

South Front Street 1978

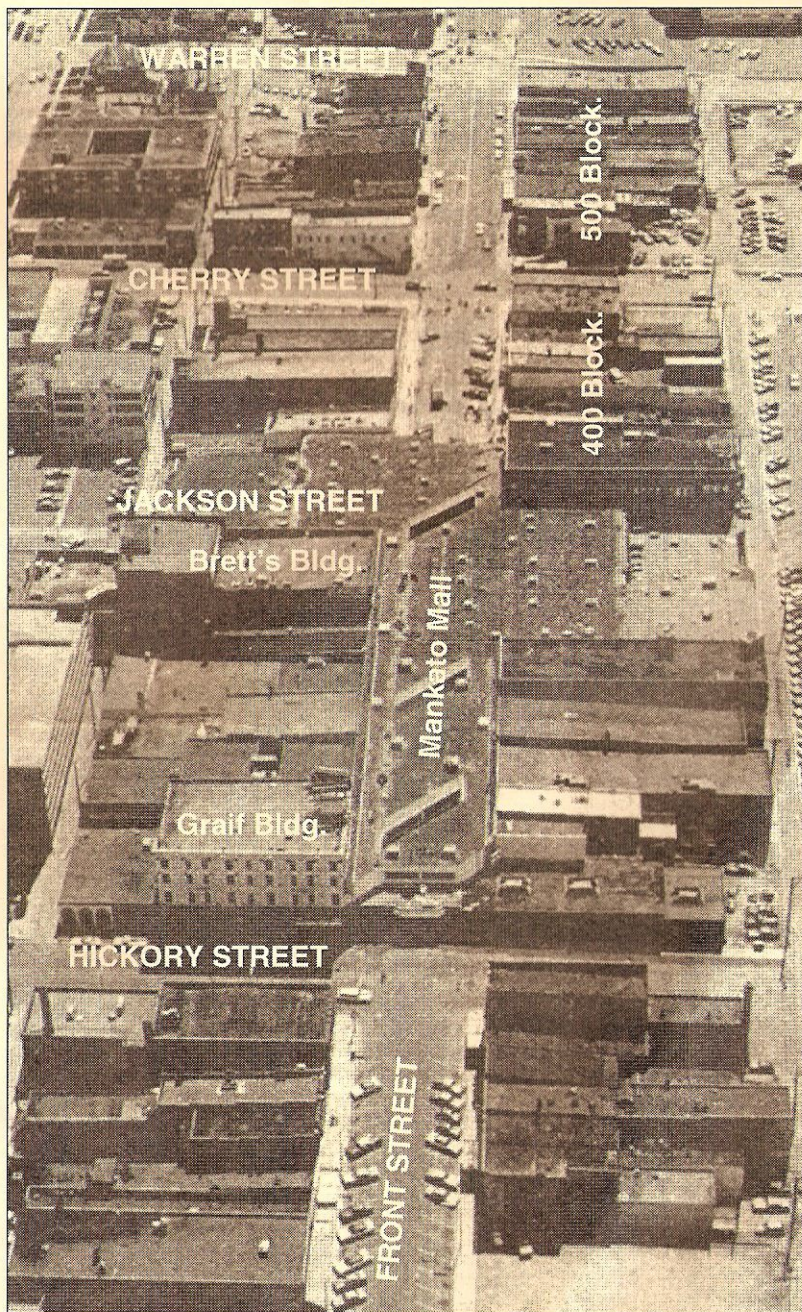


Photo courtesy of the Mankato Free Press, May 12, 1978



400 Block South Front Street looking South, 1950s

400 and 500 Blocks of South Front Street

Front Street was the center of commerce and community for downtown Mankato starting in the 1850s. This walking tour will focus on the 400 and 500 blocks of South Front Street. Major commerce on these two blocks included manufacturing and processing like the Mankato Cracker and Candy Company at 530 South Front Street, the Odjard and Knoff Furniture Company at 516-518, J.G. Koller Grain Elevator at 502; and popular stores like Backlund's Music which called 430, 424 and 414 home over its 30 year run.

Commerce in this area began to dwindle in the 1960s due to the construction of the Madison East Center on Mankato's hilltop. Downtown revitalization efforts, also known as Urban Renewal, took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s to encourage business in downtown. Today, Mankato's 100-500 blocks of South Front Street are hidden under those revitalization efforts. The Mankato Civic Center (Verizon Wireless Center) was constructed over the 200 block of South Front Street. The Mankato Mall encompasses the 300 and 400 blocks of South Front Street. The Cherry Street ramp and pedestrian sidewalk are located on the previous site of the east side of the 400 block of South Front Street. Imagine at one time, you could stand in the middle of Front Street, look north and see the Oleander Saloon at 701 North Front Street (Riverfront Drive).