

CCHS Heritage Notes for 4-1-14

Vermillion civic improvement continued when attention was drawn to the existence of several cottages on the south side of Kidder adjoining Court Street, aptly termed Kidder Street Tenement Row. Constructed in ramshackle fashion by an absentee owner, the structures had been left standing in deteriorating condition and frequented by hoboes and disreputable characters. They had been condemned by the City for some time but it was not until a fire in July 1900 that steps were taken to remove the buildings. Two years later the lots were acquired by Thompson Lumber Company, located across Kidder to the north, for storage of building supplies.

In May 1914 the Vermillion City Council ordered the removal of all hitching posts on Main Street from Dakota to Washington, as well as all of Market Street. At the same time, the City agreed to install hitching posts at public expense on the north side of Kidder and also a short section of National. The mercantile firm of Lee and Prentis made hitching posts available to its patrons on its vacant lots. In 1923 hitching posts were entirely eliminated from Vermillion's business section. A secondary argument for their removal had been the difficulty in keeping the streets clean and in proper condition through the use of mechanical equipment, including street sprinklers. The Commercial Club, organized in 1907, was particularly interested for this reason.

Plans for the beautification of the bluff on the south end of Market Street began to take form in early 1914. The City Council hired nurseryman E.D. Cowles to maintain two flower beds there for the growing seasons of 1914 and 1915.

Formally organized on March 21, 1912, the Women's Civic League assumed the leadership in all major efforts to bring about civic improvement. This group later became the Vermillion Civic Council.