

Factory: **Kearney Plow Manufacturing Co**

Location: 17th Ave & E (W?). 14th St., on tailrace. Mile west of courthouse

Years of operation: 1892-3

- Dec 11, 1891 – Will manufacture plows, small agricultural implements and machine repairs. Employ 50, 100 in second year. Will establish branch factories. Manufacture parts here and send there to be assembled.
- Dec. 15, 1891 – Meeting of 50 Kearney business men. Plow factory to have \$100,000 capital. Kearney subsidy to be \$12,500 and a building site. \$6,330 promised by men attending. Additional promised next day to total \$8,500
- Dec. 17, 1891 - Company wanting to build also has large interest in implement company in Winona, MN and was represented by **W. W. Kuhn**. He has a patent on a plow which will be manufactured here.
- Dec. 22, 1891 - \$1,200 more needed for subsidy
- Dec. 24, 1891 – Subsidy money raised
- Dec. 26, 1891 – meeting of subscribers and Kuhn to work out details. Money to be ready in cash or bank notes payable 30 days after production begins.
- Jan 21, 1892 – Walter W Kuhn was in town. Construction to begin as soon as weather Permits
- Apr. 20, 1892 – Walter Kneutzen, building contractor has two large arches 8 feet wide and 11 feet high built. Trenches for the building have been dug.
- May 17, 1892 – work is progressing rapidly
- June 15, 1892 – Brick work to be completed that evening. 3-4 salesmen on the road advertising the factory
- June 21, 1892 – Roof being completed by contractor from Omaha. Machinery on its way
- July 1, 1892 – Kearney Plow & Manufacturing Company incorporated Jan. 12, 1892. Corporate officers include Wm. Mack of Omaha, president, W. W. Kuhn, vice-president and **Richard W Kuhn**, secretary.
- Aug 5, 1892 – Machinery being put in place. “The works are to be run by electricity.”
- Oct. 15, 1892 – shipped stuff for 32 plows to Stanton. 1000 plows in process.
- Mar 23, 1893 – Plow factory has started up
- Feb. 7, 1893 – two more branch factories established making total of 17. Carload of steel expected in a day or two to be made into plowshares. 15 men employed, need more
- Mar 7, 1893 – City to build bridge across tailrace at Plow Factory. Kuhn wanted it to be Steel. Cheaper. Cost with piles \$3,500. \$500 more with brick abutments.
- Mar 23, 1893 – a visitor to Kearney was glad to see plow factory had started up
- May 15, 1893 – R. W. Kuhn has come from Cincinnati to be Sec., Earlier item said he would run co. in Kearney while WW focused on branch factories
- Oct. 27, 1894 – Plan proposed to convert building formerly used by plow factory into bicycle factory
- Mar 22, 1895 – thieves stole 200 bushels of seed oats H. D. Watson had stored in the building. Part of Watson’s ranch where he had cattle extended south of the factory.
- Apr 17, 1895 – Watson & Stoddard Poultry will use the building for the season to incubate and breed chickens.
- July 26, 1895 – “The factory building contains a large number of incubators and coops

and is an interesting place to spend a half hour.”

Oct. 28, 1898 – one of five boys who escaped from the Industrial and Reform School was captured at the plow factory

Jan 4, 1902 – Plow factory burned. Brick walls left. One of three fires that night, all may have been set. Belonged to Union Stockyards National Bank of Omaha, and contained an old plow or two, an old engine and a few pieces of lumber. Insured for \$1000

Comments: One plow, according to Burrows

July 1, 1892 – Description of building and process to be used – Ornamental brick work over the entrance. 60’ x 176’ Brick, locally made, with outside covering of gravel & tar. Ground floor has 46 windows and 4 entrances. Will cost \$7,500 when done. At entrance to left is 20’ x 40’ office. On right is 20’ x 25’ wood shop where the plow handles will be made and a 20’ x 25’ paint shop. Space between shops and office will be used as sales room. Fitting room, grinding room with three 3,000 lb grindstones for polishing plows, back 60’x90’ is the blacksmith shop. [description of machinery to be here] Machinery was being placed when article was written. Plan to manufacture 75 plows a day.

Oct 15, 1892 – description of the manufacturing process. All run by 45 hp electric motor. 12 men employed. When Kuhn was in Omaha he interested some capitalists in incorporating the Kearney Steel Bridge Company. Parts will be made at the plow factory.

Nov. 22, 1892 – Fireman’s Fair at Model Rink – Displays included first plow from the Plow Factory.

Jan. 28, 1893 – Kuhn established a branch factory in Hastings, his 13th branch factory

Nov 2, 1893 – Anderson swore out an attachment against the plow factory for \$300

Oct 10, 1900 – Reason for failure – “,,built on wind and Kearney subsidy. It was a hair-brained scheme without money or merit and failed because in the first case it was not legitimate, and because Kearney was no place for a plow factory.”