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Frontier

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that they were safe, and Mother was carried the rest of the way home on the back of one of the soldiers. ...
 "Another incident that mother tells and which, until a few years ago, was rather hard for us to imagine, was the grasshopper scourge, during the first few years at Yankton. They came during the summer when the crops were coming up and in a very good condition. They were like a great black cloud, darking the sun, and took everything in their wake, leaving fields bare and desolate.

BEN C. ASH

Probably the only man still living who remembers the Yankton of 1859, the year the Indians moved out, is Ben C. Ash, member of one of Dakota's most distinguished pioneer families. Now in his 86th year, Mr. Ash is a resident at the State Soldiers' Home in Hot Springs. He came to Yankton as a boy of 8, with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Ash, in December, 1859 and opened the famous Ash Hotel at Third and Broadway, Dakota's first hostelry.

Last January the editor invited this oldest of the old timers to honor the columns of the *Press and Dakotan* with an article, and over a period of many weeks Mr. Ash worked in its preparation. So highly is it prized that the letter itself is to be preserved in the archives of local history, as perhaps a final word from one of the actual founders of Yankton and Dakota:

In reply to your letter, Mr. Monfore, I do not wish to give you a history of Yankton, but I will give you a history of how I came to Dakota. I was born at Monticello, Indiana, 7 miles south on a farm, on the 19th day of December, 1851. My father was farming, and one morning my father said to my mother, as near as I can remember, that he wanted to go west, and asked mother to get children ready, which she did, and we started on our journey in a covered wagon toward Sioux City, Iowa. ... The country was agog over the west, and father wanted to be one of the first to satisfy that curiosity.

... About this time Dakota Territory opened up, a strip along the Missouri river including the Yankton vicinity, and in the fall of 1859 father went up to where Yankton now is located and built a log cabin about 20 feet square at what is now Third and Broadway.

The cabin had a half window in the north side and a door facing south. After father had the cabin completed he borrowed a covered wagon from a man by the name of Obed Foote, came back to Sioux City and loaded mother and five children, and a little girl by the name of Anna Rieder, about 14 years old. Her father and mother died in Sioux City, which left Anna and Katherine without a home. Mother took Anna to raise and Katherine was taken by a family by the name of Oscar Kool who started a farm 12 miles west of Yankton on the Fort Randall road. ...

Enos Stutsman, a man that was somewhat deformed below the hip, having one leg that came about to the knee of the other with a perfect foot, and whom Stutsman county, North Dakota was named after, came with us from Sioux City to Yankton.

The first afternoon out we stopped with a Frenchman by the name of Old Dakota, John Lefetre, on the Big Sioux River. Leaving there the next morning we started for Elk Point, stopping in a log cabin store, whose occupant was a man by the name of Eli Wixson. The store was full of Indian bucks.

Elk Point at that time had but two log cabins. Leaving Elk Point, we started for Vermillion, arriving there that evening. It had but four log cabins. These were located on the bottom where the Milwaukee depot is now located. We left there the next morning and arrived in Yankton late in the day on December 24, 1859.

Mr. D.T. Bramble had a store on the bank of the river at Yankton made out of cottonwood logs, 20 feet square. The other log cabin near by was then located where the new Meridian bridge across the Missouri river is located. It was owned by a man by the name of Presho, after whom the town of Presho is named. ... The scenery around the town was then nothing but a bald-headed prairie.

... Mother was the only white woman in that part of the country at that time until the middle of September



These Yankton pioneers were on hand for the 50th anniversary celebration of Dakota Territory in 1911. They included (front from left): Horace T. Bailey, John H. Shober, Gov. William Jayne and Joseph R. Hanson. In back were George W. Kingsbury (former Press & Dakotan editor and publisher) and C. J. Holman. (From the book "Yankton: The Way It Was!" by Bob Karolevitz)

1860. Father had but very little to do that winter, travel was slow, no telephone, telegraph or mail communication of any kind.

That winter there were about 300 or 400 lodges extending from Picotte's cabin to Rudolph hill, and caches were extended along the river bank near Broadway which were full of squaw corn and winter meats.

... In 1861 a man by the name of Filbert started a sawmill about 15 miles up the river on the Nebraska side, and sawed cottonwood logs into lumber which was rafted down the river to Yankton. From this father started a frame hotel on Third and Broadway, where the first legislature of the territory met in March of 1862. ...

The spring of 1861 the first governor of the territory was appointed, by the name of Governor Jayne. One day Mr. Jane

came riding up on a big bay horse with a fine bridle and saddle. The bridle had a pair of yellow reins on it and a shotgun hanging in front of the saddle. He said: "Boy, give my horse some water."

After the horse got through drinking he said: "Boy, throw up your hat. I want to shoot through it."

But I said: "No, that is all I have." After the man rode away mother asked me what he wanted. I told her he wanted to shoot through my hat and offered me a nickel. Mother then replied: "Do you know who that man was?"

I said, "No." "Why," she said, "that was the governor of Dakota Territory."

... About that time the Indian outbreak occurred in Minnesota, and what few people were around Yankton flocked into Yankton. A stockade for protection was built around the hotel and a well was nearby for safety for a supply of water.

Entering from the south on Broadway, logs were put in the ground about 10 or 12 feet apart with cottonwood lumber nailed on both sides with a filler of sand and dirt. Every few feet there were round openings left for port holes. The west and north side of the stockade was built about three to six feet high and three feet wide depending on the size of the lumber, with a ditch from four to five feet deep around the outside to keep them from climbing over the wall and to act as a slaughtering ditch in case of attack.

The stockade had an entrance on the southeast corner with a lookout built over the entrance overlooking Third and Broadway. A watchman was stationed in the lookout day and night. During the day he would be provided with a strong field-glass. Three other lookouts similar to the one explained were established with guards, one back of M.P. Ohlman's, one back of Foerster's brewery in west Yankton, and one north of

the Milwaukee depot on the Ed. Van Antwerp hill. The lookout signal for water was that the guard would raise his hands or pick up some dust and throw it in the air. It was my job to carry the water because I had a good pony.

The next move was that they conceived the idea that a militia be organized and of which Mr. F.M. Ziebach was elected captain. I was appointed a corporal. Governor Jayne got a requisition through from the government for saddles, bridles, revolvers, etc. We received no pay and wanted none. Captain Ziebach was a perfect gentleman and liked by all.

Many meetings were held due to rumors that we were to be attacked by the Indians. During the next year the Children of a man named Wiseman, two boys and two girls, were killed by Indians. This happened on the Nebraska side opposite the Jim river.

The whites finally insisted on Charlie Picotte, who belonged to the Yankton tribes, together with Wm. P. Lyman and an Indian woman to go to the Yankton agency, about 60 miles west of Yankton, to see the Indian chief, Strike-the-Ree. They came back in a few days and informed us that the chief had told them that they liked the whites and that they would see that no harm would be done the whites at Yankton.

... And by the way, the first white girl born in Yankton was my sister Lizzie. In later years this was disputed.

FRED STRUNK

Fred Strunk, of near Irene, is one of the few remaining Dakotans who took refuge in the Yankton Stockade during the Indian outbreak of August-September, 1862. Born in 1856, he came with his father, Henry Strunk, and family to Dakota in June, 1862.

The Irene man can remember little of that particular experience, but does recall the dirt embankments which remained in evidence at places for several years afterwards. Speaking of the early times, Mr. Strunk said:

"When father and his family came from Bucreek, Clayton County, Iowa, to Dakota territory where they landed June 15, 1862, they drove by ox team.

"All streams had to be forded or crossed by swimming as there were no bridges across any of the streams. Our family came first to the Solberg home and stayed a short time there. Then we moved to the Tom Frick house, then onto the old Strunk Homestead.

"The next morning after we moved onto the new place we found seven bullet holes through the shack there in different directions. We supposed this was done by the Indians.

"That night a man came to Greenway's place, where he had a tavern at the present site of the Jim River bridge. Greenway told him to come close to the house to camp at night. That night the squaw men in their blankets came and loosened the horses. Then the man told Greenway that he shot at the horse thieves and broke one man's arm. The horses were frightened and scooted. The men followed them and the next morning got them back, overtaking the party near where the town of Gayville is now.

"We never lost anything, however, by the Indians. We broke up the land in the homestead and improved it. We had a neighbor, Ole Olson. One morning in September we noticed there was no fire at the Olson place. Father went over to the place, thinking maybe the Indians had been there. He could find no trace of Olson so went to Yankton to report his absence. He found the people had started the stockade. In September we went in and helped build the stockade and stayed in it a while. We couldn't keep the cows in Yankton so father went back to the farm."

MRS. ADELIA GUILD JONES

From a remembrance of Yankton, in the spring of 1864 when as a child of 12 she arrived here with her parents, Mrs. Adelia Guild Jones has watched with interest the preparations culminating in the Dakota Territory Diamond Jubilee.

... The experience of Mrs. Jones and her husband in the flood of 1881 is told in an issue of the *Press and Dakotan*, of April 18, 1881, as follows:

On the 26th day of March, Mr. Jones received warning that the water was breaking over the bank, but like all other people on the bottom, did not imagine that a ruinous flood would occur. He took the precaution, however, to move his family and stock to the house of J. Redrick, which stood three feet higher than his own and fully believed that they would be free of all danger or inconvenience. Mr. Jones left most of his household goods in his own house not thinking it worth while to even take up the carpets. The balance of the narrative is given as related by Mr. Jones.

"The water did not strike us at the Redrick's house until 2 o'clock on the afternoon of March 29. It rolled along over and through the deep snow, running up an inclined plane and appeared to run over at the highest points first. My place, which was the lowest there, was the last to be submerged. Water came around the Redrick place that afternoon to a depth of 18 inches.

"About dark on March 30 we heard a distant roaring of water and ice, and the flood began to rise and run into the house. I helped the women and children move upstairs while the men shifted the stock to higher places. The water was three and a half feet

over the highest ground and was over the bottom for ten miles wide. It continued rising slowly. I could hear cattle bawling and struggling as the stronger crowded the weaker off high places into deep water. Some would occasionally strike against the house as they floated off. We thought it a most uncomfortable night but we did not know what was in store.

"On the 31st we were in five feet of water which was still rising. It had turned colder and thin ice was all about the house. Hay stacks and buildings were floating between us and the bluff, snow was flying and a strong cold wind prevailed. Cattle were dying rapidly and we had neither boats nor boards to get around among them and feed them.

"April 1 — Ice from the house to the barn will hold a man's weight. We brought lumber from the barn with which to build a raft for use in case the house went over.

"April 2 — The cattle are all dead. We have finished a large skiff our tools being an axe, a hammer and a saw. We have it for use in case the house goes over.

"April 4 — This morning we pushed our boat through the front end of the upper story loaded it with bedding and started in the direction of the bluff, the men pushing and pulling the boat with women and children walking on the ice, single file, some distance apart. After three quarters of a mile, we encountered rough gorge ice which would not hold our weight and we were compelled to return to the house. Then we saw three skiffs coming toward us from the bluff. They finally reached us and said they had come to notify us

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