



HISTORIC WALKING TOUR



DOWNTOWN

Vermilion

SETTLEMENT OF VERMILION

In 1905, the Canadian Northern Railway established the first divisional line at a point midway between Edmonton and Battleford; the present townsite of Vermilion. With rapid growth spawning from the arrival of eager settlers during 1906, Vermilion was incorporated as a town.

In 1918, Vermilion experienced a disastrous fire within the downtown business district. Twenty-eight buildings, housing 38 businesses, were destroyed. Only three wooden buildings were left standing along the main business street (today's 49th Avenue). Businesses quickly rebuilt the downtown core. The Main Street area of Vermilion is notable for its distinct collection of brick buildings spanning 1918-1940. Commonly found tapestry brick patterns and corbel detailing add a unique richness to Vermilion's historic architecture.

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From 1992-97, Vermilion was a project community of the Alberta Main Street Programme, which facilitated the facade restorations of a number of historically significant buildings. Plaques detailing their histories are displayed on the exteriors of some of these buildings. In addition, the histories of several other buildings were compiled with a view to future restoration. These buildings are also included in this walking tour.

A map of the tour area is found on pages 20 and 21.



Canadian Imperial Bank Of Commerce (CIBC)

4940-50 Avenue

The Canadian Bank of Commerce was established in Vermilion in 1905 on the heels of the railway, attracted by the prosperous town and its enterprising population. The bank first opened for business in a lean-to shed near the railway station, moving shortly thereafter to premises in the rear of a local store.

In the spring of 1906, the branch moved into a two storey prefabricated wooden structure, situated at the corner of Main Street and Alberta Avenue (the present site of the Scotiabank). These branch buildings, manufactured in Vancouver and shipped by boxcar to new town sites for quick assembly, were soon common across the prairies. Featuring classically-inspired details such as triangular gables and columns, the structures represented reliability and stability, important factors in attracting prospective depositors.

The bank operated from that site until 1918. Although the building was not destroyed in the great fire of that year, the bank took advantage of the disaster to build more a commodious and luxurious structure down the street. The building which stands here today was designed in the Edwardian Classical Revival style which was popular at the time for banks and institutional buildings. The project, under the supervision of the Winnipeg firm of Clayton and Company, took more than one year, commencing in August 1918, with the bank's grand reopening the following June. The new building was constructed of imported fire-resistant brick and stone from Tyndall Quarries in Winnipeg.

The Canadian Bank of Commerce merged with the Imperial Bank of Canada in 1961, creating the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. This building was sensitively renovated in the 1980's by the bank and continues to stand on this corner as an important component of Vermilion's historic streetscape.



2

F.J. Richardson Block (Karen's Klassic Kuts)

4938-50 Avenue

This brick building was built in 1945 for a prominent Vermilion lawyer, Frederick Joseph Richardson. In the 1950's a second storey was added, matching the brickwork of the first storey.

Mr. Richardson was born in Edmonton in 1896 and graduated in 1922 from the University of Alberta with a law degree. He arrived in Vermilion two years later, buying an established law practice. Mr. Richardson was active in the community, serving on the hospital board and Board of Trade for many years, as well as assisting William Elford of the Columbia Theatre by playing piano for the silent movies. Mr. Richardson had offices for many years in the Bell Block (see stop 19) until he built his own block. In 1951, Mr. Richardson was appointed Queen's Council, and in 1972 he was honoured by the Alberta Law Society for more than 50 years of successful practice. Until he retired in the early 1970s, Mr. Richardson walked to his office downtown every day. He died in 1982 at the age of 86.

After Mr. Richardson's retirement, the block was purchased by accountants Edwin Byron Clark and Robert E. Jensen. The premises were then bought by Kathleen and George Challman, who opened a hair salon. In 1992, under the Alberta Main Street Programme, the brickwork façade was cleaned and replaced and the building was enhanced with signs and awnings. Today, the building continues to house Karen's Klassic Kuts, which was opened by the Challman's daughter, Karen Bardoel.



3

Snapes/Keys Block (Duncan F. Crerar Professional Corporation)

4936-50 Avenue

This wood-frame block is believed to date back to 1919, and was built for Walter Nellis and John Law to house a hardware shop. Their original shop, on the south side of Main Street, was destroyed in the great fire of 1918. After moving again in the 1920s, Mr. Nellis sold the building to Alfred Snapes, at one time the government immigration agent in Vermilion. Mr. Snapes opened a shoe repair shop here in one of the building's two retail spaces.

In 1923, partners George Capatos and R. Wood opened their Cabaret de Luxe restaurant and confectionery in the second space. After only a few months, Mr. Capatos bought out his partner's interest and in three years time, moved to the Witherbe Block (see stop 24).

In 1928, Mr. Snapes sold the building to Mrs. Winnifred Keys for her barber shop and beauty salon. W.A. Rogan, a tailor who had been on the staff of Craig Bros. Department Store, leased the remaining half of the building to open his own shop here in 1934, moving further east along Main Street five years later.

The space was then leased for nine years to Alfred Erlin (Alf) Kaiser's wholesale grocery business, which moved here from its original location near the Days Inn. Mr. Kaiser was the local agent for the Imperial Oil Company and Robin Hood Flour, and also served for many years as the area's police magistrate. To coincide with the establishment of the new Canadian Women's Army Corps training centre at the School of Agriculture in 1942, sisters Helen, Anne, and Beth Noonan opened the Victory Café in the other retail space, serving "home-cooked meals at all hours." The restaurant proved to be a very popular eatery and outlasted the war by several years.

In 1950 the building was bought and extensively renovated inside and out by Israel Miller, who opened a 5¢ to \$1 variety store. After the shop closed, he leased the property to Leeds' Ladies and Men's Wear, which operated in the early 1960s. Mr. Miller sold the building in 1966 to Harry Mazepa, proprietor of Harry's Tailor shop and Men's Wear. Following Mr. Mazepa's death in the early 1980s, ownership passed to his wife Mary, who continued to operate the shop and live behind it. After her death some ten years later, the building stood vacant until it was purchased in 1994 by Duncan Crerar for his law practice.



4

McLaughlin Block (Elevation)

4934-50 Avenue

This brick and tile building was built in 1946 by William and Leona McLaughlin for a self-service, cash and carry grocery. The McLaughlins both had considerable experience in the grocery trade, Leona having worked for 20 years and William for 18 years at Wener's General Store, for many years situated several doors east along Main Street. The McLaughlins' new business was a departure from the usual food shops of the time, which typically offered the services of a clerk who brought items to customers from a shelf behind the counter, extended credit and made deliveries.

When the McLaughlins closed the grocery after 22 years, the block was leased to William and Donna Severyn, who had moved from Vegreville to Vermilion in 1969 to begin a business partnership with Al Anderson as Community TV Sales and Service. Within six months, the Severyns had bought out their partner's share and eventually bought the building.

The Severyns retired in 1990 and sold the business to a Lloydminster owner, which operated it for several years. The building was bought in 1995 by LaVerne and Kathy Smith. They undertook minor renovations to the interior and façade prior to moving their L & K Television business to this location from Lakeland Mall, where they had operated since arriving from Wainwright in 1987. In September 2014 Tannis Henderson opened Elevation, Mind Body Spirit Inc.; a women's boutique and wellness centre.



5

Watkins Block 4932-50 Avenue

The earliest building on this site housed the town's first school, which opened in January 1906 with eight students. The current wood-frame and stucco business block was built in 1952 by Roy Watkins shortly after his arrival in Vermilion. One of the first businesses Mr. Watkins established in this location was a coffee shop and lunch counter, which he rented to Dennis and Kathleen Noonan shortly thereafter. Other early businesses here included Mr. Watkins' real estate and insurance firm, a barber shop, beauty salon, and a photography studio.

In 1958, Mr. Watkins sold the real estate and insurance businesses, as well as the fully rented business block, to Stanley Waldenberger, another well-known Vermilion insurance seller.

In 1971, Bob Richardson leased space from Mr. Waldenberger for a denturist practice; the Richardson family had moved to Vermilion that year from Spruce Grove. Six years later, Mr. Richardson bought the building from Mr. Waldenberger, who then leased a small office in the building for his insurance business until his retirement in 1977. The following year, Albert Mix rented the office for his insurance business until 1994. Richardson Denture Clinic was located here until 2015 when they moved to their current location on 49 Avenue. The building is occupied by Pet Boutique & Spa.



6

**Isley Block
(Decals and Sign Obsessions)****4914-50 Avenue**

The building on this site was constructed of wood and stucco in 1949 by Ken Isley for his farm implement and equipment shop. Mr. Isley was also a dealer for Allis-Chalmers implements and Austin motorcars. A year after the building was completed, Mr. Isley purchased the Ambler Brothers implement business, a transaction which also included the building and the John Deere agency. Two months later he sold these premises to W.C. Martin, the local tinsmith and plumber. Mr. Martin had the large building reconverted to provide every facility for his business, including a display room for fixtures.

The premises were sold to Dr. James Brown of Tofield, Alberta for a veterinary clinic in 1959. Dr. Brown operated the clinic for 13 years, selling the practice and building to Dr. Stephen West in 1972. Dr. West was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta as a Progressive Conservative member in 1986, and sold the business to Dr. Gerry Smith. Dr. Ken Smith joined the clinic in 1985 and several years later became a partner. Dr. Gerry Smith later sold out his interest to Dr. Crystal Mullen in 1993. This building, no longer home to a veterinary clinic, it is now occupied by Decals and Sign Obsessions.



7

Imperial Block 4840-50 Avenue

Built in 1912 by a group of British capitalists under the name British Investment Corporation/Northern and Vermilion Development Company, the Imperial was intended as a luxury office and apartment block. The company had ambitious though unfulfilled development plans for the area, envisioning the settlement of 150 farms and construction of 60 homes in Vermilion. Twenty-two homes were built and are known even today as the Count de Topor houses, after the consortium's best known member.

The \$25,000 three-storey Imperial Block project was constructed of local brick from the Vermilion Brick Factory. The factory produced more than 1.5 million bricks before closing in 1914.

Mayor J.W.G. Morrison and his wife lived in the Imperial Block for a time during the 1920s. Countless students from the Vermilion School of Agriculture (today's Lakeland College) boarded here until the school built a dormitory in 1928. Students were shuttled between the school and their rooms by a makeshift bus – a horse-drawn farm wagon fitted with a wide box and plank seats along each side. In winter, the wagon was set on a sleigh.

Beginning in the 1920s, the Imperial Block housed the provincial police and district court. Numerous doctors also maintained offices here. Among the longest established were W. Hudson Scott and Harold Clarke, brothers-in-law who worked in partnership in a dental surgery until the onset of World War II. William B. Elford, long-time pianist at the Columbia Theatre, gave music lessons from his office in the Imperial Block for many years.

By the mid-1940s, when it was almost exclusively an apartment house, the building had fallen on hard times and was in dire need of repairs to meet fire regulations and modernize the plumbing and wiring. Count de Topor, the only living member of the consortium, was in failing health and unable to undertake the project. He offered the building to the town as a gift, but died before the title deed could be transferred. The town took over the property in 1957 under tax recovery proceedings, after it had sat vacant for 12 years. It was subsequently purchased by local businessman Israel Miller. Contractors Clifford McCormick and Walter Marcinew completed extensive renovations that allowed the block to reopen as a well-appointed apartment building.

For many years, driver examination offices were located in the Imperial Block. This space is now occupied by the Community Closet and remains an apartment building.



8

Vermilion Standard

4917-50 Avenue

William Bleasdel Cameron, a survivor of the Frog Lake massacre of 1885, made his way to Vermilion in 1905 to establish a printing business. In the summer of 1906 he began to publish the Vermilion Signal and the following summer went into partnership with Sextus Rutherven Pringle Cooper. Mr. Cooper had come west from Ontario to Manitoba in 1897 on a harvesters' excursion train and then on to Alberta eight years afterwards.

The partnership was amicably dissolved in 1909, with Cooper eager to establish his own publication. With the failure of the Mannville Telegram, Cooper was able to purchase a printing plant and began publication of the Vermilion Standard in May 1909. From that time until February 1910, when Cameron moved to Bassano, Alberta, two newspapers served Vermilion. In its early days, the Standard was a journal of record, carrying international and national news as well as local reports. From its first issues, the paper carried advertisements for such long-established businesses as the Days Inn and Vermilion hotels, Long's Drug Store, and Craig's Corner- Store.

In 1916, the contracting partnership of John Walker and James and Chester Lipsey constructed the existing two-storey frame building. The ground floor contained the paper's printing plant while the upper storey for 21 years housed Vermilion's Masonic Lodge. As it was situated on the outskirts of the business district, the Standard escaped the great fire of 1918 and so remains one of the oldest buildings in Vermilion. Following the Great Fire, the local Dominion Customs office was based here for eight years.

Mr. Cooper was joined in the business by four sons – Vernon, Ashely, Douglas and Percy- and retired in 1953 at age 80. Since 1973, when the Cooper family sold the Standard, the business and the building have changed hands several times, but the family's legacy endures.

In 1997, the Standard building was restored to its original appearance by Bowes Publishing through the Alberta Main Street Programme. The Vermilion Standard has since been acquired by Postmedia Network, a Canadian media company.





Vermilion Variety Store (Western Financial Group)

4921-50 Avenue

The original building on this site, a private residence, was razed in 1946 and the lot purchased by Gerry Macadam and (Joseph) Allen Currah. Mr. Macadam and Mr. Currah decided to build a “5¢ to \$1” variety store, and hired local contractor George Caron to erect a 24 x 80 foot one storey stucco structure at a cost of \$6,000.

With Mr. Macadam as general manager, the two ran the store until 1949 when the building and the business were sold to Mike and Kay Jarock, who had arrived in Vermilion earlier that year. The Jarocks changed the shop’s name to Vermilion Variety Store and began to eliminate notions and novelties in favor of groceries, housewares, clothing and jewelry. The family took up residence behind the store. After 19 years, the store and building were sold to William Machoswki, who enjoyed ownership until 1975.

Victor and Grethe Bugera then purchased the business, which they renamed 4-B Variety for the four members in the family. In 1987, major renovations to the 4-B had just been completed when the SAAN building to the immediate west burned down and caused considerable damage to the variety store. Closed for repairs for several months, the business reopened later that year. The 4-B Variety Store was later converted into a Confectionary under the same name, and was the last business to operate in that building. The building which currently stands on this location was built in 2008 using insulated concrete forms. In February 2009 Western Financial Group moved into this new building from their pervious location in Giles Block (see stop 23).





Vivian's Style Shop (Lighten Up Therapy and Wellness) 4931-50 Avenue

Paul Robock's tinsmith shop, originally built in the late 1920s, was moved to this site in 1939 from the lot immediately to the west, to make room for a new meat market. In 1940, the tinsmith building was condemned and offered for sale by the town, with the provision that the new owner demolish it. Ironically, it was the town's mayor at the time, Melvin Hill, who was also owner and manager of the Nelson-Hill Hardware Store, who submitted the winning bid on the building. Mr. Hill passed ownership of the building to his wife. Instead of razing the property, she leased it to Franco Public Service, which extensively renovated the building for a workshop and warehouse.

In 1950, Vivian Voss purchased the building to house Vivian's Style Shop. She added living quarters to the rear of the building, where she lived until the spring of 1953. Three years later, she engaged builder William J. Pettigrew to undertake major renovations, including the addition of 280 square feet of floor space, elevation of the ceiling height by more than two feet, and redecoration.

Over the years, Miss Voss hosted annual fashion shows, a feature which Leona McCool, who bought the business and building in the 1970s, would continue. During the late 80's and early 90's Audrey Barlow and Marion Mayowski were the last to operate a ladies' wear store in this location.

In 1991 the building was purchased by Elaine and Warren Gill who opened Total Image Health and Fitness. After 25 years of business the store officially closed on May 31 2016, as Total Image Natural Foods.

The building remained vacant until early 2018 when Amber Howard opened Lighten Up Therapy and Wellness, a personal transformation company.





Bailey Block (Revive Esthetics and Salon)

4933-50 Avenue

One of the earliest buildings on this lot was a tinsmith shop belonging to Paul Robock. In 1939 it was moved one lot to the east to make room for E.H. Bailey's one-storey, brick and cement meat market with a full plate glass front. The building was constructed by contractors Chester Lipsey and Torey, with Harry Marfleet in charge of the brick and stucco work.

Busy with his other meat markets in Mannville, Minburn, and Lloydminster, Mr. Bailey sold the building and business in 1945 to the next-door Vermilion District Co-operative. When the Co-op erected its new food and hardware buildings north of Main Street in 1964, Man Hoy Wong bought the building and leased the space to the Spinning Wheel, a clothing and fabric shop. The Spinning Wheel closed its doors in 1969, and the Karwandy family then leased the building for their Photocraft and Music shop. Ten years later, the Karwandys moved the business across Main Street. The building was then leased to Mrs. Eristine Duncan, proprietor of the Shoe Shack. In 1988, this business moved west on Main Street. A series of retail businesses have occupied the space since; including European Hair Stylist and Second Look Salon.

On March 1, 2018, Revive Esthetics and Salon opened for business at this location under owner Alex Maughan.





Safeway Block (Long's Value Drug Mart) 4939-50 Avenue

In 1929, Vermilion came to the attention of the international grocery store chain, Safeway, which at that time had some 3,000 stores throughout North America. The new \$15,500 store opened to much fanfare early the next year on the location of the easternmost third of the current Long's building. The Late Commercial style featured a pressed metal parapet roof, painted red to simulate clay tiles of a Spanish influence, and decorative pressed metal pier caps. These details were common features of Safeway buildings found across Western Canada.

By 1941, Safeway had closed its doors in Vermilion due to the combination of a weak economy and pressure by local shopkeepers, who regarded the chain as an interloper. It was replaced briefly by the local Economy Food Market until 1943, when the building was bought by the Vermilion District Co-operative. Originally started as a grocery, the Co-op had added dry goods and hardware departments, sparking the need for more retail space. In 1945, the Co-op bought the adjoining building to the east, along with the business of butcher E.H. Bailey, in order to offer its patrons a meat market. The buildings were joined on the interior by a doorway in the common wall.

When the Co-op moved to a location north of Main Street in 1964, the premises were occupied for a time by Wilter Automotive. In 1977, Kinniburgh Jewellers bought the building and moved their business here from its previous location around the corner on 50th Street, south of Long's Drug Store. The jewellery shop had opened in 1963, when John and Agnes Kinniburgh bought the business of long-established jeweller Ed Corley. Mr. Corley himself had bought the watch repair and jewellery business of S. Sutton.

Beginning in 1984, the east half of the building was leased to European Hairstylists, and is now the home of Revive Esthetics and Salon. Upon the Kinniburgh's retirement in 1986, the business carried on under ownership of daughter Dawn Flaata. In the spring of 2009, Long's Value Drug Mart, which had been operating next door for over a hundred years, began an expansion project. This involved the demolition of the west building of the former Co-op complex, along with the original Long's building, in order to make way for the newer and more spacious building which stands here today.



Craig's Department Store (Craig's Cornerstone East Building) 5001-50 Avenue

One of Vermilion's first businesses, Craig's Department store was established by brothers John A.M. and William "Chum" Craig in 1905. John came to Alberta in 1901 from Quebec seeking mercantile experience with his uncle in the Olds firm of W.M. Craig & Company. Chum joined his brother the following year. After several years they decided to establish their own business and in September 1905 arrived in Vermilion by democrat wagon to buy land.

They soon built a temporary frame building to house their general store. It was replaced the following spring with a two-storey wooden structure that had enough room upstairs for a community hall as well as living quarters.

The great fire of 1918 destroyed the building. Undaunted, within a week, the Craig brothers were selling their wares from a hastily erected tent. By July, they had hired John Walker to rebuild the store – a two-storey, 30 x 120 foot building constructed entirely of fire-resistant brick.

In 1961, Craig's expanded for the first time, buying the adjoining building (see stop 14) which had, since the early years of the town, housed a series of hardware shops. Seven years later, Craig's purchased its long-standing friendly rival, Stephens Department Store (see stop 15). Unlike Stephens, which closed its doors after two generations in the family, Craig's was in business throughout four generations; for a total of 112 years.

In late 2017 a group of local business owners purchased the Craig's Department Store buildings preserving their historical value. Now Craig's Cornerstone is home to Vermilion Jewellers, Uniquely U Styles, Harbrook & Paisley, MAC, and Fresh Apparel.



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Nellis & Law Hardware (Craig's Cornerstone Centre Building) 5003-50 Ave. Harbrook & Paisley

This one-storey brick structure was built in 1919 for Walter Nellis' hardware business. The original Nellis and Law hardware shop located on the other side of Main Street had burned to the ground in the fire of 1918. In 1924, Mr. Nellis sold the business to the Nelson-Hill Hardware Company, owned by Melvin Hill and Jeremiah H. Nelson and managed by the former.

Mr. Hill had first gained hardware shop experience in Ontario and came west in 1906 to open businesses in Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. He arrived in Vermilion in 1924 to investigate business opportunities. An avid outdoorsman who also served as mayor from 1955 to 1959, Mr. Hill was instrumental in the establishment of the Vermilion Provincial Park.

Upon the death of his partner in 1928, Mr. Hill became the sole owner. The business continued successfully and on the occasion of the store's 25th anniversary, Mr. Hill oversaw its major renovation. In later years the store became part of the Marshall-Wells chain.

Mr. Hill sold the business in 1958 to Rudolph Renaud and Gordon Casey of Westlock, Alberta. Three years later, they built larger quarters across Main Street, and this building was bought by Craig Brothers. Craig's undertook a renovation of the space the following year, moving the grocery department from the basement of the original store to the new addition. Upon the closure of Craig's Department Store in 2018, the building began to undergo further renovations to prepare the space for new local businesses.





Stephens Block **(Craig's Cornerstone West Building)** **Uniquely U Styles & Vermilion Jewellers**

Henry Newburn Stephens arrived in the Vermilion area from Ontario in September 1904. He became the town's first merchant when he established Stephens Department Store on the homestead of T.H. Brown, approximately one mile west of the present site of Lakeland College.

During his travel to Alberta, Mr. Stephens, whose family had run general stores in the East, was accompanied by a carload of stock, as well as lumber, furniture, ten head of cattle, and feed. He traveled by rail to Edmonton, where the goods were loaded onto a scow which sailed down the North Saskatchewan River to Lea Park. From there the stock was hauled overland to the early settlement of Breage by seven freight teams. The frugal Mr. Stephens had the scow itself taken apart, using the lumber to construct a temporary store, which would later become a warehouse. That store was moved in 1905, when the railroad grade was surveyed, to a spot by the present highway overpass. The store relocated one last time, to this site, in 1906.

Several years later Henry's brother, J. Dawson Stephens, arrived from Ontario to join him in partnership. A year after the original building was destroyed in the great fire of 1918, the Stephens brothers erected a 60 x 100 foot brick and tile structure.

When Henry died in 1926, Dawson ran the store with Henry's son Fram, who would assume management of the business in 1930. Dawson died two years later, and Fram managed the store until his death in 1958. The store was then managed by Fram's brother, Gerald, until his death. Thereafter, Gerald's widow, Betty, and his sister Margaret managed the store until they retired in 1969, when the business and building were sold to the neighbouring Craig's Department Store. In 1977, the original brick of the three storefronts were clad with metal siding to provide the expanded store with a unified façade. This metal siding was removed during renovations in 2018, to once again expose the original brickwork and upstairs windows, in preparation for the new businesses which would soon occupy these buildings.

16

Brass & Davies Block (Shoppers Drug Mart East Building) 5009-50 Avenue

In 1940, partners Sid Brass and Ted Davies purchased this 30 x 100 foot lot for their butcher shop, which had, since 1925, operated around the corner in the Boston Café building (see stop 21). They engaged the Alberta Western Lumber Company to construct a one-storey, brick and tile, Late Commercial style building with a large warehouse at the rear. Five years later, the business was sold to Leonard Manz. After two years, he sold the business and building to Bert Everitt of Edmonton. The space was leased to the MacLeod hardware chain, which had been established in Vermilion for a number of years.

When the hardware store moved several doors west in 1958, Mr. Everitt sold the building to J. Ross Boake, who relocated his drugstore here from the present site of the Vermilion Hotel. Mr. Boake had moved to Vermilion in 1943 to buy the drugstore established in 1931 by Sidney Millard. In 1960, Mr. Boake sold the business and the building to Vic and Kaye Dowhaniuk, who established Vic's Pharmacy. When they retired in 1992, the property was purchased by Susan Long and Craig Brown, who were already business partners in the operation of Long's Value Drug Mart. On this new location they opened Apple Drugs. The two ran both stores until 2003 when the partnership was dissolved by mutual agreement, and each took ownership of one pharmacy. Brown continued to own and operate Apple Drugs until early 2016, when it was converted into a Shopper's Drug Mart under new owner Scott Gillingham.



17

Vermilion Food Locker (Shoppers Drug Mart East Building) 5011B-50 Avenue

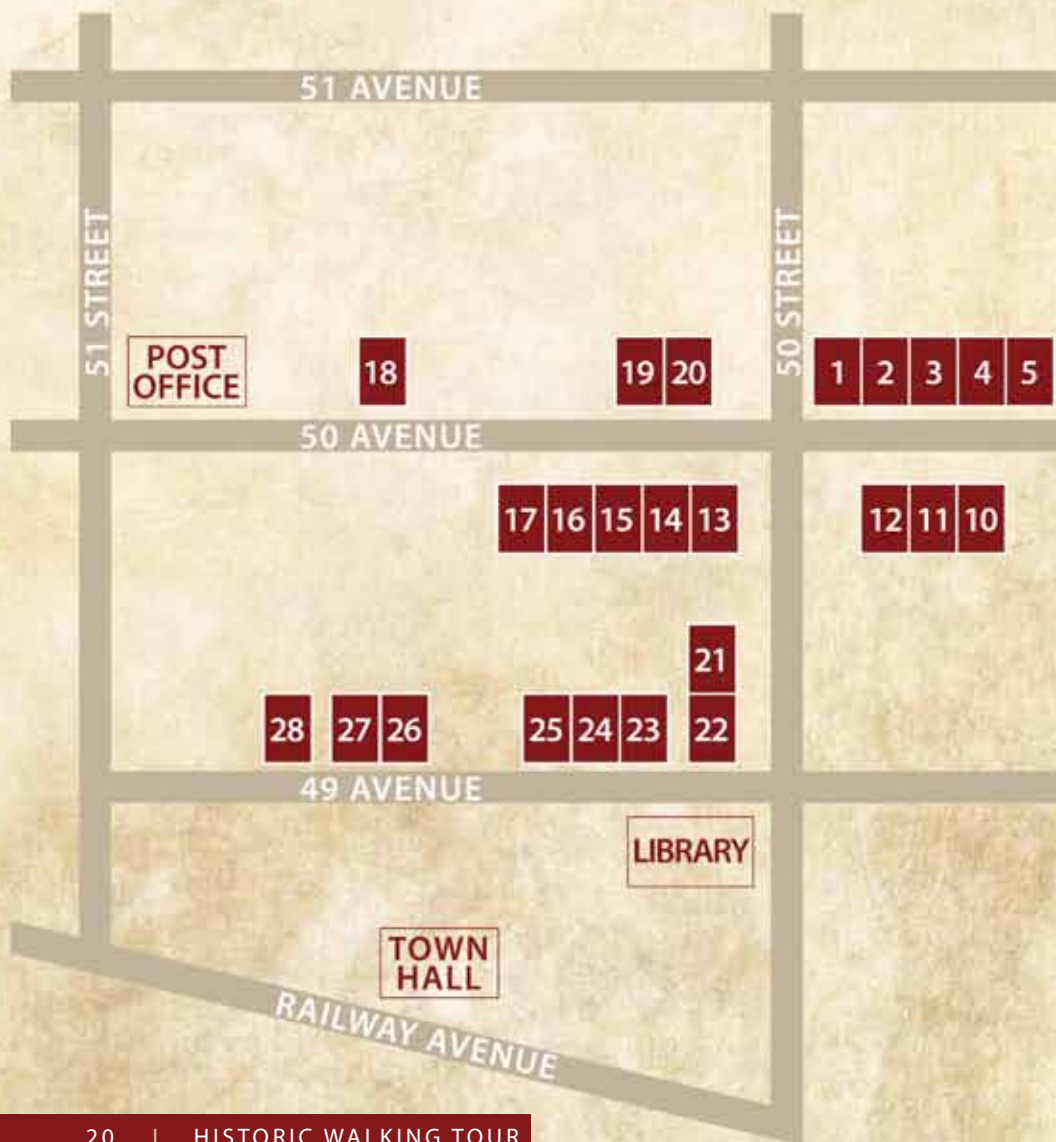
The construction of a building and establishment of a new business are generally a cause for celebration. For the Hareuther family, however, who built a one-storey brick block in 1949 for their Vermilion Food Locker and Meat Market, the celebration was muted because patriarch Paul Hareuther Sr. had died in late 1948, only a few weeks before the grand opening of the new store. His family carried on with the market under the management of sons Paul Jr., Albert, and Laurence.

Paul Hareuther Sr. had come to Vermilion from Saskatchewan in the 1940s to be meat manager at Craig Brothers, with Paul Jr. working beside him. After several years, the family decided to open its own business, offering lockers to residents for cold storage of meat and produce in the days before home freezers were readily available. The family enlarged the store in 1954 and expanded its wares to include groceries. As home freezers became more popular and townspeople eager for more general food shops, the Hareuthers vacated the building in 1958 to begin their Tom-Boy grocery across the street.

Over the next 30 years, the premises were occupied first by Stedman's Dry Goods and Fisher's Variety Store. After Fishers' closed in 1988, the space was leased by a series of retail shops. In 1999, the building was purchased by Craig Brown to expand Apple Drugs, and later the lot to the west (Shopper's Drug Mart West Building) was also purchased when the Co-op Furniture Store closed. Apple Drugs then undertook a construction project to combine the three buildings into one larger space to allow for their growing selection of goods, until it was converted into the Shopper's Drug Mart which currently operates from this building.



HISTORIC WALKING TOUR





DOWNTOWN

Vermilion

51 AVENUE

6

49 STREET

7

50 AVENUE

9

8

49 AVENUE

1. Interpretive Plaques:
Settlement of Vermilion
The Great Fire
Canadian Imperial Bank
of Commerce
2. F.J. Richardson Block
3. Snapes/Keys Block
4. McLaughlin Block
5. Watkins Block
6. Isley Block
7. Imperial Block
8. Vermilion Standard
9. Vermilion Variety Store
10. Vivian's Style Shop
11. Bailey Block
12. Safeway Block
13. Craig's Department
Store
14. Nellis & Law Hardware
15. Stephens Block
16. Brass & Davies Block
17. Vermilion Food Locker
18. Moren Block
19. Bell Building
20. W.E. Mackenzie Block
21. Boston Cafe
22. McWilliams & Long
Building
23. Giles Block
24. Witherbe Block
25. Wener's Bakery
26. Star Cafe
27. McKone Showroom
28. Charles E. Henry
Building



Moren Block (Fantasy Flowers) 5024-50 Avenue

This concrete block and stucco building was erected in 1950 for Clarence Moren's Electrical Appliance Shop. In 1946, Mr. Moren had established a radio repair shop, later adding electrical and refrigeration repairs, in a corner of the family's Moren Brothers Machine Shop, located by the Brunswick Hotel. After four years he was in need of more sales space. In this new building, Mr. Moren offered repairs as well as new and second-hand appliances for sale.

Mr. Moren installed one of the town's first televisions in the shop in 1954. Although the closest broadcasting station was thought to be far too distant for reception, he was able to tune in programs daily.

In 1958, Mr. Moren leased the shop to Arnold Usenik, who established Civic Tire and Battery shop on this site. Seven years later, the building was sold to brothers Roger and Robert Rowe, whose garage was located directly opposite this site on Main Street for many years.

After the tire shop moved in 1968, the building was divided into two retail spaces and leased to Raun Plumbing and Sears for its order office. Subsequent businesses have included sports equipment and stationery stores, florists, and a hair salon. Betty's Bouquet opened in 1989 and was in business for approximately 10 years. Since 1999 Fantasy Flowers has been operating out of the east retail space while the other half has held a variety of different businesses.



19

Bell Block (Vermilion Voice) 5006-50 Avenue

Dr. William Wilberforce Bell had this one-storey brick and tile building constructed in 1927, after several years of leasing space in the next door Mackenzie Block (see stop 20). Dr. Bell occupied the east side of the building with an office overlooking the street and a surgery in the rear. The west side was leased to Vermilion lawyer F.J. Richardson, who maintained these offices until he built his own block in 1945.

When Dr. Bell retired in 1938, his practice and the block were taken over by Dr. Clive Stephens, a son of Henry N. Stephens, founder of Stephens Department Store. Enlisting in the army at the start of World War II, Dr. Stephens was stationed overseas until 1945, when he returned to his practice here. He retired in 1965, selling the building to the Vermilion Savings and Credit Union.

In 1970, the building was sold to Monte Hunter, who established Monte's Men's Shop. Mr. Hunter undertook major renovations in 1978, expanding the rear of the store. The brickwork from the original back of the building can still be seen in the interior.

The building is notable for its decorative corbelled brick cornice and tapestry brick patterned panels. In 1994, the building façade was restored under the Alberta Main Street Programme. During the restoration, the brick wall was repainted and cleaned, carefully preserving the faded "Bell Building" wall sign located in the centre panel above the door. Today this building is the home of the Vermilion Voice, a local newspaper which began service to Vermilion and area in 2004.





W.E Mackenzie Block (Hubkins)

5004-50 Avenue

This two-storey, red brick building was erected in 1920 for William Ewen Mackenzie. Mr. Mackenzie was a cousin of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and a nephew of Sir William Mackenzie, financier and builder of the Canadian Northern Railway. Mr. Mackenzie himself worked for the CNR; he was transferred to Vermilion in 1906 and retired in 1938 after 32 years of service as locomotive foreman in charge of the roundhouse.

One of the earliest and longest established tenants was Harry L. Doan, a milliner who expanded into ladies' wear, making hats, gowns, frocks and coats by hand. Some 20 years later, Mr. Doan sold the business to Dixon's Dress Shop.

Another early tenant was the Heckbert Insurance Company. Carl Heckbert had purchased William Sutton's insurance and real estate business in 1934 and established himself here, until moving to his own business block seven years later.

Dr. William Wilberforce Bell also maintained his surgery here, on the second storey, before building his own block in 1927 on the lot immediately to the west. For many years, the second storey also contained the offices of dental surgeons Harold J. Clarke and Hudson Scott, brothers-in-law who had moved from the Imperial Block.

Mr. Mackenzie sold the building to W.P. Pilkie and his son Billie in 1945, who undertook extensive renovations the following year. Billie later sold the property to former tenant Carl Heckbert. In 1960, the building was bought by George and Dora Caron who established the Hub Café at this location. Following the closing of the Hub in the 1970s the space has been owned by a succession of Chinese restaurants, and is currently the home of Hubkins Restaurant.





Boston Café (Lorraine's Liquor Store)

4905-50 Street

Everett Ladd Hadley began selling farm implements from this site in 1913, changing his inventory in later years to groceries and dry goods. In 1920, Mr. Hadley moved with his family to British Columbia, and the building was sold to new owners who opened the Boston Café and Confectionery. Early partners included Joe Wing, former proprietor of the old Victoria Café around the corner, Joe Dow and Chow Karpoy.

Under the management of Mr. Karpoy, well regarded throughout the town for his generosity, the café soon became one of the most popular eateries in Vermilion and an established meeting place, particularly on Saturday nights. The Boston was a popular spot for the annual Mayor's Dinner for town councillors and officials.

Half of the building was leased in 1925 to the Brass and Davies Meat Market. When Brass and Davies moved to premises on Main Street in 1940, Mr. Karpoy renovated the restaurant in an effort to make it one of the most modern and commodious on the Canadian National Railway line.

Mr. Karpoy purchased the interests of his other partners in 1946 and was sole proprietor until his death in 1953. In the 1960s, the café closed its restaurant business, retaining only the confectionery, and leased the other half of the building to a variety of small retail businesses. In 1986, after 64 years of continuous business, the Boston business and building were sold to Eddy Wong for a liquor and variety shop. This building is now the home of Lorraine's Liquor Store.





McWilliams & Long Building (Grace Asian Mart)

5002-49 Avenue

This wood-frame boomtown-style building, erected in 1905, is one of four downtown buildings which survived the great fire of 1918. Shortly after it was built, an addition in the rear was constructed, which for some years was a beauty parlor and then a county office where farmers and children could bring gopher tails and magpie feet to collect a bounty.

One of the earliest businesses in the building was the Ideal Harness Shop. Shortly after the 1918 blaze, the shop closed, and Andrew McWilliams, an immigrant from Scotland, opened his tailor shop here. Shortly after the end of World War I, Mr. McWilliams entered a partnership with Herbert Dawson, recently returned from four years in the armed forces. The pair capitalized on the patriotic spirit of the time as well as Mr. Dawson's war experience by naming their men's clothing establishment The Veteran's Store. When the partnership was dissolved in 1931, the business became A. McWilliams Men's Wear.

Mr. McWilliams continued on his own for 14 years until entering a partnership with his nephew Maurice Long. The business became known as McWilliams and Long. Following the deaths of the partners, the shop was taken over in the early 1970s by Mr. Long's sister, Mary Marjorie Long Harle, and her husband, Robert Alexander Harle, and was renamed Harle's Men's Wear.

The building was sold in 1988 to Cheryl Scott, who opened Lakeland Saddlery, later known as Cheryl's Leatherworks. The building was renovated in 1985 under the Alberta Main Street Programme.





Giles Block (Northern Lights Realty) 5008-49 Avenue

Vermilion's first brick business block was built on this site in 1911 by barber J.W. "Bert" Giles, who had arrived in 1905. The two-storey, stone foundation building housed the barber shop as well as a billiard and pool hall on the main floor. When Mr. Giles retired in 1914, both businesses were sold to Joseph Young.

In 1917 the building was sold to the Northern Hardware Company of Edmonton. The building and all its wares were destroyed in 1918 by the fire which razed the town's business block. At the time of the fire, lawyer J.W.G. Morrison also maintained offices on the second storey.

Rebuilding was soon underway, and the Northern Hardware remained a fixture on this site for more than 45 years. In 1964, manager Thomas Watts retired, marking the culmination of more than 44 years of service to the firm. At the time, Mr. Watts was Vermilion's oldest active businessman.

The following year, the long-established business closed its doors, replaced by Merit Stores Limited in the space, which operated until the 1980's. The building was then divided into two retail spaces and since has been occupied by various businesses including Western Financial Group, Class, and Northern Lights Realty, which has been on this location since 1993.



24

Witherbe Block (White Swan Restaurant) 5010-49 Avenue

Irvin and Mattie Witherbe, with their infant daughter Beth, arrived in Vermilion from Nebraska on December 2, 1905. Within three weeks, Mrs. Witherbe opened a bakeshop in a tent on this site. Shortly afterward, she relocated near the Brunswick Hotel, and the lot was purchased by Oren Baker who built and operated a wood-frame general store with his sons. In 1911, he listed the property for sale, and Mrs. Witherbe promptly moved back to her old location, opening a large bakery and ice cream parlor.

After the bakery burned down in the fire of 1918, the Witherbes engaged Andrew H. Trumbo of Ilay to construct a two-storey brick shop and office block, with space for two retail businesses on the main floor. In the early 1920s, the west space was occupied by the Progressive Farmer's General Merchants shop.

In 1926, George Capatos moved his Cabaret de Luxe restaurant here from main Street offering home-made candies as well as meals. Situated on what was then the town's busiest street and located near the Columbia Theatre, the Cabaret de Luxe quickly became the most popular eatery in town. In later years, Mr. Capatos converted the restaurant into the more informal George's Café, closing it in 1958 to retire. The space continued to house primarily restaurants with a variety of owners.

For some years, the next-door retail space was occupied variously by the government liquor store, the New Vermilion Meat Market, and a Shoprite supermarket. The building was bought in the 1980s by Kent Mah, who combined the two retail areas to establish a restaurant.

Lawyer J.W.G. Morrison, who served as mayor from 1919 to 1924 and again from 1937 to 1948, maintained offices in the Witherbe Block from 1928 until his death in 1964 at age 93. James Don Adam, another well-known Vermilion lawyer, also had offices here, from 1928 to 1953, when illness forced his family to sell the practice. This building is now the home of White Swan Restaurant, which has been operating here for over 20 years.





Werner's Bakery (Northern Lights Realty) 5016-49 Avenue

The original wood frame building on this lot, built in 1905, housed the bakery and confectionary of Mrs. McClintock and her son Robert. Charles Pilkie, one of the town's earliest settler, assumed the business next, selling out to W.W. Shaver. In 1916, Mr. Shaver sold the bakery to Abraham Lazarus Wener, a Russian immigrant who had come to Canada in 1899.

In April 1918 the bakery was razed by the fire which destroyed most of Vermilion's business district. That September, Mr. Wener engaged mason and bricklayer Harry Marfleet to construct a two-storey brick bakery and confectionary.

Mr. Wener sold the business to his son Joseph in 1927, moving to Vegreville to take charge of the family's branch business there. In 1940, at age 38, Joseph died of appendicitis. Within a year, his widow sold the bakery business and building to William R. Wiebe and his son Art. William and his father had established a major flour milling industry in Vermilion in 1910, and by World War II the mill was shipping its Marquis brand flour to Britain, Europe, and the Middle and Far East.

Art, one of Vermilion's most famous native sons, had played with the Chicago Blackhawks for many years, including their Stanley Cup winning season of 1938-39. Upon his retirement from the National Hockey League and return to Vermilion in the mid-1940s, he took over management of the bakery.

The bakery closed in the early 1950s and the building was sold to Don and Jennie Wiwchar, who operated the Elite Café here through the 1960s. The building remained vacant for several years until the early 1970s when Eastalta Co-op bought it and opened a used furniture and appliance shop. After 20 years, the Co-op converted the building to a storage warehouse. Northern Lights Realty currently resides on this site.

26

Star Café (Elks Hall East Building) 5026-49 Avenue

From the time this brick building was constructed following the fire of 1918, it housed a number of restaurants. One of the earliest was the Union Café, which in 1929 billed itself as the “only café with the frigidaire system”. The business was sold in 1939 to George Soon, who undertook a number of renovations and changed the name to the Star Café. It opened officially in the spring of 1940 with a complimentary dinner for officials of the town and Board of Trade. Five years later, Mr. Soon sold the business to Vern B. Voss and it became the Voss Café. Mr. Voss operated the café for one year before selling it to John Draganiuk and Mike Maychuck, who retained the name. In 1951, they closed the business and sold the building to the adjoining Elks Lodge.

Requiring additional space, the Elks had considered building a new archrib structure but when the café became available, the lodge bought it, and began major renovations in 1953 to combine the two structures. The east building would house a new dance floor the entire size of the former hall, a new kitchen, cloak rooms and washrooms as well as storage facilities and a new club room upstairs. The lodge also decided to replace the steam heating system and incorporate the town’s new sewer and water system.

By 1980, the Elks and their auxiliary women’s organization, the Vermilion Lodge Order of the Royal Purple, had outgrown the facilities, requiring further expansion of the structure. With assistance from an Alberta 75th Anniversary Grant in 1980, the hall was extended at the rear.



McKone Showroom (Elks Hall West Building)

This building was erected in 1927 by Joseph McKone as a showroom for the new Model A Ford. The structure was built entirely of brick by well-known Vermilion contractor Owen Burns. The McKone family had operated a large garage in Vermilion since the early days of the town. The great fire of 1918 began when a worker's stray cigarette ignited a barrel of gasoline two lots west of the showroom at the McKone warehouse.

Unfortunately, with the Great Depression and the "Dirty Thirties" just beginning, Mr. McKone did not enjoy the success he had hoped for and in 1933 was forced to close his showroom. He then rented the space to the Vermilion Elks Lodge, which had been established in 1926.

The Elks opened their new premises, featuring a lodge room and recreation hall, with a Grand Ball in November 1933. They bought the building five years later, and in 1951 the neighbouring building to the east was purchased and the two structures combined. The hall has for many years been a focus of town activity, hosting community receptions, suppers, bingo games, a variety of other fund-raisers, and the local farmers' market.



28

Charles E. Henry Building
(Shirley's Beauty Salon)
5034-49 Avenue

This wood-frame, boomtown-style building is one of the oldest structures in town, having been built in 1905 and surviving the fire of 1918. Charles E. Henry arrived in Vermilion in 1905 over the Edmonton trail and within 12 hours of buying this lot began to build his wholesale liquor mart. The license was granted at the end of November, and Mr. Henry soon found himself conducting a brisk business.

In 1907 Mr. Henry sold the business and lot to William Telford of Manitoba, and began a new career in the land office, later becoming one of the town's prime auctioneers. Mr. Telford, who bought the old Alberta Hotel in 1912, was a prominent businessman and sportsman, winning considerable fame at curling bonspiels between Edmonton and Battleford.

In 1931, Jack Baddock moved his barber shop here, with the family living behind the store. A year later, Mr. Baddock expanded his business to include a second barber chair as well as a beauty parlour. After Mr. Baddock retired in 1977, he continued to live behind the shop until his death in 1991.

The building remained vacant until it was restored in 1992, the premiere project of Vermilion's Main Street Programme. It is currently the home of Shirley's Beauty Salon.



MORE VERMILION HISTORY

Vermilion History Museum

5310-50 Avenue

The Vermilion Heritage Museum contains attractively designed thematic displays which tell the history of the community. The museum is located in a restored school which has been designated a Provincial Historic Site by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

CN Station

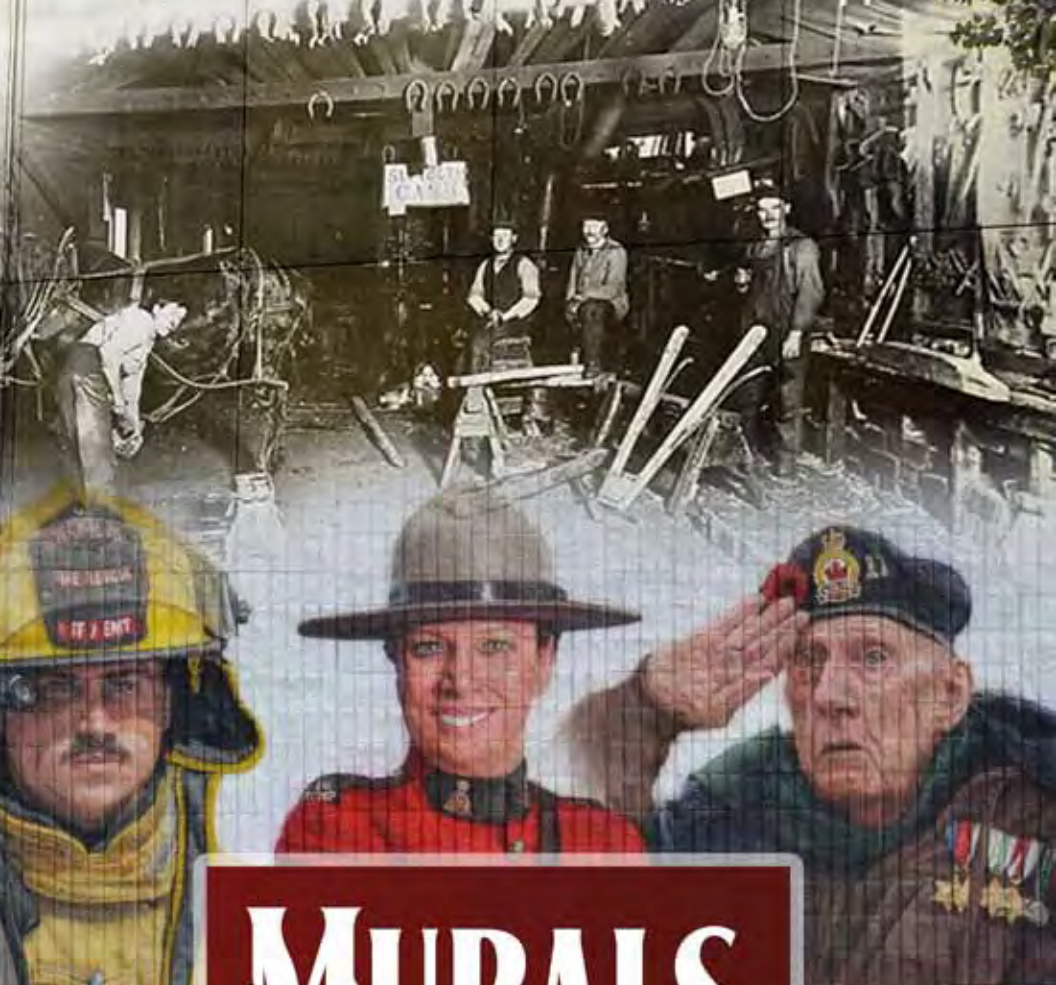
In the 1980s the CN Station was moved from its downtown site to Vermilion Provincial Park, where it is used for social gatherings and meetings.

Lakeland College

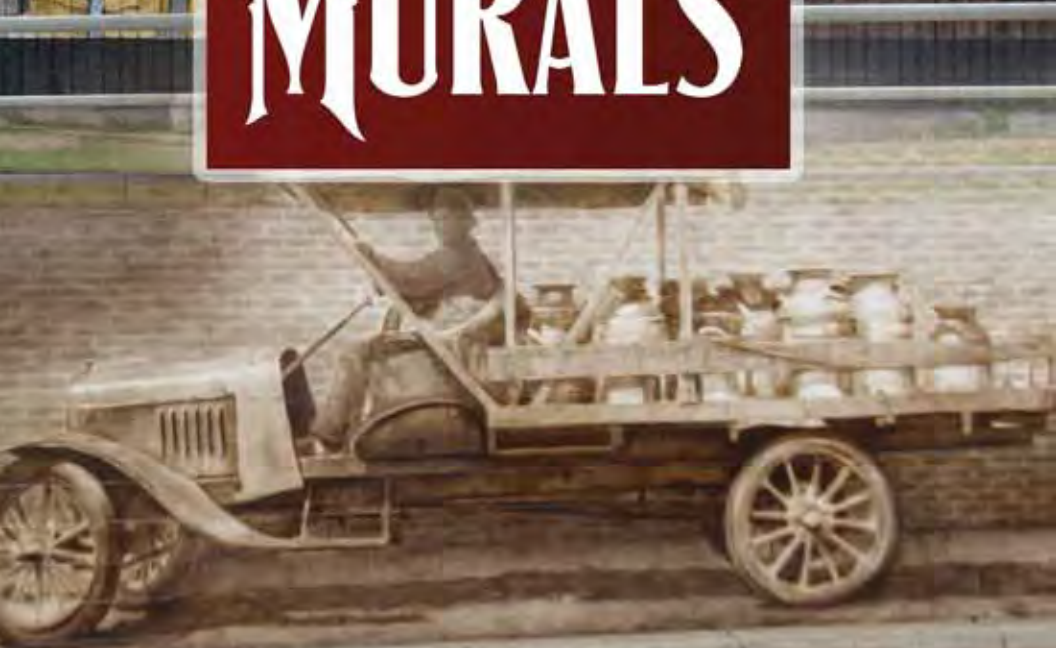
47 Avenue West (College Drive)

Eager to educate the multitudes of prospective farmers who were pouring into Alberta in search of abundant and fertile land, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Duncan Marshall, established seven demonstration farms throughout the young province in 1911, with the idea of later establishing agricultural schools at the farms. One of the sites chosen was Vermilion, and in 1912 work began on a school building. The Vermilion School of Agriculture opened its doors the following year with a staff of six and student body of 34. Courses were offered in animal husbandry, livestock, dairying, science, and farm mechanics. A course in household science was added in 1914.

Prior to 1927, when the school built a residence hall, students boarded at nearby farms or in town, often at the Imperial Block. With the arrival of World War II, most students enlisted in the armed services or sought jobs in wartime industries. The Agriculture Department closed the school in 1940 as an economy measure for the duration of the war and offered its facilities to the Department of National Defense, which in 1942 established a training centre for the new Canadian Women's Army Corps. In 1963, with the school offering more business and vocational courses, the name was changed to Vermilion Agricultural and Vocational College. In 1970 it became Vermilion College, and in 1975, Lakeland College. In 1985, during major renovations, fire destroyed the original administration and residence building. Alumni House on the campus dates back to 1912, and contains many artifacts from the college's history.



MURALS



1

Agricultural Mural (Arena)

It is fitting for the Agricultural mural to be on this building that the Vermilion Ag Society helped fund. "The Hand Feeding the World" captures the essence and purpose of our rural community that is majestic as the crops grow and ripen. The cow and calf speak to the many local cattle operations that support western Canada's beef industry. The agricultural industry allows us to thrive in this area of rich soil and good grasslands, and contributes substantially to the local and national economy.



2

"Protectors" Mural (Hi-Way 41)



"Protectors" is the mural that catches the attention of all who drive on Hi-way 41. For travelers coming from the north or from the south, these three symbolic protectors make a powerful statement. Each face in the mural speaks to us about how much we need our RCMP, our fire fighters, and our military to protect everything that is quintessential to our society. Strength, courage, and dedication are the hallmarks of this mural, reminding us how much we cherish the safety and security that we enjoy. The faces are generic except for retired RCMP Member, Roxane Baalim, who graciously allowed her photo to be used.

3

Mural (Bargain Shop)

This mural, painted by our muralist, Barry Overn, pays tribute to Vermilion's Communities In Bloom Committee. For many years this group has given countless hours of their efforts to improve the ambiance and aesthetics of our town. Shrubs, flower pots, and flowers beds created and managed by this group have brought our town accolades and national winner status. Hats off to this industrious group who put a shine on Vermilion.



4

"Beginnings" Mural (Heritage Park)



This mural, "Beginnings," located in Heritage Park, reflects the birth of Vermilion. On the left you can see settlers coming into the river valley, ready to choose their place in the land. The train, front and centre, is very significant to Vermilion because it was the reality of the train coming through this specific spot that precipitated the move of the area post office from nearby Breage to what is now Vermilion. On the right, you see the team of horses with the homesteader's wagon, patiently waiting while the owner gathers supplies. This mural truly reflects the beginnings of our town. We live each day with our cell phones in reach, our fast paced vehicles, our modern homes, and our amazing farm equipment, but 'Beginnings' reminds us of the courage and fortitude of those who initially carved the template for Vermilion and area.

5

“Blacksmith” Mural (Stewart Realty)

The mural on the west wall of the Stewart Realty building is painted from a photograph of the Wilson and Raddatz blacksmith shop sometime between 1910 and 1916. William Raddatz is on the left and his brother-in-law Curtis Wilson is on the far right.

This shop had four forges and four anvils as well as a gas powered engine which ran two trip hammers and other power equipment. Some of these can clearly be seen in the picture.

The blacksmith shop in an early Canadian community was as essential as the grocery store. Everyone used horses for transportation, for hauling goods, and for farm work. The horses had to be shod or would go lame when worked, and in winter could slip on ice and be injured. The blacksmith fitted the shoes and shod the horses. He sharpened the plough shares used to turn the sod on every prairie farm. This particular shop also replaced the steel rims on wooden wagon wheels, and made repairs to wagons, sleighs or other horse drawn vehicles.

The blacksmith shop provided not only an essential service, but also a gathering place for men to visit and swap stories, much like the coffee shops do today.



6

Vermilion Sports Mural (Curling Rink)



This mural depicts four athletes that represent the sports played at the Vermilion Arena Complex. Winter brings curlers, figure skaters, and hockey players to Vermilion from far and wide. League games, tournaments, and bonspiels are in full swing from October to the end of March. Powerskating, preCanskate, Canskate, and figure skating get under way in the fall and in early March the Vermilion Skating Carnival captures a large audience. Through spring and summer, lacrosse players pick up their sticks and the challenge is on to have the best teams win.

7

Mural (\$hoppers Drug Mart)



We planned to put a mural on the west wall of the pharmacy from the day we purchased the coop building. The west cinderblock wall was covered with an insulating layer and left with white primer.

We asked a few people about painting a mural but no one had done anything close to the scale we were looking for. We heard about Barry through Keri Pullyblank and after meeting him we knew he was the one to paint it. We had decided we wanted to depict the four seasons. Barry worked with us on some versions of what we wanted and took some photos around town and in the park. The winter panel shows the CN station, summer with the runners is the north side hill of the park across the water, summer was the fair and the inspiration for the scene was a photo from the Vermilion Standard and lastly we choose the fall back to school to represent Lakeland College as it is uniquely Vermilion. We are still proud of the way it turned out showing some active healthy lifestyle choices from our community and a couple more of that say "Vermilion" for anyone who lives there.

8

“The Creamery” Mural (Dicke Building)

This mural, “The Creamery,” presents a slice of the “good old days” when times were simpler and the way things were done included the friendly pick up of each farm’s cream cans. Vermilion’s first creamery was down on the river flat, but this one stood for many years on 51 Avenue.

Doreen Dicke sponsored this mural in tribute to her parents. Her father, Jay Perkins, managed the creamery for many years, and her mother, Florence, worked in the office. As young children, Doreen and her sister Grace spent as much time playing at the creamery as they did playing at home. However, there was work to be done too, so by the time Doreen was ten or eleven years of age, she had learned to wrap butter as fast as her Dad could. As part of this task, she had to master her dad’s regimen for scrubbing one’s hands using the yellow bar of Lifebuoy soap. Grace passed on the butter wrapping but eventually worked in the office. This mural lets the viewer imagine the regular routine of the cream cans being picked up, plus realize the efficiency of the process that kept each farmer’s cream cheque coming in.

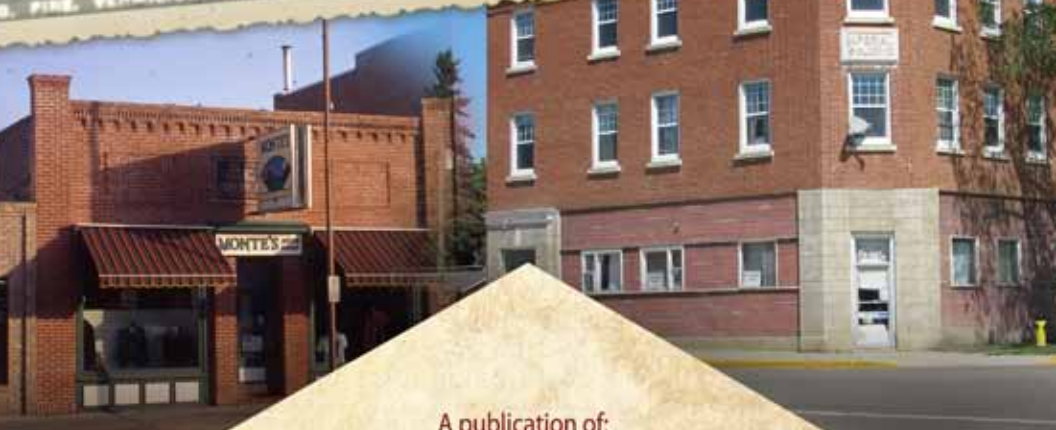




Vermilion's business district
following the Great Fire of 1918.



S. PINE, VERMILION, APRIL 11 1918



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