

You are about to set out on a tour of one of the oldest and historically significant settlements in Saskatchewan and Western Canada.

The story of Prince Albert is a story about faith and hope, greed and rebellion, dreams and disappointment, the clash of cultures and the desire to build a vibrant, diverse and prosperous community.



The Museum (Old Fire Hall)

1 The Museum

was constructed as a Fire Hall in 1912. It was made from local brick produced at the Red Rock Brick Factory, one of three brick factories located in P.A. at the time. This building functioned as the City's Fire Hall until 1975. In 1976 it became the Prince Albert Historic Museum.

2 The Band Stand

– was located on the site that is now Memorial Square at City Hall. As far back as 1887 Prince Albert had a band that was supported by the City at a cost of \$100 per year, and free use of City Council Chambers for practice and performance. Through the early part of the Twentieth Century the P.A. City Band used the bandstand in the summer months to present weekly public performances.

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Special Thanks:

Rev. Sandy Scott
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church

Prince Albert Historical Society

A WALKING TOUR of the Historic Settlement OF PRINCE ALBERT





Bridge open with River Boat

3 The Totem Pole

– The pole was carved by inmates from British Columbia, who were incarcerated in the Federal Penitentiary. *"They presented it to the city in gratitude for our hospitality."* (From *A Self-Conducted Walking Tour*, by the P.A. Historical Society, 1).

4 The Cairns

– The large cairn was erected by the P.A. Historical Society in 1922 to commemorate the arrival of Mary and James Nisbet and their party. Nisbet and his co-workers, John McKay and George Flett arrived on or near this spot, at 8:00 am, on July 26, 1866. The site chosen for the settlement was known as *kista-pinnanick* in Cree, and was a meeting place for local Aboriginal people.

5 The Red River Cart

– Is an ingenious piece of prairie technology. Its total wood construction made it easy to repair in the middle of a long journey far from any settlement. No grease was ever applied to any moving part, making the journey across the plains a noisy undertaking. The carts were also used to ford streams and rivers. At a river crossing the carts would be unloaded and the wheels taken off and lashed together. Four poplar tree poles would be lashed to the wheels forming a quadrangle over which greased or green buffalo hide would be bound. After being in the water for a while the cart would become watertight allowing for a load to be floated across the river.

6 The Court House (Treston Hall)

– is located on the site that was once home to the Telegraph and Post Office and Treston Hall a place used for public gatherings. On July 19, 1884, Louis Riel spoke to a large crowd there.

7 The Two Bridges

– that span the North Saskatchewan River are the Diefenbaker traffic bridge, completed in 1959, and a train bridge completed in 1909. The centre span of the rail bridge turned allowing large vessels to navigate the river. Riverboats were important because some believed they were the only form of transportation that could rival rail transport and offset the railway's monopolistic position

8 River Street & First Avenue West

– takes us onto what was once known as P.A.'s "bank corner." At the corner of River Street and First Avenue West you will see the red brick triangular shaped Bank of Commerce;

9 Just south you will see the stately structure of the Bank of Ottawa

10 The corner of Tenth Street you will see the red brick structure that housed the Imperial Bank

11 when you walk south, at the Eleventh Street intersection you will see a grey building which was the Bank of Nova Scotia

It later became home of Branch #2 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

12 The Prince Albert Hotel

– was located on the site where the National Hotel now stands. The Prince Albert Hotel was a large three story structure that was built during the days of the lumber boom. The P.A. Hotel, along with five other wooden built hotels would house lumberjacks who came to town when work in the bush was impossible because of weather.

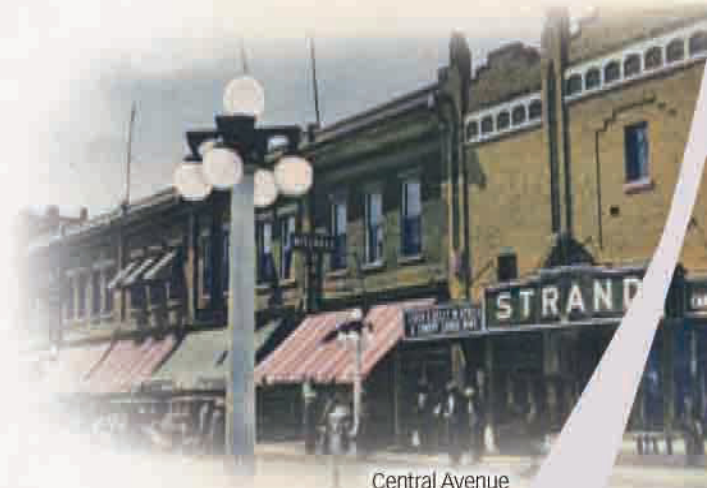
13 The A&W Restaurant

– is an unsuspecting but important historic site because it is the place Nisbet, a trained carpenter built the first Church and school house in 1867. The original church and school are now located at the northwest corner of Kinsmen Park. (at the corner of 22nd Street West and 1st Avenue).

This site was also the home of the Empress Hotel, one of "the places" to stay in Prince Albert. On November 19, 1952 the Empress Hotel was the site of the formation of an unusual political movement. One hundred people from across the political spectrum came together to form an election committee that would support John G. Diefenbaker for many years.

14 The Empress Theatre

– was located beside the grey building that was once the Bank of Nova Scotia and is now occupied by an automotive repair shop. The Theatre was renowned for its stage performances. It was partially destroyed by fire in the early 1920's but was rebuilt. Road shows, concerts and plays from New York and major European cities entertained on stage at the Empress. Boris Karloff was in the employ of the Empress at an early stage in his career. The owner of the Theatre, Nelson Morton boasted that the Empress was "Saskatchewan's finest play house."



Central Avenue



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church

15 The Rivercrest Apartments

– are located on the south side of 11 Street across First Avenue West. The building was constructed at the turn of the Twentieth Century, and it housed the Daily Herald Press in the basement. "There were windows at sidewalk level so one could walk along and glance at the paper rolling off the press and typesetters at work." For many years the building was known as the Medical Arts Building and was owned and managed by Dr. Humphrey. One major event that occurred in front of this location annually was the "6-mile Herald Road Race," which started at the front door, went to the west Penitentiary fence and back again.

16 The Old Library

– was originally built for the Prince Albert Men's Club in 1912. The hardship caused by World War I and a downturn in the economy meant decline for the Men's Club, and in 1916 its doors were closed. The building was sold to the Province and it became the Divisional Headquarters for the Provincial Police. In the early 1950's it became the home of the Prince Albert Public Library. It was said to be the only Library in the West with a wine cellar and lock-up.

17 Twelfth Street & Central Avenue, A Four Bank Corner

– At this corner the Prince Albert Land Show Building, which housed the Board of Trade in a grand ornate structure as located where the Bank of Montreal now sits. "Complete with miniature turrets, the building was finished in time for a grand opening on May 24, 1912." (Abrams, *Prince Albert...* 182). Many hoped and believed that with the expected coming of cheap hydroelectric power the Land Show Building could be used to show case P.A. and convince new businesses and industry to locate here. This hoped for promise did not come to pass.

18 St. Paul's Presbyterian Church

– is another grand historic building. This is the fourth Presbyterian Church built in the settlement. The corner stone at the south-east corner of the building was laid in 1906. It is an imposing red brick structure, fashioned in the "Neo-Gothic" style that was popular in last years of Queen Victoria's reign. Two turrets support the south wall, the east turret being almost twice as high as the west one. Three beautifully constructed stain glass windows open up the centre of the south wall. The chair of committee that oversaw construction of the Church building, and was Mayor of P.A. at the time, William Cowan, donated the windows. The windows were made in Toronto then shipped and installed in the new church. The inside of the church sanctuary is constructed in oak, houses a magnificent pipe organ, can seat about 750 people and contains some of Prince Albert's most precious historic items, like Rev. James Nisbet's working diary. The real beauty of this building is inside.

19 Wesley United Church

– was originally Prince Albert's first Methodist congregation The Methodists purchased property at the present location in 1885 and built a wooden clapboard structure that served the congregation for over seventy years. In 1925, a twenty-year conversation and debate was ended with the formation of the United Church of Canada. By 1952 Wesley Church had out grown its small wooden building and the red brick structure that now serves the congregation was dedicated on May 2, 1954.

20 First Baptist Church

– was originally located on the south-west corner of City Hall square, at 11 Street East and Central Avenue. The congregation was formed in 1903, and by 1907 they had built a church and parsonage on their corner lot. The minister of First Baptist from 1909 to 1916, Rev. C.B. Freeman was the father of Olive Diefenbaker. The Diefenbaker's were loyal members of First Baptist. The last service in the original downtown location of First Baptist happened on May 29, 1977. The congregation is presently located at 1351 28 Street East.

21 Adams Stationery Store

– is the oldest business building in this area. It has been the home of a drug store, a jewellery store and its present business. This structure is historically significant because its frontal façade is still original. Much of the glass front is original, including that scaled window domes at the top of the window case. Inside the original metal ceiling tiles are still present and exposed. This building stands as the last original witness to P.A. boom years in the early twentieth century.

22 Ted Matheson's Clothing Store

– is a notable site on Prince Albert's Central Avenue because it is now owned and managed by the third generation of Matheson's. In the store, at the very back you will find a picture of Central Avenue taken around 1912. It shows how grand Central Avenue was in its heyday. As you look around the store you will see old copies of the P.A. *Daily Herald* framed, showing ads almost 70 years old. And, if you ask, someone might show you the receipt book J.G. Diefenbaker signed when he purchased a very expensive vest.

23 Diefenbaker's Law Office

– was located in a three storey brick structure at 1109 Central Avenue (the building abutting Matheson's on the north). It still houses law offices today. For many years the main floor was occupied by Banque Canadienne National.

24 The MacDonald Building 1912

25 The Forest Centre

– was opened in September 2005 on a site that is historically significant and central to the life of this settlement. On this site a red brick Presbyterian Church was built. On what is now the west side of the courtyard, or entrance to the Forest Centre, a large brick, two story mission house or manse was built. In mid-March 1885 the North-West Rebellion was moving towards violence. There was a great deal of fear and anxiety among the settlers. Around the Presbyterian Church and manse a high wall of cordwood was erected, "forming a fort which was to serve as emergency protection for the women and children among nearly 1,000 persons who streamed in during the following week." (Abrams, 78).

It's interesting to note that the present site of the Forest Centre was not only a "Fort of Protection" during the North-West Rebellion, it was also the grave site for the early settlement from 1866 to 1875. In October, 2004, when the Forest Centre was being constructed human remains were found. The remains of 21 people were unearthed, four adults, two juveniles and fifteen infants. The unearthed remains were re-interred in the Presbyterian section of the West Hill Cemetery on October 28, 2005.

26 Memorial Square

– In 1891 the City of P.A. purchased the Presbyterian Church and eastern portion of the church property. The Presbyterians built their third church on what is now the Forest Centre parking lot (formerly 11th Street and Avenue B). The City took down the second church building and constructed Central Avenue through the property. In 1893 the Town Hall was completed at a cost of just over \$13,000.

27 The "old City Hall" is now the Arts Centre.

The council chamber was two stories with a balcony. It was used for operas, concerts and large meetings. By the late 1960's the building was too small to accommodate the civic administration so it was moved to a different building. In 1985, after a heated debate whether the present property should be preserved for its history or developed for commercial use the present City Hall was opened. It was in this square that the City Band entertained citizens from the band stand on Thursday evenings.

28 North on Central Avenue

– and just north of the Arts Centre the public horse trough and drinking fountain were located.

29 The Prince Albert Daily Herald

– has served the community for well over 100 years. The Herald traces its roots back to the Prince Albert Advocate which begun in 1894 as one of several daily newspapers serving the community at the time.

30 Japan Karate Dojo

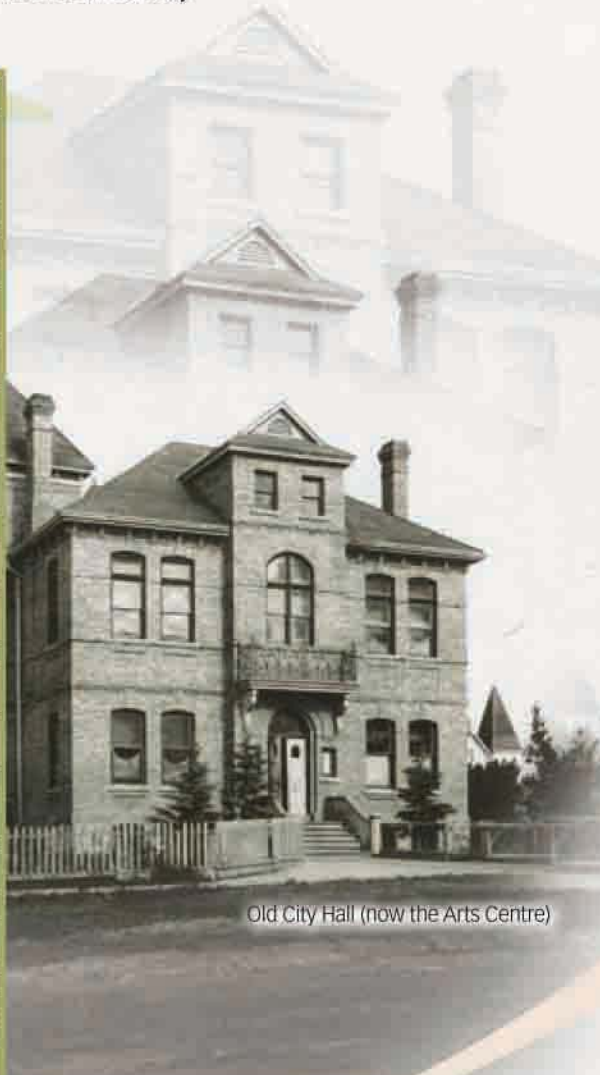
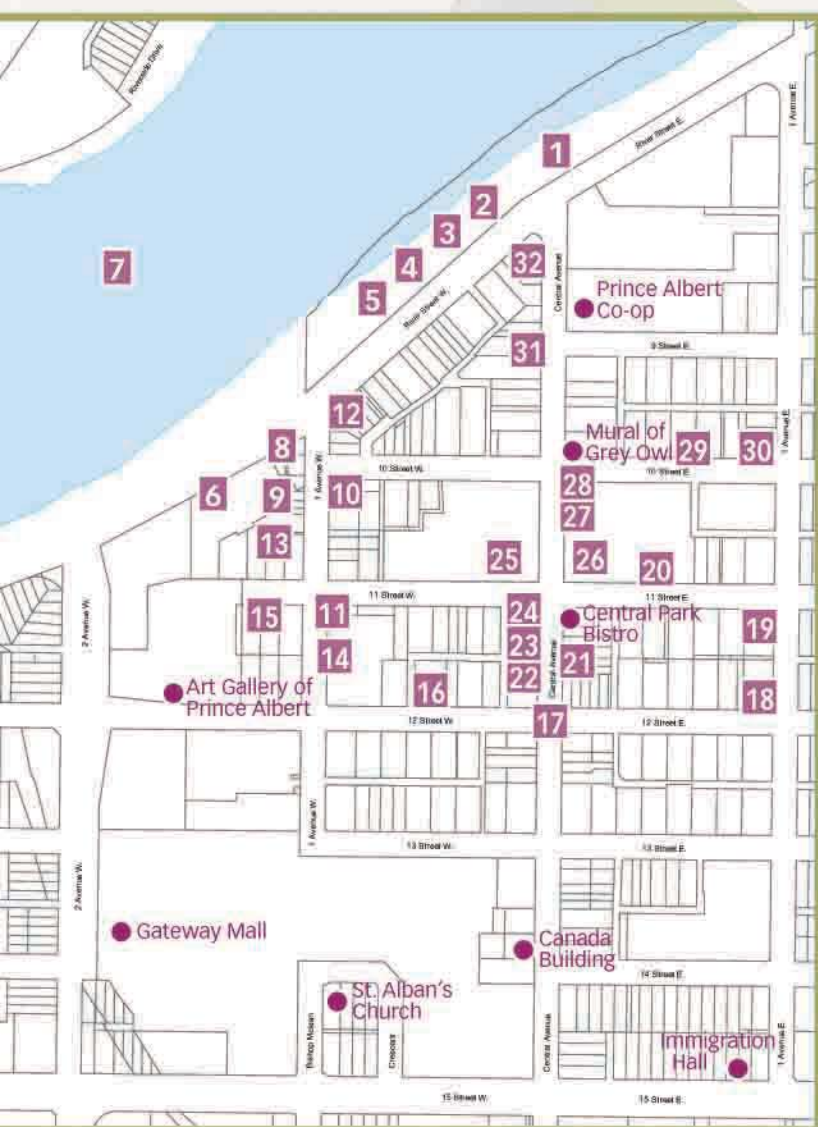
The building was originally erected as a synagogue, which was home to the religious and social life of P.A.'s Jewish community for many years.

31 "Strand Theatre"

The original building was burned and the new one finished with an ornate and pleasing interior in the early 1930's." It was an attractive theatre and concert hall.

32 The Mission House

– Having taken the journey through Prince Albert's historic settlement we arrive back on the southwest corner of Central Avenue, and we come up against the dream of what Nisbet and others hoped this community might become. On this spot, in 1867 Rev. James Nisbet built the "Mission House,"



Old City Hall (now the Arts Centre)