



Happy 150th Birthday to the City of Yankton and the Press & Dakotan!

Senator Jean Hunhoff & Family
DISTRICT 18

The Business Of Diversity

Yankton's Manufacturing Sector Has Long Been A Pillar Of The Local Economy

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The Press & Dakotan

Maybe the best way to summarize the role of manufacturing in the first 150 years of the city of Yankton, is "you name it, Yankton has had it."

Cement plants, world recognized seed companies, ice houses, flour mills, airports, radio stations and factories — Yankton would not be the same without the entrepreneurial spirit that still is evident today.

Even with the steamboats and riverboats that traveled the Missouri River to Yankton, until the railroad came in 1873, development was very limited. However, once the Dakota Southern Railroad was completed, there was no looking back.

By the 1880s, the population of Yankton had boomed to more than 4,500 people and boasted businesses that included drug stores, groceries, clothing and shoe stores, harness shops, livery stables, banks, hotels, blacksmith shops, lumber yards and restaurants.

Agricultural industries were also strong components of the community. The Yankton pork plant, the Excelsior, Eclipse and Fanslow flour mills, along with the Yankton creamery were mainstays for the community.

According to the *Press and Dakotan* of Oct. 20, 1885, the Yankton creamery had packed and shipped 65,000 pounds of butter in the preceding five months.

GURNEY'S COMES TO TOWN

In 1897, one of the most well known manufacturers in Yankton's history came to town, when Col. S. W. Gurney moved the headquarters of the Gurney Seed and Nursery Company from Nebraska to Yankton.

In 1906, C. W. Gurney, his seven sons, and a nephew incorporated as Gurney Seed and Nursery Company. Price lists of the early days were gradually expanded until in 1910, Gurney published a large seed and nursery catalog with a full-color cover.

By 1924, the family-run seedhouse in Yankton had received orders from 46 of the 48 states, as well as five foreign countries.

Radio was just getting its start in Yankton when, on February 28, 1926, listeners heard: "This is station WNAX, Voice of the House of Gurney in Yankton."

At its peak Gurney's was shipping millions of plants of hundreds of varieties. By the mid-1980s, Gurney's held a staff of some 700 employees and was responsible for creating more than 17 million annual catalogs with more than 4,000 products.

Following years of varied ownership, in May 2000, Gurney's was closed, ending the 118-year tradition within the community.

WNAX HITS THE AIRWAVES

Although no longer owned by Gurney Seed, WNAX is still located in Yankton.

In May 1922, the Dakota Radio Apparatus Company was established in Yankton.

Located on the second floor of the Wagner Block on the west side of Walnut



ABOVE: A birds-eye view of the factory district in Yankton, circa 1914. Yankton has had a diverse history among its employers, from cement plants, ice houses and flour mills in the early days, one of the largest seed companies in the nation for a century, one of the largest-reaching radio stations in the nation and a number of smaller businesses that have grown into strong drivers of the local economy. BELOW LEFT: A look inside the beginnings of the Kolberg Pioneer plant in Yankton, circa 1964. (Photo: Kolberg-Pioneer) BELOW RIGHT: The management team of Gurney Seed and Nursery partakes in this publicity photo during the 1930s. Pictured are, from left: D.B. Gurney, John Chandler Gurney, Donald Theodore Gurney, Charles Henry Gurney, George Walter Gurney and Phillip Sheridan Gurney. (P&D archive photo; from the book "Yankton: The Way It Was!" by Bob Karolevitz)



between Third and Fourth streets, 50 watts of power to reach an estimated 500 receivers within a 40-mile radius of Yankton.

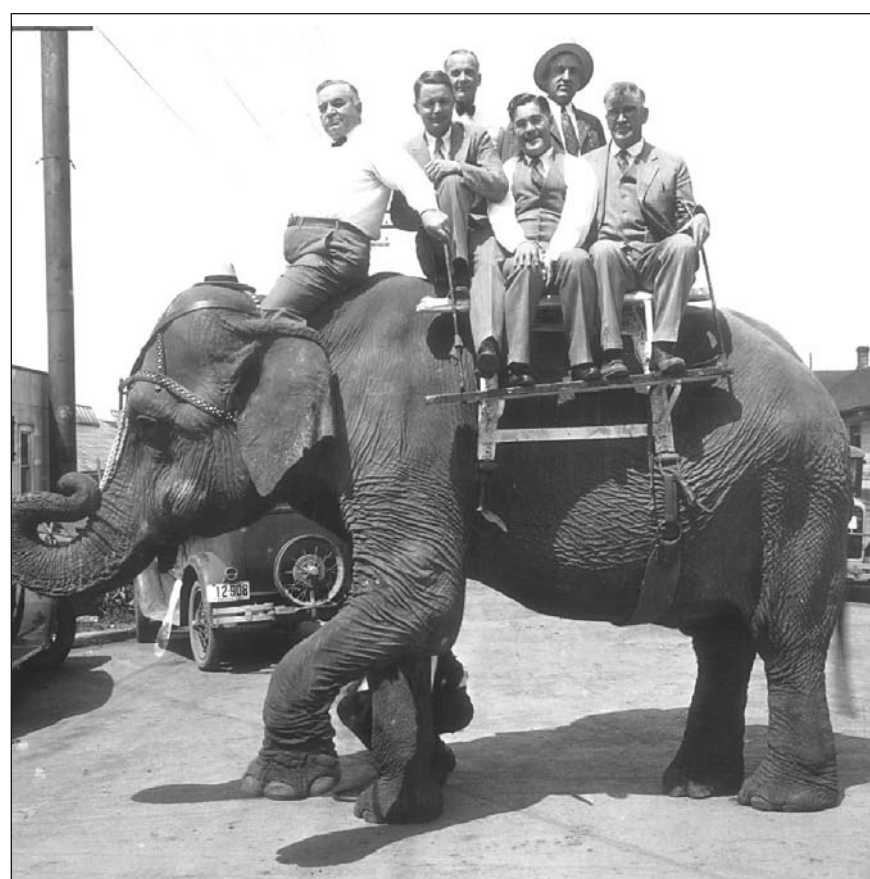
Over the next few years the station went on and off the air, often having to accept a part-time broadcast schedule.

Then the joint venture with Gurney's began.

The studio was moved to the third floor of the seed house. WNAX's live talent and folksy commentary attracted thousands of listeners and sold millions of Gurney seeds and trees.

At this same time, young musician by

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Christ Episcopal Church ~ Oldest Church parish in the Dakotas



First church in the Dakotas, 4th & Linn



Little Brown Church, 3rd & Walnut

1861 - Rev'd. Melancthon Hoyt contracted to build a small log church at the northwest corner of 4th and Linn Streets with \$250 secured from friends in the east. The first service was held in St. John's on June 30, 1861.

1862 - From March 17 to early June the House of Representatives in the First Territorial Legislature met in St. John's church. It accommodated at least sixteen men and passed 91 laws, including the location of a land grant university at Vermillion, a penitentiary at Bon Homme, rules to regulate and support public schools, plus establishing Yankton as the county seat.

1864, August 17 - St. John's was reorganized under the name of Christ Church Episcopal. Land was donated by J.B.S. Todd at the northwest corner of Third & Walnut Sts.

1866, Nov. 25 - the first worship service was held in the second Episcopal church- the new Christ Church. It was constructed of chalk rock, faced with cottonwood and painted brown. Consequently it became known as "The Little Brown Church."

1882, January 17 - From the files of the Yankton Dakotian - "Rev'd. Dr. Harris accepted the call to Christ Church and will be here Feb. 1st. Work on the new Episcopal church has been suspended until spring. The edifice is enclosed and the ceiling arch of the interior has been completed. All stone used in Yankton is picked up on the prairie - up to fifteen miles, 6000 pounds are frequently hauled at six and one-quarter cents per hundred. The experience of the Episcopal Society in construction of their church shows chalk-rock, which abounds in the Yankton bluffs is excellent material for walls when veneered with brick and cheaper than brick, as brick may be in short supply."

1882, November 13 - Quote from Yankton Dakotian - "The new Christ Church edifice was opened yesterday to the services of the Lord; the rector, the Rev'd. Dr. Harris officiating at both morning and evening services. The building is now completed with the exception of the tower and spire, and it is said to be the finest church edifice in Dakota. When completed it will be an ornament to the city and a credit to the society."



Christ Episcopal Church
"The Mother Church of the Dakotas"
Yankton, SD

• 150 Years •



Episcopal Church • 6th & Douglas