

The first town named "Papillion" was located several miles northeast of the present city by that name. Platted in 1856 and incorporated the following year, it had a post office, but soon vanished from the records. The city now bearing that name was platted more than a dozen years later on land owned by the Beadle brothers.

When the Union Pacific Railroad was built in 1866, it established a station at "Saling's Grove," east of present-day Papillion. In 1869 the railroad consented to "put down a side track and erect a suitable station house at the summit" at the settlement there. It required the citizens of Sarpy County, however, to pay \$1,600 for grading and right-of-way. Donations from people living in that area ranged from \$1 to \$400. The new town, given the name "Papillion," had its depot, and was sure to flourish!

A plat was recorded on October 31, 1870, with a population of 333 reached before the end of the year. In 1872 Samuel Pike platted an adjoining area, which he called "South Papillion." The original city limits and those of its "southern suburb" remained the same for nearly a century. Today Papillion has spread out in every direction, with a 1990 preliminary census count of just over 10,000 inhabitants.

Papillion was incorporated in 1883 with William Robinson, A.W. Clarke, J.E. Campbell, A.W. Critchfield, and William Sander as trustees. The town is named for Papillion Creek, a misspelling of the French word "papillon" meaning butterfly, which fur traders found in abundance along its banks.

The educational system probably started at the Sautter school located north of town. District #27 was established in 1872, with the first term held in a private home, and taught by Pauline Carpenter. A frame schoolhouse, built on Halleck and Adams streets, was immediately

found to be too small, so a brick building was erected on the same site in 1875. A third school was built on Washington Street in 1893. The present Papillion-LaVista School District has a high school located halfway between the two cities, a junior high school, and a number of elementary schools.

Religion has always played a large role in the life of the city. Within the town's first decade the following churches were established: Episcopal (1872), Presbyterian (1874), Methodist (1875), Lutheran (1876), and Roman Catholic (1877). Today there are churches of many denominations.

When Sarpy County was formed from Douglas County on February 7, 1857, most of the population was in the eastern third of the county, so Bellevue was named county seat. As the population moved westward, there was agitation to move the seat of government to a more central location.

An election called for that purpose in 1875 had three contenders: Bellevue, Papillion, and "Sarpy Center," an "upstart of a town" founded by Capt. J.D.Spearman that year specifically to become the county seat. Bellevue lost in the first round of voting, thereby setting the stage for a fierce battle between the two remaining contenders. Spearman tried to have the state legislature name Sarpy Center as the county seat so Papillion would be "locked out." His actions, however, were considered "dirty pool" by a majority of voters in the county, and resulted in a strong victory for Papillion.

A new courthouse was dedicated on July 3, 1875, since Independence Day fell on a Sunday that year. The second, more elaborate courthouse, for which the cornerstone was laid July 4, 1922, has recently been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The present courthouse, Papillion's third and Sarpy County's fifth, was dedicated May 4, 1975.

Papillion has been the site of numerous celebrations. The Sarpy County Fair was held in Papillion from 1883 until 1898, when it was moved to Springfield. Old Settlers' Picnics were annual events early in this century, and various Harvest Festivals and Merchants' Picnics made

their appearances over the years. In 1947 the firemen held a free barbecue to celebrate the arrival of a new fire truck. The event has become an annual affair and has continued as "Papillion Days."

Papillion celebrated its centennial in 1970. While the city has retained its governmental autonomy, its post office became a branch of Omaha in 1974.