

WHAT ABERDEEN LOOKED LIKE IN 1881



When the first settlers came to Aberdeen to work and live, they had to build a town because there was nothing here except lots of tall grass which was called prairie.

Many animals and birds lived on the prairie for hundreds of years before the first settlers arrived. Some of the animals that lived here were bison, fox, deer, badgers, and gophers. These animals survived then as they do now by hunting for food and water. There were many beautiful flowers that grew on the prairie. They were called *wildflowers* because they didn't need people to feed and water them so they would *survive*. Cone flowers and sunflowers were two of the wildflowers that grew in our area. The birds of the prairie ate seeds from the flowers and other plants. These animals, plants, and grasses were part of the prairie *ecosystem*.



The first people to live in Aberdeen had to turn the prairie into a town. The first thing they needed to do was mark *boundaries* for the town and divide the land inside those boundaries into blocks, so they would know where to build their homes and other buildings. This *process* is called *platting* land. Each *plat* is given a name to *identify* it so everyone knows where that land is. Aberdeen's first boundary included only 16 blocks and was called the **Original Plat of Aberdeen**.

The town soon needed more space because its *population* was growing. The people *expanded* the *boundaries* of the town and created a new *plat* call the **First Addition to Aberdeen**. Two more areas of prairie were added to the town before the town was six months old. These *plats* were called the **North Addition to Aberdeen** and the **Second Addition to Aberdeen**. By December of 1881, the boundaries of Aberdeen were almost three times as big as they were in July of 1881.

These first four *plats* of Aberdeen are the oldest part of our hometown. They are on the blocks near the Burlington Northern Railroad Depot which is on Main Street . A few of the buildings you can see today in that area are almost as old as the town. The Dacotah Prairie Museum building was built in 1888. One of the buildings from early Aberdeen that is no longer standing is the Inter State Grain Palace (interior pictured





below) which was also in this old section of Aberdeen. It was a very large and fancy building where people gathered for special occasions and *festivals*.

Aberdeen High School held its graduation *ceremony* there, too. The outside of the Grain Palace was decorated each fall with designs made from different kinds of grain and grass. The Grain Palace burned down in 1902. The people of Aberdeen decided not to build another Grain Palace to replace it.

Aberdeen has continued to grow during the past 125 years. Today there

are 2,645 different *plats* that make up our town and they each have a different name. Every building and house in Aberdeen is in one of these *plats*. Try to find out which *plat* your home and/or school is in.

NEW WORDS FOR ME TO LEARN

1. **WILDFLOWERS** (noun) Flowers that grow in untended areas without care
2. **SURVIVE** (verb) To continue to live
3. **ECOSYSTEM** (noun) A community of nature (birds, plants, animals) that live in the same place.
4. **BOUNDARIES** (noun) Lines that define the size of something. A city block had boundaries (streets) on all four sides.
5. **PROCESS** (noun) Method of doing something.
6. **PLATTING** (verb) To map or organize land into blocks so people can purchase or rent a certain portion
7. **PLAT** (noun) A section of land that is part of a larger area. The original PLAT of Aberdeen consisted of 16 blocks.
8. **IDENTIFY** (verb) To recognize. I can identify my coat in the cloak room.
9. **POPULATION** (noun) The number of people living in a place. The population of

Aberdeen today is about 25,000

10. EXPANDED (verb) Made larger.

11. FESTIVALS (noun) Special programs or events

12. CEREMONY (noun) An activity that is very formal and structured. The wedding ceremony will be next Tuesday.