



From the late 1890s through the dedication of the Carnegie Public Library in July, 1904, the city of Vermillion had a collection of books and magazines that the public could read and check out, but no place to call home. Until the completion of the new building, the reading room was located in the SE room of City Hall on the SW corner of Main and Church St. Prior to 1902, there was no formal organization in charge of the books, only the public goodwill to keep track of everything. That year, the Vermillion Public Library Association was formed with the ultimate goal of securing the funding needed for a new building and increasing the collection of reading material available to the citizens of Vermillion. Once that was done, funds were raised through donations, including ten thousand dollars from famous philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1903. Sioux Falls architect Joseph Schwartz designed the building and local contractor Erick Nysten made it all come together at 12 Church St. This location served as the city's library for 74 years, until it was replaced with a new one on the lots just to the south of it. This is a look at those crucial times between 1902 and 1904 when Vermillion secured its first library.

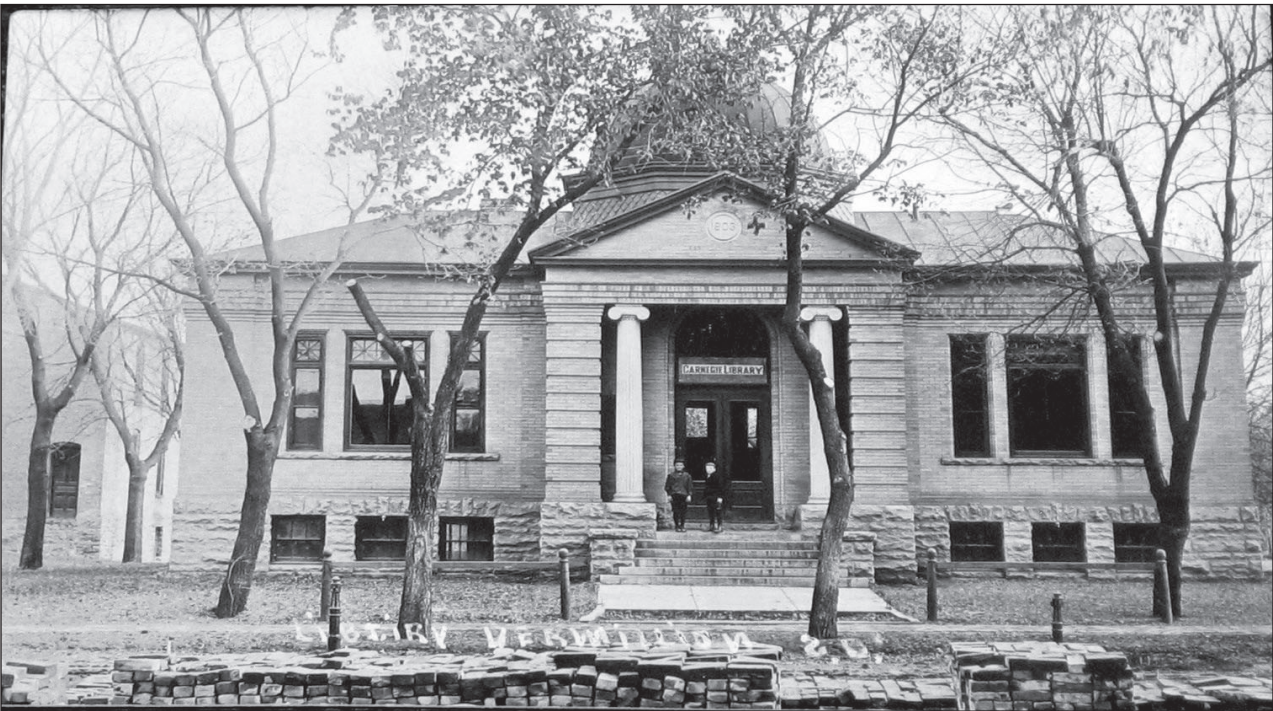
City Public Library And Reading Room

IN THE WORDS OF THE DAKOTA REPUBLICAN
JANUARY 16, 1902

Two weeks ago Monday last a number of the ladies of Vermillion met at the home of Mrs. A.E. Lee as a preliminary function considering the necessity of organizing a public library in Vermillion. The result was that these ladies decided to have it announced in all the churches that on Monday, the 13th instant, a meeting of our citizens would be held at the Masonic Temple for the purpose of settling the questions of whether Vermillion should have a public library and reading-rooms. And, as if anticipating the inevitable result of this meeting, all citizens were requested to bring with them either a book or the price of a book – as a first gift and the groundwork for a library.

By 8 o'clock the place of meeting was filled with an enthusiastic throng of our citizens, male and female. At 8:30 o'clock Mrs. E.D. Brookman called the meeting to order, and very fittingly nominated Professor Young for chairman of

At The Carnegie Public Library



Vermillion Carnegie Library on Church Street, circa 1900.

COURTESY OF THE CLAY CO. HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

the meeting. Col. John L. Jolley made a rousing and strenuous speech in his own inimitable manner of seriousness and humor, advocating the necessity and worth of a public library, and noting with pride how the people of Vermillion when they met publicly to start an organization, not only started but also went liberally on to the end. Senator Gunderson followed with a neat speech of line good sense, pledging his hearty support to the movement. So, too, D.M. Inman spoke, saying he was much in favor of the establishing of a city library and reading-rooms and would 'back' the movement with hearty support. Mesdames Kahl, Austin, and Thomas and Miss Daily also spoke the point.

A committee of five, on consultation, chose the following ladies and gentlemen as a committee of eleven – namely, Professor C.M. Young, C.F. Lotze, A. Helgeson, C.J. Gunderson, L.T. Sweezy, Jason E. Payne, E.D. Hawkins, M.D. Thompson, and Mrs. Lee, Mrs. E.D. Brookman, and Mrs. Inman. The committee agreed to meet the next evening at the office of M.D. Thompson to come up with the plans for incorporation of a Public Library Association in Vermillion, with suggestions as to its constitution, by-laws, and general modes of working. Col. Jolley moved that the committee should call for subscriptions to the library endowment. C.J. Gunderson moved that, since the interested citizens

were present, subscriptions should be called for at once. On his motion being carried, the chairman appointed him 'drummer' and Mr. Gunderson "set the ball a-rolling" 'by heading the subscription list. Subscriptions ranged between \$5 and \$10.

Altogether enthusiasm, patriotism, and recognition of duty, as well as a sense of privilege, made this public meeting one, as Col. Jolley predicted, of great success. Counting all the money subscribed, we have for the purchase of books nearly \$300 (\$293), and counting all books to hand from every source, some 314 – in itself a very respectable library. In a week's time this movement for a public library and reading-room will be a permanent organization. The funds are in existence, numbers of books have been donated, our citizens are enthusiastic and determined, – and when did our citizens ever fail to make good their ambitions and promises?

To be Continued Next Week

INFORMATION COMPILED BY TOM THADEN
Member of Clay County Historical Society

Park

From Page 1

for the flag pole in center field. He actually raised a little bit too much money, about \$2,500 too much. His error was a plus for us."

He noted that joint partners Midwest Ready Mix and Builder's Choice worked with the city on pricing.

"Midwest Ready Mix gave us the monster blocks at half price, so only \$50 per block," Goblirsch said. "City staff provided the dirt. Builder's Choice then installed that whole project for us for the cost of one block with their logo on it. This portion of the project was roughly going to cost close to \$5,500. We basically did it for the cost of sod, which turned out to be about \$1,100."

Gioblirsch said the new seating berm is a unique and great way to watch a game.

"If you are going to a ball game over there bring your bag chairs, sit over there," he said. "The first level is designed for ground seating, the next two levels are ideal for bag chairs or lawn chairs. Also with that there is a new 18x30 storage shed built to hold park and baseball field equipment. So, phase two is mostly completed."

Phase three includes installing a new six-foot perimeter fence and grand entrance.

"On Prentis Avenue there is currently a four-foot fence that just does not solve a lot of the problems we are seeing there," Goblirsch said. "We are going to remove that and reuse the fence in another project. We will be replacing it with a six-foot high green vinyl coated fence, a very nice fence, with the hope that at some

point we can put a wind break in there to enclose that area."

Goblirsch noted the need for the higher fencing is due to one to two incidences of vandalism taking place at the field each year.

"This year we have already had one where the concession stand was broken into and the product was stolen out of there," he said. "The concession stand is run by Jim Merrigan, so he lost a fair amount of product over there. The other issue is we have a ton of dog walkers who are leaving treats out in the outfield without picking them up. Also, without control points or controlled access, we have teams or players who go out when the weather is wet and just chew up the field; it turns into a lot of work for city staff to get the field back into condition to be played on."

Because roughly 75-80 games a year are played on the field, not counting practices, Goblirsch said the more the city can control access, the easier it will be to maintain the field.

The fencing project will be completed by July 1.

Phase four will be installing a new bathroom facility.

"There will be a park bathroom, to the outside (of the fence), open when the weather permits, so anyone at the playground or park can use it and not have to go into the ball park," Goblirsch said. "Then on the other side there will be two doors facing the field. The bathroom will be 20x22 area meeting all codes, all accessible."

Construction on the bathroom will start around August 1.

"Most of our games and tournaments end by July 31," Goblirsch said. "Nothing is going to get done until those games are done. The city needs about two weeks to



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Pictured in the background Carter Kratz during a Vermillion Legion Post 1 game this past weekend, is the new seating berm installed along the left field line at Prentis Park. the project, expected to cost nearly \$5,500 came in under budget at \$1,100 thanks to partners Midwest Ready Mix and Builder's Choice.

get the infrastructure – the water lines and the sewer lines – to the structure; we are updating those because they are in rough shape. So, August 1, the city will start doing their work with the hope that Builder's Choice can begin on August 20 with a completion date of October 1 of this year.

The other part of this project will be installing the main gate.

He noted that the arches that are existing on Prentis Avenue are going to get moved and placed next to the storage building and the bathroom to create an entrance point.

"We are going to have it all re-powder coated and painted and it will create a grand entrance

into the ball field area," he said. "The future parking lot is going to be where the house was at, so it is going to be a new entrance to the baseball field. By doing this, it will be a nice control point and it is very aesthetically pleasing. The main gate will be approximately 16-feet across. There will also be a walking gate so we don't have to open the main entrance for normal access. We need the 16-foot gate to get trucks in for maintenance."

The last phase, phase five, will be to complete the sidewalk and parking lot, which will be completed closer to the pool project.

"The parking lot was designed for pool usage during the day and

baseball during the evening, ideally," Goblirsch said. "The parking lot will be a roughly 50-60 car parking lot."

Looking forward, Goblirsch said the entire project will be a boost for the city.

"There has already been a lot of baseball activity there this year," he said. "We have a couple of regional event this summer, but ultimately the hope is to get the infrastructure there so that Vermillion can bid on state level baseball tournaments each year. Those are pretty sizable tournaments that get people into our restaurants, our gas stations, just into our community. Right now we are not able to host those events with the facilities we have."



Keeping hopes high for generations.

CorTrust Bank has the loans and services to help your ag business grow. Visit us today.



Raise your expectations.

cortrustbank.com • 101 W. Main St. • Vermillion

We live for the long way home.



Avera Medical Group

Avera.org/live

You're too young to let a chronic condition like diabetes or asthma slow you down. Avera Medical Group can help manage your health so you can take the long way home and enjoy the view.

Live better. Live balanced. Avera.