Saving a Boom Town:
The Reinvention of Deadwood

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Four times a day, all summer long, crowds jam Deadwood's Main Street to watch actors portray Wild Bill Hickok and other western gunmen doing battle. After the shooting ends, the amused visitors wander through the town's numerous casinos and curio shops. In an odd way, the activities of today mimic those of 135 years ago.

In 1876, prospectors and adventurers filled the saloons and gambling halls that lined Main Street, and gun play happened, although less frequently than currently. While this congruity could imply that Deadwood's identity has not changed since its founding days, in reality the return of gambling and the reenactment of western gun fights more reflect the latest stage in the economic evolution of Deadwood.

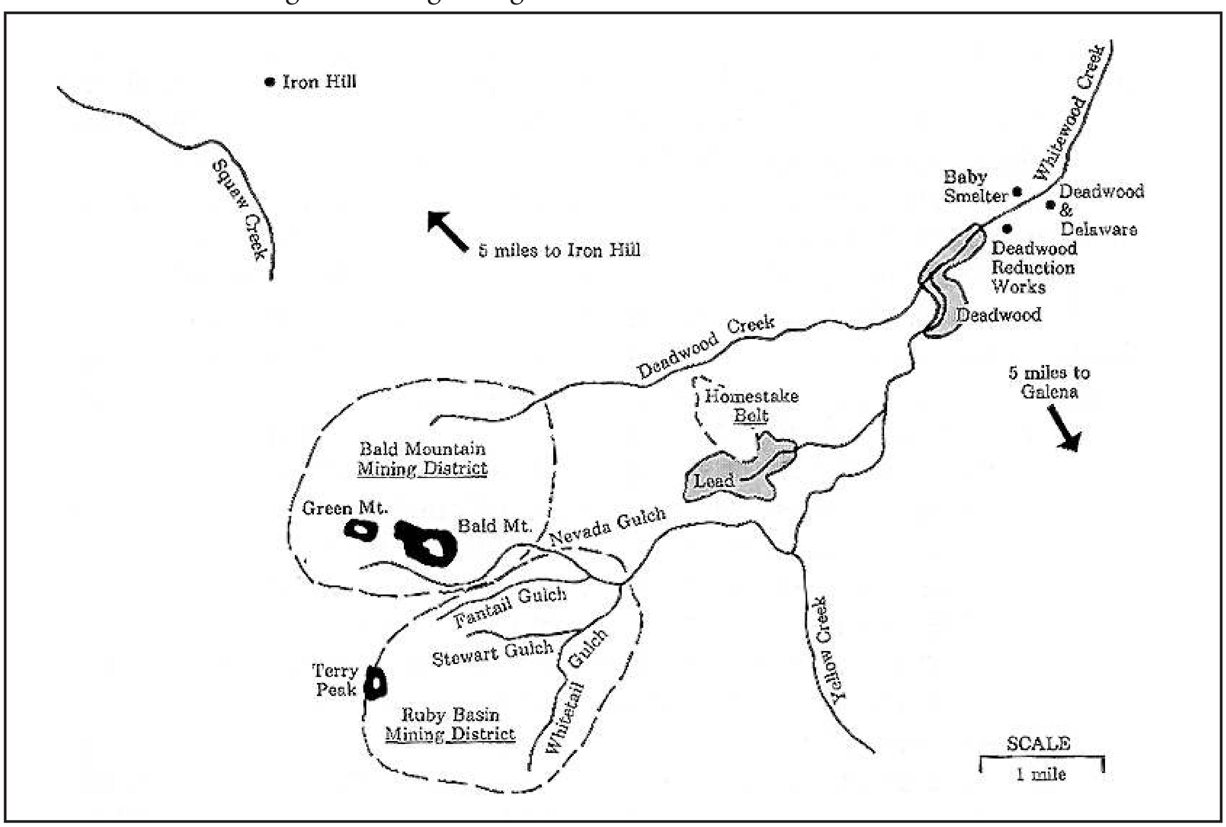
Like many Western gold camps, Deadwood could have died after the initial placer boom played out. In fact, some 1876 observers forecast just that. A reporter from *Scribner's* wrote that Deadwood was too remote and the mining season too short for long-term success, proclaiming that it "will eventually prove a failure."[1]

Instead, Deadwood survived by reinventing itself as an industrial town with a reinvigorated commercial base. Since that change, Deadwood has gone through two more transformations in order to survive and reach its current status. This paper focuses on the initial boom and bust period, that critical time when western mining towns generally died, and on how Deadwood reacted. As we will see, the town struggled for a decade, and the path to economic renewal was not easy, but with the tenacious efforts of Deadwood boosters, recovery came and a new economic era emerged.

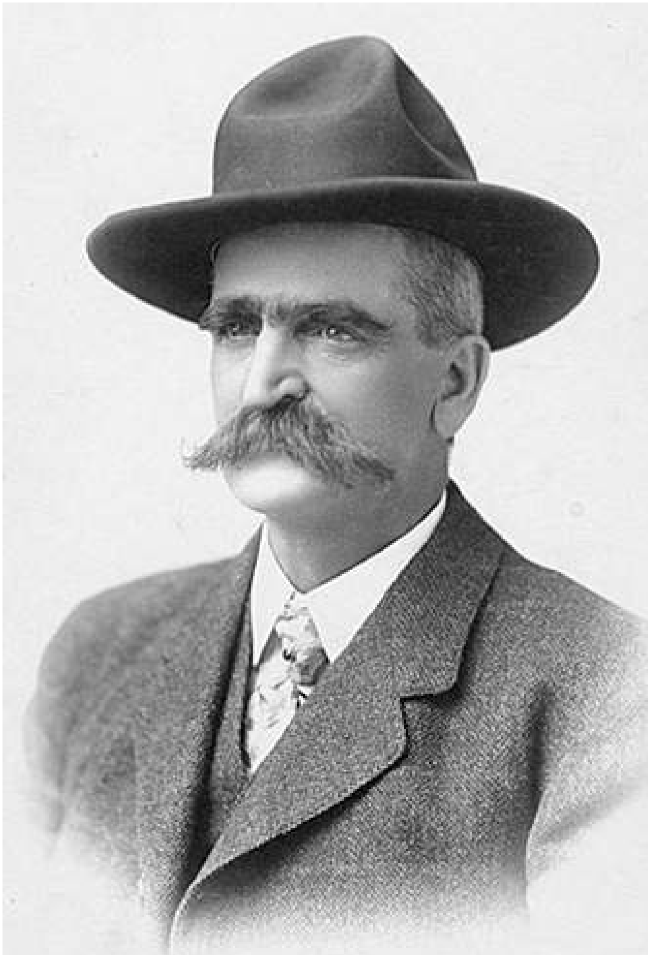
Prospectors discovered paying quantities of gold along Deadwood and Whitewood Creeks in the northern Black Hills during the second half of 1875, and a few hundred early arrivals staked every inch of placer ground by the end of that year. Hundreds of others followed, and twenty-three small gold camps soon sprang up along the gulches, with as many as ten thousand people living near Deadwood and Whitewood Gulches. Out of this milieu, Deadwood emerged as the dominant location, partly because of its site at the confluence of the two creeks and near the center of the diggings, and partly because of who settled there.[2]

While Deadwood attracted the usual mix of gold camp humanity, interspersed were a number of men who arrived with boom camp experience and who dedicated themselves to the survival of the town. Three of the most important came from Montana in 1876. James K. P. Miller, Seth Bullock, and Sol Star spent a number of years in Montana towns, including Deer Lodge, Virginia City, and Helena, gaining invaluable experience in business and politics. Another important individual, Harris Franklin, had lived in railroad towns along the Union Pacific in Wyoming before coming to Deadwood in 1879, and he too was a successful entrepreneur. For all practical purposes, it was these men who would shape Deadwood's economic redevelopment and ensured the town's survival.[3]

From 1876 through 1879, over one million dollars of placer gold left the northern Black Hills every year, and with this output Deadwood grew in prominence. It became the focus of transportation, with the famous Deadwood Stage, as well as the center of commerce and recreation. Not only did the miners in Deadwood and Whitewood gulches shop and play in town, men who worked in outlying placer camps came to Deadwood for their needs.



Map of the Deadwood area, showing the Bald Mountain and Ruby Basin mining districts. (From David A. Wolff, "Pyritic Smelting at Deadwood: A Temporary Solution to Refractory Ores," South Dakota History *15 (Winter 1985): 315.)*



Seth Bullock, a pioneer Deadwood merchant, who advocated diversifying the town's economic base and served as president of the Iron Hill Mining Company from 1885 to 1891. (Courtesy of the Archives of the South Dakota State Historical Society.)

Deadwood not only had an advantageous location, it had the prominent businesses. Bullock and Star ran a large hardware store, Miller sold groceries wholesale and retail, while Franklin peddled liquor wholesale and retail. By 1879, Deadwood counted around fifty-five hundred people, with over a hundred businesses and many more residences. Deadwood boomed during this period and all because of the placer gold. [4]

Deadwood's economic fortunes, however, soon began to slip. By 1879, most in town recognized that less and less placer gold was coming from the claims. As the boom faltered, Deadwood's population started to drop. Hoping for new fortunes, some people headed to Colorado, especially the booming silver camp of Leadville. The departures concerned local boosters, particularly the newspapers. The editor of the *Black Hills Daily Times* tried to talk people out of leaving by writing: "Leadville has six feet of snow and an army of paupers clamoring for work or bread . . . it is a nice place to—keep away from."[5]

Deadwood's downturn suddenly became worse when a fire swept through town on the evening of 26 September 1879. It started in the Empire bakery on Sherman Street, and when it spread to a neighboring hardware store, eight kegs of blasting powder flung burning debris over much of downtown. The fire destroyed all of the business district and much of the residential area, eliminating all remnants of gold-rush era Deadwood. The loss was estimated at nearly one and a half million dollars.[6]

As people inspected the destruction, different views developed as to Deadwood's future. To some it looked like the end, prompting even more people to leave town. James K. P. Miller's partner, James McPherson, was among them, as he headed to Colorado. McPherson and others believed Deadwood was done. Not all thought that way, however, as a number of people decided to stay and rebuild their businesses and homes.

Saloons were some of the first businesses to reopen, with barrels and boards becoming makeshift bars. More significantly, Bullock and Star rebuilt and expanded their hardware store, Miller relocated and enlarged his grocery business, and Franklin reopened his liquor wholesale company. These four men held substantial investments in Deadwood and they had faith in the town's long-term viability. Nevertheless, the 1880 census counted 3,777 people in Deadwood, well down from the 5,500 of a short time before.[7]

Part of the optimism shared by Bullock, Star, Miller, and Franklin came from the fact that abundant gold still existed in nearby areas of the northern Black Hills. Six miles southwest of Deadwood sat the Bald Mountain and Ruby Basin mining districts, located in 1876. Here the ore assayed well, but it was refractory and could not be treated by the commonly used amalgamation process. Another promising area was the Carbonate District five miles to the northwest. All of these districts remained quiet, seemingly waiting for the right developer or the right process. But most significantly, three miles above Deadwood sat the Homestake gold belt, which produced the vast majority of Black Hills gold by 1880, and promised even greater fortunes.[8]

James K. P. Miller, a Deadwood pioneer merchant, who promoted railroad connections and developed the Deadwood & Delaware Smelter. (Courtesy of the Adams Museum, Deadwood, SD.)

While the inactive mining districts could do little for Deadwood after the 1879 fire, the work force on the Homestake belt seemingly should have benefited Deadwood's merchants. But that was not the case. Part of the problem was limited access. Although Deadwood sat near the Homestake mines, one leg of the trip was a difficult uphill hike. Accessibility was further limited by the fact that all roads into Deadwood were toll roads. Even if the miners had horses, few wished to pay the fare. Beyond accessibility, Deadwood had strong competition as the decade of the 1880s began. Lead City, Terraville, and Central City sat practically on the gold belt and offered a variety of businesses. In 1879, George Hearst opened a Hearst Mercantile in Lead City, further cutting into Deadwood's retail activity.[9]

With Deadwood's economic condition looking dire as the 1880s began, Bullock started agitating for a board of trade. He gained supporters, and in January 1881 over fifty businessmen created the Board of Trade, with the objective of encouraging "enterprise, that capital from abroad may come here for investment, to assist in building up and developing our resources."[10]

As in many Western mining camps, Deadwood businessmen felt they needed outside money and outside developers to awaken inactive mining districts and bring new life to town. They had already witnessed such an occurrence. It was primarily the infusion of Hearst's California capital that had dramatically expanded the Homestake's operations and sparked the development of Lead City.

Over the next year, the Board of Trade met several times to discuss potential projects, with Bullock, Miller, and Franklin setting the direction. Reflecting their drive for outside capital, one of the board's first projects was to publish a twenty-five-page booklet, titled "The Black Hills of Dakota, 1881," that highlighted Deadwood's "natural advantages."

The authors of this promotional tract listed a number of local assets, especially the mines awaiting development, but they also wanted to show that Deadwood had a sense of humor. They wrote that the town had "the prettiest women, the bravest men, the laziest dogs, the meekest hackmen, the homeliest newspaper reporters and the toniest bartenders . . . . And with all these natural advantages, it cannot help succeeding." [11] The last comment pointed directly at the Board of Trade's greatest concern, wanting Deadwood to succeed.

Board members also promoted a number of other projects. Some wanted a "first class" hotel; they argued that Deadwood's lack of quality lodging would discourage potential investors. Others wanted to break the toll road monopoly by building a free road to the plains north of the Black Hills. While the conversation about transportation routes went on, the Homestake Mining Company announced its plan to build a logging railroad.

Most Western town developers saw railroads as the solution to all economic woes. So the board jumped on this opportunity and sent a special railroad committee, led by Miller, to visit with the Homestake's managers in Lead. The committee wanted the new rail line constructed through Deadwood. While it would lack a connection outside of the Black Hills, they saw the advantage of transporting Lead residents to the stores of Deadwood. To the committee's dismay, Homestake's managers announced that they had no interest in Deadwood. As if to mock the board's aspirations, they constructed the railroad in exactly the opposite direction from Deadwood.

Then the board discussed building a smelter. In 1881, the Carbonate District showed some signs of life, and the board hoped that a smelter in Deadwood might stimulate that mining district, while making Deadwood the center for ore processing.[12]

While most of the board's projects made little headway, one proposal, the construction of a flour mill, did become a reality. It seems oddly out of character for a mining town to build a flourmill, yet board members saw at least two benefits. In the first place, they believed a flourmill would attract other industries, ultimately making Deadwood a great manufacturing center. The newspapers reported that the flour mill would add "ten-fold" to Deadwood's prestige and soon make it another Denver.

On a more fundamental level, one that Bullock appreciated, a flour mill would diversify the town's economy. He saw it as stimulating agriculture on the prairies north of the Black Hills, and connecting the farmers there to the Deadwood business community, especially to his hardware store. The mill opened in 1882 and operated intermittently until it burned in 1896, but it never did bring the surge of prosperity that the Board of Trade wanted.[13]

Deadwood's struggles continued into 1885. Few outside investors appeared, and there was no new mining activity. The town's population dipped to about seventeen hundred, a loss of nearly two thousand people from five years earlier.

New life at the Carbonate District, however, seemed to promise better days and sent a ripple of excitement through town. The Iron Hill Mining Company, a locally owned and controlled undertaking working primarily on silver-bearing ore, put in place an aggressive development plan. Bullock became president in 1885, and he ordered an improved shaft and the construction of a new mill. Success followed, and Iron Hill silver bullion bars began appearing in the window of Deadwood's Merchants' Bank prior to shipment out of the district.[14]

Stocks of the Iron Hill company sold on the streets of Deadwood, and residents took great delight in the new boom. As the company displayed more and more bullion bars and declared repeated dividends in 1886, the stocks soared in value from pennies a share to $7.50. With most of the stock held locally, residents dreamed of making millions.

At the peak of the excitement, in April 1886, the *Black Hills Daily Times* proclaimed: "Main street [*sic*] during the palmiest [*sic*] days of '77, or at any subsequent date no matter what the attraction, was scarcely more crowded, and excitement never ran higher."[15] The paper further stated that another Leadville or Comstock Lode was at hand, "only on a grander scale."[16] With the excitement, developers began constructing new buildings, and the town seemed to be riding high.

Just as fast the Iron Hill company's fortunes rose, however, they fell. By mid-1886, its stock values started to slide, and rumors circulated of poor ore and an inefficient mill. Bullock struggled to convince investors of the mine's wealth, and he addressed the concerns over the mill by announcing the construction of a smelter. Bullock's former Board of Trade associates hoped the new plant would be built in Deadwood, fulfilling one of their 1881 objectives. Instead, the company built the smelter near the mine site, five miles from Deadwood. Bullock remained silent on the topic, much to the dismay of his associates.

Regardless of its location, the smelter did not return the Iron Hill Mining Company to profitability. The mine had indeed played out. Confused by the Iron Hill's collapse and the sudden disappearance of the boom, Deadwood businessmen once again debated the proper course of action. They again discussed the idea of building a smelter in Deadwood, believing the Iron Hill smelter was poorly constructed, but nothing resulted.[17]

Deadwood's hopes for survival seemed dashed, but another chance for salvation appeared on the horizon: a railroad. Since the beginning of the Black Hills gold rush people in the Hills had wanted an outside rail connection, but for years railroad companies seemed reluctant to build into the region.

The hesitancy seems odd, considering the productivity and viability of the Homestake Gold Mine. Yet, the Homestake was a self-sufficient operation, using local wood for fuel and manufacturing most of what it needed. It also appears that the Homestake had a shipping arrangement with O. J. Salisbury, who had money in the Homestake operations and ran freight and stage lines in the West.[18]

Nevertheless, in 1885 things changed when the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad started building from Nebraska to the eastern edge of the Black Hills. Miller and other businessmen saw this rail line as their answer for permanent prosperity. In February 1886, they reconvened the Board of Trade and, following Miller's advice, sent a committee east, with Miller at the head, to confer with the Elkhorn's officers. The railroad's president gave them some vague assurances about building to Deadwood, and the men headed home.

In July 1886, Bullock, Miller, Star, and a few other Deadwood notables traveled to Rapid City to welcome the first Elkhorn passenger train to that town. While celebrating, the Deadwood men cornered visiting railroad officials and reemphasized their desire for an extension. Once again those officials were evasive. When the Elkhorn built to the northeastern edge of the Black Hills, nine miles from Deadwood, and established the town of Whitewood in 1887, people in Deadwood were sure that the railroad's next stop would be their town.[19]

The prospect of a railroad arriving once again brought hopes of economic recovery, and local businessmen took a number of actions to ensure that they would capitalize on it. Mine owners recognized that a railroad connection would reduce costs and allow the refractory gold regions to open. In fact, once the Elkhorn hit Rapid City, a few sent wagonloads of ore there for shipment to an Omaha smelter.

To make sure that Deadwood would benefit from the mining activity, and to again ensure its place as the Black Hills' leading gold town, business people, led by Franklin and Miller, organized the Deadwood Smelting and Reduction Works in June 1887, with the idea of building a processing plant in town. As these men sought subscriptions to finance the works, the *Black Hills Daily Times* headlined: "Hard Times No More."[20]

Through the summer of 1887, members of the board of directors of the Deadwood Smelting and Reduction Works explored how best to fulfill their ambitions. As they debated the right process for the refractory ores, some doubted the feasibility of a smelter, wondering whether the right mixture of materials was available for one to operate.

As the discussions continued, the work of R. D. Clark of Cortez, Nevada, came to the board's attention. He had reportedly been treating difficult ore in Nevada using a special leaching process. A few local people vouched for his competence, and Clark claimed success in treating ore samples sent to him for testing.

Clark next visited Deadwood, did more tests, then vowed that he had "found the key to the whole business. It is now a simple and sure thing to work those ores up to at least 85% value of all value they contain, and that by a very cheap process."[21] Impressed, the directors purchased Clark's special process and hired him to build a plant in January 1888, to be called the Deadwood Reduction Works.[22]

While Miller actively supported the Deadwood Reduction Works and the reinvigoration of Deadwood, he also saw this as the time to enrich himself. On travels to the East Coast, he managed to win the support of a small group of investors led by Joseph and William Swift of Delaware and New York. Miller convinced them of Deadwood's future, and of his ability to manage their investments successfully. The investors were locally known as the Syndicate, and they brought the outside capital to Deadwood that the Board of Trade had only hoped for in 1881.

Miller used their money for a number of projects. Believing that a rail connection would increase property values, Miller and the Syndicate secured at least three hundred thousand dollars of property by the end of 1887. Miller also thought an up-and-coming city needed an impressive business block, and began construction of a three-story, block-long building known as the Syndicate Block.

He also undertook development of a street railway, and, knowing of the limited travel on the toll roads from Lead, he planned a three-mile interurban line between Deadwood and Lead, to be called the Deadwood Central. Miller saw all of these projects as spurring Deadwood to new economic heights, and as bringing great economic returns once the Elkhorn railroad hit town. [23]

Once again, these plans for Deadwood's prosperity did not work out as anyone had hoped. After the Elkhorn built to Whitewood, it stopped. As the summer of 1888 passed it became abundantly clear that the railroad had no intention of going further. From that location, the railroad could monopolize all of Deadwood's traffic without having to build into the mountains.

This snub greatly frustrated the town's boosters, yet they carried on with their projects. Miller pushed the Syndicate block, the street railway, and interurban line to completion. But his thinking seemingly changed. Railroad construction would have increased the value of these projects, but Miller turned the table, believing that his projects could stimulate a railroad to build in. If they could not attract the Elkhorn, then perhaps the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, still hundreds of miles away.

Similarly, the directors of the Deadwood Reduction Works moved forward with construction. For Franklin, it had become a necessity. When talk of the Reduction Works and railroad connection ran high in 1887, he and some supporters had acquired claims in the Ruby Basin Mining District and organized the Golden Reward Mining Company. He needed the plant to process the ore and make his company a success.[24]

But supporters of the Deadwood Reduction Works had their frustrations compounded by another disaster. Like many western mine investors, the Reduction Works' board of directors had been drawn to R. D. Clark by his promises of a simple process giving great returns from difficult ore. Later observers would label this "process mania," and Clark played his role well. As he began constructing the plant in lower Deadwood, he stated "that there will be no possible chance of a failure," completely rejecting the idea that a smaller experimental mill should be built first.[25]

After disbursing ninety-eight thousand dollars towards the plant's construction, the investors waited for the first clean-up, scheduled for 1 March 1889. But early that morning, a fire broke out in the plant's drying room, destroying the structure and most of the equipment. Such a disaster at a critical moment was not uncommon in mining fields and was often meant to disguise fraud. A flurry a rumors spread through Deadwood, asserting that arson was indeed the cause. No perpetrator was identified, but signs soon pointed to Clark, who may have set the fire to hide the fact that he had no special process.[26]

The directors of the Deadwood Reduction Works needed to set a course of action in the fire's aftermath, but they were split. The majority faction, led by Franklin, wanted the stock and insurance of the Deadwood Reduction Works transferred to Franklin's Golden Reward Mining Company. This company would rebuild the plant, but instead of relying on Clark's flawed process, the new operation would use a method of Franklin's choice, the Newberry-Vautin chlorination process. And this time they would build a small plant initially, and slowly expand the operation if the process proved a success. The majority also hoped that a railroad would arrive in time, making ore, equipment, and supplies more readily available. [27]

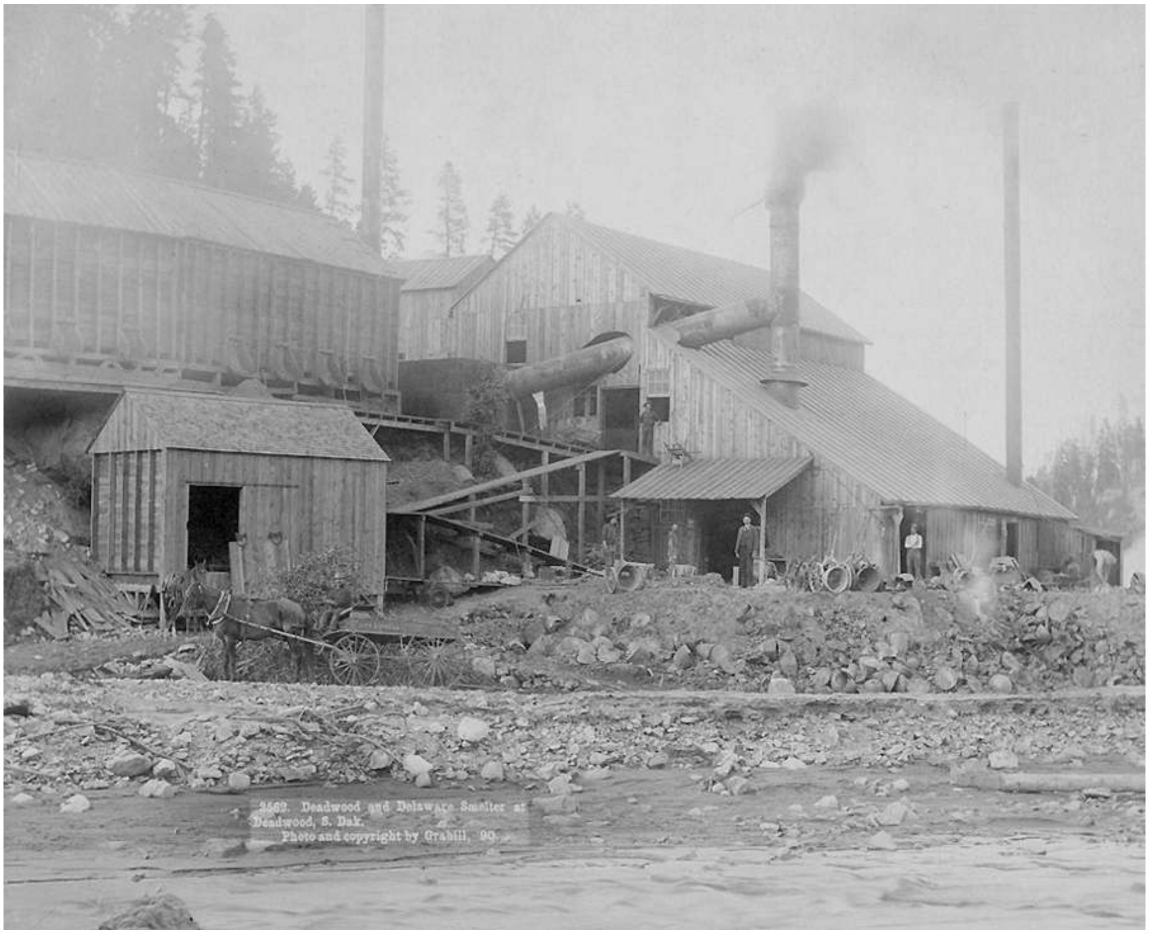
Miller led a minority group on the board of directors which advocated locking up the ruins and abandoning the site. These directors knew the Clark process to be a fraud, and Miller and his Syndicate had already turned their attention to a method that they thought would be more effective: smelting. Franklin Carpenter, dean of the School of Mines in Rapid City, had been experimenting with a smelting process that he thought would work on the Black Hills' refractory ores. He proposed making an iron matte from the pyrite content in the ores, calling it pyritic smelting.

Much like the Golden Reward group, Miller and his Syndicate wished to move slowly. They knew that Carpenter's smelting process was unproven, and it seemed wiser to build an experimental plant before making a major investment. Also, they knew that ore, coal, and coke haulage for a large smelter required railroad connections. The Elkhorn still sat nine miles away at Whitewood, and the railroad had alienated much of Deadwood's business community by its inaction. Since Miller knew a railroad was essential, he began promoting the Burlington's construction into town. In fact, he seemingly orchestrated his moves to make that happen. [28]

Events finally began to go Deadwood's way in the fall of 1889, a full decade after the great fire of '79 had nearly doomed the town. The Syndicate began building a small, 15- to 20-ton plant in lower Deadwood, known as the "Baby Smelter." Not far away the Golden Reward had a 20-ton plant under construction.

While these activities went on in lower Deadwood, the Burlington laid a rail line to near the southern tip of the Black Hills, about 110 miles away. The railroad was heading toward the coalfields of Wyoming, but all in Deadwood saw its extension as an opportunity. The city council sent a telegram to George Holdrege, the railroad's general manager, asking for a meeting. Holdrege declined the offer. Instead, Miller had already caught his ear, explaining Deadwood's advantages, Miller's projects, and the merits of building into his town.

At the end of 1889, Holdrege came to Deadwood to visit with Miller and investigate the town's potential. It soon became clear to Holdrege that Miller was willing to offer land for a railroad right of way, depot, and yards at a reasonable price. Miller also pointed to the Baby Smelter going up in lower Deadwood and promised that



James K. P. Miller constructed this experimental or "baby smelter" in 1889 to test the pyritic smelting process. Its success led to the development of the Deadwood and Delaware Smelter in lower Deadwood. (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, John C.H. Grabill Collection, LC-DIG ppmsc-02672.)

he would build a full-scale plant, guaranteeing a significant amount of coal and coke haulage, if the railroad built into town. In fact, most in Deadwood believed that a railroad would only come if they could demonstrate a "satisfactory showing of resources."[29]

Deadwood felt much anticipation in the early months of 1890. Test runs began at the Baby Smelter and at the Golden Reward's small chlorination plant. Miners reopened long-dormant claims in the Ruby Basin and Bald Mountain mining districts, and Deadwood experienced some new vitality in its commercial district as the interurban railroad began carrying people from Lead.

This new activity and the potential coal, coke, and mining markets caused the railroads to act. In February 1890, both the Elkhorn and the Burlington announced their intentions to build to Deadwood. In reality, the Elkhorn was only building out of Whitewood for fear of losing its business to the Burlington.

The announcements, in turn, brought more excitement to the gold town. Speculation returned with new vigor and a Deadwood newspaper stated that "the stock excitement of '86 is surpassed by the furore [*sic*] in real estate circles" today.[30] Mayor Sol Star summed up the local sentiment the best when he proclaimed that the railroads would finally make Deadwood a "city of permanence."[31]

As the railroads built toward Deadwood in 1890, activity picked up at the processing plants. Miller's works, renamed the Deadwood and Delaware Smelter, operated continuously, and his Syndicate announced plans for expansion. Near the end of the year, just weeks before the railroads arrived, the company began constructing a 150-ton smelter across Whitewood Creek from the baby plant. Similarly, the Golden Reward Chlorination Works completed several successful test runs, and Franklin projected expanding its capacity to 60 tons per day.[32]

The Elkhorn railroad arrived in Deadwood on 29 December 1890 and the Burlington on 24 January 1891. Within a year, a network of narrow gauge lines spread into the Bald Mountain and Ruby Basin mining districts, allowing hundreds of claims to reopen. While the interstate carriers brought in coal, coke, and supplies, the narrow gauge systems hauled ores and people to Deadwood, making the town the center of gold production and commerce that Bullock, Star, Franklin, Miller, and the Board of Trade had dreamed about since the town went bust over a decade before. A new railroad warehouse district developed in South Deadwood, with major wholesalers bringing a new dimension to the town's commercial district. The 1890 census counted 2,366 residents, up from 1880's 1,700, and the town continued to grow. An 1895 count tallied 4,204 persons.[33]

There were, however, limitations to Deadwood's new-found prosperity. While the Deadwood and Delaware worked as a custom smelter, its rates proved too high for a number of mines to work profitability, causing the plant to occasionally work under capacity. Meanwhile, the Golden Reward plant only treated ores from the Golden Reward mines. These factors caused several claims to return to dormancy, and the town's population slipped to 3,498 by 1900.

Still, with two treatment plants in Deadwood and outside rail connections, Deadwood would retain its status as an industrial town and as the commercial center of the northern Black Hills. That position was reinforced when the cyanide process migrated to the Black Hills in the late 1890s.[34]

As word of the potential of the cyanide process spread to the region, a few operations experimented with it. Colorado men organized the Black Hills Gold and Silver Extraction Mining and Milling Company and opened a cyanide plant in 1893. The Golden Reward built a cyanide annex on its chlorination plant in 1894. But these early activities brought few results. Adoption of the process stalled because of litigation brought by owners of the MacArthur-Forest patents, and because the process had not been sufficiently refined yet to treat refractory ores.

The latter situation changed in 1899, when chemists, such as John V. N. Dorr, appeared on the scene and began solving local problems with the cyanide process. By the early 1900s cyanide plants began popping up throughout the mineral fields of the northern Black Hills, with four opening in lower Deadwood near the chlorination and smelter works. When Homestake's Charles W. Merrill opened the cyanide-based Slime Plant in Deadwood in 1906, the "boom in cyanide" reached its high point. This burst of activity certainly helped Deadwood, with the town's population advancing to 4,364 in 1905, but this achievement would have not been possible without the prior efforts of Deadwood promoters and their endeavors in smelting and chlorination.[35]

Deadwood survived because of the efforts of Miller, Franklin, and, to a lesser extent, Bullock and Star. For a decade they sought ways to restore the town's economic vitality. Deadwood did have the advantage of undeveloped hardrock areas relatively close by, but Miller and Franklin also managed to develop the first plants to successfully treat that ore, and they placed their plants in Deadwood, making it a center for ore processing. It was because of their efforts, especially Miller's, that railroads built to town, ensuring the plants' success and Deadwood's prosperity. None of this would have happened on its own; it took these frontier entrepreneurs to import the technology, reawaken the mines, and reinvent their town. And their success only came after a decade of frustration and perseverance.

Deadwood emerged from the boom and bust gold camp period in 1890. Then Deadwood entered its second life as an industrial town and a service center. The gold mills and the commercial district kept Deadwood viable until 1919, when the Golden Reward shut down its operations, leaving only the Homestake's Slime Plant as a working industry. Deadwood again went into a slump, leaving a new generation of town boosters to look for a way to redefine their town.

During the 1920s, in the third transformation of Deadwood, they turned to tourism. From that time until the 1960s Deadwood depended on tourism and its retail and wholesale businesses to stay alive. With the advent of interstates and easy travel, Deadwood again began to change, as Rapid City gradually won away much of the commercial activity. By the 1980s, tourism became the town's main support. To expand tourism beyond a seasonal activity, the town adopted gambling in

Photographer John H. C. Grabill labeled this photo "The Deadwood Reduction Works" in 1890. Because of its label, most historians believe it is of the Clark plant which burned in March 1889. More likely, it is a shot of the initial Golden Reward chlorination plant, constructed in 1889-90 by Harris Franklin. (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, John C.H. Grabill Collection, LC-DIG ppmsc-02675.)

1989. Today, in the fourth stage of its economic redevelopment, Deadwood depends almost solely on tourism and gambling.[36]

Fortunately for Deadwood, Messrs. Bullock, Star, and Miller arrived in 1876, Franklin in 1879, and they accomplished the town's first revitalization. Others arrived in the summer of 1876 who became Deadwood legends, and who are critical to its economy today.

This group included Western gunman Wild Bill Hickok, and the man who conveniently killed him on 2 August 1876, Jack McCall. Calamity Jane arrived with the same wagon train as Wild Bill, and made repeated visits to town over the decades that followed until she was buried next to Wild Bill in 1903. Al Swearengen also arrived in the summer of 1876. He owned and operated Deadwood's most notorious dance hall, the Gem Theater, and became all the more infamous as a featured character in HBO's "Deadwood" series.

These four people had little to do with Deadwood's first economic resurrection, but have much to do with its current economic vitality and will be counted on for many years into the future. Much has changed in Deadwood over the years, but what happened in 1876 is still reflected in town today. That, however, would not have been possible without Miller, Franklin, Bullock, and Star initiating the redefinition of Deadwood.

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Notes:

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3. David A. Wolff, *Seth Bullock: Black Hills Lawman* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2009), 9-19; Mary A. Kopco, *The Adams House Revealed* (Deadwood: Adams Museum and House, Inc., 2006), 15; Andrew F. Rolle, *The Road to Virginia City: The Diary of James Knox Polk Miller* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), xi-xii.
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