



# MILESTONES

Lansdowne's Significant Historical Themes and Events



A Project of the Lansdowne Heritage Committee

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On the cover: Arden Train Station, ca. 1900.

# Lansdowne Milestones

**T**HE R.M. OF LANDOWNE has a fascinating and important history. Beginning in the late 1870s, when the first settlers began trickling in, leading to our incorporation as a Municipality in 1884, and up to the present, we have been an industrious, productive and vibrant community.

This booklet will help anyone, residents and visitors alike, to appreciate the basic contours of our past. Sections on various themes, noting key events, dates and personalities, will enrich an exploration of our past, and bring to life our proud heritage – the rich and busy life that has defined us for more than a century.

The following essential historical themes contain this story:

- Community Context
- Community Development
- Government Development
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Commercial Development
- Manufacturing and Industry
- Spiritual Life
- Education
- Health Care
- Culture and Recreation

We trust that this booklet will inform and inspire, suggesting the rich pageant that has been our community's story. We leave readers with this thought, which has inspired us as we developed this project.

Life must be lived forward, but it can only be understood backward.

- Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Community Context

The archival photograph of Arden from the early 20th century suggests the historic nature of that town. Photo from the Archives of Manitoba.



# Lansdowne Milestones

## Community Development

The R.M. of Lansdowne is located on the Carleton Trail and thus the area was well known to travellers using that route to get from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice or beyond to Fort Carlton and Fort Edmonton. In 1872, a small depot was built on the current site of Arden – first used as a base for supplies for survey parties and later occupied by the North West Mounted Police. As western Manitoba was gradually opened for settlement, this area had its first settlers in the mid 1870s, mostly from Ontario and Britain.

As settlers began claiming homesteads identifiable communities appeared, generally centred around a post office and perhaps a school, began to appear. These were not villages but may have had a store. The first notable example was the Salisbury region, where William Millar and his family, who arrived in 1877, established a stopping house, Post Office and store, which served the neighbourhood and travellers on the Carleton Trail. The Mekiwin District was also well populated by 1878.

As early as 1879, school classes were organized, with the first schools building erected in the Salisbury and Mekiwin (Ayr School) in 1883.

In 1884, the R.M. of Lansdowne was formed. The origin of the Village of Arden can also be traced to that year as the Arden Post Office was established and the railway arrived. Commercial enterprises soon followed.

By 1890, Arden was a thriving commercial centre with a full range of services. Throughout the municipality smaller service centres were established as branch lines were built and additional railway station locations were selected. The hamlet of Berton, later re-named Helston, was located on the new Hallboro-Muir C.N.R. branch completed in 1901. Keyes General Store and Post Office was established on the eastern edge of the Municipality in 1896 and a small village grew. Tenby was the other small commercial centre in the Municipality, established when the line from Gladstone to Dauphin came through in the late 1890s.

As the railway spurred the growth of these villages, communities also retained their identity with schools, churches and post offices as focal points. The Salisbury, Mekiwin, Glenholm, Jordan, Orange Ridge and Purple Ridge communities, in particular, retain some of that identity to this day.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Government Development

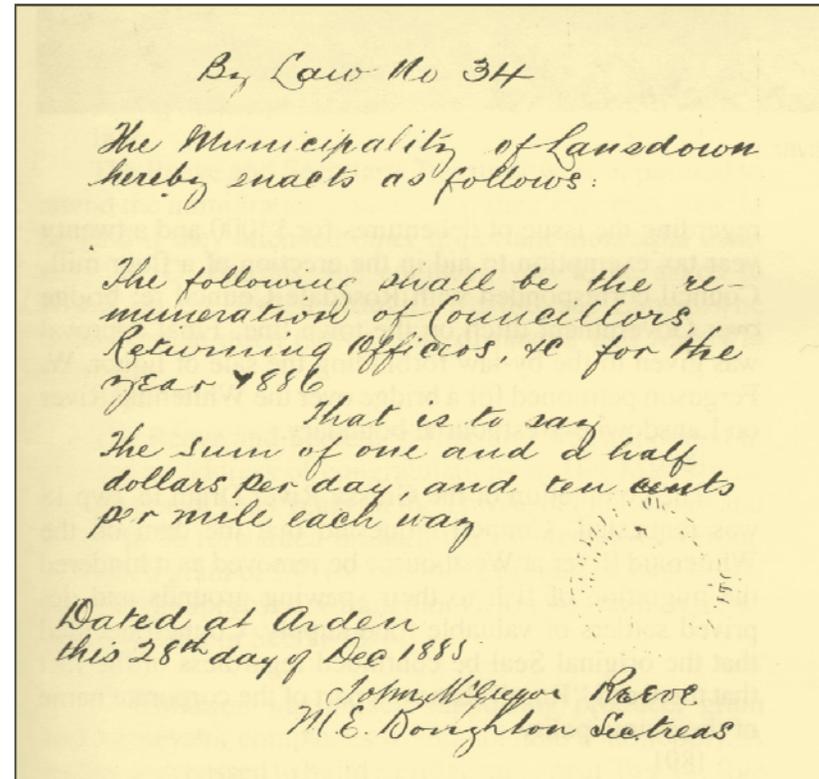
The public administration of the region was established with the incorporation in 1883 of the Rural Municipality of Lansdowne. The name was given by the Municipal Act. D. Bruce Sealey, a native of the municipality and later a faculty member of the U. of M., suggested that it was named after Lord Lansdowne, Governor-General of Canada.

The first Councillors were: D. J. Gerow, Robert Riddle, James Crawford, Samuel McGorman, Duncan McKellar and William Babcock.

The inaugural meeting of Lansdowne Municipality was held in Salisbury Church, a log building, on SW 31-15-14 Jan. 8, 1884. A by-law was passed stating that the Seal of the Municipality be a Yoke of Oxen, Man and Plow, with the words "Industry is Wealth" for the motto; the words "Municipality of Lansdowne 1884" around the edge; and that the Interim seal be the word "Industry" crossed by the word "wealth".

Council met again on two consecutive days, Jan. 25 and 26 at the Samuel McGorman residence (S 22-16-14) in Orange Ridge.

By-laws were passed to hire M. E. Boughton as returning officer and secretary-treasurer and John E. Hedderley as assessor.



A sample of the handwriting of Mr. E. Boughton.

It was nearly two decades the R.M. built its "permanent" quarters on Arden's Main Street. It was the first building constructed by the Cement Block Co. The gravel excavated from the basement was used to make the blocks. It continues its service today.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Public Services

### Postal Services

Communities incorporate to provide a structure within which those public services, which are best provided by local governments can be tailored to suit the needs of the citizens.

One service already in place was the Postal Service, managed then, as it is now, by the Federal Government. Settlers in a new region, when population warranted, applied for a Post Office. These are often at first operated out of private residences or small rural general stores.

The first Post Office in what is now the R.M. of Lansdowne was granted to William Millar in 1879, who because of his location on the Carleton Trail, found it worthwhile to have his home serve as a stopping place. He later expanded that operation to include a general store.

Other Post Offices soon opened as settlers arrived; Mekiwin, to the south in 1880, and Orange Ridge to the north in 1883.

The Village of Arden was formed in 1884 and applied for a Post office in 1884 and the communities of Florenta, Glenholm, Keyes, Tenby, Purple Ridge, Berton, received service as they were settled.

### Municipal Services

The first acts of Local Governments were generally to provide for an array additional services.

At an early meeting of the Lansdowne Council by-laws were passed to appoint roadmasters, fence-viewers, poundkeepers, and constables; establish statute labour; list the duties of poundkeepers and fence-viewers; set up laws regarding breachy animals, animals running at large and animals having diseases; regulate formation and readjustment of school districts; regulate the cutting of certain weeds harmful to agriculture; prevent and remove nuisances; prevent immorality.

They were busy indeed.

### Telephone Services

Rural communities were eager to improve services in communication and transportation as technology supplied the means.

The telephone was one example. It was a service nearly everyone wanted but there was often dispute about how to provide it.

In 1903, by-law was drawn up respecting telephone lines, but in 1906, a Public vote to operate a Municipal owned Telephone System was not approved by ratepayers. Before long however services were established in Arden, and by 1912, lines were being installed in smaller centres such as installed in Berton.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Transportation

### The Carleton Trail

Like many other parts of the great west, the area which was to become the Rural Municipality of Lansdowne, depended on the Old Trail for its communication. It was the main route by which settlers got from here to there, to bring in supplies and to transport produce.

From Fort Garry, the Trail followed a westward course to Portage la Prairie, and on to Westbourne (First Crossing). Veering to the west it passed close to Woodside (Second Crossing) and Gladstone (Palestine or Third Crossing). In doing so it crossed the White Mud River three times.

It reached the present boundary of Lansdowne just north of Keyes, on Sec. 1, Tp. 15, R. 13W. From here the course was west for four miles, then dipping southwest for a mile to the White Mud River; west again to Arden Ridge. From here it followed the course of the river northwest to a point just north of the village of Arden. From here it was again due west, leaving Lansdowne on 19-15-14. It crossed the present No. 5 Highway three miles north of Neepawa, west to Minnedosa (Tanner's Crossing), and on to Fort Ellice and the far west.

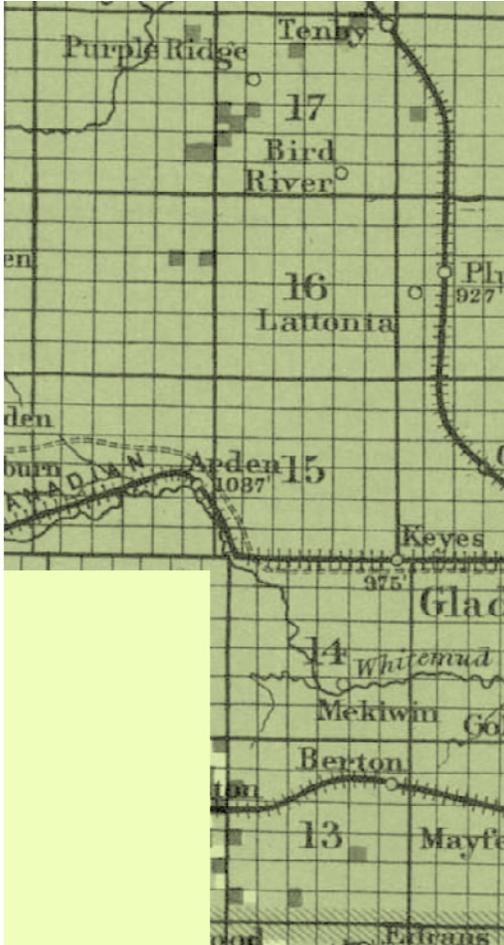
It was the era of the Red River cart, that two-wheeled conveyance made entirely of wood; not a nail, not a bit of iron in it. Propelled by ox or pony over rough trails, the screech from the grinding wheels of this contraption, like the wail of the banshee, could be heard for long distances. But it served the purpose, getting many people to their ultimate destinations, albeit somewhat slow.

Much has been written of the Old Trail. Even *Lizzie* McFadden, 14 years old, kept a diary on a trip which her family made from Fort Garry to Carleton in 1879, a trip lasting fifty-four days. Her observations on one day's travel are of interest. "Saturday, July 12. Started at 5 o'clock in the morning and made 7 miles by 9 o'clock. Camped and fed the horses at High Bluff. Saw the Orangemen pass on their way to Portage la Prairie. Started again at 12 o'clock; had good roads, then we had to double over a mud hole; then had good roads all the way to Portage. Arrived there at 7 p.m. looks like rain. Mosquitoes nearly ate us up. As soon as we got there I went to buy some bread. It was four loaves for 25 cents."

With the completion of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 and the building of branch lines in 1890, freighting over parts of the Old trail ceased, and general traffic degenerated into short distance hauling where the Trail happened to lead from new towns to the homes of ranchers and farmers. Municipal roads were built, fences erected, and traffic left the old trails for new roads. But even today, close to bluffs where cultivation has not destroyed the evidence, there are signs of ruts made by the wheels of those old carts as they rumbled westward.

## The Railway

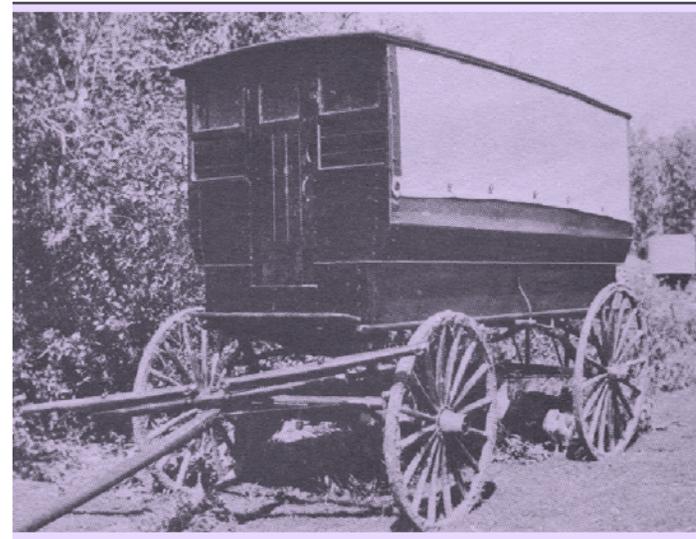
By 1900, Lansdowne well served by rail as two lines crossed the municipality east to west and one pushed northwards just outside the eastern boundary.



## Roads

Horses were the major form of transportation for many years, and each side of Main Street was lined with hitching rails. The age of the horse was marked for extinction when the first automobile arrived in town, but in rural areas, especially in winter the dependable horse still had its role to play for some time.

While the car was fast, it took rural municipalities some time to develop and maintain a system of dependable roads. Until the World War II era, roads were often impassable in winter, and cars were often parked in favour of various horse-drawn vehicles for the coldest months. Even in summer the horse drawn vehicle had the advantage of not requiring a graded road.



The horse-powered school van was common site well into the automobile era.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Commercial Development

The HENDERSON'S DIRECTORY from 1894 provided this snapshot of the community of Arden, Lansdowne's major commercial centre:

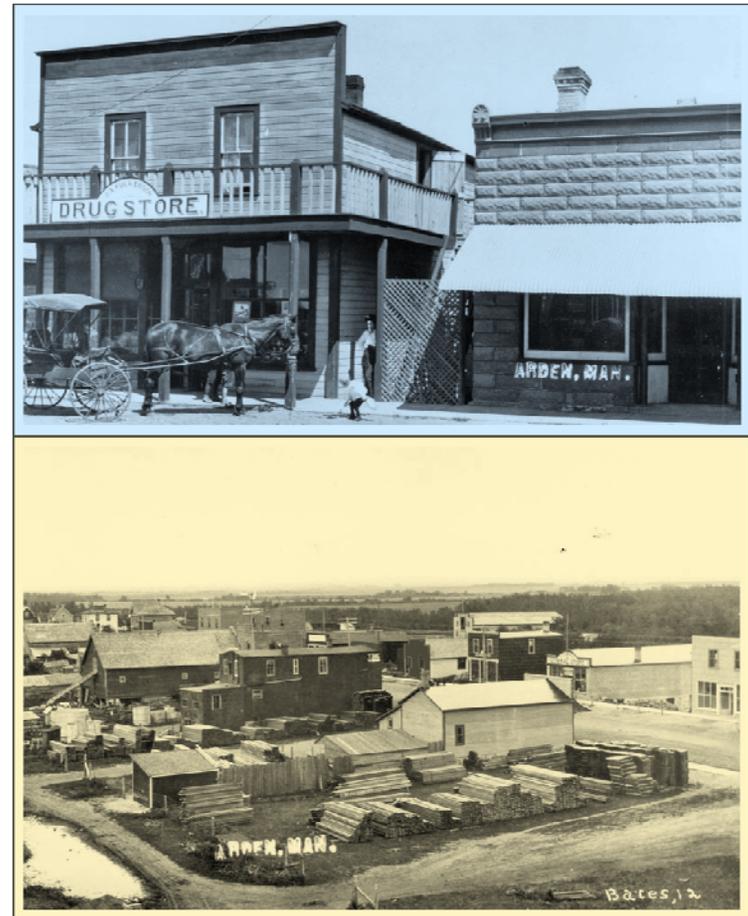
### Arden

Mails three times a week each way on every train; telegraph and express offices; has 2 grain warehouses; 135 bbl. roller flour mill. .... Pop. 150. Anderson, T. G., gen. store; Boughton, M. E., postmaster; Boughton, M. E. & Co., gen. store; Burlington, J. C., contractor; Clarke, W. T., grain buyer; Davidson, M.D.; Earngey, J., blacksmith; Jackson, Geo., butcher; Lamb, Robt, stone mason; McCamis, H. D., of M. E. Boughton & Co; McLean & Armstrong, blacksmiths; McRae, Duncan, livery; Manitoba & N. W. Ry. Co. of Can., J. W. Graham, Agent; Moore & McFarlane, millers; Renwick, Wm., hardware; Roe, J. W., cattle dealer; Snelgrove, Mrs. M., gen. store; Van Blaricom, B., implements; Wade, George, butcher.

The Northern Bank was the first financial institution to serve Arden. It is not certain how long this bank operated; but later, not long after the turn of the century, the old Union Bank, later to be absorbed by the Royal, also had a branch in Arden.

*From "The Lansdowne Story"*

It is quite evident that Arden was a prosperous trading centre with an enterprising group of business men. This was particularly the case for many years, in fact, until the coming of the motor car and the building of better roads. A hotel served the village for many years but was torn down.



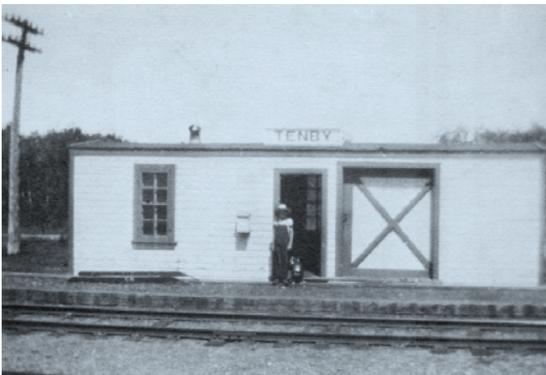
Photos from the Archives of Manitoba

## Keyes General Store and Post Office

The store was opened in 1896 by Galloway Bros, of Gladstone and later sold to Will Keyes. The Post Office was not incorporated with the store till after WWI. Many farmers and neighbours would gather around the big stove in the middle of the store for a friendly chit chat. Through the years many people owned or managed the store. Mr. Will Keyes died in 1905, and the store saw a succession of owners until it closed in the late 1960s.

## The Village of Tenby

The General Store was one of the first business places in Tenby. Tenenbein and Donen were two of the first merchants. There were many more later on. The Blacksmith Shop was behind the store. It was owned and operated by Adam Ursel and sons and was a great asset to many farmers. The Post Office was a separate building, the first postmaster being James Griffiths. Later Karl Siegal was postmaster; he built caskets for many years.



Tenby Station

John Hresavich operated "Star Printing". He had two or more printing presses and made posters and letter heads, etc. at their home.

The Joseph family had the livery barn and their home was also the rooming house for train passengers.

Jim Pratt was the radio repair man. He also sold radios (battery of course). He got his trade by a correspondence course taken at home.

The C.N.R. had a two room station — one baggage room and one passenger waiting room. There were also stockyards, a loading platform, a water tank, section foreman's home, a tool shed and a bunk house for men.

The U.G.G. was the first elevator, operating from 1915 to 1976. There was an agent's home. The school teacher usually boarded there. Cargill remodelled the elevator and opened for business in 1977.



Tenby Store

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Manufacturing and Industry

### Flour Mill

In the early 1890's, a flour mill was built in Arden which developed a large trade in flour, bran shorts and chopped feeds. It was run by Moore and McFarlane, Millers. People from all over the municipality brought their grain to be milled. The mill was completely destroyed by fire in July 1908.

### Cheese Factory

Also in the 1890's, Lansdowne had a cheese factory located in the Orange Ridge district, equipped with modern machinery and capable of producing nine hundred pounds of cheese a day. The company went out of the cheese business and turned to butter making. Frank Harper was the cheese maker and Chester Walker turned out the butter. By 1905, the factory had ceased operations.

### Lumber Mills

Two lumber mills operated in the Mekiwin district of the municipality at two different periods. William Bryce was the owner of the first one, which was built by James Milne on the river east of the J. R. Stewart place. Many difficulties were experienced in getting the machinery from Ontario where it had been purchased, only to have the mill carried away by a heavy run-off when the White Mud flooded within a year or so.

Some time later, another mill was put into operation at Bjurlings and gave much-needed services to the settlers. It was operated for a time by Robert Hunter, one of the early pioneers of the Union district, east of Neepawa. There was still another mill on the Adam McKenzie land south of the Bjurlings in the hills. Duncan McLaren and his son John operated this one, having previously filed on homesteads in the area. In the north, residents made use of lumber mills in the Riding Mountains over the years.

### Arden Gravel

The quality of the Arden Ridge gravel brought it into wide demand, both within and outside the province. It has been used for cement blocks in building, for highways and roads, for bridges, and for many other projects demanding first class gravel. The big bridge over the Saskatchewan River at Nipawin is an example of the widespread popularity of the Arden Ridge product. It is still being trucked away in large quantities to fill an ever-increasing demand.

In the early days the C.P.R. had pits along the west side of its right-of-way south of the village. This was serviced by a short spur. About 1910 another spur was built about two miles south of Arden. In about 1927, when the C.P.R. ran another spur north of Arden on the east side of the track. This spur crossed the Salisbury road and took gravel from a pit about a half mile long and handled by a drag line.

*Adapted from "The Lansdowne Story"*

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Spiritual Life

Like all pioneer communities in Western Canada, the settlers of the Lansdowne area, once they had provided food and shelter, set up places and worship.

First church service held in Arden, Methodist, was conducted in Mr. Boughton's kitchen. Their first Arden church was built in 1889, and Churches were also built at Glenholm, Salisbury, Winchester and Orange Ridge.

In fact, the inaugural meeting of Lansdowne Municipality was held in Salisbury Church, a log building, on SW 31-15-14 Jan. 8, 1884.

The Arden Presbyterian Church was built in 1893. The Ladies Aid had been organized the year before and they bought the church pews, the pulpit and chairs, and the communion service. Members met at the various homes and raised money by Scotch socials and supper and tea meetings.

In 1901, the field in this charge was Arden, Oakdale and Ridgeview. Oakdale Church was to the southwest of Arden. Ridgeview services were held in the school. Another Presbyterian Church was built at Keyes in 1900, but the congregation had met at the school as early as 1883.

The first Anglican Services held in Arden took place in 1883.

Later they rented space in the Methodist church until their church was built in 1902. The Church of the Ascension opened with Rev, G.T. Spriggs as Rector and closed in 1976. The original bell has been placed in a monument commemorating the Church.

Another Anglican Church, St. Helen's, was built near the Florence School.

The Mennonite church was built in 1942.

Although Church Union took place in Canada in 1925, it was in 1927 when the Methodists and Presbyterians united in Lansdowne.



Inaugural Session of the United Church, 1927

*Adapted from "The Lansdowne Story"*

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Education

In 1879, the first school classes were held in the Rose Ridge area, east of present-day Arden, in the home of Thomas Dunning.

### Schools in Lansdowne

Salisbury #127 (1882 – 1966)

Ayr #150 (1884 – 1962)

Arden #341 (1884 – 2001)

Florence # 203 (1884 – 1960)

Glenholm School #208 (1884 – 1968)

The Plains #340 (1889 – 1919)

Orange Ridge (Originally Brydges) #576 (1889 – 1968)

Twyford #663 (1892 – 1951)

Winchester #706 (1893 – 1967)

Oak Leaf 745 (1893 – 1968)

Ivanhoe # 764 (1893 – 1967)

Molesworth #765 (1895 – 1968)

Tenby #872 (1896 – 1968)

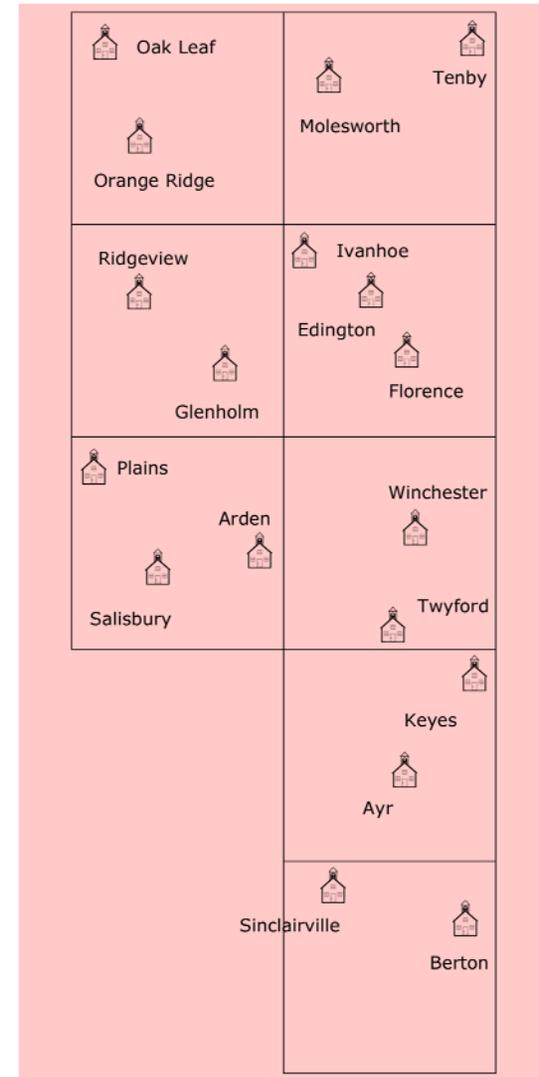
Ridgeview #883 (1896 – 1921)

Edington #933 (1898 – 1955)

Keyes #1068 (1900 – 1967)

Berton #1912 (1917 – 1967)

Sinclairville #2063 (1921 -1966)



In 1919 several school districts were dissolved or re-adjusted to suit the Consolidated School System.

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Health Care

### A Country Doctor

**Dr. John Gahan** was a native of Ireland, an honor graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and a graduate in medicine from the Manitoba Medical School. He came to Arden in 1894.

During his student days he taught school, spending one year in Glenholm. After graduation he settled in Arden where he practiced his profession for many years. His was the era of the "horse and buggy doctor" and the problem of getting around over a wide area was an arduous one, particularly in winter and when the creeks were in flood. Since antibiotics were not in general use, diphtheria, scarlet fever and typhoid presented difficult handicaps. In later years he often recalled his earlier problems, and spoke with satisfaction of the scientific advances which had been made in medicine.

He was a student of English literature and was well known for his translations of Latin, Greek and French. He often spoke fondly of his native Ireland, her lakes and dells, and her green hills.

### A Pioneer Nurse

James McCreery, who married Margaret Hockin, lived in the Twyford district. During the disastrous influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919, Mrs. McCreery and her daughter, Elizabeth, travelled for miles on snowshoes to nurse patients in dire need of help, regardless of danger or hardship to themselves. The doctors were overworked and couldn't begin to cope with the need for medical attention.

Many patients owed their lives to the McCreery mother and daughter. Mrs. McCreery was herself stricken with the flu but recovered.

As Lansdowne had no towns large enough to justify a hospital, the Municipality provided Health Care through the appointment of Health Officers and support of the nearby Neepawa Hospital, adapting a time that had changed.

### Items from Minutes of the Lansdowne Council:

1902: Dr. Gahan appointed health officer of 1902. Each councillor was requested to hold one meeting in his ward to discuss the Neepawa Hospital.

1903: A grant of \$1000 was to be paid over two years towards the construction of Neepawa Hospital.

1924: Council hired a permanent Health Officer with assistance from the Village of Arden and dispensed with the service of a nurse.

*Adapted from "The Lansdowne Story"*

# Lansdowne Milestones

## Culture and Recreation

### Sports in the early days

Long before the advent of automobiles, radios, telephones, moving pictures, and television, those seeking entertainment had to depend on their own ingenuity.

There was boating on the river in summer. Tennis was popular as well as baseball and soccer. Winter sports and entertainment included skating, hockey and curling on the river. The first skates were known as “spring” skates, which clamped over the edges of the soles of an ordinary pair of boots. Hockey sticks were fashioned out of saplings a couple of inches in diameter and with a convenient knob or curve at the root end.

In carrying on the roarin' game of curling the early settlers again had to resort to their imagination and ingenuity. They made their own, usually out of an oak block sawn to approximate the size of a curling rock. The handle would be a peg driven into the top of the rock, or a bent spike used in the same way.

### The Arden Rinks

In 1919, Arden residences raised funds for a one-sheet curling rink, which was expanded to 2 sheets in 1927. In 1950, plans

were made for a new 2-sheet curling rink with an outdoor skating facility. A more modern 3-sheet facility was completed in 1992.

### Baseball

About 1903, the Shamrocks a baseball team based in the Salisbury area was dominant. Arden itself was reported to have a “high-class” ball club in 1908. Ladies baseball was popular, a good photo from the Lansdowne History show the Florence Ladies Ball Team from 1911. The Arden ladies had a successful team in the years around 1916.

The tradition of excellence in baseball continued through the decades with Arden’s High School team progressing through Division and Zone Championships to reach the Provincials in 1963.



The Salisbury Shamrocks

## Entertainment and Social Life

Then, as now, dancing was a popular pastime, although the facilities were meager. Following a pre-arranged time and place, a group would gather at the home of one of their number. Come early and stay late, was the watchword. And here, to the music of a mouth-organ and a "fiddle," or, on rare occasions, to a small foot-and hand-manipulated organ, they would dance the night away. Parents with young children brought them along too. They would be deposited in the bedroom where they would usually sleep the night away, oblivious to the hilarity being carried on close to them. Piles of good home-baked bread, cookies and pots of tea or coffee would be demolished. By daybreak, or close to it, the party would disperse, with much laughter and cries of "It's been a grand party! We'll see you all next month at Mary and John's." What a neighborly atmosphere.

A popular pastime was the box social, as a means of pure enjoyment as well as a money making scheme for some particular charity. There was usually a program of some sort, a whist drive or a local talent show. The evening would end with a lunch, provided by the ladies, each of whom was expected to bring a box filled with goodies. But a spirit of good-natured intrigue entered into it as well. The unmarried girls would, blushing, let the particular boy friend have a very broad hint as to the identity of her lunch basket. And, of course, he would be expected to buy it. But, via the old-fashioned grape-vine, two or three other boys would also learn or suspect its identity; whereupon

the bidding would become very brisk and many of the boxes would be sold for exorbitant prices. Which was all to the good as far as the promoters of the social were concerned. And Heaven help the devoted swain who failed to buy his girl friend's contribution. They must have had "dog-houses" even in those days!



Glenholm Choir – early 1900s.

*Adapted from "The Lansdowne Story"*