

# STONES OF MEMORY

## A TOUR OF MINNEDOSA'S HISTORIC STONE BUILDINGS



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

THEN

THE HOUSE OF PROMINENT STONE MASON,  
T.D. TAYLOR.




NOW

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Produced by:  
Minnedosa Rotary  
and  
Minnedosa Heritage Committee



**Manitoba** 

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contact Minnedosa Rotary.

## STONE BUILDINGS OF MINNEDOSA

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Minnedosa is blessed with an important collection of heritage buildings including several impressive churches and exquisite houses, as well as a notable post office and railway station. These buildings recall architectural styles, materials and details from the town's early years. A heritage village on the community's eastern edge contains Minnedosa's old power station and various buildings rescued from the surrounding farming area.

One of Minnedosa's most interesting aspects is its wealth of stone buildings. Built over the course of only seven years, the ten buildings featured on the walking/driving tour will suggest the high levels of construction skill and keen eye for detail which place these among our town's treasures.

A readily-available supply of large granite field stones, which had been deposited by the melting glacier, coupled with the arrival of several qualified stone masons, led to the use of this construction material in Minnedosa's pioneer phase. The result was many long-standing buildings, including a church, homes and commercial structures. Unfortunately many have now been demolished. Others have been stuccoed over, hiding the original stones, but some remain in near-original condition.

In 1996 a sub-committee of the larger Minnedosa Heritage Advisory Committee started gathering material with the idea of providing a brief history and walking tour of the remaining stone buildings. Most have undergone interior renovations. The exteriors have received periodic maintenance, preserving them in as-built condition. As you follow this tour, it is our hope that you will gain some appreciation of the history of Minnedosa, the craftsmanship and hard work which went into converting a pile of stones into beautiful buildings which have stood the test of time.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MINNEDOSA

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Minnedosa has a rich history dating back to the fur trade era and the arrival of agricultural settlers in the West..

Around 1868 Minnedosa was originally named Tanner's Crossing, after John Tanner, one of the earliest entrepreneurs in the area. Tanner's ferry and trading post were strategically located on the Carlton Trail at a crossing on the Little Saskatchewan River. This strategic location attracted many settlers to the area, one of them being Joseph Samuel Armitage. Armitage joined forces with Tanner to lay out a town site.

Armitage is credited with converting Tanner's Crossing into the Town of Minnedosa, which was incorporated in 1883. By 1880 he had established both a saw mill and a grist mill. He and his wife would soon control 3800 acres along the Little Saskatchewan River.

By 1900 Minnedosa could boast of a brick yard, two lime kilns, a cheese factory and a creamery, all enterprises considered essential for community development.

**LOCATION B**  
**27 THIRD AVENUE NE**



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

This is one of Minnedosa's finest examples of the art of the stonemason, and also an exceptional example of the kind of Gothic Revival style that was familiar from southern Ontario. The beautiful selection of similarly-coloured and sized stones make the main walls mesmerizing to behold. The tall peaked gable and delicately detailed verandah, hallmarks of the Southern Ontario version of Gothic Revival, are also suggestive of a keen eye for form, proportion and detail.

Mr. and Mrs. John Tanner, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kenning and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Armitage are listed jointly as the first owners of the land where this house now sits.

Stone mason Robert Gugin owned the property from 1892 until 1900, when the title holder changed to Henry Rapley. As the price of record was \$1500, it seems likely that Gugin built the house during his tenure.

William and Audrey Crooks purchased this home in 1974 and are still in residence in 2006.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°15.137' W 99°50.255'

**LOCATION A**  
**125 MAIN STREET N**



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

This house is a fine example of a familiar residential form of the early 1900s. Known simply as Four Square, this was a purely North American style, noted for its elemental box-like form and truncated pyramidal roof. This kind of house was common on farm sites across Manitoba, but few either in those places or even in urban centres were carried out with massive granite blocks.

The first recorded title holder of this property is listed as K. McLellan.

Arthur Turner bought the property in 1897 for \$75. It is likely that construction on the residence itself began in 1898, when Turner took out a mortgage on the land for \$700. A second mortgage for \$200 was taken out in 1899.

One long-time resident in the home was Dr. J. N. Andrew, who practiced medicine in Minnedosa from 1895 through 1953. In winter he often made country maternity calls with his cutter, pulled by his faithful horse "Rock." Many of these calls were made in the bitter cold of winter nights. Farmers would heat bricks for Doc's return trip, put them under his feet and wrap him in his buffalo robes. With the command, "Home, Rock," Doc would return home safe and sound, asleep until the horse stopped at his front door.

Dr. Andrew had one of the first cars in Minnedosa, one of the first washing machines and one of the first "Edison" cylinder record players. His office phone number was #1, denoting his importance to the community.

The owners of this house in 2006 are Greg Toews and Diane Natiuk.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°15.129' W 99°50.335'

**LOCATION D**  
**77 FIRST STREET NE**



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

In the hands of a skilled designer it is possible to transform what might be a clunky Southern Ontario Gothic house into an elegant, dignified building. Here, the appearance of the familiar pointed Gothic gable gains grandeur through the combination at the roof line of bargeboards, pinnacles and pendant. The porch, also featuring elegant forms and details, and painted white to contrast with the greys and reds of the walls, is a beauty.

The partnership of Tanner, Armitage and Brownlee is listed as an early owner of this piece of property.

The beautiful stone house was built for Joseph and Edith Burgess. They raised 11 children in this home. Joseph, a butcher by trade, was employed first by his father-in-law, John Wake. Joseph Burgess established the Burgess store in 1896. It still operates in the same location today, under the direction of great-grandson Rick Burgess.

Following the deaths of Joseph and Edith Burgess in 1952, the house was purchased by Dr. William James Sharman who occupied the house until 1964.

The house returned to the Sharman family in 1985, when Lois Christine Sharman Douglas, daughter of Dr. Sharman, purchased the house. She restored it to its present condition.

Owners in 2006 are David and Sheila Mickle.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°15.091' W 99°50.257'

**LOCATION C**  
**101 THIRD AVENUE NE**



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

Another fine Southern Ontario Gothic design, this house is an example of a slight and popular variation on the theme—instead of a simple rectangular plan this kind of building was planned on a larger “L” shape, which gained more floor space and also design opportunities for the inset porch seen here.

The land on which this building sits was first owned by Tanner, Armitage and George McCulloch.

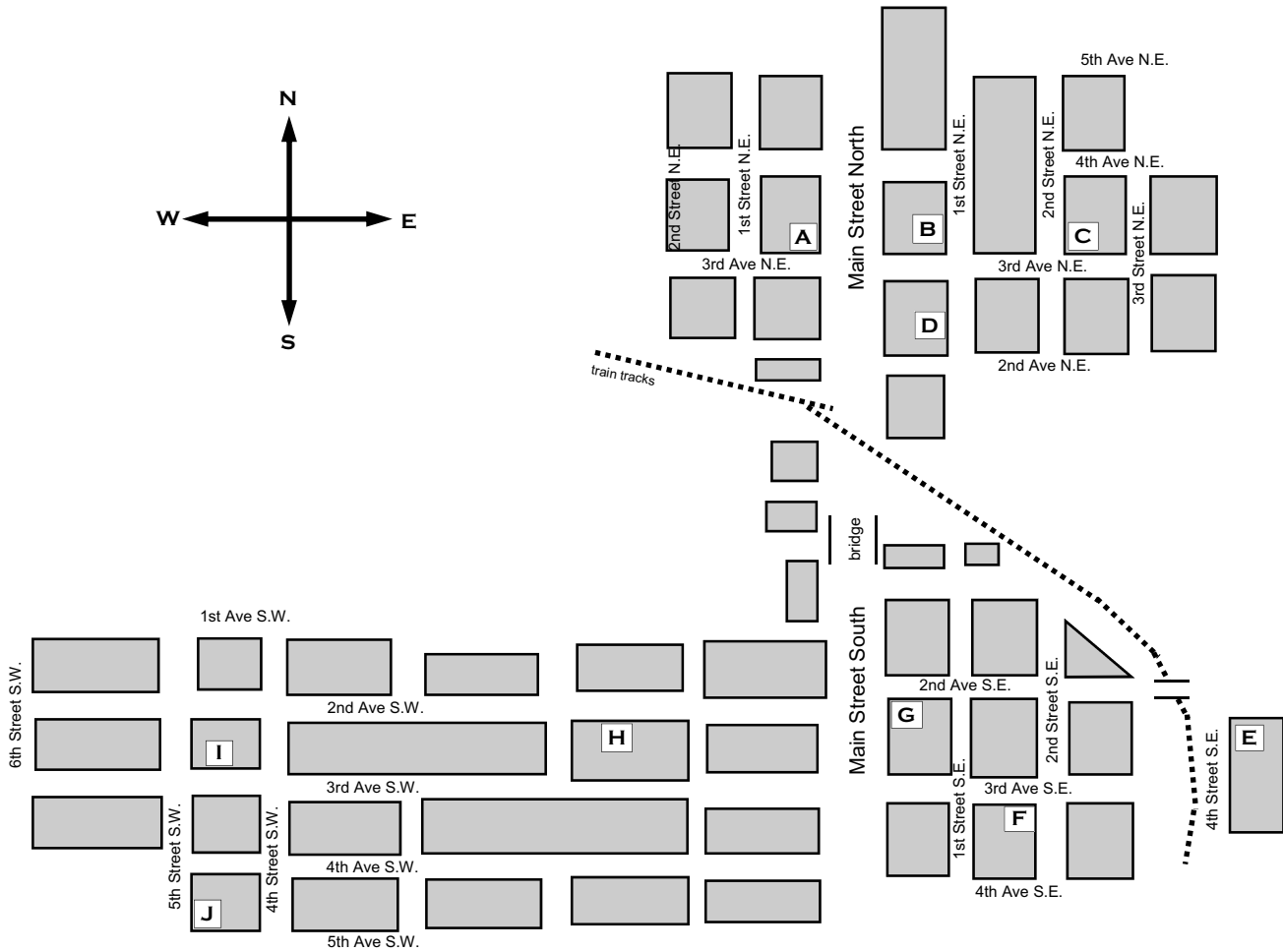
It is unclear whether the house was built in 1895 by Jackson Whiteside Brown or in 1896 by Frank and Marion Mashen.

Barrister Hume Robinson owned the house from 1903 until 1932.

In 2006 Judge Allan James and his wife, Thelma James reside here.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°15.142' W 99°50.120'

# MAP OF MINNEDOSA'S HISTORIC STONE BUILDINGS



*Please note that this is a partial map for reference only.  
The map is not to scale.*

LOCATION F  
66 THIRD AVENUE SE



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

Most of the stone houses on this tour are versions of Southern Ontario Gothic, the kind of house design that would have been familiar to the pioneers, who had arrived from southern Ontario. This building offers another architectural option, less used than the Gothic, but still popular during the 1890s. Called Second Empire, the style takes its name from the French Second Empire, the reign of Napoleon III. Second Empire was commonly used for government buildings, but also for some houses and schools. This is a very fine example of the style, noted for its mansard roof, dormer windows and bay windows along the walls.

This property was first owned by Charles Henry Currie with title listed in November 1896.

The second owner, from 1904-1923, was Herbert William Hilliard. In 1885, as 20-year olds, Herbert and his brother, George, came to Canada from England to fight in the 1885 North West Rebellion.

After the rebellion, Herbert settled in Minnedosa. At this time he purchased the Boyd Lumberyard, operating it until 1905. He then sold the business and became County Clerk for the Minnedosa Judicial District, holding the position for 13 years.

Other owners included Alfred Ayett, Dr. McLean, Earl Enquist and John and Cherokee Mendrikis.

Owners in 2006 are Douglas and Karen Kuculym.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.756' W 99°50.125'

LOCATION E  
120 FOURTH STREET SE



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

This handsome house, dramatically situated on a hillside, is a remarkable L-shaped Southern Ontario Gothic design, in this case enriched with heavily detailed bargeboards and a carefully composed porch nestled into the crook of the "L".

This house was built in 1892 by James and Mary McKay as their own residence. Mr. McKay was a stone mason and carpenter. He constructed several other buildings in Minnedosa and surrounding area.

The owners in 2006 are Kitty Talbot and Mark Leguee, who have been restoring the gracious old home for the past decade. A walnut parquet floor has been uncovered in the old parlor. A new kitchen and field stone hearth have been added to the traditional summer kitchen. The original woodwork remains intact throughout the house.

The home is known as "In the Wind Manor" because it is subject to the predominant northwesterly wind, which runs down the Minnedosa Valley. "In the Wind Manor" contains evidence of particularly fine treatment of both Scottish stone masonry and woodworking of the late 19th century.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.824' W 99°49.934'

**LOCATION H**  
**108 SECOND AVENUE SW**  
**ST. MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH**

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*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

This is an exceptional church design, one of the finest examples of ecclesiastical architecture in small town Manitoba. Like so many other Protestant churches, St. Mark's is carried out in the Gothic Revival style, which here is expressed with a steep roof, variety of pointed and surbased windows, and the delicately detailed entrance canopy. The building is distinguished by the heavy use of pink mortar, a feature that makes the building even more memorable.

The first St. Mark's Church was built on this location in 1885. The growing congregation decided that a larger building was required. In 1903 the congregation chose to build a larger church on the same site, at an estimated cost of \$5000.

A great deal of volunteer help went into constructing the building. Stories are told of the Rector himself going out into the country to conscript farmers to use their wagons to haul the great stones from the pastures to the building site.

The Church was opened in 1904 and the congregation set itself to reducing the debt, which in 1911 still stood at \$6000. It was not until 1928 that St. Mark's Anglican Church was finally free of debt.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.807' W 99°50.528'

**LOCATION G**  
**110 MAIN STREET SOUTH**  
**PEARSON BUILDING**

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*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

The Pearson Building is an exceptional example of the Italianate Style applied to a commercial enterprise. This style, highly popular in the 1870s and 1880s, is now quite rare. This handsome building is not just a rare survivor, but also an important one, distinguished by a beautifully detailed wooden cornice and the tall paired windows of the second storey.

This commercial building has housed many enterprises since it was built in the 1870s. The building, currently referred to as the Pearson Block, has also been the Setter and the Bruce building.

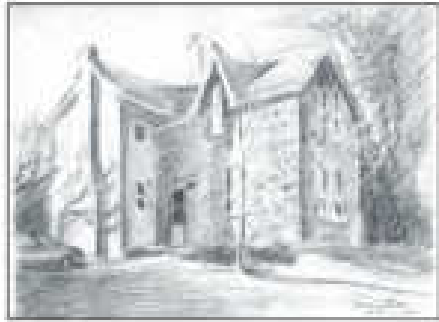
It is believed that the building originally housed a hall or meeting room on the second level. Sir John A. MacDonald is reported to have spoken there.

Prior to 1910, a Mr. George Farncombe operated a movie theatre in the south side of the Pearson or Setter Block.

In 1950, the Marshall Wells Store was located in the building. It now houses Flowers on Main and the Minnedosa Dollar Store.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.824' W 99°50.312'

LOCATION J  
353 FIFTH AVENUE SW



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

This house was the personal project of Thomas Taylor, one of the most active stonemasons in the area. The house is a classic Southern Ontario Gothic house, distinguished by the tall pointed gable at the centre of the roof, which originally would have stretched behind the present stuccoed addition.

This house is of particular importance as it was the home of Thomas Dawson Taylor, who was a stone mason credited with building many stone structures in Rapid City, Rivers and Minnedosa. Taylor-built edifices include the Burgess Block (70 Main Street S), the Pearson Block and the IOOF Hall (133 Main Street S).

Built as a farm house around 1894, the home overlooks the town and the golf course, which was originally part of the farm. As well as being an active stone mason, Taylor, with the help of his seven sons and one daughter, continued to farm and breed prize Shorthorn cattle.

T. D. Taylor served as a Town Councillor for many years and was Mayor of Minnedosa in 1909.

The home remained in the Taylor family until 1967, when it was sold to John Keith and Mary Frances Wishart.

The current owners, Elgin and Donna Hall, bought the house from Donovan Wishart in 2005 and have started to restore the home.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.639' W 99°51.058'

Note: The cover of this booklet features additional images of this house.

LOCATION I  
351 THIRD AVENUE SW



*Note: photo quality has been reduced for this web version*

It is likely that this house was built around 1903, since lumber from the first St. Mark's Anglican Church was used in the house construction. The title holder of this property in 1907 was Rachael Maguire, wife of contractor Thomas Maguire. The property was purchased by Alastair and Charles Macdonald in 1908 and remained in the Macdonald family until 2002.

Alastair, being a skilled carpenter and stone mason, made significant improvements to the house. He dug a basement by hand and lined it with stone. As an evening project, after working all day, he began applying a stone veneer to the house. His family gathered stones from the vacant lots in the area. The stones were cut and chiseled to fit. The paint on the sills and corners was made from a stone-like lump found just west of the house. The "stone" crumbled easily and was mixed with oil to produce the paint.

The owner in 2006, Lesley Kingdon, rents the house to tenants.

GPS Coordinates: N 50°14.752' W 99°51.050'



WHEN IN THE AREA YOU MAY  
WISH TO VISIT THE FOLLOWING  
DESIGNATED HERITAGE SITES:

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Town of Minnedosa Civic Centre  
103 Main Street South

Tanner's Crossing Centennial Park  
Minnedosa Beach Road

Canadian Pacific Rail Station  
2nd Avenue N.W., Minnedosa

The Castle (The Myers House)  
149 2nd Avenue S.W., Minnedosa

Octagon Display Building  
Agricultural Society Grounds  
6th Avenue N.W., Minnedosa

Minnedosa Power Company Building  
Heritage Village, Minnedosa

Cadurcis House  
Heritage Village, Minnedosa