

Vermillion Founded  
Heritage Notes  
For 9-3-13

The name **VERMILLION** was a transfer from that of the nearby Vermillion River, sometimes spelled with one "l". In turn it was a Sioux name, WASE WAKPALA (wa sa wak pa' la) meaning "red stream" and later translated by French traders to Vermillion. The first white men to visit the site of Vermillion were the fur traders who visited Clay County in the late 1700's. Remains of trading stations were found by Lewis & Clark when they traveled in the area in 1804. Lewis & Clark also journeyed to SPIRIT MOUND, seven miles North of Vermillion on August 25, 1804.

Vermillion was actually founded in 1859, although it was laid out as a townsite below the bluff in 1857. No permanent settlement had been permitted until an Indian Treaty in 1858. The post office was established on April 17, 1860, the same year in which Vermillion articles of incorporation were prepared; but were not actually filed until 1862. Vermillion was platted in 1869, ten years after the first settlers arrived and the original plat consisted of 120 acres.

A village government for Vermillion was organized in 1873. This was replaced in 1877 by an aldermanic system in accordance with a territorial statute providing for the incorporation of the town. John L. Jolley was elected as the first mayor. The first City Hall was constructed in 1885 on the site of the later March Theater (now the location of Bank of the West). It was replaced in 1902 by a Municipal Theater Building, said to have been the first in the United States which also contained the City offices.

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**Next CCHS event (open to the public) Thursday September 26, 2013--7:00pm at A/W House. Local antique dealer Joe Hoffman will appraise and tell you about any item you wish to bring along. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome!**