

BILLINGS COUNTY

NORTH DAKOTA

Date founded: 1886

County Seat: Medora

Cities, Townships, Historical Communities: Medora, Fairfield, Gorham, Fryburg, Scoria Point Corner, Six Mile Corner, and Sully Springs.

History of Billings County:

The Territorial legislature authorized Billings County in 1879. It was named after Northern Railroad president Frederick H. Billings. The County was organized May 4, 1879. Later it was subdivided into three geographical areas; i.e., Billings County and Golden Valley County in 1912; in 1915, Billings County was further divided to comprise Slope County.

Billings County is part of Dickinson Metropolitan Statistical area with Medora as the county seat. Medora was established by the Marquis De Mores who wanted to develop a meat packing plant there. The town was named after the marquis's wife, Medora Hoffman.

Theodore Roosevelt also lived in the area before he was president of the United States. He owned The Maltese Cross and Elkhorn ranches. He has been quoted as saying that his life there was "the romance of my life".

(Please refer to <http://genealogytrails.com/ndak/billings/index.html> for additional history notes about Billings County and its very colorful history)

Demographics:

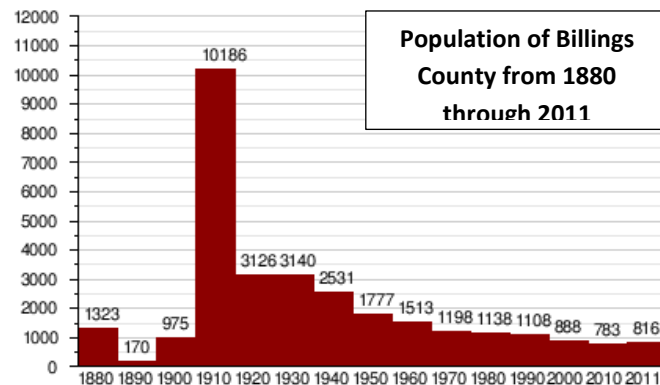
Millions of Europeans immigrated to America during the period between the Civil War and World War I; many were attracted to states such as North Dakota wherein Homestead land was available. These people developed much of the state's rural acreage within colony-like settlements. Several generations later, descendants of these immigrants continue to live in areas with a high concentration of a single ethnic group. Among the various ethnic groups maintaining a presence throughout the state, two distinct groups from present-day Russia, ethnic Germans and Ukrainians, began relocating to the upper Midwest in the 1880s. The Ukrainians, less numerous than the Black Sea Germans, have left a definable mark on North Dakota history and landscape. Ukrainian immigrants in North Dakota also erected several churches throughout the state shortly after arriving. Ukrainian settlers have been identified with at least thirty communities and their surrounding farmland (see below, from Halich, 1937: 157). These places may be home to a few or as many as several hundred families. They are

scattered throughout most of the state with the heaviest population in the southwest and central areas. One additional community in Billings County, Fairfield, should be added (Palanuk, et. al, 1979: 51-52).

According to records maintained by the NDSU Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, approximately 120,000 German-Russian immigrants entered the United States to settle in various parts of the Great Plains before World War I. Immigration from the region nearly ceased after this time. Most of these were Protestants, but a smaller number of Catholics, mainly from the Black Sea area, also emigrated. These largely settled in North Dakota where large expanses of unimproved land were available for homesteading in the counties immediately to the east of the Missouri River and west of the river on the Missouri Plateau. Many of the German-Russian Catholics were late arrivals and therefore settled chiefly on the Missouri Plateau (Sallet, 1974, pp. 36-9). They settled mostly in groups and some were helped in acquiring homesteads by immigration agents who this time represented railroad companies (Hudson, 1976, pp. 245-47; Sallet, 1974, p. 68).

The Dickinson, North Dakota area (including Billings County area) was primarily settled by German-Russian Catholics from Beresina in Bessarabia in the 1890s (Sherman, 1979, p. 9; Sallet, 1974, pp. 36-9). Many of those arriving in the early 1900s settled south of Dickinson in the vicinity of Schoenfeld, later called Schefield.

Ukrainians came in large waves between 1900 and 1910. According to the census, there were only about 32 Germans from Russia (Echoing Trails, Vol. II). German-Russian homesteading continued to World War I at which time they comprised the largest immigrant population in western North Dakota.



Data from U.S. Census Bureau

Billings Historical Organizations:

Billings County Historical Society Museum, Medora, North Dakota 58645

Chateau de Mores State Historical Site, Medora, North Dakota 58645

North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame, Inc., Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park – South Unit, Medora, North Dakota 58645

National Protected Areas:

Parts of: Little Missouri National Grasslands

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Cemeteries (Source: [Echoing Trails II Billings County History](#)):

Connell Cemetery – Bullion Butte (unknown when it was established)

Harman-Tetly Cemetery - Badlands near Little Missouri River (established 1909)

Immaculate Conception Cemetery – Fairfield (established 1916)

Medora Cemetery – Medora (established 1919)

Saint Boniface Cemetery – Rattlesnake Butte (unknown when it was established)

Saint Jacobs Cemetery – Gorham (established 1914)

Saint Mary's Cemetery – Rattlesnake Butte (established 1902)

Saint Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery – Fairfield (established 1905)

Saint Josephat Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery – Gorham (established 1914)

Saint Stanislaus Cemetery – Belfield (established 1909)

Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery (established 1923)

Smith Cemetery – NW4 of section 14-137-100 (established 1907)

2 Lazy 2 Haven Cemetery – Logan (established 1980)

Schools:

Prairie Junior High

Demores

Churches:

Saint Demetrius

Saint Josephat

WWI Draft Registration:

Name:	Born:	Birth Place if not USA
Abbattecola, Lorenzo	27/5/1896	Italy
Babnick, Martin	25/3/1890	Austria
Carey, Joseph Hugh	27/8/1893	
Dahl, Magnus	1/8/1887	
Eaton, Jay John	23/8/1883	
Farrand, Walter Lynn	5/10/1887	
Gardner, George Franklin	28/3/1878	
Haag, John K	2/2/1893	Rostat, Russia
likow, John I	14/8/1889	Austria
Jackson, Ber	1/10/1891	
Kalisch, Joseph	12/8/1887	Wuntenberg, Germany
Lambird, Dwight	12/9/1888	
McAndrew, George Iva	15/12/1886	
Nickls, William Henry	14/6/1884	
Oberg, Anton Roy	19/1/1896	
Paasch, Henry Hans	1/12/1881	
Quire, Charles Austin	19/3/1892	
Rader, Russel Lee	24/1/1881	
Sagen, Henry Arne	11/9/1894	
Talkington, David Jesse	20/7/1880	
Uchytill, Anton	17/12/1882	
Vader, Raymond	8/8/1880	
Wrban, August Albert	5/9/1878	
Young, Charles Alexander	21/4/1892	
Zaboletney, Alex	10/3/1882	Russia

(source: genealogytrails.com/ndak/billings/)

WWI Casualties (Source: [Echoing Trails II – Billings County History](#)):

Anderson, Lee E.

Dutchuk, Mike

Ell, Jack

Haniuk, Mike J.

Knudtson, Roger D.

Polensky, Frank

Reilly, Patrick

Rusth, Helmar O.

Wanner, Robert L.

Wolf, Kenneth

Wolf, Clarence

Relevant Books summarizing history of Billings County:

[Echoing Trails I – Billings County History \(out of print\)](#)

[Echoing Trails II – Billings Country History](#)