

Tour of Vermillion
Downtown Historic District

Vermillion, South Dakota

Vermillion, S.D.

Still Standing

- 1 Austin-Whittemore House
- 2 Old National Guard Armory
- 3 10 Block of West Main, South Side
- 4 Bank of Vermillion / First National Bank
- 5 U.S. Post Office
- 6 Carnegie Library
- 7 Churches on Main & Dakota Street
- 8 Grange/Waldorf Livery
- 9 Clay County Bank / Vermillion National Bank
- 10 Nissen Building / Citizen's Bank & Trust
- 11 St. Agnes Catholic Church
- 12 Clay County Courthouse

Locations are indicated by the corresponding number inside a white square on the "Still Standing" Map on the inside back flap - page 41.

Locations are indicated by the corresponding letter inside a circle on the "Gone for Good" Map on the outside back cover on page 42.

Gone for Good

- A Chandler House
- B Liveries on Market Street
- C Lee & Prentis / Meisenholder's
- D Central / Old High School
- E City Hall / Opera House / March Theatre
- F Churches on Main & Church Street
F-1 - Methodist; F-2 - Lutheran; F-3 - Baptist;
F-4 - First Episcopal and Swedish Congregational;
F-5 - Congregational; and F-6 - Methodist
- G Municipal Building / City Hall
- H Waldorf Hotel
- I St. Joseph's Academy
- J West Side Elementary School

1 Austin-Whittemore House

15 Austin Street (1882)

In 1882, Horace Austin built a new house on the bluff that was designed by Andrew Pickett. Some of the primary features of this Italianate Villa-style brick structure were the prominent cupola, the low-pitched roof, a foundation made of Sioux quartzite. After being donated to the Clay County Historical Society in the 1960s by Helen Whittemore, the house was renovated and restored by the group. It now serves as a museum and is the home of the Clay County Historical Society.



Photos courtesy of CCHS and Tom Thaden



Photo courtesy Pressing Matters Printing

Ⓐ Chandler House

111 Market Street

A longtime establishment below the bluff, the Chandler House survived the flood of 1881 and afterwards was moved up the bluff to continue as the premier hotel in Vermillion. The first building most passengers saw when they walked up the bluff from the depot, the Chandler House was the premier hotel in Vermillion until the Waldorf was built in 1902. As time moved on, the Chandler House was turned into a boarding house and at the end a place for the homeless during the Great Depression. It was eventually torn down and replaced on location by the old National Guard Armory in 1941.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

2 Old National Guard Armory 111 Market Street (1941)

Prior to 1941, there were no adequate facilities available for the two National Guard units stationed in Vermillion. They had been storing their equipment and using space under Inman Stadium on the USD campus. In 1941, the WPA built a new armory on land donated by the city. It was located on a lot on Market Street that had formerly been occupied by the Chandler House since 1881.



Photo courtesy of Tom Thaden



Photo courtesy of Tom Thaden.

Ⓑ Liveries **on East Side of Market Street**

Vermillion used to have around five liveries in town, some on Center Street, but most on Market Street. Collins & Harris Blacksmith Shop, C.W. Richardson & Son Livery Stable, and the City Dray Line are shown here on the east side of the 100 block of Market Street around 1905. After the advent of the automobile in the early 1900s, most were converted into storage for the vehicles and then were eventually torn down.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

© Lee & Prentis / Meisenholder's 1-3 Market Street

A mainstay in Vermillion from the very beginning, Lee & Prentis had everything you could ever need or want in a store. After being in business for over fifty-five years, Prentis sold the business in 1929. Meisenholder's took over where Lee & Prentis left off. Although they changed the building to fit their needs, they maintained the quality and variety that could be found at the store.



Photo courtesy of CCHS



Photo courtesy of CCHS

3 10 Block West Main

South Side (1890)

After a massive fire in 1890 destroyed both sides of the 10 block of West Main, the city passed an ordinance that banned all new wood frame buildings in the business district. It was after this occurred that Vermillion's downtown began to take on its now familiar appearance. Both sides of the block were entirely rebuilt (except for 1-3 West Main) of brick, supplied primarily by the Bower Brick Co. The pictures shown are from c. 1895 and 1910.



Photo courtesy of Clay Co. Historical Society and W.H. Over Museum



Photo courtesy of Clay Co. Historical Society and W.H. Over Museum

4 Bank of Vermillion / First National Bank 1 East Main Street (1882)

The first bank built on the bluff, the original building was destroyed by a fire in 1892. Rebuilt in the same location in 1893, the contractor used stones (with sandstone trim) instead of bricks to give this building its distinctive look. After merging with the Vermillion National Bank in 1929, the new owners of the bank decided to give it a different, more modern look. The stone building with multiple entrances was replaced with a flat concrete front and a single entrance. In 2009, the historical look of the building was altered further when all of the sandstone trim was removed and replaced with concrete.



Photo Courtesy of Dakota Republican



Photo Courtesy of Dakota Republican

5 U.S. Post Office 16 Court Street (1931)

Prior to the completion of the new building in 1931, Vermillion's post office never had a place to call its own. Once the town moved up to the bluff in 1881, the post office was moved from place to place on Market and Main Street due to fires and leases. As soon as the new courthouse was opened in 1913, the U.S. Postal Inspector pushed hard to claim the grounds at the Northeast corner of Court & Kidder Street as the preferable site for the proposed federal building in Vermillion. It would be 18 long years before this actually occurred.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

① Central School / Vermillion High School 18 Church Street

In 1873, the city decided to build a new 40'x 40' schoolhouse for \$4,000 on land above the bluff donated by Capt. Nelson Miner. Even after the new elementary schools opened, the Central School building was not big enough for the junior and senior high. In 1911, the city tore down the old building and constructed a new high school directly to the east of where the old one once stood. Upon completion, the new high school was 115' x 83' and had much more room than before. Within ten years, though, the city decided to build an addition

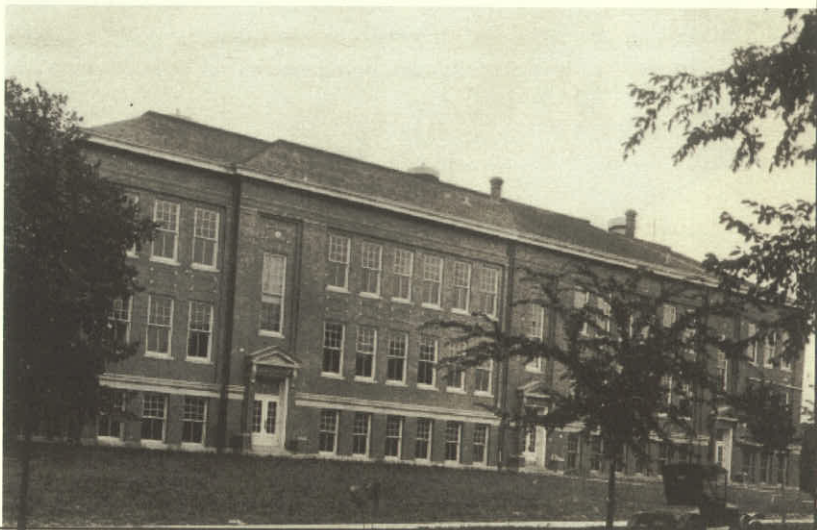


Photo courtesy of W. H. Over Museum

Central School - 1873



Photo courtesy of W.H. Over Museum and CCGS

6 Carnegie Library 12 Church Street (1902)

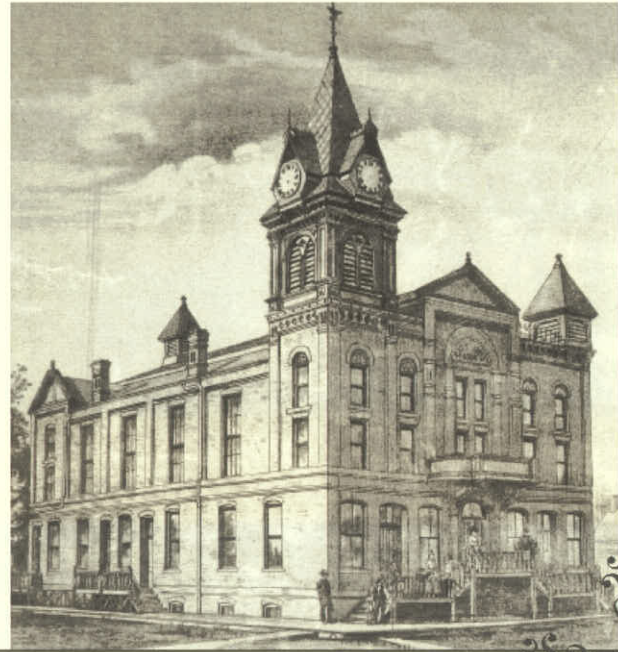
A \$10,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie in 1903 allowed Vermillion to setup its library in a separate building. Previously, it had been located in the southeast room of City Hall. Formally opened to the public in July, 1904, on a Church Street lot purchased for \$100, it soon became a popular place for all types of people, especially children.



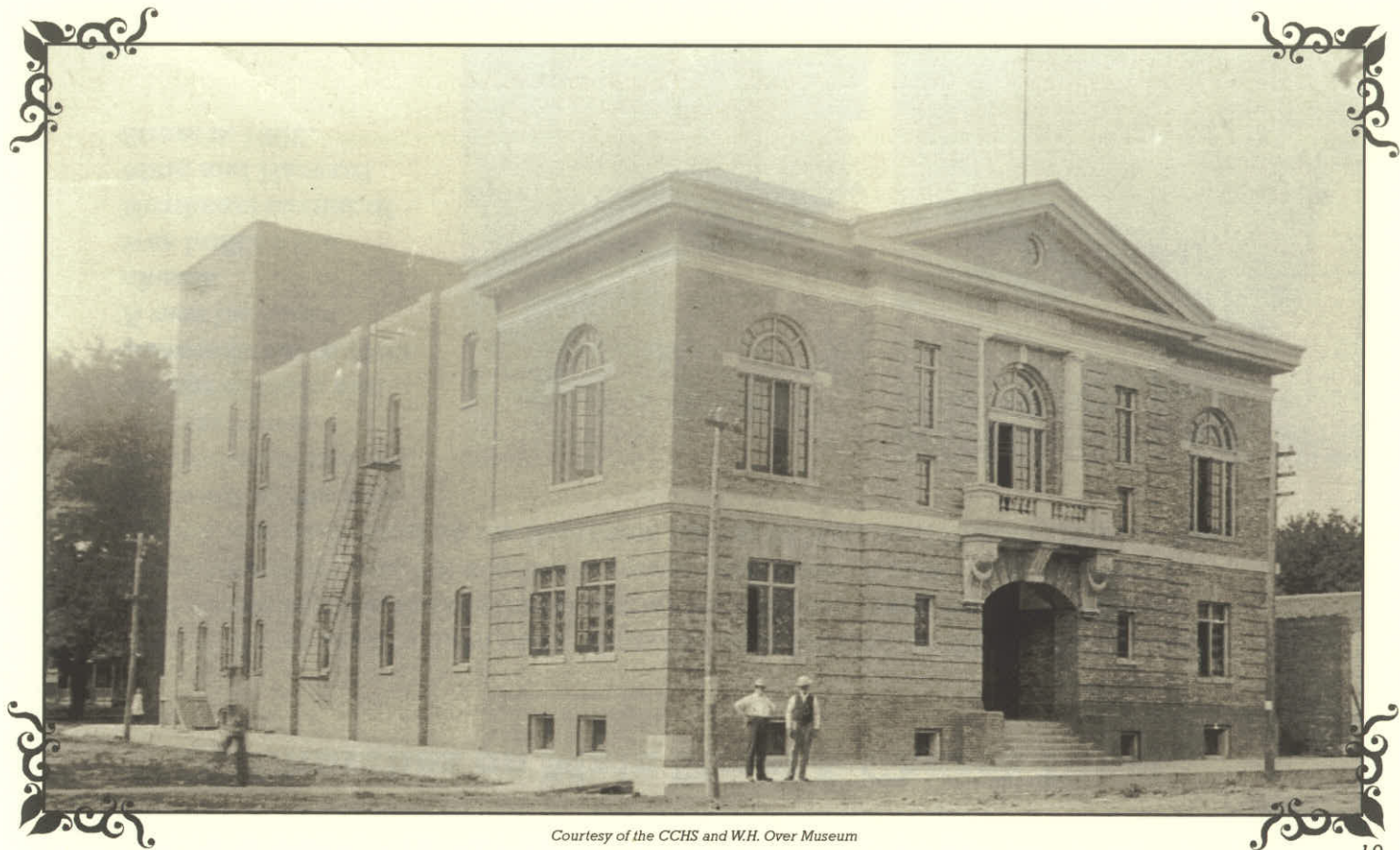
Photo courtesy of CCHS

E City Hall / Opera House / March Theatre 19-23 East Main Street

In 1884, a city hall was built on the southwest corner of Main and Church Street. Opened to the public in July, 1886, the building also served as an opera house. Many improvements were made on the old City Hall, but the building was declared unsafe and torn down in 1908. The new City Hall/Opera House was dedicated in February, 1910, and was a stately stone and brick building with more space for city offices. It also housed an auditorium with a sloping floor and a seating capacity of 700. Leased out and used for a movie house after the city moved its offices, it was disposed of at a public sale in September, 1946, and eventually razed later in 1957.



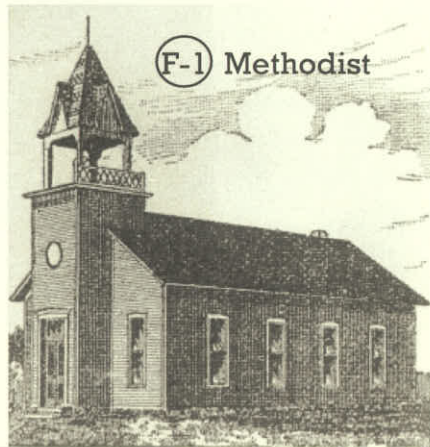
Courtesy of the CCHS and W.H. Over Museum



Courtesy of the CCHS and W.H. Over Museum

F Churches on Main Street & Church Street

Church Street used to have many churches on it, located on the southwest corner with Bloomingdale, the northeast corner with Kidder (used by three different denominations), and the southeast corner with Main. A new Congregational church was dedicated on the Southeast corner of Main and Dakota Street in 1890 followed by the new Methodist church on the Northwest corner of Main and Dakota Street in 1896. A new Lutheran church was built on the Northeast corner of Main and Harvard Street in 1907.



F-1 Methodist

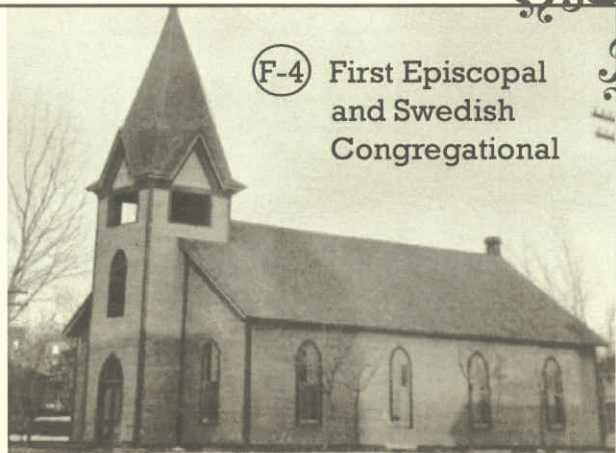


F-2 Lutheran

Photo courtesy of CCHS



(F-3) Baptist



(F-4) First Episcopal
and Swedish
Congregational



(F-5) Congregational



(F-6) Methodist

7A Baptist Church

101 East Main Street

A new Baptist Church with the sanctuary built of Sioux quartzite was dedicated in 1890. The most recent addition to the Baptist Church was in 1925, when Lewis Hall was built directly to the west of the existing church.



Photos courtesy of Cleo Erickson.

7B United Church of Christ - Congregational

225 East Main Street

Both the Congregational and Methodist churches dedicated new buildings in 1929. The Congregationalists sold their old building and built a new one of colonial architecture on the Northwest corner of Main & Harvard.



Photos courtesy of W.H. Over Museum.

7C First United Methodist Church

16 North Dakota Street

After a fire destroyed their original church on Main Street, the Methodists sold their lots and built a new church on the southwest corner of Dakota and National. This building housed not only the church but also the Wesleyan Foundation and parsonage on the south side.



Photos courtesy of Jeanette Williams.

© Municipal Building / City Hall 25 Center Street

Within ten years of dedicating its new city hall, Vermillion ran out of office space and had to build again. A new Municipal Building (as it was called) was erected on land purchased from the Vermillion Milling Co. at 25 Center Street. The city agreed to keep and maintain the power plant, but started over with the design of the building. Dedicated in November, 1920, it was replaced by a fourth City Hall on the same location in 2009.



Photo courtesy of Tom Thaden.

8 Grange / Waldorf Livery 26-28 Center Street (1902)

Ever since Vermillion was moved up the bluff after the flood in 1881, a livery has been on the Southwest corner of Center and National Street. The current structure was built in 1902 in anticipation of the increase in business due to the opening of the Waldorf Hotel, and the Waldorf Livery has survived the test of time. After automobiles replaced horses and carriages as the main means of transportation, the Waldorf was used as an auto livery where the everyday person could keep their car. The old meets the new in this picture, with carriages and Model T's lined up together in front of the livery.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

9 Clay Co. Bank / Vermillion National Bank 1 West Main Street (1881)

Originally known as the Clay County Bank, the Vermillion National Bank was diagonally across the street from its primary competitor, the Bank of Vermillion. One of only two buildings on the 10 block of West Main that was not destroyed by a fire in 1890, the bank showed that it was indeed fireproof. The two banks merged together as one in 1929, as the First National Bank of Vermillion. The building has been used by other businesses ever since.



Photo courtesy of Vermillion Plain Talk

10 Nissen Building / Citizen's Bank & Trust 25 West Main Street (1906)

Almost at the same time the Waldorf Hotel was built, Mrs. L.C. Nissen put up a new building on the opposite corner to house her growing millinery business. After 1925, this building was to house the Citizen's Bank & Trust and later on, the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company upstairs.



Photo courtesy of CCHS



VERMILLION S. DAK 7

Photo courtesy of CCHS

H Waldorf Hotel 105 West Main Street

The Waldorf Hotel grew out of an idea by community leaders to have a place for people to stay while in Vermillion. Located on the Northwest corner of Main and Prospect Street, it provided all of the amenities, including rooms, baths, a restaurant, and a barber shop. In addition, many doctors rented offices in the building as well. The hotel was torn down in 1964 and was eventually replaced by a bank.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

I St. Joseph's Academy

Washington Street & West National Street

In 1889, the Episcopalians erected a classroom building on the northwest corner of High and National Streets. After just a few years, the Benedictine Sisters took it over for use as a state orphan's home. From 1897-1908, they operated the school know as St. Joseph's Convent or Academy and added some buildings. Abandoned in 1908, the Vermillion School District used the property for Grades 5-7 from 1917-21, when it was known as the North Side School.



Courtesy of the Dakota Republican and the CCHS

11 St. Agnes Church / Vermillion Area Arts Council **202 Washington Street (1907)**

In 1905, the Catholic parishes of Vermillion and Fairview combined, thus creating the need for a larger building. The decision was made to build a new structure on the same location for \$10,000 and the old building was sold and moved over to Center Street. Constructed of pressed brick and with elaborate stained glass windows, the new church building was completed in the summer of 1907. The first mass was held in the church on September 22, 1907, with Father Flood presiding.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

J West Side Elementary School
320 W. Main Street

After 25 years with just one school housing all the students in a central location, the city was forced to add two new elementary schools. The first of those opened in 1897, was built for \$4,000 on land donated by Horace Austin, and became known as West Side Elementary. An addition was made to the building in 1911 and the name was later changed to Austin Elementary in honor of Rachel Austin, an early teacher at the log schoolhouse.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

12 Clay County Courthouse

213 West Main Street (1913)

At the same time Vermillion was building a new City Hall, Clay County was looking to replace the old wooden courthouse that had been in use since 1881. A bond was passed by Clay County in 1910 approving the construction of a new courthouse between High and Washington Street. Built of yellow stone on the north side of the 200 block of West Main Street between 1912 and 1913 for around \$95,000, the new courthouse replaced the original one built on the bluff in 1881-82. The building and its landscaping have withstood the test of time.



Photo courtesy of CCHS

Changing Landscape of Downtown Vermillion

1881-1900

- Wooden buildings and buildings moved up to the bluff from the bottoms.
- Temporary, wooden, government buildings
- After two major fires, brick buildings.
- Businesses concentrated in the areas along Market and Center St., and the 10 block of both East and West Main.

1901-1940

- Major government buildings built of brick or stone
- Expansion to the 100 and 200 blocks of East and West Main and along Court, Elm, National, and Prospect Street
- Appearance of many entertainment facilities (pool & billiard parlors, bowling alleys, skating rinks, movie theatres, golf)
- Almost all buildings on Main, Center, Market, Court, Elm, Prospect, and Church occupied by businesses.

1941-1980

- Many businesses move out to Cherry St./Hwy. 50, leaving some vacancies
- Older, classical buildings demolished and replaced with newer buildings or not at all
- Other older buildings are left vacant

1981-2011

- Some downtown buildings vacated or without permanent tenants
- Primarily bars restaurants, and specialty shops seperated by the occasional bank, movie theatre, or public building

Downtown Businesses

Same Proprietors

J.W. Grange & Co. – 1881-1927
F.W. Lotze – 1881-1931
Thompson-Lewis Co. – 1881-1975
First National Bank – 1881-Present
Lee & Prentis / Meisenholder's – 1881-1957
R.E. Stinson's Men's Wear – 1884-1929
Oden Implements – 1928 -1986
Lass/Jacobsen Bakery – 1893 -1979
O.S. Olson – 1892 -1932
Iverson Hardware – 1881-1937
Helgeson's/Davis Drug – 1881-2009

Multiple Owners

Gas Stations
Implement Shops
Car Dealerships
Auto Repair Shops
Liveries / Dray Lines
Restaurants / Diners
Grocery Stores / Meat Markets
Hardware Stores
Barber & Beauty Shops
Billiard Parlors / Bowling Alleys

Business Trends

1881-1900

Confectioneries
Meat Markets
Partnerships
Billiards & Pool Halls
Men's Clothing/Tailors
Leather/Harness Shops

Variety/Discount Stores
Specialty/Novelty Stores
Department Stores
General Stores
Women's Clothing/Millinery
Barber Shops

Drug Stores
Furniture Stores
Produce/Poultry/Dairy
Hardware Stores
Liveries/Dray Lines

1901-1940

Coffee & Tea Houses
Leather/Harness Shops
Confectioneries
Meat Markets
Department Stores
Grocery Stores
Produce/Poultry/Dairy
Laundry/Dry Cleaners
Barber/Beauty Shops

Movie Theatres
Partnerships
Variety/Discount Stores
Specialty/Novelty Stores
Car/Implement Dealerships
Drug Stores
Hardware Stores
Women's Clothing/Millinery
Oysters

Billiards & Pool Halls
General Stores
Gas Stations
Bowling Alleys
Restaurants/Diners
Furniture Stores
Soda Fountains
Men's Clothing/Tailors

1941-1980

Barber/Beauty Shops
Gas Stations
Department Stores
Hardware Stores
Children's Clothing

Car/Implement Dealerships
Specialty/Novelty Stores
Grocery Stores
Soda Fountains
Bars

Coffee & Tea Houses
Restaurants/Diners
Produce/Poultry/Dairy
Men's Clothing/Tailors
Movements to Cherry St./Hwy. 50

1981-2011

Closings
Movements to Cherry St./Hwy. 50
Lawyers/Insurance Agents

Restaurants/Diners
Bars

Specialty/Novelty Stores
Banks

Business Types and Locations

East-West Streets

Grocery Stores
Bakeries
Clothing Stores
Millineries
Shoe Stores
Entertainment
(Movies, Theatre, Billiards, Bowling)
Banks
Doctors and Lawyers

North-South Streets

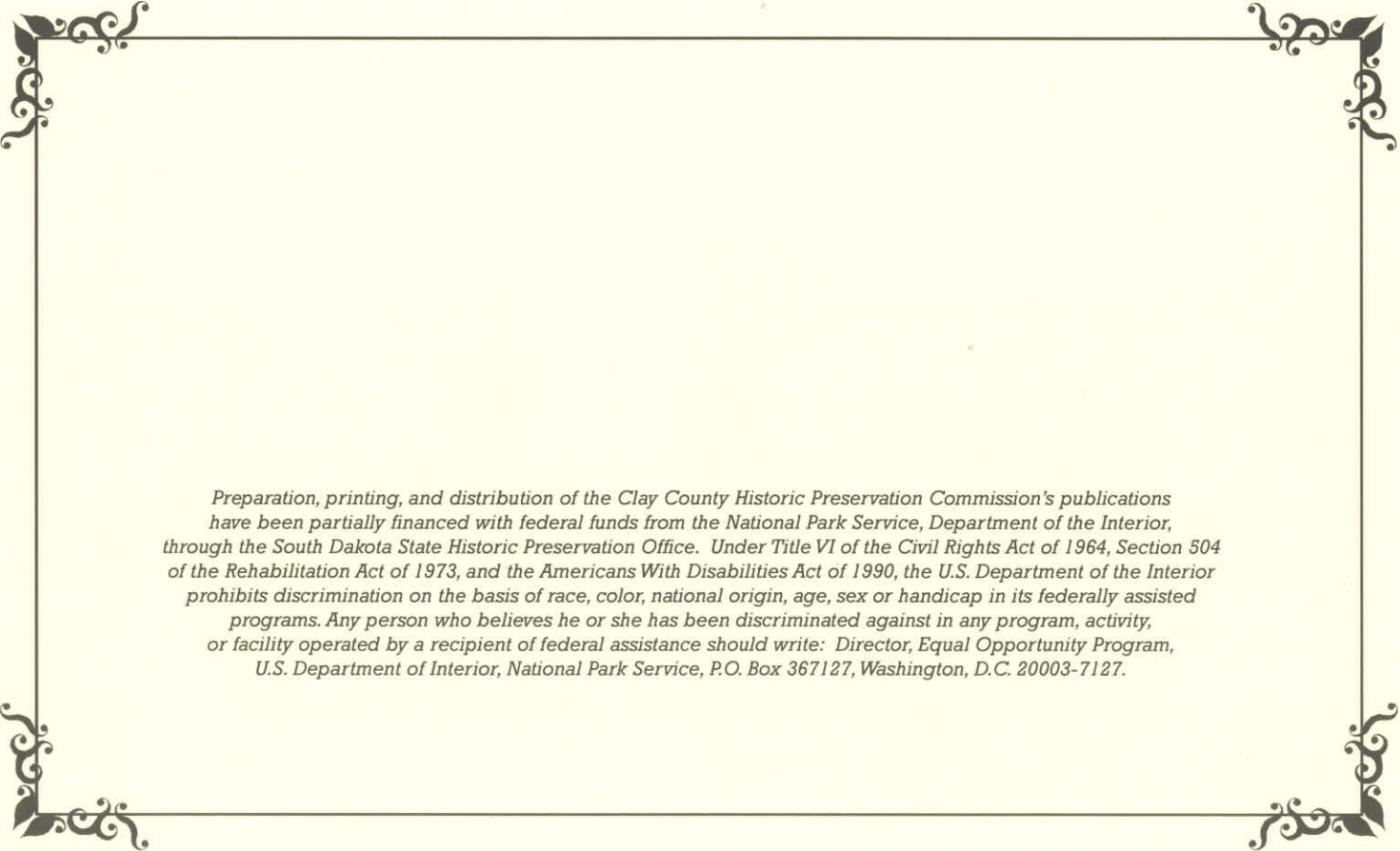
Liveries
Car Dealerships
Government Facilities
Electronics/Appliance Stores
Plumbing & Heating Shops
Implement Dealers
Grain, Feed, Flour, Seed

Both

Department Stores
Meat Markets
Insurance Brokers
Hardware Stores
Variety/Discount Stores
Barber & Beauty Shops
Lodging
Churches
Diners/Restaurants

Summary

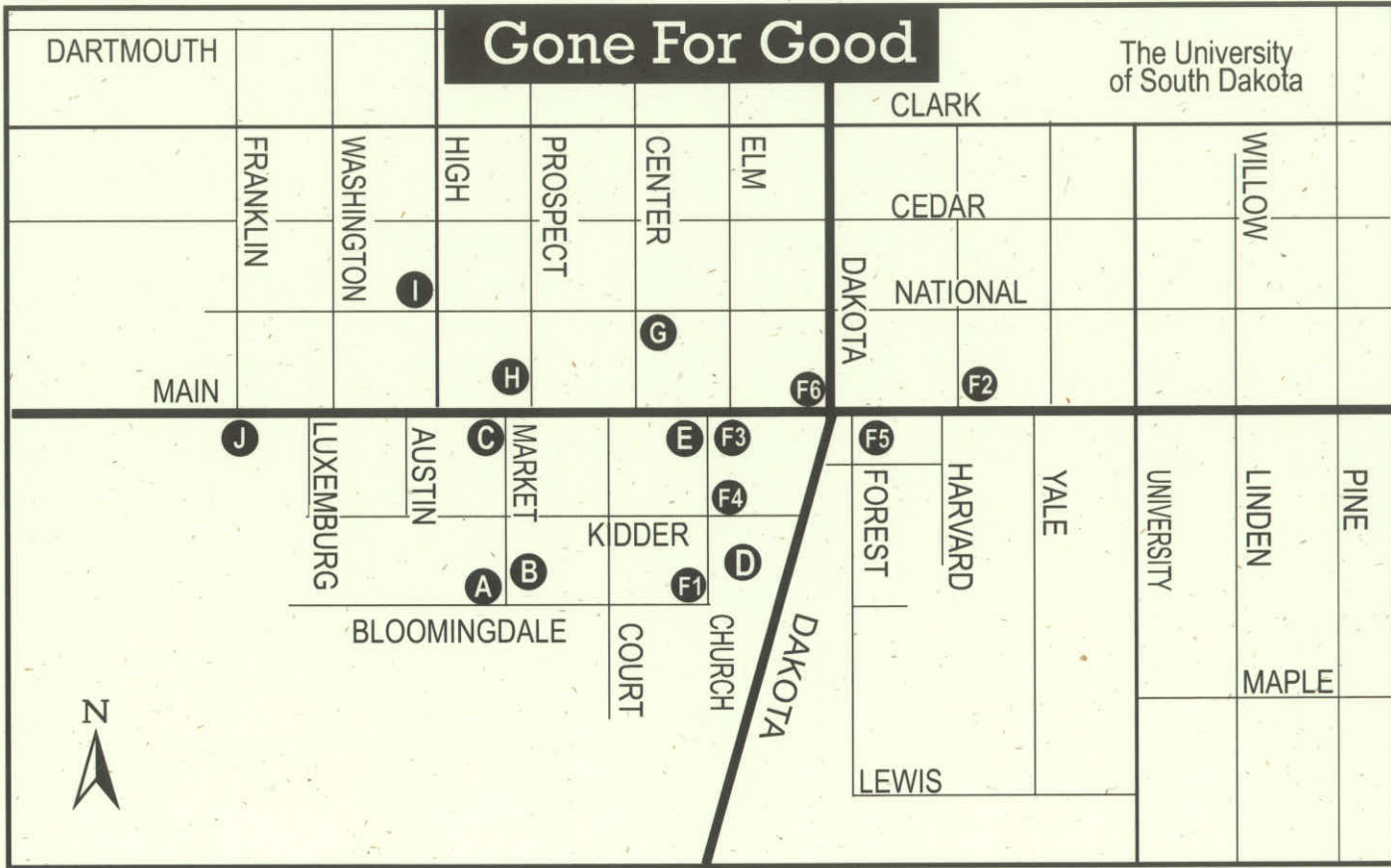
- The makeup of downtown Vermillion has changed tremendously over the past 128 years
- Many different sources were used for information, including newspapers, yearbooks, telephone directories, books, atlases, city guides, utility records, and especially interviews with longtime citizens of Vermillion and Clay County
- While there was once wooden buildings concentrated in a one or two block area, downtown Vermillion expanded to include mainly brick buildings over a much larger area
- Where there once was a wide variety of steady businesses, many buildings are now vacant or have no permanent tenants and downtown Vermillion now consists mainly of specialty shops, restaurants, and bars.
- Downtown Vermillion has many historic buildings still standing and in fairly good condition, but many more have been torn down over the years.
- There were many different business trends throughout the history of downtown Vermillion, depending mainly on the economy and world affairs.
- Different types of businesses tended to have been located on particular streets in downtown Vermillion
- There were some businesses that were located in the same building over a long period of time and others changed locations that moved quite often.



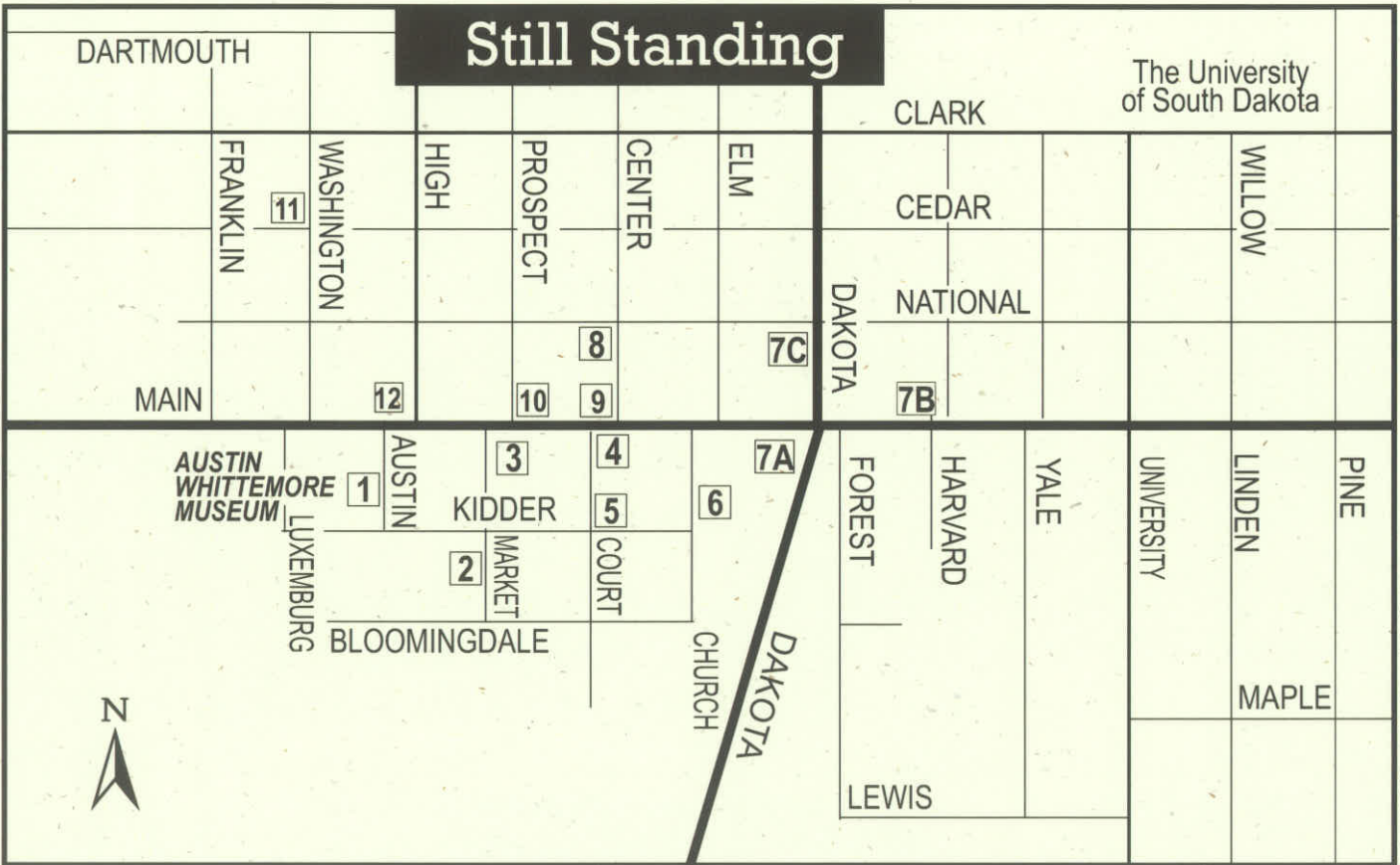
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Gone For Good

The University of South Dakota



Still Standing



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