

## HISTORIC HOMES OF YANKTON

## A Look At The Ephraim Miner House



Ephraim Miner House  
613 Douglas Avenue

Dakota Territory Chapter No. 794

The chalkstone home built in 1873 by Ephraim Miner is one of the last of its kind in Yankton. Because neither lumber nor bricks were conveniently available in 1868 for building purposes, several local businesses and a few home-builders turned to quality sandstone which had been discovered only a few miles from the pioneer river town.

The walls of the Miner home are unusually thick, better for warmth in winter and comfort in summer, and window wells are deep. The unaltered compact exterior belies its roomy interior, which includes not only spacious living quarters on the main floor with living room, bedroom and bath, large kitchen, separate utility room, and porch, but also a private apartment with separate entrance. The original open stairway was closed in order to provide private access to a second apartment which occupies the entire second floor. Slanted ceilings and gener-

ous windows provide a welcoming atmosphere. Original steam registers remain in the home, and water is heated by natural gas. A generous back yard and alley once held Miner's own lime kilns. A beautiful sunken garden north of the house was reached by wooden steps.

Ephraim Miner was born on April 5, 1833, in Oswego County, NY, to Rufus and Ase-nauth Sharp Miner. By age 17 he was already teaching a common school, something he would do off and on in his restless travels before marriage on December 3, 1863, to Amanda P. Stock. His travels had taken him from Illinois to Wisconsin to Minnesota to Pike's Peak (where he had driven a team), back to St. Joseph, Mo., and finally in 1867 to Yankton, D.T. Miner would become personally involved in the business, political, and religious affairs of the fledgling Yankton community.

In 1868, as trustee of the first Congregational Church Society, he along with Joseph Ward and J.B.S. Todd selected a building location on the northwest corner of 5th and Walnut Streets for two lots donated by Todd. (In 1886, almost 20 years later, still member of the Yankton church council, he

provided bricks from his own kiln to help build Mission Hill's first Congregational Church). In 1870, Miner, with military escort, was appointed to take the first census of northern and western Dakota Territory. He served as legislator 1871-1875 and later as Yankton County Register of Deeds. In 1887 he and partners Joseph Ward and Malcolm Walker hired workers to successfully sink an artesian well on 2nd and Locust Streets in Yankton, which eventually powered the first electricity in town. In 1905 while county commissioner, he spoke at dedication of Yankton's new Court House. Miner died at age 78 on March 26, 1912.

The Miners had four children, but only one would remain in Yankton. Miss Helen, an early graduate of Yankton College, served for decades as college librarian.

The property, which has been vacant for several years, has since 1961 resided in the Kamback family. Pauline Albrecht Kamback, who died in 1997, served as competent landlady for many years, screening tenants for both apartments with care and friendly attention. Her son, the late Dr. Marvin Kamback, lived in the upper apartment for some time.

## WEED PATCH

## Spring Has Finally Arrived To The Area

BY LINDA WUEBBEN

I know it's spring, and you want to know how I know?

Because Bob and I are on the open road calibrating corn planters. I know, it's a mouth full.

When Craig was working his way through college, he found this job which paid pretty decent for a college student. Chemicals dealers would pay someone to go and check the speed and rate of a farmer's corn planter to see if the chemicals he has purchased will be applied correctly. That's calibration.

After college was over and Craig found a full-time job, Bob decided he could try to take over the calibration contract. We have never been as busy as Craig was as the requests from insecticide dealers became fewer and far between.

This year the need seemed to be more in demand and when that first call came from a farmers cooperative expressing a need to check out a planter, I knew it was a sure sign of spring!

Normally, my sure sign of spring are the shiny leaves of my varied collection of day lilies poking out of the ground. I have quite an assortment of colors and they provide quite an explosion when they bloom. I love the way the bulbs spread and overcome weed patches. I will have to do some transplanting soon because the plants will need thinning, but I love the additional bulbs. They are like a gift, and I enjoy spreading the blooms around my home or garden or sharing them with friends. That's how I started my collection, gifts of bulbs from fellow gardeners.

I have the sweet corn seed lying on the counter in the basement, so if I'm gone the next few days babysitting my grandsons or working on a story lead, and Bob decides to start planting, he can find it. The garden was tilled last fall, but it's still a little early for Bob to be digging it up for my planting. It will still be a few weeks before I purchase my tomato plants and no, I'm not fretting over when to plant potatoes, because I don't.

I read recently mulberry trees will not bud until the last frost, so Bob has been checking our trees. There is no budding yet, so we may as well not get too excited to be out planting just yet.

But let's get back to the calibrating.

Of course, the requests we get to check the application rates on planters are usually not close to Fordyce. This year we only had to cover the territory from the east state line between Iowa and Nebraska to Hwy 281 near O'Neill and south to the state line with



Wuebben

Kansas. Only once did we cross Hwy 281 to calibrate. On our longest day we traveled 567 miles and completed six calibrations, much to the delight of those six farmers. We calibrated one planter

after sticking the pickup in four-wheel drive because his planter was in a Quonset in the middle of his cattle yard. Glad we didn't get stuck there!

This year we completed more calibrations than all the previous years together. We do all makes and models and any size from new to old. Bob has also been trained in four different types of chemical applications and I ride along to provide stimulating conversation — when I'm not reading a magazine or a book or a more interesting pursuit as we drive miles from home. I'm not real crazy about checking out the progress of field work near Columbus or Fullerton or Waco. Is there really a town with the name of Waco in Nebraska?

A few years ago I used to be able to embroider pillow cases or dresser scarves or quilt blocks while we drove, but have you driven on the Nebraska highways and byways lately? You can shake, rattle and roll and not even have music. Same goes for typing. I thought I would be able to catch up on a Weed Patch or work ahead on a new story, but my laptop keeps time to the bumps and ruts and the keyboard is in permanent motion.

So I read and occasionally I fall asleep. Otherwise I would be thinking about the city survey I need to resend or the Writers Block I should have written last month or what story can I whip out of thin air for the local paper this week.

But I wake up when we do the actual calibration process, which includes determining how much of the non-active granular substance has dropped into the measuring tube when Bob runs the planter with a portable motor. This is a situation comparable to asking the question, is your cup half-full or half empty. Definitely material which could be used in a divorce proceeding — ranks right up there with sorting hogs or cattle.

I'm pretty sure we're finished with the process for this season. It couldn't have come too soon as farmer Bob wants to get his corn planted now, too. And yes, he calibrated his own planter way back in March.

Planting a garden seems too simple after all that.

## PLANT EXCHANGE

## Revisiting A Recreated Yankton Middle School Garden

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Yankton teachers Doug Winstead (Technology Education) and Stacy Ryken (Math) are re-purposing the middle school courtyard that is surrounded by classrooms. Bulbs they planted last fall are now abloom along with returning pasque flowers.

"We want this courtyard to be bright and cheerful while students are here," Winstead says. "It's a quiet and comfortable place for students to relax and read. Some classes study the plants and specimen fieldstones."

"One of the students told me 'Looking out there between classes makes me happy.'" Winstead's homeroom students plan a hot dog lunch in the courtyard. Funds for this effort come from grants and community support. For more views, search "Yankton Middle School Courtyard" on Yankton School District website.



## DIBBLES AND BITS:

• Want ideas for container plants? One resource is the plant catalog. High Country Gardens, specializing in water-wise perennials, features some perennials hybridized for more color, as well as native plants. Its current catalog suggests adding a perennial to annuals as you plant a summer container. While perennials may cost more than annuals, you can then Fall plant the zone hardy perennial in a flowerbed for added value. www.highcountrygardens.com or 800.925.9387

• Wyman McCain, twenty-five year rural Crofton Nebraska master gardener has cherry, apple and pear trees. "It was hard to find a peach tree for this region. I like Reliance peaches because they are most hardy. I find apricots are hard to grow."

• What is a perfect orchid flower? When American Orchid Society panel of judges apply a score sheet for an orchid, they must finally agree on criteria such as merits of the parts of the flower, its color, size, number of flowers on the stem, the flower in relation to the rest of the plant, and the cultural or horticultural merit of the plant. "All plants are not created equal" is a truism that can be applied to judging. "Is It Smoke and Mirrors?" Orchids, April 2011.

• Picking plants that look attractive together in a container garden can be a challenge. According to www.Garden-logic.com "thrillers, fillers, and spillers" design concept works. You pick a plant that stands out as something different (thriller), something alike (filler) and something that drapes (spillers). Another design concept is the "power of masses." Consider selecting one kind of plant per container and repeat it in other containers or nearby window boxes. One color may also be repeated in containers for impact.

**REMINDER:** Plant Sale by Town & Country Garden Club, May 13, 7 a.m.-Noon, or sold out at the Territorial Capitol replica at Riverside Park, Yankton. Betts Pulkrabek says that members dig up plants from their yards and pot them for the sale. "We are reasonably priced and love to share any knowledge that gardeners might find helpful."

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## Farmers Market Workshops Planned

Several farmers' market workshops are being planned for Northeast Nebraska and South-east South Dakota in the upcoming weeks. Make plans to attend the Mitchell Farmer's Market on Saturday, May 14 at the James Valley Community Center from 9:30 - 3:30; Kimball on Saturday, May 21, from 12:30-4:30, location to be announced; and Plainview, NE, a date in June to be announced.

The South Dakota events will feature Pat Garrity of South

Dakota's Buy Fresh Buy Local program, local market managers, successful market vendors and SDSU extension educators.

If interested in learning how to successfully sell garden produce, baked goods, jams and jellies, honey, eggs, arts and crafts, or whatever your specialty you won't want to miss these free events.

Questions, call Sandy Patton at 402-842-2555 or email sandyp@threeiverwb.net

## YANKTON DAILY PRESS&amp;DAKOTAN

**nje**  
Newspapers  
In Education

**USED BOOK SALE**

**Thurs., May 12  
9AM-4PM**

**Fri., May 13  
9AM-3PM**

**319 Walnut**

## West Side of Building in the Alley

NIE (Newspapers in Education) is a program that provides the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan newspapers to classrooms to be used as teaching materials. Along with special instructional materials, these newspapers are used at all grade levels to reach children and stimulate their minds. In recent years, the use of newspapers in school has more than tripled due to the need for a more current perspective on the events of the world today.

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