAT SOUND UP AND UNDER

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33. MAP OR ANIMATION  
GRAPHIC: Tornado Alley

34. POP-UP FACT: "South Dakota averages 30 tornadoes per year. Not all touch down or do damage"

35. WS: Storm Clouds forming thunderhead

36. CU: FUNNEL CLOUD or animated graphic.

37. WS: Tornado tearing up buildings.

38. MS: Storm Cellar (photo or real)

39. PHOTO MONTAGE: State Historical Society's photos of the 1884 tornado

40. PHOTO MONTAGE: of tornadoes and damage from the later storms.

41. WS: Trucking shot of Spencer Tornado damage.

42. MS: People at clean-up of Spencer or other footage.

43. POP-UP FACT: "The average tornado travels 16 miles, leaving a path of destruction a quarter mile wide."

44. ON CAMERA: NWS REP.

NARRATOR:

Right up the middle of the United States is an area known as Tornado Alley, where tornadoes can happen most any time during summer months. South Dakota sits on the north end of Tornado Alley, and within our state, the Aberdeen area has seen the most storms of this type. Also called cyclones, or twisters, tornadoes usually develop along with thunderstorms.

The tornado itself is wind spinning in a circle, creating a funnel.

The best way to escape a tornado is to get underground. In the days before most homes had basements, South Dakotans dug storm cellars so they could escape tornadoes.

One of South Dakota's most famous, most spectacular tornadoes, and among the first anywhere to be photographed, developed near Huron and moved toward Sioux Falls in 1884—killing people and animals and destroying buildings along the way. Other big, killer twisters hit Brookings in 1918, and the towns of Bath, Florence, and Wilmot in 1944. In recent years, the towns of Chester, Pine Ridge and Spencer, have been devastated by tornadoes.

But in every case, those places have bounced back. People decided to rebuild, always helped by volunteers from neighboring towns.

While tornadoes spring up quickly, we're lucky to live in a time when there are ways to predict them, and to alert people.

NWS REPRESENTATIVE ON CAMERA:

(Brief description of modern systems for predicting, detecting, and tracking tornadoes, and for warning the public.)

**V I S U A L**

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- 45. PHOTO and LIVE ACTION  
MONTAGE: Dust bowl years  
Drought
- 46. XCU Macro shot Grasshoppers  
on leaves eating.
- 47. MONTAGE CONT. Sandstorms
- 48. MONTAGE CONT.  
Grasshoppers
- 49. XCU Macro shot grasshoppers  
eating leaves.
- 50. PHOTO MONTAGE: People  
leaving the state, heading west  
in their old cars and pick-ups,  
ala "Grapes of Wrath"
- 51. WS of healthy modern  
farmlands.
- 52. WS: Aircraft in motion, from  
different eras.
- 53. WS: Bi-plane aerobatic airplane  
flies in over green  
croplands...does loop the  
loops.
- 54. CU: Young boy on farm,  
perhaps lying on ground  
looking up to the skies.
- 55. WS: Bi-plane continues loop the  
loops.

NARRATOR:

Tornadoes are not the greatest challenges to ever drop from the South Dakota skies.

The 1930s were the state's toughest years, and it seemed like all the problems started in the sky. First, no rain came. Farm lands dried up and turned to dust.

Wind whipped all that dust into great, black clouds in the skies. Dust fell back to earth like snow, burying fences and roads.

The sky filled with clouds of hungry grasshoppers. The grasshoppers landed, and in some parts of South Dakota, ate away every bit of plant life.

Between dust and bugs, many farmers and ranchers were driven off the land.

Those who stayed invented ways to keep soil healthy, and less likely to blow away into the sky.

NAT SOUND UP AND UNDER

There have always been South Dakota kids who've dreamed of soaring into the sky. And plenty have grown up to do just that—as adventurers, as scientific explorers, and as fighter pilots.

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**V I S U A L**

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56. PHOTO MONTAGE: Clyde Ice, and any representative film footage of old-time aerial daredevils.
57. POP-UP FACT: "Cropdusters spray crops with chemicals that kill insects and weeds."
58. Shots of Clyde Ice in later years.

59. Photo of Nellie Willhite in her flight helmet.
60. POP-UP FACT: "Nellie was 11 when Orville and Wilbur Wright invented airplane flight, at North Carolina in 1903."
61. Photo of a freight wagon dissolving into a 1920s era plane.

62. Explorer II

63. Stratobowl.

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**A U D I O**

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**NARRATOR:**

One of the first was Clyde Ice, a true South Dakota adventurer. In the year 1919 he traded two used cars for a small airplane. He made a name for himself at air shows across the country with stunts like walking on his plane's wings as it flew, leaping from one plane to another in flight, or hanging from a rope ladder. He's thought to be South Dakota's first crop duster, and he started an early airline that moved people and mail. Many times he flew emergency flights into terrible weather, rescuing people stranded by blizzards, or dropping food to them. Despite taking risks few other pilots would consider, Clyde Ice never injured himself or a passenger in 62 years of flying. He lived to be 103 years old.

Nellie Willhite, who in 1928 became the first woman licensed as a pilot in South Dakota, lost her hearing at age two. That didn't stop her from flying. Nellie's father made his living moving goods by freight wagon. Nellie's job was moving goods and people through the air.

In 1935, two explorers won worldwide attention for a scientific flight aboard Explorer II, an Army Air Corps balloon.

The balloon was launched from here, the Stratobowl, a huge natural hole in the ground near Rapid City. The Stratobowl shielded the balloon from winds as it was prepared for lift-off.

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**V I S U A L**


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64. Shots of Anderson and Stevens, Explorer II in flight, newspaper headlines, the football helmets (they're displayed at Ellsworth), and the National Geographic photo they took showing the curve of the Earth.

65. Map showing White Lake in relation to Stratobowl.

66. War headlines, from SD newspapers. Photos of the bases at Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

67. Women flight instructors, and shots of Violet Cowden.

68. POP-UP FACT: "Many years later, just for fun, Violet parachuted from a plane for the first time—at age 74."

69. Foss and McGovern as they appeared during the war, and as they were later in life.

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**A U D I O**


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NARRATOR:

A little after seven in the morning on November 11, 1935, Explorer II rose. In the balloon's gondola were one ton of scientific equipment, and pilots Orville Anderson and Albert Stevens. The Army Air Corps didn't have flight helmets, so the two men wore football helmets from a Rapid City high school. They sailed nearly 14 miles straight up. Nobody had ever been that high before, and no one would reach those heights again for 21 years. Anderson and Stevens took a photo that showed the curve of our round planet, the first time anyone had ever seen that.

Eight hours and thirteen minutes after launch, Anderson and Stevens landed Explorer II safely near White Lake, South Dakota. Some historians consider that flight the beginning of America's space exploration.

Six years later, the United States entered the Second World War, and South Dakotans went into military service at a rate unequaled by any other state. Some fought the war in the sky. Special air fields for war planes and their pilots were built near Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

Flying planes during World War Two wasn't just men's work. Women were flight instructors at Black Hills Airport, outside Spearfish, and they prepared flyers for war missions. South Dakotan Violet Cowden flew new planes from factories to where ever they were needed for the war. She could fly 19 different types of planes.

Two South Dakotans who were World War Two flyers came home and became very successful political leaders. Joe Foss was elected governor. George McGovern was elected to Congress and the Senate.

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70. Photos of Don Smith—see March-April 2002 issue of South Dakota Magazine.
71. POP-UP FACT: "The Doolittle Raid happened four months after Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
72. POP-UP FACT: The Doolittle Raid, on April 18, 1942, was the first time American planes bombed Japan."
73. ONLINE LINK: SD WWII Memorial?
74. War memorials, and the B-1 or other jets at Ellsworth.
75. Images of NASA flights over the years.
76. Black and white image of Mercury or Gemini spacecraft taking off.
77. Rocket launch with sound. (NASA)
78. Shots of Charles Gemar in the 1990s.
79. POP-UP FACT: "Astronaut Gemar was born in Yankton in 1955. He grew up at Scotland, South Dakota and graduated from high school there in 1973."

## NARRATOR:

Don Smith, was one of those who didn't return home from the war. He died in a war-time plane crash, but not before becoming a true hero. Born at Oldham, he grew up in Belle Fourche, and was one of 16 American pilots who flew a daring, famous mission called the Doolittle Raid, in April, 1942.

Everyone who flew planes—or prepared others to fly or took care of the planes—is represented by one of the figures at South Dakota's World War Two Memorial, in Pierre.

South Dakota flyers have been part of every American war since planes were invented, and some of the most advanced war planes have been flown from Ellsworth Air Force Base, just east of the Black Hills.

## MUSIC UP AND UNDER

## NAT SOUND UP AND UNDER

In the early 1960s, the United States manned space program took off—picking up where Anderson and Stevens of Explorer II left things 25 years earlier. Only now it wasn't balloons headed toward space.

Charles Gemar became the first South Dakotan in space on November 15, 1990. He was one of five astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis that day, and he and his crew stayed in space for five days, circling the Earth 80 times. Gemar returned to space on other Shuttle missions, in 1991 and 1994.

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- 80. Exterior and interior EROS shots.
- 81. POP-UP FACT: Something about how many millions of photos have been processed at EROS the past 30 years.
- 82. EROS worker and shots of other personnel at work.
- 83. Modern planes—large and small.
- 84. Airliners, private planes, Sioux Falls airport, a small-town airport,
- 85. Fed-Ex plane,
- 86. air ambulance. Or MedEvac helicopter.
- 87. Modern Cropduster
- 88. Bomber dumping slurry on forest fire.
- 89. Hot Shots jumping over fire.
- 90. ON CAMERA: Hot Shot
- 91. B-roll Hot Shots at work.
- 92. Aerial views from over the state.

But being part of America's space program doesn't always mean traveling there. The Earth Resources Observation System north of Sioux Falls is usually called by its initials: EROS. It has been the national center for receiving photographs beamed to Earth from satellites in space since 1972.

EROS WORKER:  
(Female—Describes the kinds of images that are beamed down to EROS, and how they are used.)

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

NARRATOR:  
Maybe you've flown over South Dakota in a plane. It's not only our biggest cities that have airports. All through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, towns worked to build good airports. Like trains, planes deliver people and create business. Air travel saves time...and lives.

It saves our crops...

our forests.

Sometimes, saving our forest requires people to jump out of the plane and into the fire.

HOT SHOT ON CAMERA: (Based at the Forest Service headquarters at Custer.)

NARRATOR:  
But South Dakota skies don't always bring danger and destruction. They are home to our national bird, the eagle.  
  
Have you ever wondered what our state looks like, from a bald eagle's point of view?

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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93. Spectacular sunset shot of the sky.

94. CLOSING CREDITS

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Back on the ground, the view is just as wondrous. In stormy times or calm times, South Dakota skies can be as exciting as its people.

CLOSING MUSIC