Top 5

From Page 4A

3. THE TRIAL OF JACK MCCALL

As the territorial capital, Yankton was a hub of judicial as well as governmental proceedings in Dakota Territory. As such, it hosted the trial of a man accused of one of the most famous murders in Old West lore.

On Aug. 2, 1876, Wild Bill Hickok, the former gun fighter turned lawman, was gunned down in a saloon in Deadwood. Initially, Jack McCall was a suspect in the killing, but he was ultimately found innocent of the charge in a hasty trial. McCall went to Wyoming, where he bragged of the murder. Since Wyoming authorities didn't recognize the Deadwood verdict because the town was an illegal settlement in Indian country, McCall was arrested and extradited to Yankton for trial.

McCall was convicted of the crime and, on March 1, 1877, was hanged near what is now the intersection of 31st and Broadway on the north edge of Yankton. McCall, 24, was the first person to be executed by the U.S. government in the territory. He was buried in a Yankton cemetery. The body was later exhumed and moved to a new location; allegedly, when the coffin was opened, the noose used to execute McCall was still wrapped around his neck.

McCall is now buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Yankton cemetery. Officially, no one knows where the body is buried, a mystery that has brought investigators occasionally to town in search of the remains and of a piece of ghostly western folklore.

4. THE FLOOD OF 1881

The Missouri River has always been integral to Yankton's history, and flooding has always been a part of that story. (As the events of 2011 point out, the aspect still haunts life along the river.)

That was no more evident than in the spring of 1881, when floodwaters reached into Yankton and changed the area forever.

As the river quickly thawed that March, an ice gorge formed downriver in the Vermillion area and formed a makeshift dam. Soon, water began backing up and creating problems.

The Missouri River rolled out of its banks and moved into downtown Yankton. The community of Green Island, located just below Yankton, was drowned by the rising waters and was wiped from existence. Several steamboats were crushed by the jamming ice. The rising waters also created damage at several other locations in the area, including Vermillion, where three-quarters of the town was washed way; the community rebuilt itself on a bluff.

The flood is still remembered as perhaps the worst in Yankton's history, surpassed in terms of water volume only by the flooding of 1952. In the wake of the flooding of 2011, the memory of 1881 still serves as a fresh reminder of what being a river town is really all about.

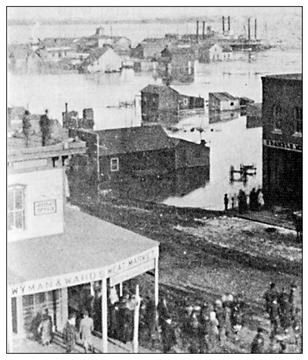
5. THE BLACK HILLS GOLD RUSH

Like the events that led to the trial of Jack McCall in Yankton, the gold rush represents another twist in history that directly impacted Yankton despite happening hundreds of miles away.

Gold was found in the Black Hills in 1874. Prospectors worked their way north from the present-day community of Custer and found vast amounts of gold in what is now the Lead-Deadwood area. Even though the Black Hills was considered Indian territory and such mining and settlement schemes were technically illegal, the rush soon commenced.

Yankton during the 1870s was not only a territorial capital but also a vibrant river outpost for travelers heading across the frontier. It was an ample source of fresh water and supplies, and offered by a thriving steamboat industry. When word of gold spread, Yankton was swelled by a massive influx of easterners heading west to find their fortunes. Local businesses popped up to meet the demands of these new arrivals. A printed daily publication called *The Black Hiller* sprung up to meet the needs of these transient hopefuls, and the paper proved so successful that the *Weekly Dakotan* became a daily newspaper, the *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotian,* on April 26, 1875.

The rush eventually subsided, but it left a significant impact on the history of Yankton.



P&D ARCHIVE PHOTO

This image of lower Yankton illustrates the misery that was unleashed by the Flood of 1881. While the toll it took on the local riverboat industry is often overstated, the historic flood did destroy part of Vermillion and wiped out the nearby settlement of Green Island.

Dakotan

From Page 5A

Kingsbury became the sole owner in 1866, then sold it to Charles H. McIntyre and James S. Foster, who then sold it themselves six months later to Arthur Linn.

In 1870, two more rivals opened in Yankton. *The Weekly Yankton Press,* born out of a split in the local Republican Party, was started by Kingsbury (again) and James M. Stone. That same year, the *Dakota Herald* was started as a Democratic paper by Maris Taylor and T.S. Singiser.

In 1873, Stone sold his interest in the *Press* to S.V. Clevenger, and the publication then merged with the *Dakotian* to become the *Press & Dakotian* in 1873, with E.M. Brown, Clevenger and, yes, Kingsbury as the owners.

The following year, gold was discovered in the Black Hills, and that opened the floodgates for western expansion (although it was technically illegal because the Black Hills was still Indian territory by treaty.) To meet the demands of the new arrivals, Kingsbury joined with Wisconsinite Wheeler S. Bowen to form *The Black Hiller,* a daily publication. It proved so successful that Bowen and Kingsbury, operating as W.S. Bowen and Co., moved the *Press & Dakotian* to a daily publication on April 26, 1875 — and it is from that date that the newspaper's volume numbers still run today.

Bowen

Lusk

This began an uncharacteristic period of stability for the newspaper as the wild territory became a state in 1889 and a new century arrived. In 1902, Bowen and Kingsbury sold the newspaper to David. E. Lloyd, who sold the paper a year later to W.C. Lusk, who came to town in the late 1890s and purchased another local publication, the *Gazette*. From 1903-1907, the paper was known as the *Press & Dakotan-Gazette*, after which the latter tag was dropped and the newspaper became the *Press & Dakotan* for good.

Lusk owned and published the newspaper for 37 years. When he died in 1940, his son, Robert, acquired the stock. In 1944, Fred H. Monfore, who had joined the company in 1920 and became the newspaper's editor in 1940, purchased controlling interest in the company.

The *Press & Dakotan* remained in the Monfore family for 35 years until it was sold to Stauffer Communications of Topeka, Kan., in 1979.

In 1995, the Stauffer company — including the *Press & Dakotan* — was purchased by Morris Communications of Augusta, Ga. That company owned the *P&D* until 2008, when the Yankton newspaper was one of several Morris publications sold to Gatehouse Media.

In 2008, the ownership carousel came full circle as *P&D* publisher Gary Wood purchased the *Press & Dakotan,* along with the *Vermillion Plain Talk,* the *Missouri Valley Shopper* and the *Broadcaster*, under the banner of Yankton Media, Inc. Once again, the ownership was local, bucking the trend of that time.

Obviously, changes are a constant at the newspaper; they are too numerous to list here. But in the last two decades, the *Press & Dakotan* has seen sweeping and noteworthy technological changes. The newspaper switched from an afternoon publication to a morning paper in 1993, then set up its Website in 1997. The paper went to all digital photography in 2004. Just this year, the *Press & Dakotan* began offering an online e-edition and recently expanded its video components.

Oddly enough, change has been part of that straight line that has carried the newspaper from those first days in a log cabin to the 21st century. It figures to be part of the *Press & Dakotan's* future, as well, in whatever form it delivers news and other information to its readers. In that respect, the mission has never changed from that very first day.

Former Publisher Commends P&D

BY ADRIAN PRATT
Former P&D Publisher (1998-2000)

Pratt

Sitting on the other side of the world in New Zealand, Amy and I can honestly say that we deeply miss South Dakota and the wonderful people and places we so enjoyed for almost seven years.

Yankton schooled us in the wild ways of nature — I'd never before experienced anything quite like the thundersnow storm that assailed us soon after we arrived. But it also taught us about the importance of community. The kindness, concern and sheer decency of the folks we met in Yankton have stayed with us in the years since we have left.

The *Press & Dakotan* was my first opportunity to be a publisher. I would have failed horribly had it not been for the talent, dedication and loyalty of the amazing people who worked there. I can't remember how many newspaper crises we went through during my time at the *P&D* — but I do remember that none of them ever beat us, because we had people ready to come in late, work long and get the job done. We didn't always have the most modern equipment or money to spend, but we sure had the best people.

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Let's Celebrate Yankton's 150th Birthday!

McVay-Gurney-Stephenson home on Pine Street

Grandma Linda as Mother Goose with Grandson David

Linda & Daryl Stephenson Family

Linda Stephenson loves Yankton history! She and husband Daryl live in the historic McVay-Gurney-Stephenson home in Pine Street.

Linda and Daryl raised their family in Yankton and several of their children and grandchildren reside in the area.

Linda is the owner of Linda's Angel Crossing in Morgen Square, a specialty store featuring fashions and accessories for ladies and children. She previously owned Mother Goose, a children's store in Historic Downtown Yankton.

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