

Yankton's Historic Places



PHOTO: P&D ARCHIVES

The Jencks Hotel photographed draped in mourning for President James A. Garfield, the last of seven presidents born in a log cabin and the second president to die by assassination — in his case, two months after being sworn into office.

St. Charles/Morrison Hotel

The rivers of our country were the highways to settlement. Even today, the navigable rivers move large amounts of product to southern ports.

When President Thomas Jefferson sent Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the vast northwest territory in 1804, their mode of travel hinged primarily on the Missouri river. President Jefferson could give the expedition little information about what they would encounter. They completed their charge traveling to the Pacific Ocean and returning safely home with the loss of only one man.

The ensuing decades sent this territory on the road to settlement. Brave men moved up the river and opened small trading posts. In Yankton it was the Frost, Todd and Company, operated by George D. Fiske. The Sioux living here called it by the name, Ihankton-wan meaning "village at the end." To begin with it was called "Charlie's Town" named for Charles Picotte.

The United States signed a treaty with the Yankton Sioux April 19 1858. It was ratified by the Senate on Feb. 17, 1859. The first pay-off in annuity goods came in July of at year delivered by the steamboat "Carrier." There was no great influx of settlers to begin with when the Indians departed for a reservation in Charles Mix County.

The few white men here staked their claims and visionaries among them began turning this point on the river into a community.

The first commercial housing for travelers was the Ash Inn built by Henry Clay Ash in 1859. His wife Mary arrived in December of that year. It is claimed she was the town's first white woman. A more permanent building was completed in 1861, the same year Yankton was designated capitol of the vast Dakota Territory.

During the decade of the 1860s, newspapers, banks, blacksmith and general stores opened. Churches, school and a library were built. The Civil War ended. Covered wagons with settlers came along with stagecoaches bearing new residents as well as



COURTESY PHOTO

The former Morrison Hotel is now part of the Sir Charles Apartments in downtown Yankton.

those planning to make their mark further west.

A long list of hotels and boarding houses was included in the town's growth. Our story today is about one in particular.

- 1870 — The St. Charles Hotel was built on the northwest corner of Third and Capitol. It was a three-story wooden frame building and was located just two blocks from the steamboat landing and one block from the Territorial Capitol on Fourth Street.

- 1872 — The Morrison Block was built by J.W.C. Morrison and Judge W.W. Brookings. It was a three-story brick building that was attached to the St. Charles Hotel. The second story housed the US courtroom, the Governors office, offices for a judge, U.S. marshall and U.S. attorney. In December of that year the Yankton Press reported that "Old Joe" the faithful old gray horse for 17 years had died. He was the property of the Northwestern Stage company.

- 1873 — Did "Old JOE" know his time of service was no longer needed? On Jan. 25, the first locomotive, the "C.G. Wicket," crossed Rhine Creek and into Yankton on Sunday morning. By Feb. 3, regular passenger trains were operating on the line. George Armstrong Custer with about 800 men of the 7th Cavalry arrived April 9, 1873. Custer and his officers were entertained to dinner at the St. Charles and a ball Stone's Hall located

across the street to the east.

- 1876 — This year the hotel on Third and Capitol became the Jencks. It continued housing passengers of the railroad and steamboat lines. This was the year that Jack McCall was on trial for the murder of Wild Bill Hickok.

- 1884 — Now the hotel became the Morrison, with George E. Hussey as manager.

During the ensuing years, it had different names: Pierce; 1926 Portland and Yankton. During this time, it became the beautiful stone and brick structure we recognize today. Eventually it became the Hotel Charles Gurney. The Gurney family and name is highly prized as is their contribution to this city's progress.

Major refurbishing was done under Peterson Investments and 30 stockholders. The stockholders donated their shares and made possible the sale of the building in 2009 to Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services, Inc. It is now known as Sir Charles Apartments, Sir Charles Housing, LLC, in association with Charisma Management. It is also home to IMPACT (Individualized and Mobile Program of Assertive Community Treatment), a program operated by Lewis and Clark Health Services.

From territorial days to present day, this icon on the northwest corner of Third and Capitol will continue to serve Yankton citizens.

United Way

A Look At Sack Pack

BY JILL WERMERS

Sack Pack Board President

As the summer begins to wind down, many of us start looking forward to another new school year. Our thoughts turn toward new school supplies, new school clothes and all the excitement that goes along with starting something new.

Unfortunately there are those in our community who will not have that same excitement. They will struggle with having enough to purchase the needed supplies and clothing for their children. This includes food as well.

Our schools seek to help by providing students with free and reduced lunches. This program provides healthy well balanced meals for children on weekdays throughout the school year. But what happens to them on the weekends when the children are not in school and there is nothing at home for them to eat? The Yankton Sack Pack program seeks to address this need by providing students with nutritional, child-friendly food to take home for the weekend.

The food chosen is shelf-stable, kid friendly and easily managed by the children. The food is usually packed on Wednesdays by volunteers and distributed to the schools on Fridays. All food is given to the children confidentially.

Some commonly asked questions about the Sack Pack Program are:

Is there a need for the Sack Pack Program in Yankton?

The answer is yes! There is a tremendous need. Yankton's School Districts rate for free and reduces lunches is at 39 percent. This equates to 1 in 4 children that are living below the poverty line.

What does this program mean to the children who receive them?

These packs mean the difference between going hungry and having good nutrition over the weekend. Many educators will tell you that good nutrition is vital to children's ability to learn. Children who

return to school on Mondays that have had adequate food over the weekend are more alert and ready to learn when they return from the weekend. It is our mission to ensure that no child in the Yankton community has to go hungry.

Is there a cost to the school or families?

No. The Sack Pack Program is free to the school and families of children in need.

Who is eligible for the program?

All students are eligible for the Sack Pack Program who feels they have a need. As a program, we do not want to put restrictions on who can qualify, such as, qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

Who pays for the food?

The Sack Pack Program buys all the food that goes into the packs. Funds for the Sack Pack are provided ONLY by community support as well as from United Way & Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton. Our program has been a United Way Partner Agency since Sack Pack began in 2008.

What schools are participating?

This past school year, packs were provided to: Webster, Lincoln, Beadle, Stewart and the Yankton Middle School as well as Sacred Heart School. This coming school year we are happy to be able to provide meals to the Head Start Program and the Yankton School District Preschool Program.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

How many children are participating?

We are anticipating on providing more than 400 packs to students this school year.

What is the cost to provide meals to a child each week?

Each weekly pack has an average cost of \$4. It cost roughly \$160 per child for an entire school year.

What is included in each pack?

A typical pack has two juice boxes, two breakfast items, two entrée items, two snacks, can of vegetables and two fresh fruits. We have a rotating menu hence a variety of different foods distributed each week.

For more information on the Sack Pack program, please visit www.yankton-sackpack.org ... "Because Achieving Doesn't Stop for the Weekend."

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Rumbles

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"We try to pre-set the show so it flows. We have a set list of what comes up next, so we're not stumbling around for what to do next," he said. "But if somebody sends up a note that it's their dad's birthday and they ask for a special request, we'll try to play it."

The Rumbles still include '60s music but has shifted more to the '70s, '80s, '90s and newer music, Hough said.

"In the show, we always have songs that are a crowd pleaser from one generation to the next," he said. "We couldn't do a show without songs like 'Old Time Rock And Roll' and 'Sweet Home Alabama.' They are among the ones that we play a lot."

However, the Rumbles will perform whatever moves the crowd, Hough said.

"We try to play to the audience. We might play for teenagers at a street dance and then we may play for somebody's 50th anniversary the next day," he said. "Anytime, we have a mixture of age groups, old fans and then there are new kids who come. It's amazing to see the younger ones out there, jumping and clapping to music and words from when they weren't born yet."

The Rumbles band enjoys

any venue, but they are particularly looking forward to tonight's concert along the Missouri River, Hough said. He pointed to the success of the band's Fourth of July weekend concert at Arnold's Park, Iowa, along the shores of West Lake Okoboji.

"There are some videos from that concert on our Facebook page," he said. "We had 5,000 people. You see people of different ages, from the very young to the older people."

During its half-century existence, the Rumbles have adjusted to wild swings in the public's musical tastes. The band has also adjusted to its changing line-up.

"Besides myself, as the longest running member so far, everyone in the band has been replaced three times over the past 50 years," he said. "We re-invent ourselves. When somebody leaves, we hate to see them go, but we adjust to what the new band

member does best."

While many bands undergo constant changes, the Rumbles have actually showed incredible longevity among its members in surviving for 50 years, Hough said.

"As (the original members) left, it was just understood the band would stay together. Whoever ended up at the end, they owned the band and inherited it," he said. "Now, the newest guy has been with us more than 10 years."

The names and faces of the band's members may have changed over the years, but one thing has remained the same, Hough said.

"It's rewarding to go out and still get a good crowd having fun," he said. "We give the energy back, and we still have fun playing."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

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