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**VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA**

PAPERS, 1880-2009  
(bulk dates, 1888-1980)  
Quantity .5 linear ft.

**ACCESS:** This collection is open for research without restrictions.

**PHOTOGRAPHS:** Negatives are located in Box 2.

**PRINTED MATERIAL:** Printed Materials are located in Box 1.

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**PROCESSED BY:** Gayla Koerting, July 2006.  
Doris Peterson, Updated 2008, 2009, 2010

**ACCESSION NO.:** RC2000.14

## History

The town received its name from the nearby river, derived from a Sioux name, Wase Wakpala, for “red stream,” that was later translated by fur traders to Vermillion. The town was founded in 1859, and the post office was established in April 1860. The articles of incorporation were not filed until 1862. Settlers began to arrive seven years later below the bluff, and the local government was organized by 1873. At that time Vermillion was often referred to as “Vermillion-Under-The-Hill” or “Vermillion on the Bottom.” However, Vermillion suffered a devastating flood on March 27, 1881; the town was relocated, re-platted in 1884, and rebuilt on the bluff.

The growth of the city flourished with the founding of the flagship institution for higher education in the state, The University of South Dakota, in 1862. USD is designated as the public liberal arts university in the state and is home to a large College of Arts and Sciences, a School of Education and the state’s only School of Law, School of Medicine, accredited School of Business and College of Fine Arts. The university attracted students, faculty, and staff into the area and aided in attracting businesses into the area.

## Scope and Content Note

The Vermillion, South Dakota Collection contains six series: **Correspondence**, **Land Title Abstracts**, **Photographs**, **Printed Materials**, **Typescripts**, and one subject series on the **Vermillion Sesquicentennial**.

The **Correspondence** series consists of three individual letters relating to Vermillion history from 1888, 1909, and 1954.

The **Land Title Abstracts** series contains 4 abstracts for parcels of land in Vermillion or in Clay County.

The **Printed Materials** series contains one successful National Register of Historic Places application for the Downtown Vermillion Historic District, one Preserve America grant application for funds to produce a publication on Vermillion’s history for the town’s sesquicentennial, two books on Vermillion’s history, newspaper clippings, and promotional literature from various city agencies. Visitor information, maps, guides, and other brochures were produced by the Chamber of Commerce for students attending USD or those individuals coming to teach/work at the university. The Vermillion Development Company produced city economic profiles to encourage business opportunities in the area. Student handbooks, play productions, and commencement materials from Vermillion Middle and High School are also included in this series.

The **Photograph** series contains five 8 x 10 negatives of the Vermillion High School Basketball Team, ca. 1940s.

The **Typescript** series consists of a 2 page document entitled “The Military Road” by USD professor of history Cedric Cummins.

The **Vermillion Sesquicentennial** series contains material used to celebrate Vermillion’s 150 of existence.

**Additional Resources**

- Lathrop, A.H. *Life in Vermillion before the 1881 flood and shortly after*. Vermillion, SD: Clay County Historical Society, 1970. Location: 3rd floor, Chilson Collection, F659 .V4x L37
- Moses, Lloyd R. *Clay County place names*. Vermillion, SD: Clay County Historical Society, 1978. Location: 3rd floor, Chilson Collection, F657 .C6 C55 1976
- Schell, Herbert S. *Clay County: Chapters Out of the Past*. Vermillion, SD: Vermillion Area Chamber of Commerce, 1985. Location: 3rd floor, F657 .C6 S36
- Schell, Herbert S. *History of Clay County, South Dakota*. Vermillion, SD: Clay County Historical Society, 1976. Location: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Chilson Collection, F657 .C6 S34x
- Smith, Elizabeth T. *Historic Vermillion and Clay County*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2002. Location: 3rd floor, F659 .V4 S64 2002
- Sterling, Everett W. *Vermillion story, the people and events in Vermillion's founding in 1859 and growth through the first 100 years. Published on the occasion of the Vermillion Centennial, August 1859*. Vermillion, SD: Vermillion Chamber of Commerce, 1959. Location: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Chilson Collection, F659 .V S7x
- Svingen, Orlan J. *The history of Vermillion to 1900*. MA Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1975. Location: 3rd floor, LD5071 .3x Sv36
- Thaden, Thomas R. *From the river valleys to the rising bluff: a pictorial history of Vermillion, South Dakota, 1859-2009*. Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Co. Publishers, 2008. Location 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Chilson Collection, F659 .V47 T48 2008

**Subjects:**

Vermillion (S.D.) – History  
 Clay County (S.D.) – History  
 South Dakota – History  
 Vermillion (S.D.) – Social life and customs

Box No. Description**Box 1**

## CORRESPONDENCE (3 folders)

Andrews, Elva Cornelius to Ellwood C. Perisho (Prof.), ca. Nov. 1909  
w/ encl. "A Few of the Things that Elva Cornelius Andrews Has to  
be Thankful For, Thanksgiving, 1909"

Taylor, Franklin to Jacob Denel, 16 December 1888

Rothrock, E. P. (State Geologist) to Cedric Cummins (Prof.), 22 June  
1954

## LAND TITLE ABSTRACTS (4 folders)

125 Prospect, Vermillion, South Dakota

212 Prospect, Vermillion, South Dakota

Lots 3 and 4 in Block 3 of Hanson's Addition, Vermillion, South  
Dakota

W1/2 of NW1/4 and NW1/4 of SW1/4 of Sec1 and E1/2 of NE1/4 and  
NE1/4 of SE1/4 of Sec2, T92, R52, Clay County, South Dakota

## PRINTED MATERIALS (27 folders)

## Books: (5 folders)

*Christopherson, Dan. Downtown Vermillion Historic District: A  
project of the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission.*  
2003. (Master copy)

*Christopherson, Dan. Downtown Vermillion Historic District: A  
project of the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission.*  
2003. (Copy)

*Jacobson, Kevin P. Documenting Vermillion's rich cultural  
heritage: A sesquicentennial project. City of Vermillion's  
Preserve American Grant Application and Attachments.*  
Submitted December 13, 2005 by the Vermillion  
Sesquicentennial Task Force.

*Jordan, George T. Vermillion and vicinity.* J.E. Jonnason, 1909.

*Lathrop, A.H. Vermillion reminiscences: Notes on the early days of  
Vermillion, South Dakota; Its people and institutions.* Reprint  
of series of articles published in the *Dakota Republican* and  
the *Plain Talk*. 1920?-1960.

*Thaden, Tom. Tour of Vermillion downtown historic district.*  
Vermillion, SD: State Historical Perservation Commission,  
2008 (first printing).

## Brochures: (2 folders)

*The Bluffs* (Multi-level Gulf Course and Residential Development),  
n.d.

## Resident and Visitor Information

*Know Your Town.* ca. 1972

*Snow Control Brochure.* 1990

*Vermillion Briefs.* August 1995

*Vermillion: Home of the University of South Dakota.* ca. 1940s (2  
copies)

Box No. Description**Box 1 cont.**

## PRINTED MATERIALS cont.

## Clay County: (3 folders)

## Events

Burbank High School, *His Uncle's Niece, A Farce in Three Acts.*  
by Raymond W. Sargent, 28 April 1933

Dalesburg Bank Concert, 23 February 1934

Prairie Center Community Club, *Mrs. Briggs of the Poultry Yard.*  
10 March 1934

National Swedish Ladies' Concerts, City Hall, 17 Nov. 1890

## Map of Clay County Place Names,

from Moses, Lloyd R. *Clay County place names.* (Vermillion,  
SD: Clay County Historical Society, 1978), Supplement.

map shows abandoned houses, airfield, area designations,  
cemeteries, churches, creeks, houses, schools, Spirit  
Mound, highways, towns, townships, township halls

## Clay Rural Water System, ca. 1975

## Newspaper Clippings: (3 folders)

*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*

"Anna's Place: Boarding House 'Slows Down' After 45 Years,"  
(Anna Vaith) 24 November 1957

*Sioux Falls Argus Leader*

"Boarding House Reach Not Always Necessary," (Anna Vaith),  
22 May 1977

"Water Project Almost Finished," 29 June 1980

*Vermillion Plain Talk*

"Six Small White Marble Headstones are Symbol of Diphtheria  
in Vermillion," n.d.

"Vermillion was Physically Demolished, but it's Moral Fiber  
Stood the Test," 25 March 1967

"After 1880, Vermillion and Big Mo Changed, One Went South,  
Other North," 18 February 1965

"Railroad Plans Made in 1872," 3 June 1965

"New Historical Society to Form-Seek City History," 17  
February 1969 & 24 February 1969

## Vermillion Chamber of Commerce: (5 folders)

Community Profiles, n.d., 1978, 1981

General Information, churches, schools, realtors, eating  
establishments, lodging, n.d.

Maps, total of 5, ca. 2004, n.d.

*Program of Action.* 1986

Promotional Brochures, ca. 1940s, 1970s, 1980s, 1996

## Vermillion Development Company: (1 folder)

Economic Profiles, 1974-1977, 1989

## Vermillion High School: (4 folders)

Activities/Athletics Handbook, 1993-1994

Diploma, 1918, May Coverdale

Programs, Commencement, 1975 & 1979

Programs, Plays, 1933-1934

## Vermillion Middle School: (1 folder)

Student Handbook, 1984-1985

## Vermillion Parks and Recreation: (1 folder)

Guides, 1994-1996

Box No. Description

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**Box 1 cont.**

TYPESCRIPTS

Cummins, Cedric. "The Military Road." n.d.

**Box 2**

VERMILLION SESQUICENTENNIAL (3 folders)

Pins

Business cards

Calendars, 2009

City Hall groundbreaking ceremony programs, September 17, 2007

City Hall groundbreaking ceremony speech by Dan Christopherson,  
September 17, 2007

City Hall dedication ceremony programs, April 30, 2009

Community Guide, 2009, *Vermillion South Dakota The Place to Be*

Ecumenical Worship Service programs, August 9, 2009

*In Every Generation: An original musical photograph* play program,  
July 10-13, 2009

List of mayors 1877 to 2010 and city managers 1966 to 2005, compiled  
August 19, 2008

Ratingen Wind-Band programs, August 6, 2009

*Looking Back: 150 years of history*

*Nebraska Journal Leader* (Ponca, Nebraska), July 30, 2009

*Plain Talk* commemorative edition, July 31, 2009

*Press & Dakotan*, August 7, 2009

**Box 3**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Negatives

Vermillion High School, Basketball Team, [1940's?], total of 5  
8x10 negatives