

MORRISON COUNTY

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

The topographical landscape of Morrison County, Minnesota is the key to the success of a wide variety of businesses and industries throughout its history. The Mississippi River runs through the center of the county and was harnessed by early settlers for its power. Little Falls, the county seat, straddles the river and is the most populated city in the county. Other geographical features of the county are praised in Nichols' Headlight, "A journal of progress and development devoted to the interests of railroads and railroad centers", published in November, 1899.

Following a brief description of northeastern Minnesota's bounty, Nichols' Headlight glowingly states:

"To the west and southwest of these forests and mines lie the great fertile plains which have become the wonder and admiration of the world. But of all the vast area, in natural resources, Morrison County stands unsurpassed. Its climate is perfect, its surface mildly undulating, and while for the width of two or three miles along the track of the Northern Pacific Railway, the soil is light and sandy, throughout the county as a whole, it is most fertile. Fully three-fourths of it has been heavily wooded, the trees being of many kinds, sugar maple and oak predominating."

It is no wonder that agricultural pursuits and logging were primary industries in the early years of Morrison County's history. Fur trading was also popular when Morrison County was young and its wilderness was yet to be tamed.

In order to accommodate the needs of a growing population, which was attracted to Morrison County by its beautifully diverse landscape, a wide variety of businesses and industries sprung to life. Some of these have

survived to the present time, while many have succumbed to the onward march of societal change.

Listed below are examples of businesses and industries from the past in Morrison County, of which few remain:

PAST

- ~Logging
- ~Agriculture/Farming
- ~Creameries
- ~Fur Trading
- ~Grain Elevators & Feed Mills
- ~Milling (Flour & Lumber)
- ~Brewery
- ~Mercantiles (Dry Goods & General Merchandise)
- ~Black Smithing
- ~Brick Manufacturing
- ~Granite Quarrying
- ~Sash & Door Factory
- ~Iron Works
- ~Sleigh Manufacturing
- ~Carriage Manufacturing
- ~Harness & Saddlery Manufacturing
- ~Cigar Factory
- ~Livery
- ~Millinery Shops
- ~Confectionary (Candies & Ice Cream)
- ~Wild Ricing
- ~Little Falls Business College & School of Penmanship & Shorthand
- ~Agricultural Implement Dealers
- ~Land Agents/Developers
- ~Paper Mill
- ~Headwear Manufacturing

PRESENT

Morrison County's past also saw its share of professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, clergy, insurance agents, photographers, and bankers. There were also plenty of hotel and restaurant owners and retailers. These careers are part of the present economic scene, as are the following:

- ~Tourism
- ~Agriculture/Farming
- ~Boat Manufacturing
- ~Granite Finishing
- ~Machining/Metal Working
- ~Snow Plow Manufacturing
- ~Hospital
- ~Mail Distribution
- ~Agricultural Implement Dealers
- ~Plastics Production
- ~Grocery Stores
- ~Automobile Dealers & Repair
- ~Milk Product Processing
- ~Printing
- ~Woodworking Shops
- ~Landscaping/Greenhouses
- ~Seafood Processing
- ~Camp Ripley (Military & Law Enforcement Training Center)
- ~Airport
- ~Building Construction
- ~Meat Processing
- ~Recreation & Sporting Goods
- ~Computer Networking
- ~Land Agents/Developers
- ~Book Sellers
- ~Online Services
- ~Gift Shops & Antique Sales
- ~Big-box Retail

"The county is dotted with beautiful lakes of varying size, which are full of the best fish. Running water is abundant, stagnant water unknown. Rivers and creeks are numerous, and among them is the Father of Waters, which runs through the county from north to south, dividing it into nearly equal portions."

Nichols' Headlight, 1899