

## RICHARDTON

The Northern Pacific Railway established a station called Spring Valley in 1881 where Richardton stands today. In 1882 Oscar L. Richards of the C. P. Richards Company of New York decided to buy the land and plat a town on the Spring Valley site. The C. P. Richards Company were passenger agents for the Hamburg-American Steamship Lines, and they hoped to settle their new town with immigrants from Germany.

The town was platted by the Northern Pacific and Richards in 1883 and renamed Richardton. Then occurred the first event which helped make Richardton unique — prefabricated houses! In 1883 Richards and Company decided to attract immigrants by building the town and inviting them to settle in and near it, rather than letting the settlers build the town after arriving. Richards shipped in two stores, a church, a school, a hotel and 12 houses, all pre-cut and ready to erect. They were painted green with red roofs, a fact referred to often in correspondence of early residents and visitors.

By December of 1883 Richardton was doing brisk business in the area, serving as a distribution point for rail shipments for settlers north and south of the village. In its December 28, 1882 edition, The Dickinson Press reported “Richardton is a new place offering superior advantages to the settler and the business man.” And settlers and businessmen did come.



State Historical Society of North Dakota

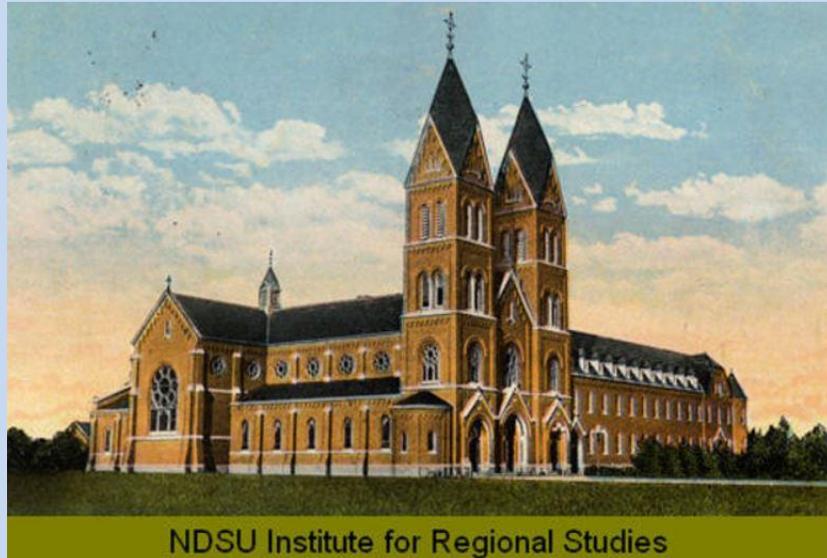
A group of men, women, and children have disembarked from a train and sit in wagons in Richardton, waiting to travel to their new land in southwestern North Dakota. Circa 1900-1910.

Photo credit: State Historical Society of North Dakota (00090-0397)

During the 1890's Richardton began to grow, due mostly to the migrations of Germans from Russia and from the Austria-Hungarian Empire. These two distinctly different groups of Germans, mostly Roman Catholic, formed the largest group of settlers in the Richardton area.

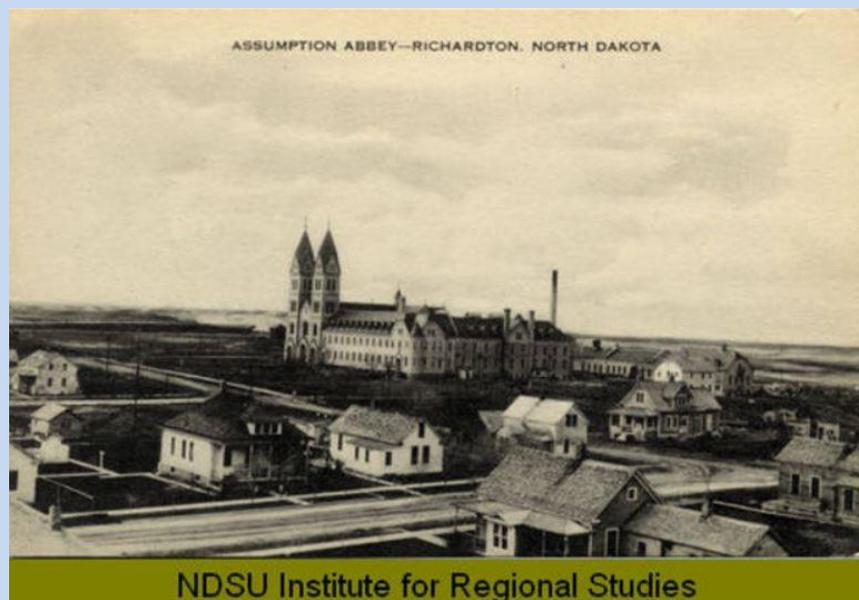
Richardton continued to take on its predominantly Catholic features with the establishment of North Dakota's only Benedictine monastery there in 1899. In 1906, the cornerstone was laid for Richardton's most prominent landmark – the twin-towered "Cathedral of the Prairies" which was to serve the needs of both the Benedictine monks and St. Mary's Parish for decades afterwards.

*Source: Stark County Heritage and Destiny.*



Assumption Abbey Benedictine Monastery-1922

Photo credit: Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (2000.418.16)



This real photo postcard offers an elevated view of abbey in distance with houses in foreground.

Photo credit: Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (2000.418.2)



B Street in Richardton looking north to U.S. Highway 10 in 1941.  
Photo courtesy of the North Dakota Department of Transportation



B Street in Richardton looking south from U.S. Highway 10 in 1941.  
Photo courtesy of the North Dakota Department of Transportation



Many businesses operated along North Avenue in Richardton in 1960. On the right are a SuperValu store, Richardton Motor Sales, the Roxy, Chuck's Bar, a cafe at the intersection with Main Street, and a meat market.

Photo credit: State Historical Society of North Dakota (2012-P-035-0035)