



Milestones

Themes and Events in Morden's Development



A Project of the City of Morden

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On the Cover

Stephen Street – Old and New
Photo by Regina Akhankina

Morden Milestones

This community is named for Alvey Morden who claimed government land in 1874 under the Dominion Lands Act and homesteaded on NW9-3-5W until his death. It was the building of the Pembina Mountain Branch Line by the Canadian Pacific Railway that brought Morden into existence, when the company bypassed the existing communities of Nelson and Mountain City and laid track across Alvey Morden's homestead.

This booklet presents milestones in the development of the community under the following themes:

- Pre-settlement
- Settlement
- Nelson, Mountain City and the Origin of Morden
- Commercial and Industrial Development
- Government Services
- Health Care
- Education
- Culture, Entertainment and Sport
- Spiritual Life

A Timeline is included at the end of the booklet to provide a summary of key moments in Morden's history.

Pre Settlement

80 million years ago, much of North America was covered by the Western Interior Seaway, which was home to a large variety of fish and reptiles. In the west, the Rocky Mountains were forming from a series of volcanic eruptions. Volcanic ash settled on the surface of the Seaway, eventually sinking to the bottom where, through the ages, it developed into bentonite - a type of clay. As the sea life died, they sank to the bottom to be encased in bentonite where their skeletons were preserved. Since the 1970s, these fossils have been unearthed and become part of the collection of Morden's Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre - the largest marine fossil collection in Canada.

During the last Ice Age much of the North American continent was covered by glaciers that scraped and scoured the landscape, creating the present day terrain. As the glaciers advanced, rocks, boulders and other debris were pushed along in front of it. As the climate began to warm, the outer edges of the glaciers melted, depositing this debris – thousands of years later, Scottish stonemasons who settled in the Morden area shaped these prairie rocks into houses and commercial buildings. The melt also created great rivers and lakes. The largest of these glacial lakes was Lake Agassiz. The Manitoba Escarpment, the ridge of land just to the west of Morden marked its western shore.

Mounds located in the Calf Mountain area, west of Morden, indicate the presence of North American Aboriginal societies centuries ago. The area was part of the traditional territory of the Assiniboine, Dakota Cree and Dene peoples who lived on the plains. The ancestors of these groups arrived in Manitoba between 10,000 and 13,000 BCE. The Ojibwa arrived about 300 years ago.

LaVerendrye was possibly the first white man to visit the Morden area. In 1738, he left Fort LaReine (Portage la Prairie) on his trek to the Minot, North Dakota area and traveled south to Calf Mountain near Morden and then west to the Turtle Mountains. In 1802, Alexander Henry Jr., a partner in the Northwest Company, built a trading post 1½ miles southwest of the future community of Morden - naming the post Pinancewaywining.

In 1867, the new country of Canada reached only from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes. West of Ontario, Rupert's Land - the territory now called Manitoba - was split between First Nations, European settlers, the Hudson's Bay Company and a Métis population. Determined that the land should be Canadian, the government of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, with help from Britain, purchased the territory from the Hudson's Bay Company. Residents of the area - including the First Nations, Métis and Europeans - were not consulted about the transfer of land to Canada. The stiffest resistance came from the Métis of the Red River Colony, who feared the

loss of their land, religion and culture under Canadian control. In 1869, under Louis Riel, the Métis declared their own provisional government, which announced that it would negotiate the colony's terms of entry into Confederation. After a long standoff and lengthy negotiations in Ottawa, the resistance came to an end and the Red River colonists agreed to enter Confederation.

In the spring of 1870 the Canadian Parliament passed the Manitoba Act, creating the “postage-stamp” province of Manitoba. The French and English languages were to be guaranteed equal status in the courts and the legislature, and there was a commitment to public funding of both Roman Catholic and Protestant school systems. Existing land titles were recognized and 1.4 million acres set aside for those Manitobans whose families were of partial Aboriginal heritage.

The **Dominion Lands Act** of 1872 was a federal law designed to encourage the settlement of the Canadian Prairies, and help prevent the area being claimed by the United States. In order to settle the area, Canada invited mass emigration by European and American pioneers, and by settlers from eastern Canada. It offered ownership of 160 acres of land free (except for a small registration fee) to any man over 18 or any woman heading a household. They did not need to be British subjects, but had to live on the plot and improve it.

After Manitoba entered Confederation, the influx of settlers from Ontario as a result of the Dominion Lands Act threatened to overwhelm the previous inhabitants. Immigrants from Europe, as well as Russian Mennonites populated the area. The federal government set Manitoba's existing western and eastern boundaries in 1881 and the final northern boundary in 1912.

Settlement

The earliest white settlers to arrive in the Morden district came in 1874, joining Metis families who had already settled in desirable spots in the area. That year, Alvey and Frances Morden left Walkerton, ON with their children Wilmot, Frank, Albert, David and Elizabeth and headed west to file claims on government land in Manitoba.



Alvey and Frances Morden

Alvey and Frances were United Empire Loyalists and so ardently Canadian that they refused to travel through any part of the United States, even though by this time the railroad had reached Minnesota. Instead, they travelled the all-Canadian – and more difficult – Dawson route. When they arrived at Fort Garry, they stayed in the immigrant sheds that stood on the banks of the Red River. There was plenty of room as settlers were not yet arriving in large numbers. Although he was offered a quarter-section on what is now downtown Portage Avenue, Alvey decided to seek other property that would better suit his purpose. While at the Fort, Alvey met an old acquaintance named MacVicar who was working as a surveyor’s assistant. He advised Alvey to come out to the Pembina Mountain Country. Alvey and his sons Wilmot and Frank set out by way of Morris to look over the area. Finding what they wanted, they returned to the Fort to file their claims. Soon after, the family headed to their new property by oxen teams – a journey that took six days. When they arrived in the area they only had time to put up hay for the stock and build a few log shanties before winter set in.

The following year, more settlers arrived. Alvey worked hard to encourage his acquaintances to come to the district, but many were so discouraged by the bad roads that they refused to travel beyond the Stinking River (LaSalle River).

In 1932, Albert Hutchinson Morden wrote that “there were few settlers in the district at that time. George Cram had filed his claims before we arrived and the Duncans had settled in the north, but we did not discover them ‘til later.”

Nelson, Mountain City and the Origin of Morden

In 1877, Adam Nelson built a grist mill on Silver Creek marking the beginning of the community of Nelsonville. Nelson realized that the most needed product in scarce supply was flour. Seeing an opportunity, he brought in a steam powered mill which sawed lumber by day and ground flour by night. The effect on the area was instantaneous, bringing an influx of merchants, professional men and services. Part of Nelsonville's success was due to the Land Registry Office, built there to accommodate the Ontario English who were settling in the west. The new settlers used the community as a stopping place on the way to their homesteads.

By 1882, with a population of over 400, Nelsonville was incorporated as a village - now known as Nelson - and was the county seat for North Dufferin County. Besides the land registry office, it had a saw mill, grist mill, cheese factory, town hall, school, Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, stores and banks. Doctors, lawyers, druggists and blacksmiths set up businesses. Lodges of the Masons, the Orange Order, the IOOF (Independent Order of Oddfellows), and the Royal Templars of Temperance were formed. A regular stage coach route connected the town with West Lynne (Emerson). Its weekly newspaper, *The Mountaineer*, edited by J. F. Galbraith, was published from 1879 to 1884.

Mountain City was located at the crossroads of the Boundary Commission Trail and the road from St. Joseph (Wallhalla), North Dakota to Fort Garry. The location had the advantage of being one days travel by horse, two days by oxen from West Lynne. Settlers either went north from this point to Nelson or west to the Turtle Mountains. In 1874, the first expedition of the North West Mounted Police passing along the Colonization Trail camped at the future townsite.

The Mountain City site was owned by F. T. Bradley, a customs collector at Emerson, who had the community surveyed and promoted it. In time the community had two hotels, a general store, a tin and hardware store, a blacksmith shop, a grist mill, a sawmill, a school, a few homes and a Presbyterian church attended by cleric H. J. Borthwick. As the county seat of South Dufferin Municipality, a court house was built in 1881 - Dufferin Hall.

Mennonite settlement

From 1872 - 1874 seven thousand Russian Mennonites arrived to settle on a "reserve" of eight townships located east of the Red River. As arable land was taken up, the search for additional land got underway. They were led to consider the grassy, and somewhat swampy, open prairie just north of the International Border, lying between West Lynne and Mountain City. The area had been bypassed by earlier groups. However, as one-time residents of a similar terrain in south Russia, the Mennonites saw the opportunities of the area, and lodged a request with the Canadian

government to open another “reserve” for them here. Consequently, seventeen more townships were laid out, to a depth of eighteen miles north of the border between the Red River and the western hills. The speed with which the area was settled was noted by J. F. Galbraith in his book, *“The Mennonites of Manitoba”* -

“In ’75 the few settlers at Pembina Mountain fondly hoped that in the course of fifteen or twenty years this plain would become settled notwithstanding the absence of timber. Before the summer was over, a long line of campfires, extending for miles and miles, announced one evening to the lonely settlers that six thousand Mennonites had located in seventeen townships. It is ’79 now, and farms on that plain are as hard to get, and are as valuable as, our much vaunted timber claims along the Mountain...”

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company

By 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway had built its Pembina Mountain Branch line to a point three miles east of Morden – a location called Stephen in honour of the C.P.R. president George Stephen. The next year, the company bypassed the established communities of Nelson and Mountain City and laid track across land owned by the Morden family, where Mort Cheval Creek provided valuable water and the Creek crossing was less steep. A water tower was built at the crossing. The stop was called Cheval, but within a few months was changed to Morden.

In 1932, Albert Hutchinson Morden wrote,

“When the rails reached Winnipeg, a branch line began to stretch out toward our settlement. Both Nelson and Mountain City wanted it of course. My father (Alvey Morden) pointed out the easy grade at his place, a farm which he had just bought to the west of the present town of Morden. Doubtless the Railway Company saw the advantage themselves for the year 1881 saw the surveyors camped on our farm, and the line was surveyed west beyond us. By the fall of 1882 the rails had reached a point 3 miles to the east of us. Here a box car without wheels served as a station and the place was known as Stephen. Nelson, Mountain City and even we were disappointed. However, in 1883 the box car station was moved to Morden, which became the name of the station.”

Nelson was still the county seat of North Dufferin in 1884, and its citizens still carried enough weight with the provincial government to have a large brick courthouse erected there. Residents, determined to have a railway, planned to raise \$60,000 to build a branch line from Morden. The money could not be raised and during the winters of 1884 and 1885, residents of Nelson began to move businesses, houses, schools, churches and commercial buildings to Morden via horse-drawn skids. Brick buildings were torn down and the bricks sold to build farmhouses. The frame hotel was moved to Stephen Street in Morden. Houses and businesses were brought in sections and rebuilt. (In 21st century Morden, buildings moved from Nelson still exist.) The last building

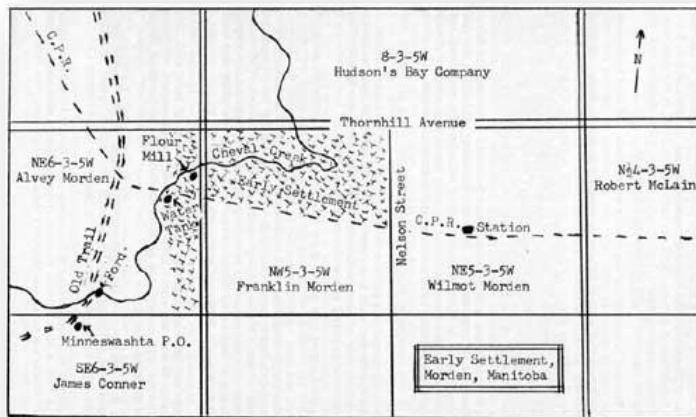
was removed in 1905. The community was later re-named Dunston and in 1958 a commemorative plaque was erected in memory of the pioneers.

Like its neighbour, Nelson, the rosy future predicted for Mountain City was cut short. The site was abandoned in 1883 when the railway line was constructed through Morden. Those buildings capable of being moved were taken to the new town. Dufferin Hall was moved to Stephen Street where it housed Morden's post office, a printing plant and two offices, until it was destroyed by fire in 1897.

Morden

When it was certain that the townsite would remain in Morden, Alvey Morden gave fifteen acres of land for Hillside Cemetery, a mill site by the creek and a hotel site on Railway Street.

Morden's population soon grew to 200.



Early Morden

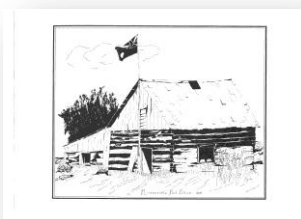
People's basic needs, such as food, worship, education and medical care were met early in Morden. The Fraser Flour Mill was moved from Nelson in 1885 to the bank of the Dead Horse Creek. A woollen mill was also built on the Creek. A turning and planing mill - Garrett and Mennie's Machine Shop - was established on Stephen Street.

J. F. Galbraith's newspaper, *Nelson Mountaineer*, was part of the migration, issuing the first Morden paper on October 31, 1884 under the banner of the *Manitoba News*. It was published until March 1887. In the first edition, editor Galbraith described the community's development –

“A newspaper being to a considerable degree a historical record of the community amongst which it is published, it seems perfectly in order that a new journal should, where practicable, prepare for its readers a retrospective sketch of what has gone before in the way of an introduction, as it might be, to the perspective volumes which are to follow on as the years unroll themselves and the events which go to make history are unfolded for the chronicler. The news can attempt such an introduction with good heart for the task is not a severe one. Morden is, in fact, brand new and its history is the history of a summer. A year ago, the site of the present busy little town was stubble-field, and it

had not been definitely decided whether the railway station should be located there or some miles away. And on the location of this railway station, of course, all depended. Briefly, the location of this particular station was for upwards of a year, the subject of a spirited contention between certain parties at Emerson on the one hand, and Messrs. Morden, one of the pioneer families of southern Manitoba, on the other, the C.P.R. railway company being the arbiter. The Emerson parties had purchased some land a few miles east of the present town of Morden, and had surveyed the same into a town plot which they called Stephen. At first Stephen had the best of it, a temporary station being located there for upwards of a year, but in the long run, the superior generalship of the Messrs. Morden gained for them the prize and somewhere about this time last fall it was officially announced by the C.P.R. Company, that the station would be permanently located on the Morden properties, and the Company's engineers were at once sent out to survey a town plot, which, in honour of the pioneer proprietors of the site was called Mordenville. Almost immediately, building construction commenced and notwithstanding the severe winter weather, two substantial and commodious hotels and two large general stores were speedily in business operation...

It is perhaps scarcely necessary that we should detail the business houses of Morden at this date, but for future reference a summary enumeration in the first issue of Manitoba News may not come amiss. We have then; first of all, the C.P.R. passenger depot, freight sheds and telegraph office. Next in order of importance come the two large elevators. Then, as they occur to us, follow two well stocked general stores, one very complete grocery, a well-equipped printing office, two legal offices, four implement warehouses, two fine hotels, one wholesale liquor store, a harness shop, butcher's shop, barber's shop, two blacksmith's shops, two boarding houses, two lumber yards, three large livery stables, building contractors, etc. In addition a drug store has been arranged for, a banking office is being fitted up, and a hardware store is but awaiting the completion of the building. From this enumeration, we are sure our readers will agree with us that if the town has not "boomed" during the summer, its first year's growth has at any rate been eminently satisfactory..."



Minnewashta Post Office

By 1880, settlers in the area accessed postal services through offices in Nelsonville, Mountain City and Minnewashta - which was located on James Conner's property south of Alvey Morden's homestead. The first *Morden* post office opened in October 1884 and for many years operated out of various downtown buildings.

Businesses established in Morden in 1883 include James Grummett's photo studio , the Commercial House and Morden House Hotels, John Wardrop and

Company Lumber, J. Whitney's Morden Harness Emporium and D. Callander's Morden Blacksmith Shop.

By 1884, several Nelson businesses had opened branch stores in Morden, including James Clerihue's Dufferin Store, Westbrook and Fairchild Agricultural Implements and J. H. Ruddell's harness shop. Others established businesses that were new to the area including Franklin Morden's real estate office, M. A. Courtois shoemaker, Enoch Winkler's Lumber Yard, the White Store (general store), J. H. Parr's Wines and Liquors, the Morden Shaving and Hair Dressing Salon, T. Underwood's Morden Carriage Works and Repair Shop.

Businesses opening in 1885 included Misses Gray and Dewar's Millinery and Dressmaking shop, A. E. Ferguson's blacksmith shop, J. B. McLaren's law office, J.T. Blowey's furniture shop, T. B. Godfrey's hardware, G. W. McLaren Chemist and Stationer, D. McSherry's Meat Market, Cruikshank's Lumber Yard and William Garret's blacksmith shop. By 1886, Nelson businessmen Haley and Sutton, and Meilke and Coppinger had moved their general stores to Morden.

Other early businesses included the Queen's Hotel (1886), the Hudson's Bay Company (1886), James Andrew's Jewelry and Watch Repair (1887), Morden Bakery (1888), the Snowden and Nelson confectionary (1888), George Ashdown's hardware store (1889) and F. W. Metcalfe's drug store (1889).

Clerihue's Bankrupt Stock.
COST AND LESS THAN COST.
GREAT SACRIFICE SALE
 Commencing Monday, June 1st.

The undersigned having bought out the Bankrupt Stock of Mr. James Clerihue, Morden, wishes to dispose of the same in short order.

The stock is complete and well selected, embracing
Dry Goods, Ready-made Clothing, Boots & Shoes, Millinery and Fancy Goods, Hats & Caps, Choice Groceries, etc., etc., etc.

CHEAP GOODS MAKE HARD TIMES EASY.
 DISCALL AND NOTE THE PRICES.

T. B. GODFREY.

S. HEDDS. Cruikshank's Lumber Yard.
 DRY WHITE AND RED PINE
 BUILDING & CONTRACTING
 NURSERY PLANTS
Harness Shop
 SALLWAY STREET, MORDEN

J. T. BLOWEY
 FURNITURE
 THE WHITE STORE
 BOOTS & SHOES, Boots & Shoes, Boots & Shoes,
 FULL LINE OF LIGHT & HEAVY HARNESSES
One Hundred Horse Blankets
 T. C. GRAY.

Manitoba News, June 5, 1885

The Imported English Cart Horse
YOUNG LOFTY
 SATURDAYS and Mondays at 10 o'clock.
 TUESDAYS at 10 o'clock Johnson's Market.
 WEDNESDAYS at 10 o'clock St. Michael's, Lower St.
 THURSDAY evenings at J. Simpson's, Indian St.

QUEEN'S HOTEL
LIVERY AND FEED STABLE.
 GOOD HORSES, FIRST-CLASS RIGS
 CAREFUL ATTENDANCE
 CHARGES MODERATE.
 F. J. LITTLE, GEN. GEORGE, LIVERY DEPARTMENT.

MORDEN BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY.
 ICE CREAM AND LEMONADE.
 CHOICE BREAD, FRESH BUNS,
 A Superior Assortment of Candies
 constantly in stock.
 FRESH FRUITS IN SEASON.
A. STEWART.

MORDEN RESTAURANT.
 MEALS, 25 CENTS.
 CHOICE GREEN FRUIT IN SEASON
 A Superior Assortment of Candies constantly on hand.
 Fresh Groceries always in stock.
 ICE CREAM, ICE COLD LEMONADE,
 and all kinds of Temperance Drinks.
 W. G. McRAY, Agt.

Manitoba News August 6, 1886

DUNSFORD & COMPANY.
 BANKERS AND BROKERS,
INSURANCE & GENERAL AGENTS
 Morden - Manitoba.

Money loaned on approved security. Starting Money, Drafts and Cheques purchased, and drafts sent for transmission of money to all parts of Great Britain, Canada and the United States.

LOAN COMPANIES REPRESENTED.
 Hamilton Provident and Loan Society,
 London and Canadian Loan and Agency Company.

INSURANCE COMPANIES REPRESENTED.
 Royal of England, capital, \$24,000,000. City of London, capital, \$10,000,000. Canadian Am. Co., capital, \$2,500,000. North West Fire Insurance Co., capital, \$50,000. Canada Life Assn. Co., capital and surplus, \$400,000.

WM. GARRETT
Shaving & General Blacksmithing

All kinds of Farm Machinery repaired on short notice. Shoring, Tarring and Sawing. Cutting executed with dispatch and satisfaction guaranteed.

Shop on Stephen Street,
 Morden, Aug. 2nd, 1886.
NATHAN TAYLOR.
WHEELWRIGHT

Wishes to announce to the people of Morden and neighborhood that he has opened a shop in connection with Mr. Wm. Garrett's blacksmith shop, Stephen Street, Morden, and will be pleased to be favored with a share of public patronage.

WAGONS, BUGGIES, ETC.
 made to order, and guaranteed to give satisfaction.
 Repairs promptly attended to, at "Morden"
 August 1, 1886.

Manitoba News, March 12, 1887

Commercial and Industrial Growth



North Railway Street, 1888

As Morden developed, North Railway Street became the principal business street, but growth of the village as a business centre caused expansion into Stephen Street – which was originally intended as an elite residential street. The road at the northern end of the village was called Thornhill Avenue after the village of that name to the west. The street between Alvey Morden’s property and that of his sons was

called Mountain Street after Mountain City. The boundary between Wilmot and Franklin Morden’s properties became Nelson Street.

Initially, the community’s buildings were mostly built of wood. However, following several large fires in the early years, builders turned to brick and stone. The period between 1890 and 1914 was a busy one for construction. MacGregor's brickyard was established and several substantial brick buildings were erected - the Freemason's Hospital, a red brick post office built by the Federal Department of Public Works and many churches, schools, hotels and houses. Stone structures were also built at this time, usually by immigrants from the British Isles where stone was extensively used. Several large houses were built of stone, as was Meikle’s General Store in 1890, the Maple



The Arlington Hotel

Leaf School of 1893, the Heckels Block and the Arlington Hotel in 1901 and the County Court House in 1904. When the Arlington Hotel was completed in 1901, the Morden Chronicle described it as “the most up to date hotel west of Toronto”.



Heckel's Block



McConnell House

Political parties played a significant role in Canadian newspapers in the 19th century. Most towns large enough to support a newspaper actually supported two – one Liberal and the other

Conservative. Morden was no exception and was well served by newspapers in the early years. The *Manitoba News* was published until March 1887 when J. F. Galbraith prepared to move to Vancouver, BC. Within two weeks of the *News* shutting down, *The Monitor* appeared, sponsored by the Conservatives and under the editorship of Hugh J. Borthwick, a well-known clergyman. Borthwick resigned as editor in February 1892, as a result of dispute with management over two political editorials that he had written. Editor J. H. Smith succeeded Borthwick.

But Borthwick was not out of the newspaper business - in the same year, 1892 - he and Neil Fox, a printer, along with publisher E.A. Bailey, founded *The Morden Herald* with the blessing of Liberal supporters.

Within five years, both the *Monitor* and the *Herald* were struggling to survive. They merged and on January 7, 1897 became the *Morden Chronicle*. The Conservative leaning J. F. Galbraith returned to Morden in late 1896 to resume a role with the *Morden Chronicle*. His homecoming was short-lived. In 1901, citing poor health, Galbraith moved back to the West Coast.

In August 1898, a rival paper again appeared in Morden - *The Morden Empire* - with Liberal, Neil Fox as editor. The *Empire* and *Chronicle* shared the market for 13 years. In June 1911, the two newspapers closed and *The Morden Times* was launched. That name has been associated with Morden ever since.

The Morden Board of Trade was incorporated on March 27, 1890. It officially became the Morden and District Chamber of Commerce on May 24, 1960.

Morden's first Bell Telephone Company office was opened in 1890 at the corner of North Railway and Nelson Streets. It was operated by Mr. John Thomas Pound, who was also the Customs officer. By 1900 the number of phones connected to this exchange was 67. In 1908, the Manitoba Government purchased the telephone system from Bell. The installation of phones gradually expanded. The Manitoba Telephone System built a new office in 1961 on the corner of Thornhill and 7th Streets and also laid the first underground phone cable in the Morden area. Direct Dial service was introduced in 1970.



Union Bank

The Union Bank of Canada (later the Royal Bank of Canada) opened on September 1, 1893.

On May 1, 1895, Morden was incorporated as a village. H. P. Hansen was the first mayor and Colin McCorquodale was secretary-treasurer. The same year, Morden's first electric light plant began operation.

With a population of about 1500, Morden gained status as a town in 1903. As a pioneer community, Morden had reached its peak. In the early 1900s the West began to attract many people and a number of the pioneer families left for the Northwest Territories (modern day Saskatchewan and Alberta). By 1911, the population had dwindled to about 1100. The community grew slowly, recovering to a population of 1500 in the early 1940s. It was only after WWII that the town truly began to grow again.



Court House

In 1904, Morden became the seat for the Southern Judicial District. That year the Manitoba government acquired nine acres of land north of Wardrop Street for a new Court House and Gaol. Designed by provincial architect Samuel Hooper and built at a cost of about \$40,000 by local contractor T. T. Thompson, construction of the imposing two-storey stone structure was completed on December 31, 1905.



C.P.R. Station c. 1907

In 1906, the Canadian Pacific Railway built a two-storey wood frame railway station with a station agent's residence on the second floor and topped by a dramatic roof. The station was in use until the mid-1960s and was moved to the Pembina Threshermen's Museum in 1972.

The Midland Railway of Manitoba, incorporated in 1903, was a small regional line that operated in southern Manitoba. In 1907, it built a line from Morden to Walhalla, North Dakota. In 1909, the line was taken over by the Great Northern Railway (U.S.), under a subsidiary - the Manitoba Great Northern Railway. Depots were located at Haskett, Glencross and Morden. The Morden depot was located on Thornhill near 2nd Street. The rails ran to a roundhouse located north of the Court House.



Roundhouse and fair grounds

Grain, coal, livestock and dairy products, as well as other consumer goods and passengers were transported between Morden and Grand Forks. From Grand Forks, the Great Northern paralleled the Canada-U.S. border and gave Morden access to the American northwest from the upper

Mississippi River Valley to Puget Sound. The service was short lived. During the Depression, international trade restrictions slowed the flow of goods. The Great Northern terminated its service in 1936 and abandoned the line to farmers a few years later.

Morden Creamery was organized in 1912 as a joint stock company owned and operated by local businessmen and farmers in the area.

The 1915 establishment of the Morden Experimental Farm by the Dominion Government further contributed to the prosperity of the community.

Morden received hydro power in June 1921, one of the earliest communities in Manitoba to receive electrical service under the Electric Power Transmission Act passed by the Provincial Government in 1919. The Manitoba Power Commission came into being when the Act was passed “to generate, purchase, transmit and distribute electrical energy throughout rural Manitoba”. Under the Act, municipalities, many of which operated small and costly independent power systems, could apply for service through the Minister of Public Works, who contracted to purchase power from the City of Winnipeg.

While the water in Dead Horse Creek was indispensable to the railway and early residents, a negative consequence of establishing a community by water was the potential for flooding. Possibly the worst flood occurred in 1931 in the middle of the drought. A cloudburst west of Morden caused the creek to spill its banks and rampage through the community.

In an 1897 editorial, J.F. Galbraith had suggested that the community would gain a plentiful water supply if a dam was constructed on the Creek one mile west of Morden, creating a lake that would catch run-off. The idea persisted over the years until the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Agency (PFRA) constructed a dam in 1941- in large part due to the efforts of Mordenite and Member of Parliament for Lisgar, Howard Winkler. On March 25, 1942 when the water flowed down the spillway, Morden had a lake - Lake Minnewasta - that covered 60 acres and captured run-off from an area of about 86 square miles. Construction of the dam alleviated flooding, provided a water supply for the town and enabled the population to expand.

Pembina Mountain Clays Incorporated quarried the only non-swelling calcium bentonite in Canada at 21 sites in the Morden-Miami area from 1939 to 1990. The bentonite was processed at plants in Morden and Winnipeg. Twelve grades of bentonite were sold in powder form primarily to vegetable oil refineries in Alberta and Ontario.

In 1951, Morden was one of the first rural Manitoba communities to install a water and sewage system. As well, in the early 50s a garbage collection service was established and a street improvement and paving program was initiated.



Lake Minnewasta, late 1950s

Largely due to the persistence of Howard Winkler, work began in 1952 to raise the dam by 12 feet to ensure a sufficient water supply for agricultural and industrial uses as the town continued to grow. The enlarged dam resulted in an L-shaped lake that covered 144 acres and was 70 feet at its deepest point. With expansion, recreation potential was explored with the creation of a Beach Committee. The opening of Colert Beach - named in honour of the efforts of

Dr. Walter Colert in its development - coincided with the completion of the new dam in 1954.

Industrial development did indeed expand. Canadian Cannery Ltd. built a million dollar plant that opened in 1952 to process Alymer, Lynn Valley and Franklin brands of vegetable grown by local farmers. California Packing Corporation (Del Monte) acquired a large share in Canadian Cannery in the 1960s and began to downsize. The Morden Plant was closed in 1970.

Pembina Poultry Products established a processing plant in Morden in 1955. The Dressler Headwear Factory was opened in 1960.

Other companies that set up operation in Morden include - Farm King/Buhler Manufacturing (established in 1932 and operated as Standard Gas Engine Works until the Company was purchased by John Buhler in 1969), Tupperware Company (1979 - 1991), Huron Window Corporation (1981) and 3M Canada Company (1982).

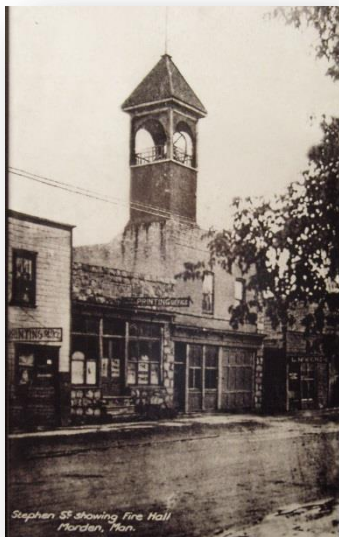
In 1981, the PFRA, under a Federal-Provincial Agreement raised the level of the Morden dam by nine feet, raised the spillway by seven feet and lowered the water supply intake to the Morden Water Treatment Plant. Storage capacity of the reservoir was thus increased from 2,100 acre-feet to 3,100 acre-feet and the dependable annual yield increased from 430 acre-feet to 880 acre-feet.

Government Services

In its early development, Morden was under the jurisdiction of South Dufferin County. In 1890, the Rural Municipality of Stanley was created from parts of the former South Dufferin and North Dufferin Counties. Morden was incorporated as a village in 1895. The first mayor was H.P. Hansen. The Manitoba government granted Morden town status in 1903 and city status in 2012.

Since 1870, the birth of Manitoba as a Province, the area has been represented in the Canadian Parliament by the member for the Lisgar riding (later Portage-Lisgar). Alexander Lawrence was the first member of the Manitoba Legislature representing the Morden constituency (later Morden and Rhineland constituency, Pembina and then Morden-Winkler constituency).

Morden's police force was established in January 1891. By-law #5 of the Municipality of Stanley indicates: "that James Atkin be appointed as Municipal Constable for the R. M. of Stanley at \$20.00 per month for the year 1891 and also that he act as sanitary officer".



Fire hall built in 1898

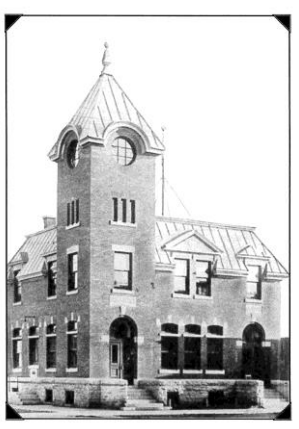
Fire was a feared enemy in pioneer communities. As most buildings were made of wood, the threat of fire was always present. Morden's earliest fire protection was the bucket brigade – whoever was nearby assisted in battling the flames. In its early days, the community established a volunteer brigade equipped with a horse-drawn chemical engine. In 1897, the Village Council agreed to pay a \$5.00 bonus to the first man who got his team hooked to the engine after an alarm was sounded. In 1904, a special Council meeting was held to arrange for the purchase of a No. 7 Waterous Gasoline fire engine at a price of \$2,700 which included 500 feet of 2 1/2 inch Arrow fire hose. The price was to be paid in five equal instalments over five years with six percent interest.

As the community grew the need for a more permanent firefighting arrangement became apparent. An organizational meeting of a new fire brigade was held in February, 1905. This marked the beginning of a continuous, organized fire service. A major problem in prairie communities was poor water supply and the means of getting it to a fire. In an effort to address this, the town constructed wells or reservoirs at strategic points throughout the community. A pump drew water from the reservoir to the fire, but often the reservoir ran dry. The problem was not really solved until the installation of a waterworks system in 1951.

The Post Office

The post office holds a significant place in Canadian and Manitoba history. It was there that people stopped to send letters to loved ones, collect parcels and presents, and meet with their neighbours. It was a place filled with hope and cheer - the pioneer's connection to their home community and to the larger world. Extremely busy places in the days before telephone and telegraph, post offices were vital parts of community life

According to the *Canada Official Postal Guide*, the first *Morden* post office opened in October 1884. In the early years Morden's post office operated out of various downtown buildings.



Dominion Post Office, 1913

As a physical presence of the Dominion Government in the early 20th century, post office architecture was designed to impress. While each building was unique, many of the post offices constructed across the country in the early 1900s had similar features and were often the most imposing landmarks in town. They were multi-purpose buildings combining a number of federal services. In early 1913, a call for tenders for the construction of a new Post Office appeared in the *Morden Times*. By mid-December, 1914, Postmaster James Stirton was moving into the imposing, new Morden Dominion Post Office. The hand-wound clock was installed in the tower in 1916.

In 1968, the Federal Government announced the construction of a new federal building in Morden to house postal and other government services. Having served the community for over half a century, operations at the Dominion Post Office shut down at noon on July 29, 1970.

The Dominion Experimental Farm

Situated in the lee of the Pembina Hills, Morden has the longest frost free growing season in Manitoba. It did not take long for early residents to take advantage of the excellent growing conditions. By the turn of the 20th century horticulture was well established in the area.

Alexander P. Stevenson, one of the first pioneers to arrive in the area had a keen interest in horticulture. He established his farm in 1875, about eight miles northwest of the Morden's properties, planting a small garden of native fruits and imported seedlings. By 1900 he was testing close to 100 varieties of apples and other fruits. Stevenson proved how rich the land around Morden was and what a variety of crops it could support. When the Morden Experimental Farm was established by the Dominion Government in 1915, the decision to locate in Morden was due, in part, to A. P. Stevenson's work.

Initially the work of the Experimental Farm was designed to demonstrate to prairie farmers and farming communities how to improve their living conditions, what varieties and crops were suited to the area and which animals gave the best return. Over the years, the Farm became a major centre for crop and ornamental plant breeding for western Canada.

Under the direction of the first Superintendent S. A. Bjornson, a Hampshire sheep flock, bee colonies, and apple and plum orchards were started. Soon the orchards were enlarged to include spruce trees, strawberries and other small fruits.



Administrative Building and yard c. 1927

During the tenure of Superintendent W. R. Leslie (1921-56) the farm became internationally known. Tobacco, cereal grains, sudan grass, soybeans, field corn, raspberries, perennial and ornamental flowers were grown and Percheron horses and Ayrshire cattle were introduced.

The Morden rose breeding program came into its own under the direction of Henry Marshall. His research with the native prairie rose, *Rosa Arkansana*, was the stepping stone to improved cultivars such as the Morden Cardinette and Morden Centennial. The first of the Parkland rose series was introduced in 1962.



Morden Rose Postage Stamp, Issued August 1, 2001

In 2017, the Morden Research and Development Centre is part of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's national network of 20 research centres. Its work focuses on the development of technologies that enhance profitability and environmental sustainability and contribute to the health and wellness of Canadians.

Health Care

In 1881, Benjamin James McConnell graduated from Queen's College Medical Faculty in Kingston Ontario and moved west to Nelsonville. There he joined the practice of Drs. R. and D. Wilson. When Nelson businesses moved to Morden, Dr. McConnell moved with it, becoming Morden's first doctor. Pioneer druggist G. W. McLaren was also part of the migration.

The earliest record of a veterinarian being registered in Morden is the name of Dr. Wm. Riddell. This appears on the registry of the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association in 1890.



Freemasons Hospital c. 1894

Morden's first hospital - The Freemasons Hospital - was officially opened on March 10, 1893. With no government funding available, the approximately \$14,000 required for construction was raised by the Belmont Lodge, with assistance from the Grand Lodge, other Manitoba Lodges and the local population. The only other hospitals that preceded it in the province were the St. Boniface, the Winnipeg General and the Brandon General. The first staff included Doctors McConnell, Boyle and

Shanks. The Women's Hospital Aid was organized immediately and was active in helping to furnish the hospital from its early days.

The Freemasons Hospital was built to address the serious health problems that faced pioneer communities such as typhoid, smallpox, scarlet fever and tuberculosis. Although infants and young mothers were the most susceptible, no one was spared from these diseases. The need for health care was crucial. Since typhoid was probably the biggest killer, a good water supply was also imperative. As early as 1890, the local paper carried an article on the necessity of digging a town well which would be deep enough to draw clean water. This well was dug shortly after and likely saved many lives.

A nurses' training program was established in 1898 and a Nurses' Home was built the same year. The program continued until 1942. A licenced practical nurses course was introduced in 1945 and terminated in 1971.

Dr. G. H. Bray was the first dentist to establish a practice in Morden in 1906. The first full-time, resident optometrist was Dr. Stan Jenkins who established an office in 1950.

With enactment of the Health Services Act in 1945 and formation of Morden Hospital District No. 21, the Board of the Freemasons Hospital authorized the transfer of all its assets to the new District. In October 1950, Judge Milton George, Chairman of the local Administrative Committee, presented plans for a new hospital to the Freemasons Hospital Board. The Committee subsequently took over operation of the hospital, while a new facility was built.

Freemasons Hospital was sold to the Mennonite Brethren Church for use as a Senior Citizens Home (Tabor Home). A new Tabor Home was opened in 1969 to provide health care to individuals requiring long term care.



Morden and District Hospital, 1952

The Morden and District General Hospital officially opened on July 3, 1952 during Morden's 70th anniversary celebrations. In 1970, an expansion was completed, together with the construction of an office building for the Southern Health Unit. Various improvements to service and equipment were made over the years.

In the early 1960s physicians Dr. Jim Menzies and Dr. C. J. Unruh, together with dentist Dr. Fred Ollinik and optometrist Dr. Stan Jenkins decided to build new office space. Together, they purchased a property on 2nd Street across from the hospital to build a medical centre to house four doctors, two dentists and an optometrist. The medical centre opened on January 19, 1963.

In 1975, a St. John Ambulance service was initiated in Morden to teach C.P.R. throughout the Pembina Valley area. This was a pre-requisite to establishing a volunteer ambulance service in 1976.

The 1980s was a period of great change and increased services at the Morden and District Hospital with the introduction of Fetal Heart Monitoring, dialysis, occupational and physical therapy, palliative care and chemotherapy. These services were firsts for rural Manitoba. The local Hospital Board supported the community whenever possible by providing services closer to home. The diabetic education program, started at Morden Hospital, was eventually used as a template for the rest of Manitoba.

The opening of Boundary Trails Health Centre (BTHC) on May 2001 was the culmination of years of planning and the amalgamation of the Morden and Winkler hospitals into one regional centre. The total capital cost for the project was approximately \$37.6 million. Morden, Winkler and surrounding municipalities contributed \$3 million toward the building and other amenities.

The redundant Morden and District General Hospital was redeveloped into Boundary Trails Place, a hub for educational and health care services, including Agassiz Medical Centre, a community owned clinic opened in 2004.

In 2007, an MRI Centre was opened at Boundary Trails Hospital. The 7-million dollar unit was cost shared by the province, local municipalities and businessman John Buhler to provide diagnostic services closer to home for thousands of Manitobans. At the time, the unit was the second of its kind to be located outside of Winnipeg - the other was in Brandon.

Education

The Maple Leaf School District was formed at a meeting of the South Dufferin Municipal Council in February, 1881. Mr. Arra DeLong was elected Chairman and Mr. Wilmot. F. Morden, Secretary. The first school was a 24 x 18 foot log building located about one mile south of the townsite with Colin McCorquodale as the first teacher. This building was later moved to Morden and used as a court house and jail.

As the community expanded, a second school building, containing two large rooms, was located on the south-west corner of Nelson and Stephen Streets. This building later became the Salvation Army barracks.

In 1886, a two-storey, four room school was moved in two sections from Nelsonville to a site on 5th Street and renovated. It remained in use until 1912. Mr. Ogilvie was the first principal of this Grade 1-8 school. As enrolment continued to expand, the old school building on Nelson and Stephen Streets was put into use again.



Maple Leaf High School

In 1893, under the direction of Judge Corbet Locke and J. B. McLaren, three acres of land between 10th and 12th Streets facing Thornhill Street were purchased for a new school - the largest school site in the province at that time. That year, the six-room, stone Maple Leaf School was built. The granite boulders from a nearby quarry were split and shaped by local masons. Even the blackboards were manufactured locally by mixing soot and plaster. In 1903 it was elevated to the status of a high school, with the establishment of Grades 9-11. In 1929, Grade 12 was added. This school was demolished in 1953.

The Maple Leaf Elementary School was built in 1928 adjoining the high school. The school was expanded in 1980 and is still in use in the 21st century.

The School Board, headed by Dr. Walter Colert, arranged for the construction of a 10-room school on the north side of Wardrop between 3rd and 5th Streets in 1952. Eight rooms were added in 1958. This facility - École Morden Middle School - is still in use in 2017. In 1964, a new



Maple Leaf Elementary School, 2017

Collegiate was built on the same grounds on the east side of 5th Street. It was expanded in 1974 and again in 2014 when an additional 3,200 square feet of gymnasium space was added.

In 1973, the Oak Haven School was built to the west of Maple Leaf Elementary to provide education for the mentally handicapped. These classes were incorporated into the mainstream school system when Maple Leaf Elementary was expanded in 1980.

In 1990, Minnewasta School opened on the south side of the community.

Community Organizations

The Morden Masonic Lodge received its charter on September 9, 1880 in Nelson and moved to Morden in 1885. It was known as Belmont Lodge until 1942, when the name was changed to Morden Lodge No. 13. The highlight of Masonry in Morden was the construction of the Freemasons Hospital, which opened in 1893. Morden Lodge No. 13 ceased operation in 2000. The institution of the Morden Chapter No. 54 of the Order of the Eastern Star was held in 1953 in the Morden Legion Hall. The members' main objective was to help enrich the quality of life in the community.

The Nelson Lodge No. 9 of Independent Order of Oddfellows (I.O.O.F.) migrated from Nelson to Morden. In 1910, Victoria Rebekah Lodge No. 15 of the I.O.O.F was instituted in Morden.

Morden Legion Branch #1 was among the earliest rural branches, chartered in 1926 as the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League. Prior to organizing the Legion, the citizens of Morden and the R.M. of Stanley erected a cenotaph at Stephen and 9th Streets (Confederation Place) to honour Veterans of World War I. It was later re-dedicated to include Veterans of World War II and also commemorates those who served in the Korean War. The Morden Legion Ladies Auxiliary was formed in 1926.

In the spring of 1916 a group of residents met to organize a Horticultural Society. The charter - the fourth in the Province - was dated April 13, 1916 and signed on March 27, 1923 by the Minister of Agriculture and Immigration. In its early years, the Society undertook a beautification program in which boulevards were planted with flowering shrubs, yellow roses, spirea and lilacs. Two members -William Godfrey and C. C. Milne - were responsible for planting the triangular park at the west end of Stephen Street (now known as Milne Park). In 1933, a Civic Improvement Committee, in co-operation with Town Council, the Experimental Farm and the Horticultural Society, planted trees in Morden Park and elms along Thornhill Street.

The Morden Kinsmen Club was chartered in 1945 and the first meeting of the Kinette Club was held in 1946. Both organizations had a history of serving community needs until they ceased operation in 2002.

Morden Elks Lodge No. 478 was officially instituted in 1963. The Lodge first met in the Arlington Hotel and then moved to the Legion. For years the Lodge sponsored a Sports Day on July 1. The Order of the Royal Purple was started in Morden in 1964.

The Morden Lions Club started on November 24, 1971 with the purpose of improving the quality of life in the community.

The Morden Community Credit Union Society Ltd. (Agassiz Credit Union) was created in 1947. The founding members were John B. Weber, Richard Willcocks, William L.S. Jessiman, Albert G. Morden, Jacob J. Riediger, Robert C. Cram, Harry A. Sandy, Thomas E. Baker, William B. McCreery, John L. Clubine, Joseph H. Weber and Edward Friesen.

The Morden - Winkler Regional Library opened on October 20, 1965 to provide free library services to all residents of the two communities. Paul Sigurdson was the first Chairman of the library board. The R.M. of Stanley became part of the library in 1976. The Morden Branch moved from its original location in the municipal building to the “old” post office in October 1971 and then to larger premises at 514 Stephen Street in 1996.

The United Way of Morden and District was formed in 1967. The first directors were: J.A. Penner, W.J. Breakey, Frank Doerksen, Louis Darich, Ruth Krushel, Anne Fehr, Margaret Chubb, R.E. Hodgson and Judge Milton George.

The Morden and District Museum was formed in 1967 to preserve pioneer artifacts. In 1971 it found a home on the second floor of the “old” post office.



Plesiosaur fossil

Fossils have been discovered since the late 1930's in the Morden and Miami areas where bentonite mining was carried out by Pembina Mountain Clays Inc. The fossils were merely curiosities and until the 1970s no concerted effort was made to collect and study them. In 1972, Henry Isaak and Don Bell, encouraged and supported by the Morden and District Museum, began systematically collecting the marine fossils unearthed in local quarries.

Henry Isaak became the museum's curator and over the next two years, 30 mosasaur and 20 plesiosaur specimens were excavated.

At first the fossil finds were stored in the basement of the Morden and District Museum. Each year more and more discoveries were made with the help of palaeontologists and volunteers from across Canada. The palaeontology collection grew rapidly and was in need of a new home for display and storage. Work on a museum started in January 1978 in the basement of the newly constructed Morden Recreation Centre. The Museum's official opening was in May of 1979, but the palaeontological displays were not completed until 1982. The galleries were designed and constructed by technicians from the Manitoba Museum. In the early 2000s the Morden and District Museum divested itself of its pioneer collection and was renamed the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, to better reflect its focus.

In 1988, a small group of local artists - Pembina Hills Artists Inc. - came together to exhibit and sell their works and to create opportunities to highlight the artistic talents of the Pembina Valley region. These early initiatives led to the development of the Pembina Hills Arts Council.

The Morden Area Foundation was established in 1993 by a group of community leaders who shared the conviction that when a group of individuals come together and work for a common good, they can bring positive, lasting change to their communities. The Foundation is a charitable organization that manages and invests gifts from individuals, families, and other organizations, returning the interest earned to local charities through grants. Founding Board Members were Betty Dunbar-Sager, Dr. Bob Menzies, Fred Westwood, Gordon Hoeschen, Ivadell Sigurdson, Marilyn Skubovius, Sam Andrew and Ron Laverty.

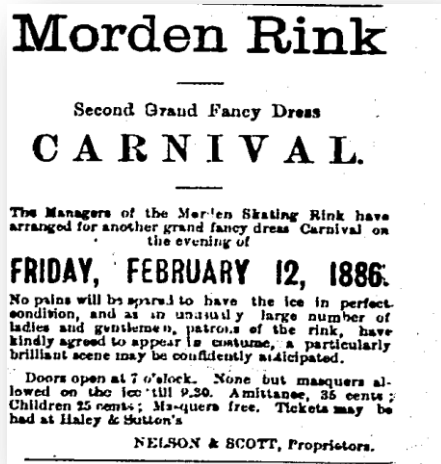
Culture, Entertainment and Sport



Victoria Hall

Victoria Hall was a 500 seat dance and concert hall located on the second floor of T. T. Thompson Co. Ltd., a hardware and farm implements store. It opened in 1898 and until it was destroyed by fire in 1938, it was the centre of community activities. Morden was alive with performances by the dramatic society, the town band, symphony orchestra and dance orchestra. There were school plays, operettas, socials and dances on Saturday night featuring live music.

The Starland Theatre, owned and operated by Jake Kendall, was showing movies as early as 1914. In 1951, Jake's son Ernie started construction of the Kenmor Theatre which was intended for live performances. After Ernie's passing, his son Ernest W. Kendall Jr. took over the business and completed the building as a movie theatre.



Manitoba News, February 12, 1886

For early settlers, sports and games provided an opportunity for meeting with friends and neighbours. A baseball club was organized as early as 1885. A six-hole, sand green golf course was developed when the community was established. By 1886, the first skating rink had been built and the first curling club was organized in 1887. Two years later the Morden Curling and Athletic Association purchased a piece of land from the C.P.R. on South Railway Street, where they built a three sheet rink that was used for both curling and skating.

The community had a lacrosse team around 1890, playing teams from Souris, Manitou and Roland. There was also a cricket club around the same time, but the game gradually lost its popularity to the lawn tennis club.

Residents enjoyed horse racing from the first years of the community's development. The Morden Turf Club was formed in 1890 and operated until about 1914. Twenty acres of land was purchased to develop a race track and grandstands. The Morden Agricultural Society, formed in 1889, held an annual fair, horse races and baseball tournament on the grounds for many years. In the early 1960s the grandstand was demolished and the race

track levelled to create baseball diamonds. In 1976, a recreation centre was built on the site.

In the winter, hockey was popular, with a club being organized by 1898. Girls played hockey as early as 1922.

The Morden Whiz-Bangs, one of the best girls softball teams in Manitoba, was formed in the late 1940s by a group of high school students from Maple Leaf School. The team achieved success far beyond expectations, given their level of experience and small town birthplace. In May 2005 the Morden Whiz-Bangs of 1948-1950 were inducted into the Manitoba Softball Hall of Fame.

The first Corn and Apple Festival was held in 1967 to celebrate Canada's centennial. The festival name recognized the 1925 designation of the Morden area as the Corn and Apple Belt - the long, growing season making this area of the prairies unique for the growing of corn and apple crops.



In 2008, Morden was designated a “Cultural Capital of Canada” by the Government of Canada – the first Manitoba community to win this award. The national program, which ran from 2002 -2012, recognized municipalities that demonstrated support for the arts, culture and heritage as integral to community life. Morden celebrated with special programming with the theme of *Chautauqua Spirit*, offering residents and visitors a year full of cultural discoveries including workshops, lectures and exhibitions, music festivals, plays and the development of outdoor murals.

Spiritual Life

The spiritual needs of the early settlers were well served by missionaries. Services were held in homes and schools but were irregular. One of the most active of the early Presbyterian missionaries was Reverend Hugh J. Borthwick who came to the area in 1875. His parish covered 3200 square miles and included 30 congregations. Reverend J.M. Harrison, the Methodist Minister, was in the area in 1877.

Albert Morden, son of Alvey and Frances Morden, wrote that the Methodist services were held in his father's log home on the hill west of town and that the Presbyterians met in Maple Leaf School in the early 1880s.

The first white settlers in the Morden area were mostly Protestants and Jews. The four protestant denominations were Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist. Each denomination built a house of worship in Nelsonville, and when the town moved to Morden, the churches followed - literally, with the Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican church buildings being moved and rebuilt in Morden. By 1885 all four denominations were established in the community. As well, the Salvation Army built a chapel on the southwest corner of Nelson and Stephen Streets in 1883. The building was later used as a school.

Members of the Jewish faith, who numbered over 100 by 1900, established a synagogue - B'Nai of Israel - in 1896 in a former store on North Railway Street. A Seventh Day Adventist Church was organized in 1894. The Roman Catholics built the Parish Church of St. John the Evangelist in 1899. A number of other denominations built their own places of worship as the community continued to grow.

Morden Timeline

The following collection of dates and activities has been drawn from Morden's local history books and early newspapers.

1874 Alvey and Frances Morden leave Walkerton, ON with their children Wilmot, Frank, Albert, David and Elizabeth and head west to file claims on government land in Manitoba. They were among the first white settlers to locate in the immediate vicinity of Morden.

1875 Alexander P. Stevenson establishes his farm eight miles northwest of the Mordens

1877 Adam Nelson and his family establish their homestead near A.P. Stevenson's farm, building a grist mill and sawmill on nearby Siler Creek.

1878 Three post offices in the area: Minnewashta, Nelson and Mountain City

1879 J.F. Galbraith launches his newspaper – *The Manitoba Mountaineer* – possibly the earliest weekly printed entirely in rural Manitoba.

1881 Maple Leaf School District No. 83 is formed in February and a log school is constructed at the NW corner of 35-2-5W, one mile south of Thornhill Street.

The Pembina Branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway is built to within three miles of the Morden family's property.

1882 The Canadian Pacific Railway bypasses the established communities of Nelson and Mountain City and lays track across land owned by the Morden family. A water tower was built at the crossing of Mort Cheval Creek. The stop was called Cheval, but within a few months was changed to Morden.

1883 A two room school is built on SW corner of Nelson and Stephen Streets

1884 Residents of Nelson and Mountain City begin to move businesses, houses, schools, churches and commercial buildings to Morden.

J. F. Galbraith's *Manitoba Mountaineer* is part of the migration to Morden, issuing the first Morden paper on October 11, 1884 under the banner of the *Morden Manitoba News*. Continues until March 1887

Methodist Church moved from Nelson

The Commercial House Hotel opens on North Railway

- 1885 The Fraser Floor Mill is moved to Morden from Nelsonville to the edge of Dead Horse Creek on what is now Mountain Street
- 1886 St Thomas Anglican Church moved from Nelson
- Rapid expansion of the community necessitated establishment of a graded school. The two storey school from Nelsonville is moved to a site on 5th Street in Morden and renovated for use for Grades 1 to 8.
- 1887 In April, 1887, the *Morden Monitor*, sponsored by the Conservative party, begins publication, edited by Rev. Hugh J. Borthwick
- First curling club is organized
- 1889 The Morden Curling and Athletic Association purchases land from the CPR on South Railway, east of 9th Street to build a three-sheet curling rink.
- 1890 Bell telephone office opens – one of the first in rural Manitoba
- March 27, the Morden Board of Trade is incorporated to promote activities that would bring trade and progress to the community. H.P. Hansen, president (Third Board of Trade in Manitoba after Winnipeg and Selkirk)
- First record of a veterinarian being registered in Morden - Dr. Wm. Riddell
- 1890 The Morden Turf Association is established and 20 acres of land is purchased to develop into a racetrack and grandstands.
- 1891 Morden's police force is established, with the appointment of a constable/sanitary officer.
- 1892 Rev. Borthwick resigns as editor of the *Morden Monitor*, and with Neil Fox, founds *The Morden Herald*. J.H. Smith becomes editor of the *Monitor*
- 1893 Morden's first hospital - Freemasons Hospital - opens on March 10, 1893, built with funds raised by the Masons and the local population. It was the fourth hospital in Manitoba after Winnipeg General, St. Boniface and Brandon General and served the community until 1952.
- A Nurse's Training School is established at Freemason's Hospital.
- Union Bank (subsequently the Royal Bank of Canada) opens a bank on Stephen Street
- Three acres of land is purchased facing Thornhill Street, between 10th and 12th Streets for the construction of a 6-room stone school.

- 1894 Maple Leaf School opens. Built by local labour from granite boulders from the hills west of Morden, it was considered one of the better school buildings in the Province at that time and sat on the largest school site in the Province.
- 1895 May 1, Morden is incorporated as a village - H. P. Hansen, mayor and Colin McCorquodale, secretary-treasurer
- The first electric light plant in Morden begins operation.
- 1896 B'nai of Israel synagogue established at corner of Nelson and North Railway Streets
- New St. Paul's Methodist Church and Parsonage built on Thornhill Street
- Bank of Hamilton opens
- 1897 Newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Monitor* merge on January 7, 1897 to become *The Morden Chronicle*. J.F. Galbraith is editor
- 1898 A nurse's residence, adjacent to the hospital, is built by the board of Freemason's Hospital
- Registered Nurse's training program is initiated at Freemasons Hospital
- Victoria Hall - a 500 seat dance and concert hall - opens at the corner of Stephen and 6th Streets
- The Liberal leaning *Morden Empire* issues its first newspaper in August 1898, with Neil Fox as editor
- 1901 The Arlington Hotel, built by Jack Kennedy, opens on Stephen Street
- 1903 Morden gains status as a town
- Maple Leaf School is elevated to the status of a high school, with the establishment of Grades 9 - 11.
- 1904 Following formation of the Southern Judicial District, Morden becomes the County Seat and the Morden Court House is built
- 1905 Morden Volunteer Fire Brigade is established
- 1906 Canadian Pacific Railway constructs Morden Railway station on 7th and North Railway Streets. Closed in 1960
- Morden's first dentist, Dr. G. H. Bray, sets up his practice

- 1907 Midland Railway of Manitoba builds a line running from Morden through Haskett and Glen Cross to Walhalla, North Dakota.
- 1909 The Great Northern Railway takes over Midland Rail and links Morden to the U.S. with service to Walhalla and points south
- 1911 *The Morden Times* newspaper was started July 6, 1911
- 1914 Dominion Post Office building is opened in December, 1914.
The Starland movie theatre opens
First reports of bentonite found in the Pembina Mountain area.
- 1915 The Dominion Government establishes the Morden Experimental Farm to specialize in horticultural research to benefit western Canada
- 1916 The Morden Horticultural Society is formed on April 3, 1916
A clock is installed in the tower of the Dominion Post Office
- 1921 Morden receives hydro power in June, one of the earliest communities in Manitoba to receive electrical service under the Electric Power Transmission Act passed by the Provincial Government in 1919.
Morden- Stanley War Memorial is dedicated in memory of Veterans of WWI
- 1926 Morden Legion chartered as the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League - among the earliest rural branches in the province
- 1928 The one-storey, six-room Maple Leaf Elementary school is built adjoining the high school
- 1929 Grade 12 is added to the Maple Leaf School curriculum
- 1930 Grey Goose bus line born in Morden to connect the town with Winnipeg
- c. 1933 E.H. Spencer sent samples of clay found on his farm away to be analysed. Out of this action came bentonite mining in the Pembina Hills
- 1940 Pembina Mountain Clay Inc. is organized and took over the quarrying of clay. A drying plant is built in Morden and an activation plant is built in Winnipeg
- 1941-42 The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Agency (PFRA) builds a dam on Dead Horse Creek, creating Lake Minnewasta

- 1942 Registered Nurse's training program at Freemason's Hospital is discontinued
- 1946 Training of practical nurses is established at Freemason's hospital, with the first class being accepted in December 1946.
- 1947 Founding of the Morden Community Credit Union Society Ltd. on May 22, 1947
- 1948-50 The Morden Whiz-Bangs win 61 of their 82 softball games and are recognized as one of the best girls' softball teams in Manitoba.
- 1950 Installation of waterworks and sewage system
- In July, Dr. Stan Jenkins becomes Morden's first full-time resident optometrist
- 1952 A new 71 bed hospital opens on July 18, 1952. Morden District General Hospital was financed by the Provincial Government and controlled by a local board. The old Freemason's Hospital is converted into a 32 bed personal care home - Tabor Home.
- Kenmor Theatre opens
- Work begins to raise the dam on Dead Horse Creek by 12 feet, expanding the area and depth of Lake Minnewasta.
- Canadian Cannery Ltd, Alymer Products opens a plant in Morden to take care of the expanding western market
- 1952 In anticipation of the expansion of the Lake Minnewasta dam, a Beach Committee is formed to develop recreational facilities at the lake
- 1953 Maple Leaf High School is demolished.
- A 10-room school is built on the north side of Wardrop between 3rd and 5th Streets.
- 1954 Official opening of the expanded Lake Minnewasta dam, August 2
- Pembina Poultry Packers Ltd. opens
- 1958 Addition 8 classrooms built on to Morden Middle School
- 1961 Manitoba Telephone System opens a new building on December 13, 1961, located at the corner of Thornhill and 7th Streets
- 1963 A new medical centre, housing medical doctors, dentists and an optometrist opens on 2nd Street across from the hospital.
- 1964 The Stanley Flying Club is formed. Members approach the R.M. of Stanley to close a

- road allowance northeast of Morden for an airport
- 1965 Morden Collegiate Institute opens, located on the east side of 5th Street and Gilmour
- The Morden-Winkler Regional Library opens on October 20, 1965
- 1967 United Way of Morden and District formed
- Morden and District Museum is organized to preserve pioneer artefacts
- The first Morden Corn and Apple Festival celebrates Canada's Centennial.
- 1969 Tabor Home opens a new 60-bed facility on 9th street. The former Freemasons Hospital is eventually demolished.
- 1970 Morden and District General Hospital expansion is opened on May 24. The expansion included an additional 23 beds (bringing the total to 75) and construction of an office building for the Southern Health Unit.
- The "old" Post office closes at noon, July 29 and the new Post office opens the following day.
- Dr. R.A. Kristianson establishes the first full-time chiropractic practice in Morden.
- 1971 The Morden branch of the Morden-Winkler Regional Library moves to the west side of main floor of the Old Post Office.
- The Morden and District Museum opens on the second floor of the old Post Office
- 1972 Substantial fossils are being found in the Pembina Hills. The Morden and District Museum sets up excavations.
- 1973 Oak Haven School is built to the west of Maple Leaf School to provide education to the mentally handicapped. Classes were incorporated into Maple Leaf School in 1980.
- 1974 A new wing is added to Morden Collegiate Institute
- 1976 A new recreation centre is built on the site of the old horse racing track and fair grounds
- Morden Ambulance graduated its first class of volunteer drivers and attendants
- 1978 A new museum is opened in the basement of the Recreation Centre to house the growing collection of marine fossils

- 1979 Tupperware opens its 21st plant in Morden. One of two plants in Canada, it was a 143,000 square foot facility
- Recreation Centre Hall is opened with full banquet and catering services
- The Morden and District Museum moves to new space in the basement of the Morden Recreation Centre
- 1980 Maple Leaf Elementary School is expanded
- Fetal heart monitoring initiated at Morden General Hospital
- 1982 3M Company Canada opens a 40,000 square foot facility
- 1983 Dialysis provided locally, saving patients the drive into Winnipeg
- The Morden library expands to the entire main floor of the old Post Office
- 1986 Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy provided from Morden General Hospital
- Chemotherapy provided locally saving patients the drive into Winnipeg
- 1987 Palliative Care initiated in rural Manitoba, beginning in Morden
- 1989 The first Back Forty Folk Festival is held on the first Sunday in June
- The Morden Research Station opens a new laboratory and office building
- 1990 Minnewasta School opens on the south side of the community
- 1993 Morden Area Foundation is created through a challenge from the Sill Foundation
- 1996 Morden library moves to larger premises at 514 Stephen Street.
- Pembina Hills Artists Inc. (later to become the Pembina Hills Arts Council) leases the old Post Office building.
- 1997 The Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame opens in Morden's Recreation Centre
- 2001 Boundary Trails Health Centre opens at the junction of PTH 3 and 14 - an amalgamation of the Morden and Winkler hospitals.
- 2004 The Morden and District Museum changes its name to the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in order to focus on its unique and abundant fossil collection.
- 2007 MRI facility opens at Boundary Trails Health Centre

2008 Morden is designated as a Cultural Capital of Canada by the Federal Government and celebrates with a Chatauqua

2012 Morden gains status as a City

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