



Harvey C. Jewett, Sr.

Dakota Images

Along with other entrepreneurs of his era, Harvey C. Jewett, Sr., one of Dakota Territory's first wholesale grocers, helped to supply the demands of the Great Dakota Boom.

Jewett was one of twin boys born to David and Sarah Niles Jewett on 5 August 1863 in Newark, Ohio. Ambitious and restless, he began working his way west as a teenager. After spending two years in a Chicago boot-and-shoe store, he headed for Aberdeen, Dakota Territory, where he and two brothers, Charles and Rollin, opened a retail grocery business called the Red Front in 1883. Two years later, he established Jewett Brothers Wholesale Grocery. With his brothers, he traveled around eastern Dakota Territory selling produce and dry goods to the small-town grocers who served the region's homesteaders. His dedication to the firm was evident in such business practices as firing the warehouse's coal stoves in the middle of the night to keep perishables from freezing or riding for hours to track down a "bad faith" account.

In 1886, Jewett married Katherine ("Kate") Kennedy, whom he had met during a visit to his hometown. In 1889, along with another brother, David, he opened a branch wholesale business, called Jewett Brothers and Jewett, in Sioux Falls. By 1902, the brothers had also taken over the Manchester Biscuit Company, with offices in both Sioux Falls and Fargo. Two years later, the drug department of the grocery business was incorporated separately. Jewett's son, Harvey C. Jewett, Jr., became head of both businesses in 1932, but Jewett himself retained positions of leadership in both concerns.

Harvey C. Jewett, Sr., died 22 June 1937 in Aberdeen. A respected businessman, he had been active in education, banking, the Aberdeen Commercial Club, the YMCA, and the American Red Cross. He also served as a director of Northwestern Bell Telephone Company and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway. In 1941, Nash-Finch bought out the Jewett grocery line. The Jewett Drug Company continues in existence today, and a fourth generation of the family has been involved in its operation.

by JOAN ANDERSON

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