

“Promise & Potential”
Yorkton In the Early 1900’s

A Self-Guided Heritage
Walking Tour



Cover Photo: Courthouse, 29 Darlington Street East

The Yorkton Courthouse was the first courthouse to be designed and built by Saskatchewan's first provincial architect, Maurice Sharon.

Begun in 1919, construction was delayed by inflation, an early winter, a steel workers' strike and problems with subcontractors. The facility finally opened in February of 1921.

This historic building was restored in 1984-85. It is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style: round topped Romanesque windows, projecting end bays, stone carvings, and highly ornate woodwork in the courtroom.

In 1988, the Yorkton Courthouse was declared a Provincial Heritage Property. It was further honoured on a \$1 stamp which Canada Post Corporation issued in February 1994.



Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee

The City of Yorkton Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee was established in 1987 to advise and assist Council on any matter arising out of the Heritage Property Act, or the regulations thereunder including: evaluation of properties, and making recommendations to Council regarding the designation of buildings, property and artifacts.

Welcome

Wend your way to a bygone day.
Thru the times of the town,
Past the places and people,
The sights and the sounds,
A bell tolls in the steeple.

Yea, Time...It has so much to say.

Yesterday,
It wound its threads and wove its tapestry,
'Tis today.

This is our heritage.

Welcome to the *heritage walking tour*. This self-guided experience will introduce you to Yorkton's past. The private homes and public buildings are of interest both in their relationship to the history of Yorkton and as samples of the City's architectural heritage.

The tour begins at the Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre and ends at 29 Myrtle Avenue. If you proceed at a leisurely pace, the walk will take about an hour and a half.

We hope you find "*The Promise & Potential of Yorkton*" an enjoyable experience. Please remember to view private homes from the sidewalk only. Public buildings may be entered during regular hours of operation.



Land Titles Building
City of Yorkton Archives - Jackson Collection

The Promise & Potential of Yorkton

Journey to Yorkton Began at Toronto

A group of businessmen and farmers founded the YORK FARMERS' COLONIZATION COMPANY in Toronto after receiving a Charter from the Dominion Government on May 12, 1882. The Charter gave the Company the right to acquire lands in Canada for the purposes of colonization. They obtained certain sections of land in 8 townships within the Provisional District of Assiniboia, North West Territories in an area now known as the Yorkton region in Saskatchewan. The Company established "York Colony" and the community of York City, on the banks of the Little White Sand River, inviting settlers from Ontario, other provinces, the British Isles, and the United States. On January 1, 1884, the post office was opened as "Yorkton" to prevent confusion with "York" in Ontario.

It was through the Company's lobbying that the railway was finally extended westward, although not through the original site, and the first train arrived four kilometers south as the new location in January 1891.

When settlers from many countries of Europe began arriving in the late 1890's, Yorkton was already a large village, attaining town status in 1900. Because it was the terminus of the railway until 1903, the town was the stopping place for new immigrants on their way to free homesteads in the region.

Eventually, with three railway companies passing through, Yorkton became the distribution centre for the surrounding large trading area.

Early Life & Times

The walk you are embarking on captures the essence of Yorkton in those early years—a young community with promise and potential.

The buildings you see were constructed between 1899 and 1932. The majority were built in the boom years, 1900—1915, a period marked by immigration, growth and prosperity. The grandeur of some of the private homes and public buildings is a testament to the hopes of the day.

By 1911 the population was 2,309 and Yorkton was experiencing a building boom. World War I (1914 to 1918) interrupted the town's growth, but only temporarily. The 1920's heralded a resurgence of prosperity. In February of 1928, the town of Yorkton officially became a city.

The Days Ahead

1929 was proving to be one of the most prosperous years in Yorkton's history...when the October "crash" of the New York Stock Market changed the face of the future.

The 1930's became the era of drought and Depression. By 1937 one quarter of municipal taxes were expended on relief for the unemployed. The decade also ended with a bang—the declaration of World War II. Peace did not return until 1945, and then at great cost.

For Yorkton, much had changed. But united by crisis and hardship, the people of this city continued the dream their parents and grandparents had started...but that's a story for another day.



**Victoria School
built in 1899 on the
present site of
Shaw Park**

**The second Victoria
School built in 1929
on Fourth Avenue N.**



Start at Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre
(refer to #24 for history)

1. *St. Paul Lutheran Church*
73 Smith Street East

St. Paul is the oldest church in Yorkton. It has its original wood ceiling, beams, floor and pews. Note the Gothic architecture and Romanesque Arch stained glass windows.

The Church was completed in 1901. It originally served as a Methodist church, but was sold to the Lutheran congregation in 1929.

In 1998, St. Paul was designated a Municipal Heritage Property.



Photo—City of Yorkton Archives—The Jackson Collection

2. *53 Sixth Avenue North*

This property was built in 1911 for Frank Seaford Collacott, whose father was one of Yorkton's early business leaders. Thomas Collacott erected 45 and 47 Broadway St. E. and operated one as a hardware store.

Frank sold the house to Robert Rousay, a prominent area farmer and cattleman, but remained as a tenant until 1943.

The house features an upper balcony and a columned verandah, and an interior graced with carved window frames, french doors, hardwood floors and stairs, and the original fireplace.

3. *Shaw Park*

Shaw Park was the first site of Victoria School, a 6-room brick building constructed in 1899. The first principal was J.A. Gregory; his assistant was J.A.M. Patrick.

In 1929, the original structure was replaced by a new and bigger Victoria School on Fourth Avenue, site of the Fisher Court Apartments today.



Shaw Park

4. *85 Fifth Avenue North*

This home was built between 1907—1914, but its most notable occupant was Sam N. Wynn, who purchased the property in 1920. In 1904, Wynn started work on the town newspaper “The Enterprise” as a monoline operator. A year later, at the tender age of 19, he became the paper’s editor and publisher. Sam Wynn was instrumental in establishing “The Enterprise” as one of Canada’s leading weeklies.

5. *88 Fifth Avenue North*

Note the carved pediment above the verandah, the columns and decorative wood shingles of this 1911 house. This was originally the home of John Alexander MacDonald (J.A.M.) Patrick. He came to Saskatchewan as a teacher, but later practised law. His most memorable case was the 1933 perjury trial of Peter Petrovich Veregin.

Patrick served as Yorkton’s Mayor in 1908-09 and 1914-15. In 1935, he was appointed District Court Judge and moved to Moosomin.

6. *92 Fifth Avenue North*

When it was built in 1911, this home featured an identical design for 98 Fifth Avenue. Today, only #92 retains much of its original appearance. Both homes were constructed of Doukhobor brick by a group of stone masons from England.

The homes were occupied by cousins Joseph and W.J. Duncan who operated a farm machinery business. Joseph was also a Dominion Land Agent and carried the Cockshutt Plow Co. Agency.

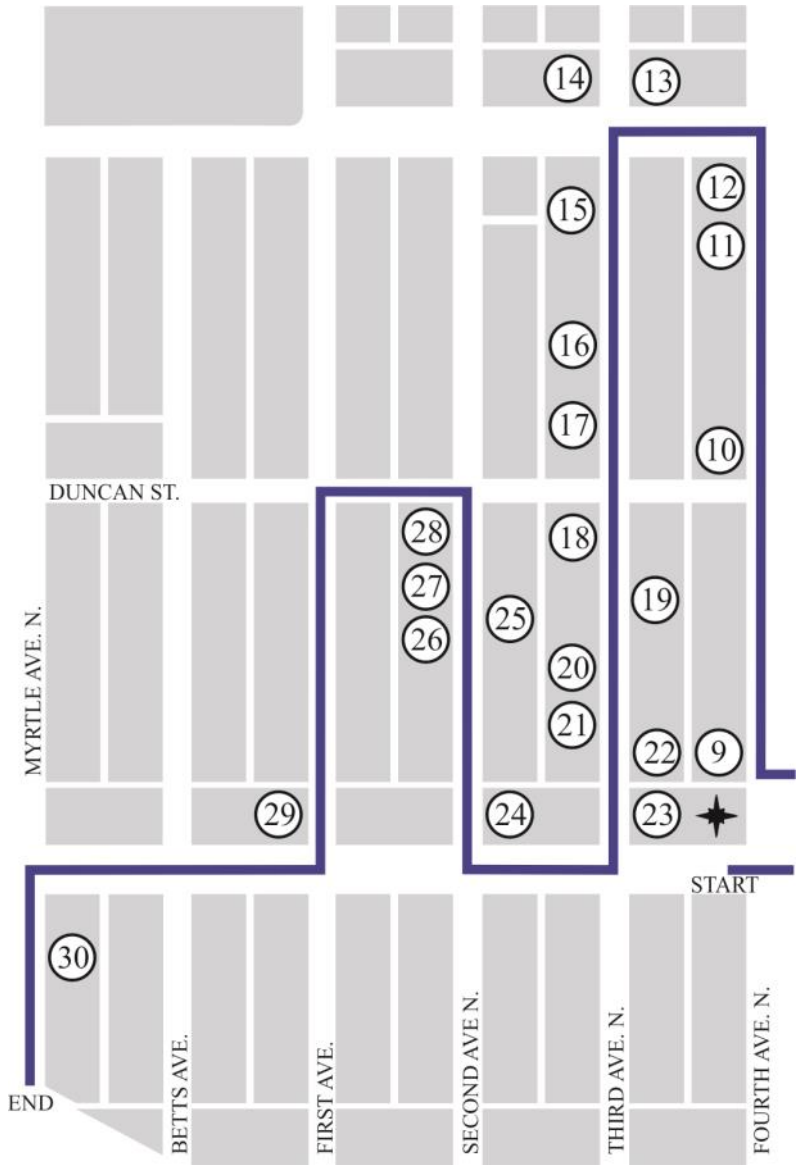
7. *97 Fourth Avenue North*

This home was also built in 1911, for an area farmer named John Cherry. Later, however, it became well-known to locals as the residence of the Royal North West Mounted Police. Interesting features include gables with palladian windows, a piered verandah and an oval window in the front door.

8. *65 Fourth Avenue North*

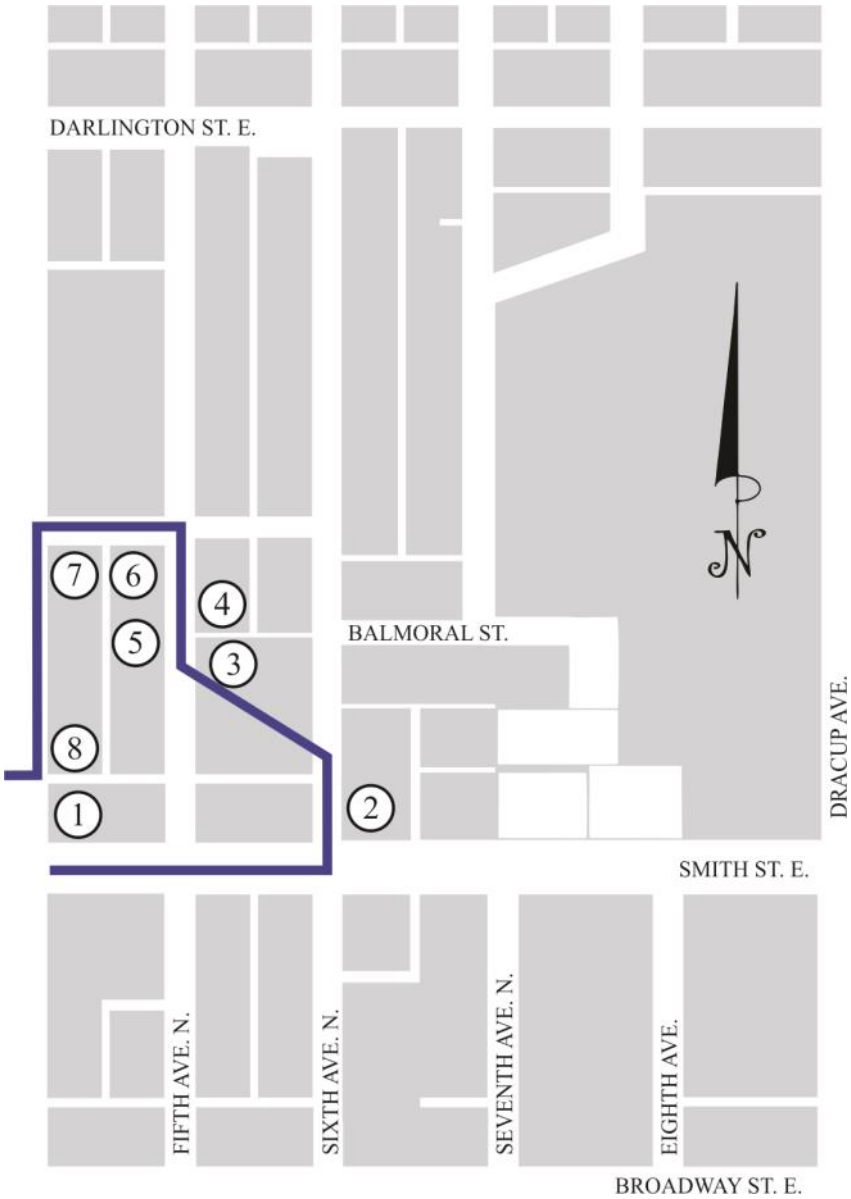
Rev. M.M. Bennett is believed to have been the first occupant of this house, which was built in 1910 to serve as the Methodist Church parsonage. It became the St. Andrew’s United Church manse in 1928, and later was sold to private individuals.

The exterior has lost its original clapboard, exposed stone foundation and front verandah, and the upper storeys have been converted to private suites. The elaborate stained glass door and windows, however, remain.



- Start** Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre
- 1 St. Paul Lutheran
 - 2 53 Sixth Avenue North
 - 3 Shaw Park
 - 4 85 Fifth Avenue North
 - 5 88 Fifth Avenue North
 - 6 92 Fifth Avenue North
 - 7 97 Fourth Avenue North

- 8 65 Fourth Avenue North
- 9 70 Fourth Avenue North
- 10 114 Fourth Avenue North
- 11 152 Fourth Avenue North
- 12 160 Fourth Avenue North
- 13 45 Darlington Street East
- 14 Courthouse
- 15 154 Third Avenue North



- 16** 140 Third Avenue North
- 17** 132 Third Avenue North
- 18** 90 Third Avenue North
- 19** 85 Third Avenue North
- 20** 82 Third Avenue North
- 21** 74 Third Avenue North
- 22** 73 Third Avenue North
- 23** Land Titles Building

- 24** St. Andrew's United Church
- 25** 81 Second Avenue North
- 26** 82 Second Avenue North
- 27** 90 Second Avenue North
- 28** 106 Second Avenue North
- 29** The Armoury Building
- 30** 29 Myrtle Avenue

9. *70 Fourth Avenue North*

This house dates to approximately 1901, though a major addition was constructed at the rear in 1911. James Magrath, son of Rev. Miller Magrath, was the home's, original owner. He was a general storekeeper who valued the Indian trade, and became a successful dealer in furs.



Photo: City of Yorkton Archives
Jackson Collection

10. *114 Fourth Avenue North*

This home was owned by Charles Beck, brother of Levi Beck, who was widely known as Yorkton's "Merchant Prince". Charles served as Yorkton's Mayor in 1906 and 1916.

The house was built in 1908 in the Queen Anne Revival style. Note the decorative cresting and finials adorning the roof line, the circular inset of the gables and the columned entrance.

11. *152 Fourth Avenue North*

Judge Gordon's residence was built in 1915. Little is known about the Judge, but perhaps his desire for privacy is best reflected by the original concrete fence that still surrounds the house. Other notable features include the balconet, ornate windows and peaks.

12. *160 Fourth Avenue North*

The decorative gable of this 1908 home is reflective of the Gambrel style. The original occupant is unknown. In the 1950's owner J. McMillan left the property to St. Andrew's United Church. It served as a manse for Rev. E. Jones until a new manse was built.

13. *45 Darlington Street East*

Built in 1913, this house was originally the home of Brigadier General Alexander Ross. In 1934, General Ross became the National President of the Royal Canadian Legion. While occupying this post, he assisted King Edward VIII in the unveiling of the Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge. The Royal Canadian Legion Alexander Ross Branch was named in his honor.

The house features a lead glass window on the front door, a stained glass window and a rear balcony.

14. Courthouse, 29 Darlington Street East

The Yorkton Courthouse was the first courthouse to be designed and built by Saskatchewan's first provincial architect, Maurice Sharon.

Begun in 1919, construction was delayed by inflation, an early winter, a steel workers' strike and problems with subcontractors. The facility finally opened in February of 1921.

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Across from the Court House visit the Pioneer Cairn erected to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the York Colonists in 1882.

Centre of Darlington Street and Second Avenue, the War Memorial honours those who died serving during WWI, WWII and the Korean War.

15. 154 Third Avenue North

J.E. Carpenter, owner of Carpenter Lumber Yard, built this house in 1910. True to his name, J.E. was a carpenter by trade and embellished his home with intricate woodwork. Note the verandah and roof line.

The house also features a stained glass door and windows. The front verandah and back porch were rebuilt at a later date when lawyer V.R. Smith owned the home.

Photo: City of Yorkton Archives
Jackson Collection



16. 140 Third Avenue North

This home is an example of the popular 1920's Bungalowoid style. Although the building is one and a half storeys high, the upper storey is suppressed to suggest the one storey of a true bungalow. The unique front porch was created when the original front entrance was moved because of fire damage.

The house was owned by Edwin Pinkerton, who managed Yorkton's first Co-op store, served as a Council member from 1919-22 and as Mayor in 1926-26 and 1933-34.

17. 132 Third Avenue North

Milton A. Eby, one of Yorkton's first druggists, was the original owner of this home. He operated a drugstore in the Dunlop Block from about 1903-36. After his death, Eby was succeeded by Mr. Durer, who had the distinction of being the only druggist in town to have a soda fountain at his establishment.

The original house was built in 1903; the balcony and verandah were added later. The bricks used in construction were hammered into molds to create their unique rough appearance.

18. 90 Third Avenue North

Built in 1907 for W.D. Dunlop, this house is typical of the Queen Anne Revival period. Note the ornate grape-like shingling and the elaborate woodwork that crowns the south bay window. The front entrance originally featured a verandah.

An early settler and prominent businessman, Dunlop was instrumental in the development of Yorkton's business district. He built the Dunlop Block located on Broadway St. E. and Second Ave; ran the Yorkton Supply Co. with Major Bradbrooke; and later became an owner of Poulter and Dunlop's Department Store.



90 Third Avenue North
City of Yorkton Archives
Jackson Collection

19. 85 Third Avenue North

This house, built in 1902, was originally the home of Frederick Hukins, a real estate and insurance agent. The exterior of the house has remained relatively unchanged. Note the corner brick quoins. The interior features the original fireplace. It is surrounded by a bookcase graced with lead glass doors done in the same design as the exterior windows.

20. 82 Third Avenue North

Aside from the 1908 construction date, little is known about this property. It does have some interesting features, however, most notably the carved faces in the window casings.

21. 74 Third Avenue North

Note the design similarities between this building and #73 Third Avenue North. Date of construction is estimated at approximately 1900.

#74 served as the manse for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Rev. Thompson, who served from 1908-25, was the first occupant. T.W. Magrath, an active member of the church, lived at #73.

22. 73 Third Avenue North

See above (#22).

23. Land Titles Building, 49 Smith Street East

The Land Titles Building was built in 1907-08, and reflected the community's hope and potential for growth. It replaced the former Dominion Lands Office on Argyle Street. The new building was expanded in the 1920's. Note the two colours of brick.

After Land Titles relocated its office in the mid-1970's, the building's future came into question. In 1980, the Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre was constructed right next door, and the Land Titles Building was incorporated within the Centre's mandate to serve as a community cultural facility. It was designated a municipal heritage property in October of 1989.

The exterior is graced by Romanesque arch windows, Keystones and Tyndall Stone. The interior features the original copper doors and vaults, bronze railing, marble stairs and washroom fixtures.

24. St. Andrew's United Church, 23 Smith Street East

In 1925, a nation-wide union of Methodist and Presbyterian churches led to the union of two Yorkton congregations, and the creation of St. Andrew's United Church in July of 1928.

St. Andrew's was built by Andrew Purves. The cornerstone was originally laid on August 30, 1909 by Rev. Charles Gordon, also known as celebrated author Ralph Connor.

The church features the buttresses and Romanesque arch stained glass windows of the Gothic Revival style. A Casavant organ serves as a memorial to those who died in World War I and II. In 1952, a Carillon organ was installed in memory of the early settlers who promoted religious development in Yorkton and area.



25. 81 Second Avenue North

Built in 1910, this was originally the home of Dr. C.M. Henry. He is believed to have brought the first X-ray machine to Yorkton. In order to install the cumbersome machine in his office, however, Dr. Henry had to cut a hole in the west wall of his home.



81 Second Avenue North
City of Yorkton Archives
Jackson Collection

During the 1930—40's, the house became the R.C.M.P. barracks. By mid 1950's it was converted into the Henry Apartments. Restored to a private residence in 1992, it was designated as Municipal Heritage Property in 1996.

26. 82 Second Avenue North

This home was built in 1922 by the local construction firm of Logan and Black. Dr. A.F. Laird was a resident.

27. 90 Second Avenue North

Built in 1905, this house is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Revival Period. Note the tower, pillared verandah, decorative wood shingles and carved frame windows. The home's original owner was J.T. Hall.

28. 106 Second Avenue North

This was formerly the home of John MacDonald, who served as the manager of the Bank of British North America. The house was built in 1911, and originally had an open verandah which was later enclosed (see south side). Note the northern oval window.

29. *The Armoury Building, 56 First Avenue North*

When war broke out in September of 1939, construction of the Armoury was not yet completed. The official opening took place in October, and because of wartime security concerns, a ball planned for the occasion was cancelled. Only one person at a time, accompanied by a soldier could visit the premises. The plans had been to use the facility as a housing and training centre, but with the reality of war, it was used mainly for recruiting purposes. Today, it is used by the Reserve Unit of the 64th Battery of the 10th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery. It has a drill hall, office, classrooms where Army Cadets meet, sometimes used also by the Sea Cadets.

Constructed of brick and Tyndall stone, with pilasters and military carvings, the cost totaled \$32,000.



The Armouries
Collection of Del Sveinsson

30. *29 Myrtle Avenue*

Although six homes were originally constructed along Myrtle Avenue in 1932, only three still stand today. The homes were built by the Doukhobor Community as rental properties.

The design of these homes is believed to be unique in Saskatchewan. Built of brick manufactured by the Doukhobor Brickyard Society at Yorkton, each home features walls that are three bricks thick.

The houses were built by hand by Doukhobor men working twelve hours a day, six days a week at a wage of \$0.10 per day. Once finished, the houses were rented to non-Doukhobor families for approximately \$25 a month.



Levi Beck's house was located on the corner of Second Avenue North and Smith Street on the present site of the Fire Hall. Built in 1902, it was demolished in 1957.

Photo: City of Yorkton Archives - Jackson Collection

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City of

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