



Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

Our Cultural Moment for August celebrates J.J. Morrison

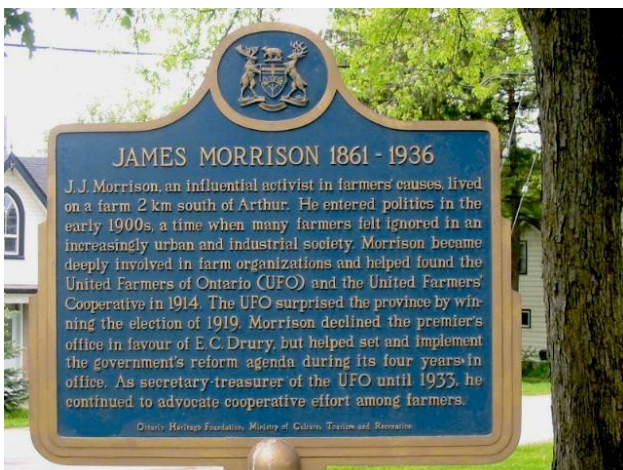
Who would have imagined that a young man, born on a farm just outside Arthur, would make such a difference in the political and farm scene in Ontario? J.J. Morrison did just that and ultimately became known as the “father of the Ontario Farm Movement” and hailed as a thinker ahead of his time.

At age 25 he left the farm for Toronto and after struggling to make a living he, his wife Margaret Blyth and their 4 children moved back to the farm where they had 5 more children. He became involved in local township council, school boards and with the Arthur Temperance Lodge where he began to organize farmers. In 1910, he was elected secretary for the Dominion Grange and was instrumental in creating the Canada Council of Agriculture, which worked interprovincially, and within six months of meeting W.C. Good, E.C Drury and J.Z. Fraser they fathered the United Farmers of Ontario. (UFO)

Elected Secretary of the UFO and the United Farmers Co-Operative, the farmhouse became his office but eventually he would move back to a small office in Toronto. His first task was to find a better price for binder twine and soon he had ordered 100 tons of twine from a company in Ireland. The UFO then setup 40 branches to dispense supplies from the head office and this was the beginning of the Co-op's as we know today.

In 1919 the UFO entered provincial politics hoping to gain enough seats to form the opposition however to their surprise they won the election. They tried to persuade J.J. to take the job as Premier however he declined, and E.C. Drury filled the position. Disagreements between the farmers and the unions caused them to lose the election in 1923 however during their time in office they created the Department of Welfare and the Province of Ontario Savings Bank.

Although Mr. Morrison lived in Toronto during the 1920's and 1930's he stayed interested in activities in Arthur and raised considerable funds for the Arthur cenotaph monument. In 1962 a Plaque was erected by the provincial government at the south end of Arthur and the same year he was elected into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame. In 2018, after being nominated by Senator Rob Black, Mr. Morrison was also inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.



Submitted by Robert Macdonald, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable