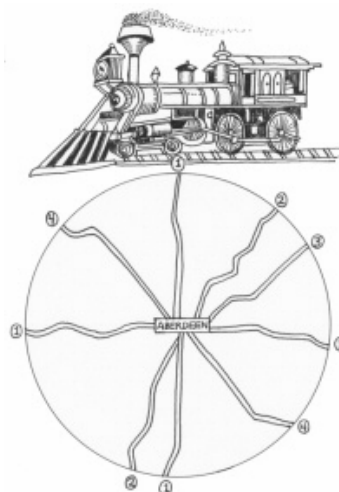


HOW ABERDEEN WAS FOUNDED

In the late 1800s, Aberdeen did not look like it does today. Very few people lived where Aberdeen is today because there were no roads to bring people here, and there were no homes, stores, schools or other buildings here either. Aberdeen was part of a large grassy area called a *prairie*.

The *population* of America was growing, and the people who lived in the eastern part of the country wanted to find new places to live in the unsettled western part of the country where Aberdeen was. Many farmers in Minnesota and Wisconsin wanted to have larger farms but there were no more farms for them to buy where they lived, so they were also interested in moving west to places like Aberdeen. This was a time of *expansion* for our country.



Railroad companies were the first businesses to come into the *prairie* area, building tracks so their trains could bring people and supplies to the unsettled parts of America. **Charles Prior** (pictured at left, courtesy of Dacotah Prairie Museum) worked for the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul railroad in Minneapolis, and his job was to decide where the new railroad tracks would go and make new towns along the railroad, including Aberdeen. **Charles Prior** named each town he founded after a place or person he knew. He called our town Aberdeen because Mr. Prior's boss, **Alexander Mitchell**, came from Aberdeen, Scotland.

The first train came to Aberdeen on the new tracks on **July 6, 1881**, carrying lumber and other supplies to start the town, so July 6 is Aberdeen's birthday. The first train carrying people arrived on August 1, 1881. These people came from places like

New York, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the New England states. Some people also came from foreign countries like Germany, Russia, and England. These people were called *settlers* or *pioneers* because they were the first ones to live here.

After this, many other railroad companies built tracks to Aberdeen, and Aberdeen became known as the **Hub City** because all these tracks met here like spokes on a wheel meet in the center or hub of the wheel.

The first time our new *settlers* saw Aberdeen they saw lots of tall grass but no trees, and the *landscape* was very flat compared to where they lived before. This is because Aberdeen was part of the *prairie*. The new town was also very small with only 16 blocks *platted*. This area quickly filled up with houses and businesses that our *pioneers* built.

The first business in Aberdeen was a drugstore built by Mr. Mills. The people in Aberdeen called Mr. Mill's store, **The Pillbox**, because he sold lots of pills. The Pillbox was very small, only 10 feet by 12 feet, and was built out of wood. Later, Mr. Mills built a larger store.

Charles Prior founded our town, but he never lived here. He was busy starting other new towns as his railroad company continued to work its way westward through South Dakota.

Do you think you would have liked to be one of Aberdeen's *pioneers*?



NEW WORDS FOR ME TO LEARN

1. **HOMETOWN** (noun) The town where I live
2. **CELEBRATE** (verb) To observe a notable occasion with festivities
3. **IMAGINE** (verb) To form a picture in my mind
4. **FOUNDED** (verb) Established or started (like a business)
5. **SETTLERS** (noun) People who are the first to live in a town
6. **PIONEERS** (noun) Means the same as settlers
7. **RECOGNIZE** (verb) To identify something I've seen before
8. **PRAIRIE** (noun) A large area of natural grassland
9. **POPULATION** (noun) The number of people living in a town or area
10. **EXPANSION** (noun) An area made larger
11. **LANDSCAPE** (noun) The way the land around you looks
12. **PLATTED** (verb) To have mapped or organized land into blocks or sections so people can purchase or rent a certain portion