

The Marquis de Mores – Dakota Entrepreneur



Medora Packing Plant in 1883 State Historical Society of North Dakota 42-074

The Big Idea

After he moved to New York, the Marquis studied the American west and the cattle industry. He became convinced that it would make him “the greatest financier in the world.” With financial backing from his father-in-law, he started his own company named the Northern Pacific Refrigerator Car Company.

He planned to build his own abattoir or packing plant and butcher the cattle where they were raised. He then would ship the beef to the east in refrigerator cars. He also opened butcher shops in the eastern cities. His dream was to have one company that was self-sufficient providing beef “ranch to table.”

Construction started in June 1883 and slaughter began in October. The packing plant was made larger in 1884 and the 85’ smokestack finished in 1885. The plant closed in November 1886 due to fierce competition from other packers, the effects of bad weather and drought, and because eastern customers did not like the taste of the range-fed beef.

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Other Business Ventures

The Marquis started many other businesses besides the packing plant. He ranched, experimented with feeding cattle and tried raising sheep and horses.

He started a freight company and stagecoach line from Medora to Deadwood. He never received a mail contract so the route was not profitable.

He owned ice houses all along the railroad from Helena, Montana to Duluth, Minnesota. He used his refrigerated cars to also ship salmon from the west coast to markets on the east coast. He tried irrigated farming along the Little Missouri River and also owned land in Bismarck.



Medora Deadwood Stagecoach next to the De Mores Hotel
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Something to think about:

Even though his ideas failed, is there a need for entrepreneurs like the Marquis?

Why or why not?