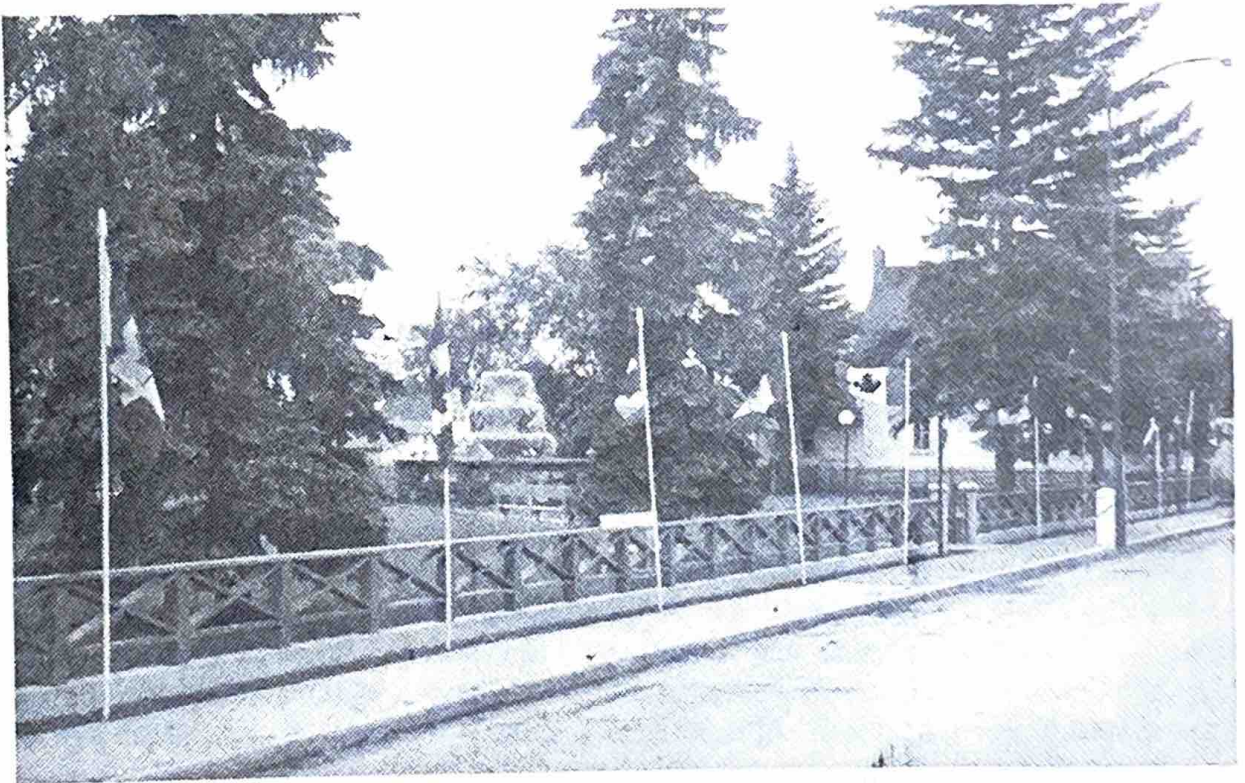


a short History on
Morden and District

BY ADOLPH DACK



Morden Centennial Park and Confederation Place

Written Especially For The Morden Regional Library

MORDEN – October, 1968

The earliest people who lived in North America, as far as is known, were the Indians who lived in different parts of this continent and were of different tribes.

The tribes that lived in this part of Manitoba were the Crees, the Assiniboines, the Chippewas and the Sioux. The Sioux actually lived south of Morden from the Pembina River valley southerly.

In 1802 the Northwest Trading Company built a trading post about three or four miles southwest of Morden on the banks of Pinancewaywining River (now called Dead Horse Creek). At that time the stream flowed almost all year. Through a lack of proper conservation of soil conditions, streams and ponds have since dried up.

Quite a while before this, the Canadian, LaVerendrye, explored southern Manitoba and parts of North Dakota and South Dakota. In 1738, LaVerendrye passed near Morden in the country around Darlingford. The LaVerendrye National Historic Park, which is 11 miles west of Morden on No. 3 Highway, was built by the people of Morden and other neighboring towns to honor this great Canadian.

The Pinancewaywining Historic Site two miles southwest of Morden was also built by the people of this community to commemorate Alexander Henry and the Northwest Company who were the first Canadians from Eastern Canada to open up this territory.

The Indian tribes who lived around Morden were a peace-loving people, proud and living a good independent life. To them we owe the introduction of such vegetables as potatoes, corn, squash, tomatoes and other types of food. The Indian people who lived far to the south introduced such things as quinine, Indian hemp (used in making ropes and mats, etc.), coffee, chocolate and tobacco.

The First Settlers Arrive

Up to the year 1870 the only white settlers from the east who travelled through the Morden area where fur traders and buffalo hunters from Fort Garry (later to be known as Winnipeg). However, from 1870 onward to about 1890 a great many settlers came here from Ontario and some came from Quebec and the Maritime provinces. Later on, many people came from Great Britain, Germany, Austria and other parts of Europe.

About the year 1874 to 1875 a great number of Mennonites came to Manitoba. They settled at Steinbach and during the next several years came in large groups to settle in the areas east of Morden as far as the Red River. They brought with them valuable experience in agricultural pursuits. This was very acceptable to the Province as there were thousands of acres of land available to create good farming communities. In later years, Mennonites settled west of the original districts and now live in Morden and other areas west of here.

To the Ontario settlers we are indebted for the formation of municipalities and the organization of the first schools and churches in Morden, as well as, Icelandic and German elements made their contributions to the community's social life.

The First Towns

The town of Nelsonville or "Nelson" for short, was one of the first towns that started about the year 1872.

Nelson was situated five miles north and three miles west of Morden. It had a land office, two hotels, stores, a doctor's office and a law office. It was the county seat of this area. Before the Municipality of Stanley was formed, Morden area was part of Dufferin County. The population of Nelson was between 700 and 1000. It had a newspaper called "The Mountaineer", a saw mill and a grist mill as well. A school and Court House were also built there.

Mountain City was situated five miles southwest of Morden. It had a population of three to four hundred. It was on the main overland trail between Emerson and the Turtle Mountain country. It too had churches, a school, hotel, several general stores, a saw mill and later a grist mill. Stephen was a stopping point built by the Canadian Pacific Railway about three miles east of Morden.

When the railway was built to Morden from Winnipeg in 1882, these towns moved most of the buildings into Morden where the railway (the Canadian Pacific Railway) built a station and, in time, grain elevators were built.

By the year 1885, Morden was beginning to grow at a fast rate. By 1900, it had a population of about 1500. The first newspaper came from Nelson and was called The Mountaineer, The Herald, The Monitor, The Chronicle and later, The Morden Times. For some years there were two newspapers, The Chronicle and The Empire. About 1911 they were merged into one paper known as The Morden Times.

The first hospital in southern Manitoba was built in Morden between the years 1890 and 1895. It was called the Freemason's Hospital.

The first school one mile south of Morden was a log building built about 1881. Later it was moved into Morden when the town was built. A larger school was built a few years later - it stood at the corner of Stephen and Nelson exactly where the Chamber of Commerce and Police Station are now. The third school was moved in from Nelson. It was a four room wooden building and was situated on the east side of 6th Street on the property of the present Church of God. By this time, about 1895, many children attended this school as Morden had a population of about 1000.

The fourth school, the "Maple Leaf School" was a stone building and was situated on the present highway (Thornhill Avenue) between 10th and 11th Streets on the north side of the highway, just east by south of the present Maple Leaf School. It was a six room school. Later the present Maple Leaf School was built in the west part of town and two schools were built in the east end of Morden on Wardrop Avenue and 5th Street.

Morden was the pioneer town in southern Manitoba in education leading the way in educational matters. Now there are more than 1250 pupils in attendance in the schools here.

The first churches were moved from Nelson in the 1880's. They were the Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican. Later, the Roman Catholic church was built in 1904. There were also the Baptist, Evangelical, Lutheran and Adventist churches. The Mennonite churches were built in Morden about 1920 - The Bergthaler, Mennonite Brethren, Rudnerweider and Sommerfelder. Later churches built are The Alliance and the Church of God and Pentecostal.

The Canadian Pacific Railway was the first railway and was built in this area in 1882. A second railway was built to Morden from Grand Forks, North Dakota in 1907. It was removed in 1937. The station stood where the Pembina Esso Service Station is now. The railway yards extended as far as the area north of the Court House, it was the Great Northern.

In the early period of the town, a flour mill was built. At that time flour mills were in many country towns in Western Canada. The first mill here was quite a large one situated on the banks of the creek just west of the bridge on Mountain Street. This mill burned down in 1902 and a fine new mill was built in 1903 at the site where the Inter-Ocean Elevator now stands.

Morden was one of the first towns to have its own electrical power plant. It was built about 1895, and was on 11th Street between the Highway and Stephen Street. It was later enlarged and supplied electricity for about thirty years-until the Manitoba Hydro came to Morden in 1923.

For years Morden was the chief grain marketer and exporter in this part of the Province. There were seven large elevators and two flax warehouses. The following are the names of the elevators: The Home, The Winnipeg, The Northern, The Lake of the Woods, The International, Ogilvies, The Farmers Elevator.

At one time there was no waterworks system in Morden. All the water that was required came from wells throughout the town and from rain water collected in cisterns and barrels. In 1950, Morden built its own waterworks system (the first new water system built in Manitoba since 1912). Since then many towns have built water systems.

The first highway systems leading out of Winnipeg to southern Manitoba were built towards Morden and were completed in 1928. From Morden the highway was built to the west as far as Deloraine. After some years, these roads were improved from gravel to pavement.

In education, legal and medical fields, Morden has always led the way from a rural standpoint. As stated before, schools were always important in Morden. Hospitals and supplies of doctors were well looked after. Morden is also the judicial centre of southern Manitoba from the Red River to Killarney. Lawyers and Court officials have always made Morden a legal centre.

In horticulture and agriculture, Morden is one of the pioneer centres in Manitoba even so far that the Canadian government chose Morden in 1916 as the site of the Experimental Station, now known as the Morden Research Station employing 50 to 80 persons. The Pioneer work in fruit and horticulture commenced by the late A.P. Stevenson family of Dunston, influenced the Federal Government in its decision to locate the Station here.

Industries

Canadian Cannery began in 1952. They process vegetables such as peas, corn and beans. Mr. W.C. Vick has been in charge of the Plant for some years. From 50 to 160 people are employed, depending on the season.

Standard Engine Works, started about 40 years ago by Mr. Adolph Krushel, manufacture farm machinery of many kinds and employ from 20 to 40 people. This is a Morden industry shipping to many outside points.

Louis Krushel & Sons - electric welders, airline compressors, pumps, power saws - started about 1937. This is a specialty manufacturing firm in certain types of electrical equipment, shipping to many outside points.

Lechner Machine and Welding Shop - machine repairs, custom building from metal and welding - a traditional repair and machine shop started in

Morden's early days as a machine repair center - business area reaching throughout southern Manitoba.

Morden Apparel Ltd. - manufacturing garments, many of which are exported.

Pembina Mountain Clays - processing bentonite which is shipped to many parts of Canada.

Domtar Fine Papers Co. - processing flax straw for the paper industry.

Other industries include livestock feed mills, lumber and woodwork suppliers, concrete cement processing, construction companies, fuel supply warehouses and other business firms supplying the building trades.

The Morden Chamber of Commerce which began 70 years ago, has many local achievements to its credit. It has aided in many public matters, such as industry, the waterworks system, tourism, local history, highways, education, etc.

The successful outcome of the first hospital built in Morden is the large Morden District General Hospital at the east end of town. This hospital - now being enlarged - will, when completed, be the largest hospital in southern Manitoba, maintaining Morden's importance as a medical centre and upholding the tradition of the first hospital built here in 1893.

Just west of the Hospital stands the Morden Medical Centre. This well planned building built just a few years ago, contains the offices of doctors, dentists and an optometrist; and as well the modern scientific equipment necessary in the practice of these professions.

A Tourist Centre

Morden is noted for its beautiful tree-adorned streets and is considered to be one of the beauty spots of Manitoba.

One of its recognized assets is the lovely ten acre Civic Park known here as the Morden Tourist Park. It was founded by the Town of Morden 75 years ago and is outstanding insofar as it is one of the few civic parks in Manitoba outside of the larger cities. It is quite uncommon for towns to have parks of this size.

There are other parks such as the park at the Research Station, the Centennial Park with Confederation Place and the small triangular Milne Park.

COLERT BEACH, was a result of an idea which Dr. W. Colert dreamed about and planned. In 1952 his dream became a fact and Morden now has an attractive beach on the western shores of Lake Minnewasta. Local citizens, together with the doctor, worked hard for several years until the work was completed. A road leads south of No. 3 Highway to the beach, which has suitable accommodations such as shelters, bath houses and plumbing. Camp sites are near at hand. Cabins too are available in secluded beauty spots near the shore overlooking the southern part of the lake.

The Morden Golf Course is one of the most picturesque courses in Manitoba.

Situated beside the golf course is Pinancewaywining Provincial Historic Park. This beautifully treed park was constructed by Adolph Dack with the co-operation of Morden citizens in 1945 - a nice place for tourists to visit on the shores of Lake Minnewasta.

The last few years have seen the building of three motels in Morden.

They assist in supplying accommodation for visitors, both business and pleasure. There are also two large hotels in town.

Historic Parks

Near Morden, available to everyone as a sightseeing and patriotic expression are:

The Pinnaclewaywining Historic Site and Park located two miles southwest of Morden, commemorating the building of an early trading post of the Northwest Company in September, 1802, as well as commemorating the founding of the Town of Morden. This park officially opened in 1962. There are two plaques giving details of its history.

This is the reading on the plaque of "The Northwest Company" describing the building of the trading post:

Fort Pinnaclewaywining

Built in 1802, under orders of Alexander Henry the Younger, a partner of the Northwest Company, to open trade with the Cree and Assiniboine Indians. The fort stood about two miles to the southwest on the banks of Dead Horse Creek, at the crossing of the Pembina-Calf Mountain trail. There the Red River cart was first known to be used in western Canada.

— The Historic Sites Advisory Board of Manitoba 1962

Morden

This is the reading on the plaque referring to the founding of the Town of Morden:

Named after Alvey Morden, founder of the town who in 1874 took up a homestead in the area. The community developed following the establishment of a Canadian Railway Station near Dead Horse Creek in 1882. Nearby communities—Stephen, Mountain City and Nelson - when by-passed by the Railway, were abandoned - and during the 1880's the people of these communities moved their homes and businesses to Morden.

— The Historic Sites Advisory Board of Manitoba 1962

LaVerendrye National Historic Park

LaVerendrye National Historic Park eleven miles west of Morden. This lovely two acre historic park was planned by Morden People and citizens of southern Manitoba, both east and west of here. The park is a tribute to the Canadian explorer, LaVerendrye, who passed near the site in 1738 enroute to the Mandan Indians and to explore the Missouri River hoping to find the route to the Western

Sea. No one should miss the opportunity of visiting this park as it is a notable contribution to the history of our community. The park was completed in 1949.

Morden is unique as a town where citizens founded two National Historic Parks and as well built the Morden Centennial Park and Confederation Place.

An Important Centre For Vegetables, Grain & Livestock

The rich soils in this part of Manitoba, have made Morden the centre of row crop and vegetable growing operations. To quote Dr. C. Walkof of the Morden Research Station, "Growing vegetables in Manitoba is profitable for many market gardeners and farmers who grow canning crops. The rich soil, abundant sunshine and irrigation water (which will be available in the near future) will promote the growth of highly nutritious vegetables in abundance. Many types can be grown such as potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, peas, beets and sweet corn, beans and a number of other types".

Many vegetables are canned in the Morden and nearby areas. The Morden Research Station is operated by the Government of Canada and helps the vegetable growing industry to solve problems in producing vegetables. New varieties that are adapted to the climate of Manitoba are developed at the Research Station. The station had its beginning in 1916 and was at that time operated as an experimental station for general farming experiments and fruit and flower culture to assist and to encourage agriculture, horticulture and tree culture as well as promoting conservation.

Adolph Dack

Written especially for the Morden Regional Library.

NOTE:

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**Knowledge creates power, citizenship and
understanding.**

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**Copies of this pamphlet are available without charge at the
Morden Regional Library.**

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