

HISTORICAL INFORMATION - ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA

- 1822 - Colin Campbell established a fur trading post on the Elm River, 21 miles north and five miles west of the present site of the city of Aberdeen. He traded with the Yanktonaise Indians there for six years.
- 1872 - Brown County, named for Alfred Brown, a legislator, was created by the Territorial Legislature.
- 1877 - The first permanent white settlers: Clarence Johnson, Benjamin Arrendall, and William and Hattie Young, established claims in Columbia Township.
- 1879 - Brown County was opened for settlement with post offices at Columbia and Yorkville.
- 1880 - The first filing on any land in the township in which Aberdeen is located, was made by John G. Zimmerman as a timber culture claim on May 28, 1880. The land on which the city is located was entered at the U.S. Land Office at Watertown in June 1880.
- It is said that Charles H. Prior, town-site agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad, pointed his finger to the map of the southwestern part of Brown County and stated, "There is where we shall cross the Northwestern railway and locate the town."
- The city was named after Aberdeen, Scotland, the birthplace of Alexander Mitchell, who at the time of Aberdeen's founding was president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad.
- In November of 1880, Columbia won out in competition with Bath and Ordway over which was to be named Brown County seat.
- The first religious service on the site of Aberdeen was held when Father Robert Haire, founder of Sacred Heart Parish, said Mass that fall. Earlier, in June, he held religious services at Columbia.
- 1881 - On January 3, the first plat of the city was filed with the county register of deeds. The first train entered Aberdeen on July 6; in August the post-office opened, and the school was dedicated that fall.
- 1882 - On April 4, a petition for the incorporation of the town was presented to the county board. Trustees elected on June 5, selected W. H. Alley as president. The first church building was completed by the Presbyterians; later Sacred Heart was in its first building; first services were held by the United Brethren Evangelical Church, First Baptist, and Wesleyan Methodist and congregations were organized for Zion Lutheran, Presbyterian, and the United Brethren Evangelical Church Mission. The United States Land Office opened in October; the first artesian well was drilled near the Milwaukee depot.
- 1883 - The city charter was granted to Aberdeen by the Territorial Legislature on March 15. It set up five wards; gave the mayor veto power; set the mayor's salary at \$10, and those of the council members at \$5. The city election April 5, 1883, elected John Garland as mayor. He resigned at the end of the first month and Phil Skillman finished out the term. That fall a \$15,000 bond issue was approved for establishing waterworks and erecting a city hall. The \$8,500 school building had 150 students. Bishop Hare conducted Episcopalian services in Berry's Hall on Dec. 5.
- 1884 - The First Methodist Episcopal Church was established on January 25. The city had two miles of sidewalk and a lighted business section. The fire department had three companies and the membership of the police department was increased.

1885 - The city council published the city charter and ordinances. Columbia presented the county court house to the city.

1886 - The Presentation Academy was established by the Presentation Order of Catholic Sisters.

Aberdeen had 793 voters in the city election on April 4. The town was operating under a new charter established as general law by the legislature under its act of incorporation. The new charter gave the mayor power to appoint the auditor and chief of police; it also increased the powers of the city council.

In July, the board of equalization set the assessed valuation at \$1,700.00. The tax levy was 4 mills for the general fund; 2 mills, alleys and streets; 1/2 mill, fire department; 2 mill, cemetery; and 1/2 mill for the library.

Over the mayor's vote, the site for the city hall was selected. The position of health officer was established.

In April the first hospital was chartered with six trustees to represent: the city council, the Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches. The Good Samaritan Hospital opened in the old "Cassel" home in northeast Aberdeen. The first year they had 57 patients about half of them "county cases," too poor to pay.

1887 - The hospital had 132 patients; 108 of these had typhoid fever and seven died.

1886 - The city council re-districted the 5,044 census count into four wards in February.

1889 - In June the Good Samaritan Hospital was moved outside the city limits. Article X of the new State Constitution made all cities an administrative unit of state government, allowing them only such powers as were granted through state enabling acts.

1890 - The first legislative session in South Dakota passed an incorporation act applying to all cities which had previously functioned under a city charter. Aberdeen was selected as permanent county seat for Brown County. May 1st was called "Enforcement Day." It was the first day in the history of the state in which the prohibition law became effective.

1893 - The grain palace with 1,600 seats was completed, and the first exposition held in September.

1894 - Women voted in the school election, eight voted in the 4th ward and fewer numbers in the other wards. The city raised \$779 to pay rainmakers. The city had a mayor and 8 aldermen.

1900 - The census showed Aberdeen had 4,087 people. Diptheria epidemic.

1901 - Northern State Teacher's College was authorized by the state legislature. City voted \$100,000 sewage disposal bonds.

The Presentation Sisters used their quarters as a 15-bed emergency hospital during the diptheria siege and were granted a hospital charter on October 18, for St. Luke's Hospital.

- 1902 - On April 28, the grain palace burned. Northern State Teacher's College was opened for instruction that fall.
- 1903 - The Good Samaritan Hospital was now listed as the Brown County Hospital.
- 1910 - Aberdeen had an increase of 160% in the census figure of 10,753. The Brown County Hospital was now listed as apartments and was inside the city limits. Payroll for NSTC was \$31,000 annually.
- 1911 - Voters approved a 5-man commission on February 28. They also voted for a municipal court; Judge George Crane was the first municipal judge. Central High School was built. Bonds for \$100,000 sewage disposal won.
- 1912 - St. Luke's Hospital had 100 beds and electric lights. St. Mary's parochial school was built.
- 1915 - Voters refused to change to a 3-man commission government. Jewish services were held.
- 1916 - City electorate refused to change to the aldermen-mayor form of city government.
- 1917 - On March 5, the Congregation B'Nai Isaac was chartered with services at the Synagogue.
- 1920 - The census count was 14,573. Women voted for the first time in a general election. On March 16, a \$500,000 school bond was approved. The Murdy Corporation set up the Lincoln Hospital with 65 beds and a school for nurses. Members of the corporation were: Drs. R. L. Murdy and R. D. Alway.
- 1922 - Voters refused to change to the aldermen-mayor government in June.
- 1929 - The Lincoln Hospital closed down.
- 1931 - In June the voters again rejected a change to the aldermen-mayor form of government. The Lincoln Hospital became the Good Samaritan Hospital under that organization.
- 1936 - On May 1, the voters refused to sanction a city manager.
- 1938 - The civic arena and theater were constructed.
- 1940 - The Lincoln Hospital Building was purchased by the Presentation Sisters and moved to the present site.
- 1946 - Aberdeen voters approved a city manager; H. N. Pierce was named to the position.
- 1949 - The city government changed back to a 5-man commission. The Bureau of Indian Affairs serving the Dakotas and Nebraska was located here in October.
- 1954 - Voters rejected a change to a city manager.