

There are so many stories and people who make a community, like Alberta, what it is today. This showcases just a snippet of them. It is impossible to capture them all.

Our goal is that you will find this tour to be an enjoyable outdoor activity, and educational as well. A tour, such as this, would not be possible without our research volunteers. We thank them for their hours of time and dedication. We would also like to acknowledge the past research of county historians Edna Mae Busch and JoAnne Foley. Their compiled historical information was a valuable resource in doing this project.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

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making history come alive

City of Alberta
Self-guided Walking Tour

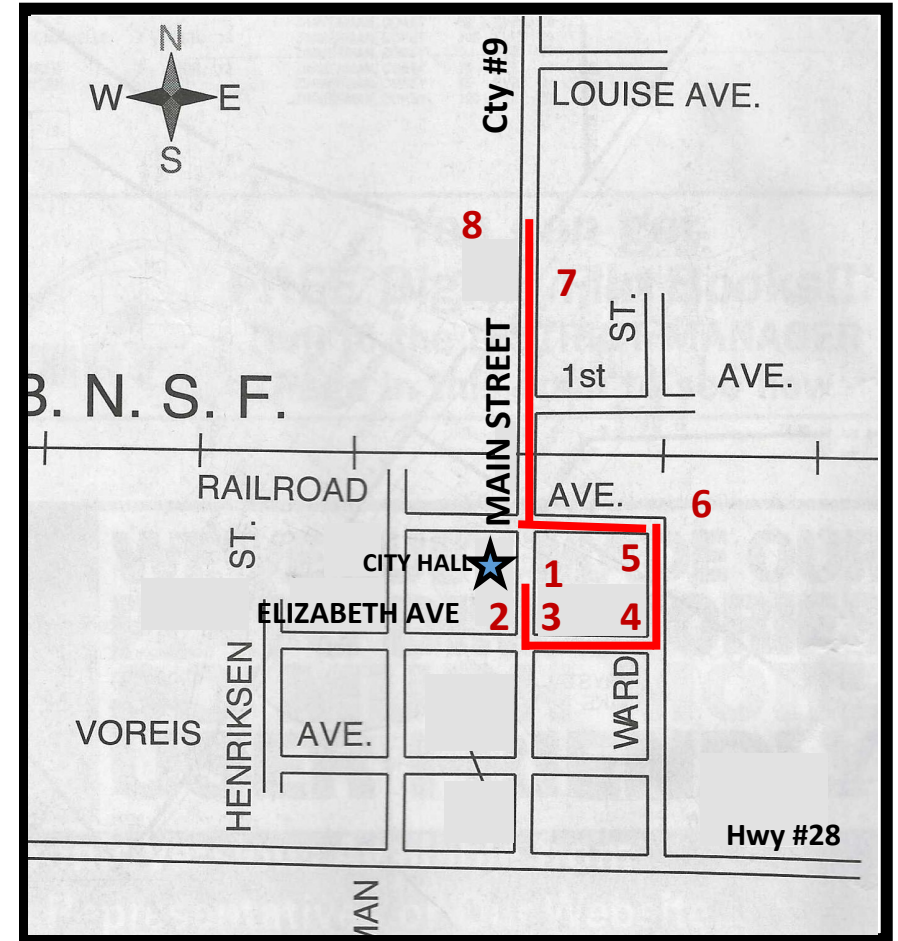
Some of the best historical artifacts are right before our very eyes. Take a walk back into time and learn a little bit about some people that helped structure Alberta as we know it. The homes and structures on this tour were built by many of the folks who began businesses, churches, community organizations and were influential in helping Alberta and Stevens County become a thriving place to live, work and play.



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Just a little background

Although the town of Alberta has changed its name, the place on the map has stayed the same. Wheeler Station (or just Wheeler) was the first name, after Homer D. Wheeler who was the owner of the land when the first elevator was built in 1882. In 1884, it was changed to Clearfield, as Minnesota had another post office named Wheeler. Clearfield was changed again a few years later, to Alberta. The final name is in honor of Alberta Hardin, daughter of the postmaster, Andrew Hardin. Alberta was an accomplished news woman. The first incorporation of Alberta was up in the air as a result of a law suit and declared void. The Morris Tribune lists May 1, 1912 as the day incorporation was to take place and a new council was elected. The peak population of Alberta was 200, in 1940.



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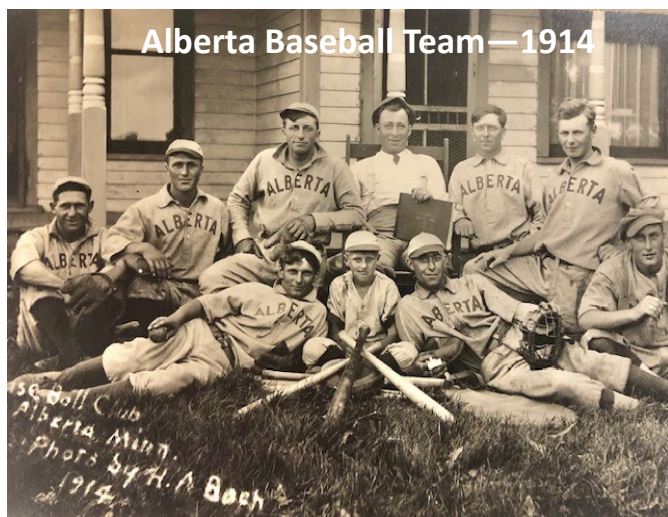
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First Car in Alberta—Nelson Family

FUN FACT

June 1915 was so cold that farmers wore fur coats to cultivate corn.



Alberta Baseball Team—1914

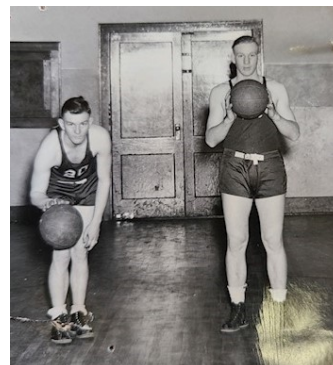


Alberta Band - 1915

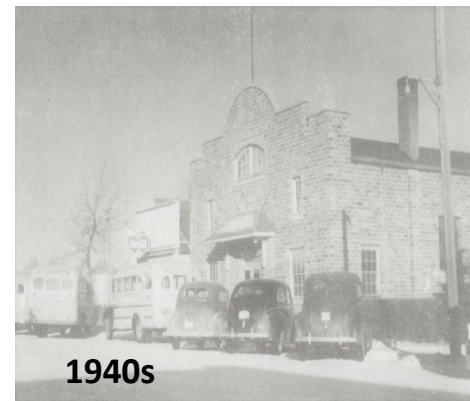
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304 Main Street—Town Hall

The Alberta Town Hall was dedicated on October 30, 1929. Many plays, carnivals, sporting events, roller skating and dances took place here until the mid 1960s. In 1954, the Alberta Merchants sponsored the First Annual Flower Show. There were 324 entries! The school used the gym for basketball games and gym classes until 1954 when the school addition included a gymnasium.



Arland Seibrecht and Harvey Mathison, 1944, playing basketball inside the Town Hall.



1940s

FUN FACT

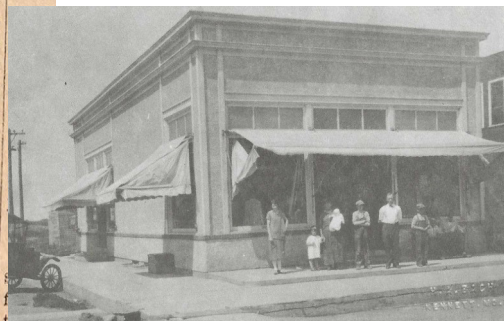
Prior to the Town Hall building, this lot was home to Chris Eystad's General Store (also meat market and confectionery) and Spauldings Pool Hall, which changed ownership frequently. A fire in 1928 destroyed that building.

2 301 Main Street (Alberta Bar & Grill)

John and Katie Schultz owned and operated a general merchandise store in Alberta from 1908-1945. John was also the postmaster from 1915-1924. This building on the corner of Main Street and Elizabeth Avenue was built in 1923, after they purchased two lots, and was their second store location. (The original was on the east side of Main Street) This 28 X 60 building was contracted to August Heil of Hancock, with Louis Loher excavating the basement with trained horses. After operating the store for 37 years, they sold to their son and wife, Lee and Lillian Schultz, in 1945. Since the 1960s it has changed ownership multiple times as a café and eventually Alberta Bar & Grill. It is no longer in business, but the building is periodically used for community events.



John and Katie Schultz



The new Schultz Store, 1923



Alberta School and Manse— 1920

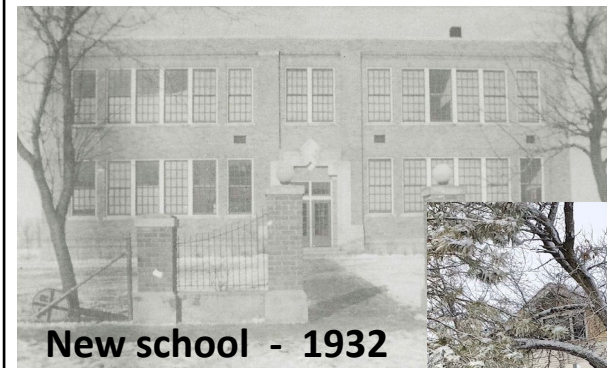


Horse-drawn school buses



After the 1931 fire

FUN FACT: Alberta School District had a female school bus driver in 1927



New school - 1932



The Manse, right, is now owned as a private residence.

2021

8 Alberta School and Teacher's Manse

When Alberta first started, it had no school. The children trudged 2.5 miles north to District 25 in Gausman's Grove, Pepperton Township. In 1911, after much heated discussion, Districts 19 & 25 merged to form School District #19. It was the first consolidated school in Stevens County, and one of the first ones in the state. Two years later, District 13 joined the new consolidated district. In 1913, a new two-story school building was dedicated. It was built north of the railroad tracks for the cost of \$13,000 and Professor Fred Grafelman became the Superintendent. He started classes that were new to the residents such as Agriculture and Manual Training in the basement. He also started the first 4-H club in the county.

Then the Alberta School was chosen to receive financial aid by the Rockefeller Foundation in building a complete modern home for teachers. This home contained 21 rooms. In the basement was a training program for girls consisting of a cooking and sewing laboratory, store room, model dining room, laundry, and bathroom. The first floor was the apartment for the superintendent and his family, and the second floor was the home for the lady teachers. Hundreds of people showed up for the dedication of the "Vincent Home" (also known as the "Manse" or "Teacherage") on February 16, 1917. This was the first teacher manse to be built with a consolidated school in the nation. It received much notoriety and a model was featured at the World's Fair in San Francisco. Mrs. Grafelman made the model of the building, trees, busses, etc.

The first school building was destroyed by a fire in 1931. The new school was dedicated in 1932, with additions being built in 1949 and 1954. In 1967, after much discussion, Alberta Independent School District #766 consolidated with Chokio Independent School District #766. Together they became the Chokio-Alberta Independent School District #771. Today the students attend school in Chokio, with sports and activities consolidated with Morris.

3 300 Main Street (Alberta State Bank)

The Alberta State Bank began in 1912 with a capital stock of \$10,000. It was a proud day for the bank when they announced newly installed safety deposit boxes making it convenient for their patrons to store their valuables. They also installed an electric burglar alarm system. So it was unbelievable, the morning of July 21, 1921, when the word spread around town that the bank had been robbed. The robbers had cut all telephone wires in the town of Alberta and stole tools from the Great Northern Depot to remove a basement window into the bank. They ignored the steel door to the vault and picked a hole through the wall large enough for a body to crawl through. Most of the valuables taken from the safety deposit boxes were Liberty bonds, which, at that time, could be cashed by anyone. These robbers were never found. Another severe blow was dealt to the bank in 1929. L.P. Norby, who had been a cashier at the bank since 1913, and considered a prominent upstanding pillar of the community, admitted he had embezzled over \$20,000 from the bank. (He was also mayor at the time) Norby was sentenced to prison in Stillwater. The bank closed for about a year to reorganize. Another robbery occurred in March of 1936. Likely a gang that was causing trouble in similar small towns around the state. The Alberta State Bank was purchased by Morris State Bank and closed in 1942.

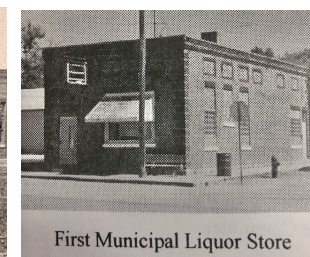


In 1945, the Alberta city council voted to purchase the old Alberta State Bank building and open a Municipal Liquor Store. Over the years it was bought and sold to other individuals. On March 11, 1996, when it was called *Kehoe's Bar*, thieves broke into this establishment and stole about \$1,200 worth of cash. Entry was made through the back door.

THREE robberies in the same building!



Main Street Alberta looking north— 1914



First Municipal Liquor Store

4**301 Ward Street**

This home was once occupied by Charlie Tomoson, also known as "Red", for his red hair. Charlie was a WWI Veteran and moved to Alberta shortly after his army discharge in 1919. It is evident that he was very creative and talented at working with his hands and using hand tools. He was a blacksmith at Bangarter's Garage in the 1930s. It was located on Neuman Street (pictured below), where the playground is today. Charlie then worked many years for the Minnesota Highway Department at its district headquarters in Morris, putting his blacksmith skills to use there. Charlie also made



fishing decoys as a hobby with his friend, Chester Buss. They made and sold around 1,000 decoys each year for nine years! He left behind a collection of decoys, both finished and unfinished. Charlie's grandson lives in this house today and enjoys the creative workmanship of his grandfather.

**5****305 Ward Street**

This home was originally owned by the Foley Family. P. H. (Patrick Henry) Foley operated a 17 room hotel on Main Street in the early 1900s, and his sister, Mary ran a boarding house out of this home. P.H. Foley's hotel was also known for its wonderful food. Due to health reasons, he sold the



hotel in 1919, all furnished with steam heat and electric lights.

Mary Foley may have had the first "AirBnB" in Stevens County!

**6****Cargill Elevator**

Since 1882, there has always been one, two or three elevators in Alberta. Over the years those elevators have been bought, sold and relocated, burned down, and rebuilt. Cargill has remained in Alberta since 1914.



1950s

7**Old Trinity Lutheran Church - N. Main St.**

In July of 1915, Rev. Jacob Thornell preached his first sermon at the school. The meeting was well attended and much interest followed. Rev. Thornell was said to be a young man with a pleasing personality and a very eloquent speaker. The group presented him with an automobile, as he traveled from Morris to Alberta. On November 2, 1915, the congregation was organized and chose the name *The Trinity Evangelical English Lutheran Church*. (The Morris Tribune wrote an article titled *Lutherans Invade Churchless Town*.) Land for this building was donated by George Fougeron with no reservation or restriction on which denomination built there.

The cornerstone was laid by Rev. Bredesen on December 7, 1919. When the church was built, they obtained a manual type pump organ from a church in Glenwood. In 1958, a vacuum cleaner was installed to replace the manual pumping system. This congregation is now located on Highway 28 in the church building previously owned by the Church of the Nazarene.

