

CCHS Heritage Notes for 3-11-14

The setback that Vermillion suffered in the great flood of 1881 proved to be temporary after moving atop the bluff. By the end of the decade, the population had doubled from 714 in 1880 to 1,490 in 1890. Among the new public buildings was a courthouse erected in 1882 at the corner of Court and Kidder. This structure fulfilled the needs of Clay County until 1912, when it was replaced by the current building on the north side of Main between High and Washington Streets.

The Austin-Whittemore House, at 15 Austin Street, was constructed by H.J. Austin in 1882, and later occupied by Pansy Austin-Whittemore. The construction of this property just one year after the flood helped substantially in firming up the relocation of the community atop the Missouri River bluffs. Lee and Prentis built a new brick structure on the corner of Main & Market, using some materials salvaged from below the hill. In 1919, the business was taken over by the Meisenholder family, who continued the general merchandise store until 1958. In 1959, Vermillion's one hundred year centennial, the building was torn down.

When laying out downtown streets, complications arose over the discovery that the private residence of A.H. Lathrop in the unplatted area north of Main on what is now Prospect Street would be in the middle of Market Street, were that street to continue straight north. The final decision was that Market Street should end at Main and Prospect Street should be deflected to the East of the Lathrop residence. In consequence, there are jogs in the streets of Washington, High, Prospect, Center and Elm on the north and Luxemburg, Austin, Market, Court and Church on the south. The decision to end Market Street at Main Street assured the predominance of Main Street as the preferred business thoroughfare.