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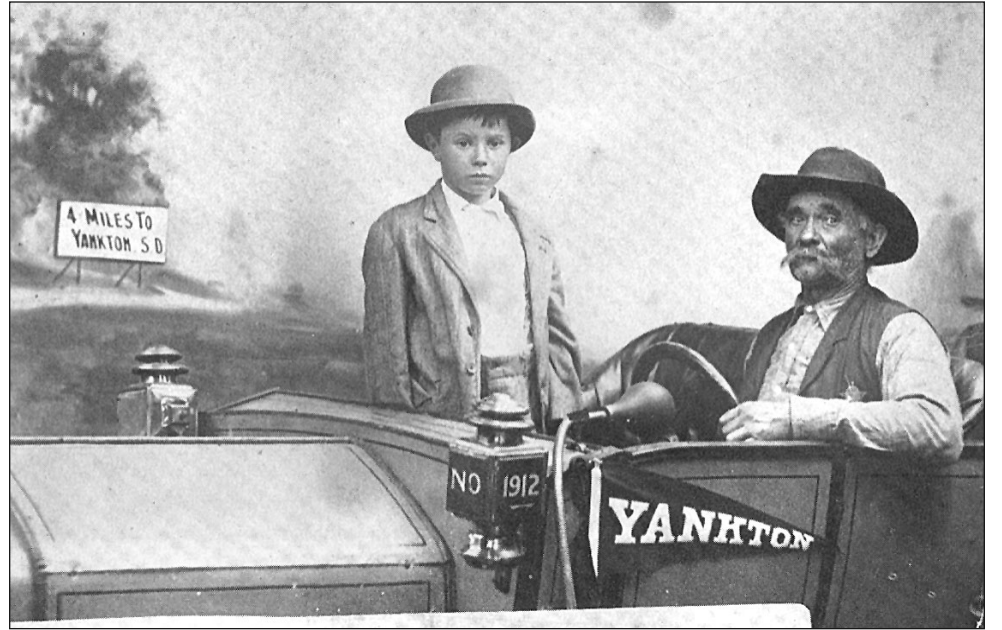
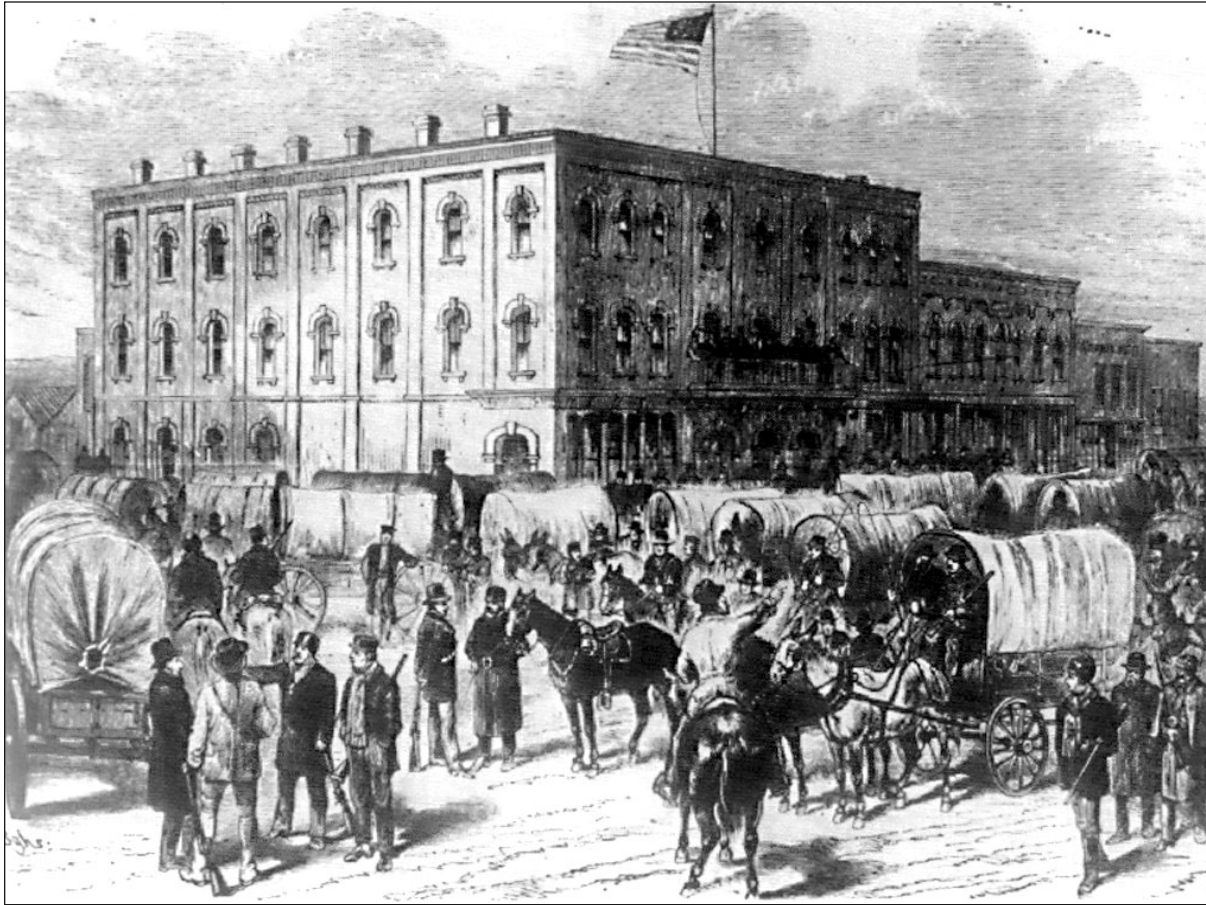
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P&D ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Since its earliest days, Yankton has always been a place for visitors to congregate, whether it was an individual looking for a place to relax or a soul headed west on a quest for gold or land. LEFT: The Merchants Hotel opened in 1873 on Broadway at the site of the old Ash Hotel, which was the first lodging operation in the settlement of Yankton. The Merchants Hotel joined the ranks of such local inns as the Smithsonian, the Germania House, the Bradley Hotel, the New England Hotel, the Chicago House, the Coates Hotel, the Eagle House and the Sherman House, to name a few. ABOVE: Postcards were also used to lure people to town. (From the book "Yankton: The Way It Was!" by Bob Karolevitz)

Yankton Tourism Comes Into Its Own

From Territorial Hotels To Modern-Day Recreation, Yankton Has Always Offered Something For Travelers

BY LISA SCHEVE
Yankton Visitors Bureau

Visitors, tourists ... whatever name you like to use ... all have been coming to Yankton for 150 years. The tourism industry has had a lasting impact on the community and has evolved and changed from our first inn in 1861 to a community that supports more than 12 hotels and motels, and 16 campgrounds.

Here is a glance at how tourism has progressed in Yankton.

LODGING

Yankton's first inn wasn't the Best Western Kelly Inn. It was the Ash Inn, built and operated by Henry Clay Ash and his wife Mary. Many of the visitors who stayed in Yankton's hotels during our first years were either prospectors passing through to search for gold in the Black Hills or new settlers seeking temporary housing until their homesteads were claimed and built. Or some hopped a ride on a riverboat.

Hotels, motels and cabins have come and gone. Some have changed names and changed names again. Some are now apartment buildings. There was the Gurney's Hotel, Morrison Hotel, Jencks Hotel and the Fensel's Hotel opened in 1954. Today, Yankton has 12 different properties and more than seven different cabins/vacation home rental operations.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS:

Events and festivals have changed styles and meanings. And some events have left Yankton all together. Yankton hosted the first state fair on Sept. 28,

1896, which ran for five days. The state fair was held in Yankton for 10 straight years until the event was moved to Huron, its permanent home.

Fourth of July has always been a constant Yankton celebration. As early as 1883, Yankton held a Fourth of July parade which hosted 530 Native Americans including Strike-the-Ree.

Before Yankton was known for its annual Riverboat Days celebration, it was known for the events held by the Gurney companies. In 1931, Gurney's held its first Watermelon Days, with more than 15,000 people attending. Gurney's was known for their events during the depression-era including its pancake feeds. In 1936, Gurney's held a free pancake festival, where they served 146,000 pancakes.

SITES AND ATTRACTIONS:

From shopping, movies and entertainment Yankton has had it all throughout the years:

- 1893 — Fantles retail store opened on Oct. 7.
- 1909 — The first movie theatre came to Yankton.
- 1923 — JC Penney's store came to Yankton
- 1925 — Meredith's Jewelry opened
- 1939 — It was reported that South Dakota served 1 million tourists in the state, many coming through Yankton.
- 1948 — The Movieland Drive was established; the first drive-in theatre in South Dakota
- 1951 — Kelly's Cove opened along the James River
- 1970 — The Yankton Mall was established.



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Boating and swimming are just two of the attractions of the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, which draws more than a million visitors a year.

- 1971 — The grand opening was held for the new Dakota Territorial Museum in May.
- 1973 — The first South Dakota Fiddlers Contest began in Yankton by Wilbur Foss and his dad. You can attend this year's event on Sept. 17, 2011.

GAVINS POINT DAM AND LEWIS AND CLARK LAKE:

With groundbreaking ceremonies for Gavins Point Dam held in 1952, tourism received a large boost to the area. Outdoor recreation has become synonymous with Yankton. Campground facilities from federal, state and privately owned have all grown and expanded. Here is a glance at the developments of what we proudly call the Lewis and Clark Lake area:

- 1953 — Pierson Ranch — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased the remaining 400 acres of the ranch for the Gavins Point Dam Project. The ranch in-

cluded what is now Chief White Crane Recreation Area, Cottonwood Recreation Area and the Pierson Ranch Recreation Area.

- 1959 — Pierson Ranch opened as a park and is the oldest campground in the area.
- 1967 — Lewis and Clark Recreation Area: The following sites were leased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks on June 1:
 - Yankton Unit (210 acres)
 - Midway Unit (83 acres)
 - McVey Unit (120 acres)
 - Gavins Unit (322 acres — these acres do not include 90 acres of state owned land that is normally included with the acreage for Gavins Point Unit).
 - 1978 — Gavins Point Dam to Ponca, Neb., was designated a National Recreational River.
 - 1984 — Lewis and Clark Recreation Area: The Midway Unit was developed as part of the Lewis and Clark Master Plan.

- 1986 — Lewis and Clark Recreation Area: A new visitor center was completed in the Marina area.
- 1987 — For the first time, South Dakota State Parks accepted camping reservations, but was limited to Lewis and Clark Recreation Area. Also, Lewis and Clark Resort came into existence.
- 1990 — Tourism coined the new state slogan "Great Faces. Great Places." — Lewis and Clark Recreation Area: Cruises were offered on the 150-passenger paddle-wheeler *Far West*. — Camping cabins became available at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area. Rental per night was \$20.
- 1995 — Lewis & Clark Recreation Area: A new welcome center opened in the Midway section of the park and a connecting road linking all three campgrounds (Yankton, Midway, Gavins Point), was completed.
- 2001 — The management of Pierson Ranch and Chief White Crane Recreation Areas was assigned to the South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation by a lease agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of South Dakota.
 - Internet on-line camping reservations initiated at www.campsd.com.
 - Lewis and Clark Lake: The 864-acre park had 366 campsites, 13 camping cabins and a rent-a-camper.
 - 2010 — Visitation for the year at South Dakota State Parks was at 6.8 million. Lewis & Clark, Springfield, Chief White Crane and Pierson Ranch visitation was at 1,250,000. Camper units in South Dakota State Parks was 260,000. 52,500 camper units visited Lewis & Clark, Tabor, Sand Creek, Springfield, Chief White Crane and Pierson Ranch.
 - 2011 — Lewis and Clark Lake: 41 more campsites and two camping cabins were added to the park, bringing the total number of campsites to 417 (which includes eight equestrian sites) and 19 camping cabins.

Congratulations, Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, on 150 Years!



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