

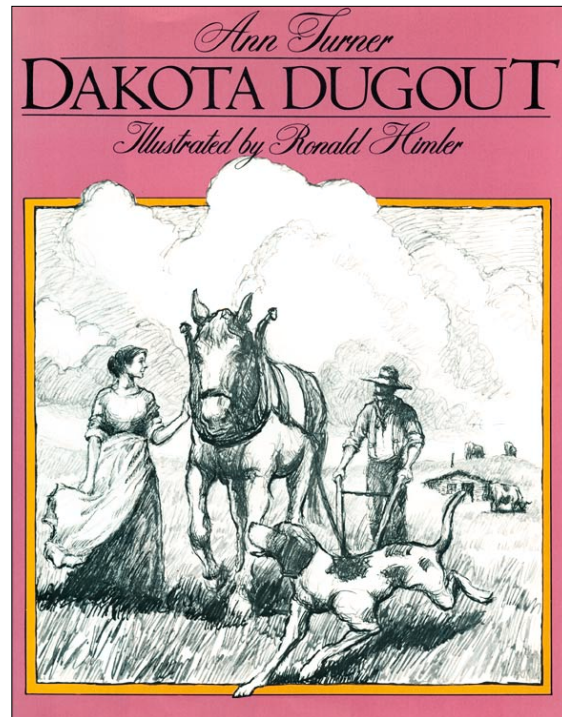
Read DAKOTA DUGOUT

Read the Book

Feel the Heat of the Prairie Sun

“Tell you about the prairie years? I’ll tell you, child how it was.” In *Dakota Dugout*, a grandmother tells her granddaughter about her first experiences on the prairie. As her story unfolds, through poetic text and beautiful illustrations, you will feel the heat of the prairie sun and hear the sparrow “jabbering on a fencepost.”

Dakota Dugout. Text copyright 1985 by Ann Turner. illustration copyright by Ron Himler. All rights reserved. Used by permission from Simon and Schuster Books.



What Do You Think?

A Few Things to Think About

How did Ms. Turner’s book *Dakota Dugout* make you feel about the hot prairie? Was there something that you could almost taste or smell as you read or listened to the book?

How do you think Sarah’s life with Matt differed from the life she left behind?

What things did Sarah do to make life in the dugout more pleasant?

What does Sarah mean when she says, “Sometimes the things we start with are the best?”

About the Author

Ann Turner is the author of *Dakota Dugout* and 40 other books! When someone asked her why she writes, she answered: “Writers write for the same reasons that readers read—to find out the end of the story.”

Ms. Turner also wants to help readers experience the past through reading. She tries to help kids “live in or experience a moment in time so vividly that it almost becomes ‘their’ time. It is important that kids learn that ‘they’ (different peoples) are also ‘us’ and that ‘long ago’ is not that far away from right now.”

If you would like to ask Ms. Turner questions about *Dakota Dugout* or about being an author, you can write to her:

Ann Turner
60 Briar Hill Rd.
Williamsburg, MA 01036

About the Illustrator

Illustrator Ronald Himler attended the Cleveland Institute of Art, where he majored in painting and illustration. He illustrated his first book in 1972, and has illustrated over 75 books during his career.

Explore the Object



1885, National Museum of American History, Behring Center.

Hint: the woman in *Dakota Dugout* lists it among the things she took with her to Matt’s cave in the earth.

You will find information about the object on the last page of this activity.

- ▶ **Clue 1:** Women in the 1800s used objects like this when getting dressed.
- ▶ **Clue 2:** The hook on the end of the object helped women fasten something.

Describe how you think this tool was used:

About the Object

This is a silver boot hook. In the 1800s, girls and women used hooks like this to help them button the tiny buttons on their shoes. Similar hooks were used to fasten the buttons on their gloves.

Do you think that the woman in the story had much use for her buttonhook when she arrived in Dakota Territory?



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Women had little use for fancy shoes during their early years on the prairie. Shoes were expensive and were saved for special occasions. Solomon D. Butcher. Courtesy of the Nebraska Historical Society.

Silver boot hook, 1885, National Museum of American History, Behring Center.

High button shoes, 1885, National Museum of American History, Behring Center.

Visit the Museum

Visit the National Museum of American History's Hands On History Room to learn more about the lives of people who lived in sod houses.