

MANDAN

The City of Mandan was founded in 1879 and became the Morton County Seat in 1881. Mandan has a rich heritage, first as a village for the Mandan tribe, then a cavalry fort, railroad town and hub for area ranchers and farmers. Mandan was established as the center for western expansion of the railroad. In 1883, a railroad bridge spanning the mighty Missouri River linked the east and west.

Located across the Missouri River from Bismarck, the city was named after the Mandan Indians, who had established a village at the confluence of the Missouri and Heart Rivers in the 1500s. The Mandan resettled to the north two hundred years later after a smallpox epidemic significantly reduced their population.

In 1872, a military post was established at the same location as the Mandan village. Originally called Fort McKeen, the post was renamed Fort Abraham Lincoln later that same year. Fort Abraham Lincoln was home to the 7th Cavalry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and the starting point of the Custer Trail.



NDSU Institute for Regional Studies

1890s view of the stern wheel steamboat Abner O'Neal while docked at Mandan, N.D. View taken from a nearby bluff, with the Missouri River in the background.

Photo credit: Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (59.1.9)



This 1900 view of Mandan shows residences in the foreground, many of which boast windmills in their yards. The Morton County Courthouse is visible on top of a distant hill. The Mandan High School and the steeple of St. Joseph Catholic Church are also visible.

Photo courtesy of The State Historical Society of North Dakota



This 1909 wide angle panorama was taken from the top of railway cars parked in railyards. The two story depot with covered area faces towards the railyard with people milling around and cars with lumber stacks are waiting to be hooked to trains.

Photo courtesy of the State Historical Society of North Dakota



This real photo postcard offers a view of the cars and businesses on Main Street, looking east in 1923. Visible are the Red Trail Pool Hall, Hotel Lewis and Clark, a drug store, cafes, and the Cummins Company Department Store.

Photo courtesy of The State Historical Society of North Dakota



The "Sunken Garden" parking lot at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. Circa 1940.

Photo courtesy of the North Dakota Department of Transportation



The Heart River Bridge on the west side of Mandan during the flood of March 1948.
Photo courtesy of the North Dakota Department of Transportation



View of Main Street with its storefronts visible into the distance. The building on the left is the Lewis & Clark Hotel.
Photo courtesy of The State Historical Society of North Dakota