

# 1903 Saskatoon Phoenix, In The Early Days

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## 1903 In The Early Days Saskatoon Phoenix, Illustrated Supplement, Christmas, 1903

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When the first movement began which led up to the beginning of the colony, this district was an unbroken prairie with no white settlement nearer than Prince Albert. At Batoche and Duck Lake were the same settlements of French and half-breeds as now, only smaller. The White Cap Indian Reserve had been surveyed. Sir D. L. McPherson was Minister of the Interior; Sir John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister of Canada. An association of gentlemen from Toronto, headed by Joseph Alpheus Livingston, assisted by Dr. Potts, Dr. Hunter, Rev. Messrs. Turver, Gundy, and others of the Methodist Church; W. P. Page of the Dominion Grange; J. B. King and J. C. White of the Independent Order of Oddfellows; G. M. Rose, H. O'Hara, D. Miller and others of the temperance cause together with other elements, was formed in September, 1881, and applied to the Dominion Government for an unbroken tract of land in the North-West Territories within which to begin a temperance colony. They desired, if possible absolute control on the question of prohibiting, the sale of intoxicating liquors within their jurisdiction. After much consultation the request was granted by the Department, subject to such exceptions as were obvious in Hudson's Bay lands and other reserves provided by statute.

An active campaign of advertising was opened at the Industrial Exhibition of 1881 in Toronto and so much did the scheme appeal to the sympathies of the people that a short time only elapsed until the entire tract contemplated had been applied for by prospective buyers, each of whom was expected to settle one-half section of land personally, or by substitute. So much interest in the settlement of lands had been developed throughout Ontario by the agitation that it led to numerous applications by other syndicates for lands to develop on similar lines. This, in turn, embarrassed the Government that they were unable, finally, to grant all the conditions originally contemplated to the Temperance Colonization Association. The end of it was that the contract with the Society (now organized into a joint stock company) was signed with no guarantee that the even numbered sections could be controlled by the company, and thus the first blow was struck at the main object of the scheme, and many subsequent difficulties were brought into existence which, to this day (1903), have not been overcome. It required up to June, 1882, to get the organization of the Company complete, and on the 22nd day of that month, a commission consisting of Messrs. J. N. Lake, W. S. Hill, and George W. Grant, accompanied by a competent surveyor, were despatched from Toronto to examine the tracts of lands set apart, from which to select and begin operations.

After a trip via Chicago, Emerson and Winnipeg, they disembarked from a construction train at Moosomin on the 6th of July, this being the furthest the railway was then constructed. Three weeks were occupied in reaching Clark's Crossing, then a busy point in ferrying freight for Battleford, and, strange to say, soon again to be for the third time, the scene of the busy life of the last stage of this district's experience in settlement, the first being the old Mackenzie survey of 1873 and 1878, during which was built the telegraph line, still in operation. The second has been referred

to and the third came with the building of the Canadian Northern Railway and its great bridge across the river.

Many were the incidents of the trip of the commission to this point; among others they were called out of bed at midnight in Fort Qu'Appelle to answer a writ of replevin respecting a pony bought in Brandon, which it turned out had been stolen from the Fort a month before. They had brought it back home, and when it was identified they compromised by buying it the second time at one hundred and twenty dollars, or two hundred and forty dollars in all. The pony did duty for many years in conveying settlers to examine lands. Sergeant Griesbach [A. H. Griesbach, ultimately Superintendent of the North West Mounted Police] was the officer of police in charge.

A term of examination extending over some two months was completed by the return of the examiners, Mr. Hill going via the river and Lake Winnipeg route. Mr. Lake via Clarke trail [Lake so calls the trail from Clark's Crossing to the old Qu'Appelle-Humboldt trail] to Touchwood and Qu'Appelle, and Mr. Grant via Elbow and Moose Jaw. Their reports are interesting, and in the main will be found to bear out the prediction of the results which are so promising today.

When we come to introduce the heroic band of settlers who opened the field we are compelled to look for some in vain, for they have gone over to the Great Beyond to reap their reward. One only now (1903) resides here to represent the beginning of 1882. Mr. J. M. Eby, whose experiences by Lake Winnipeg, Saskatchewan River and Prince Albert to this point are known mainly only to himself. Mr. James Hamilton and his son Robert accompanied the exploration commission almost the entire way, separating at Fort Qu'Appelle [Peter Latham and Harry Godwin were also of the part. See page 15]. To Mr. Hamilton and Mr. S. W. Hill, with Mr. Fred Blake, surveyor, belong the credit of the first selecting of the present Site of Saskatoon, they having been dispatched in a southerly direction to explore, while Messrs. Lake and Grant went north. [Mr. John N. Lake was Commissioner and head of the expedition, and was charged to select the 2,000,000 acres and fix the town site in their midst. Mr. S. W. Hill was a farmer sent out to advise him. Their course can be followed in Lake's diary presented to the University by his heirs, They arrived at "The Telegraph Crossing," the Clark's Crossing of that day on the bank of the South Saskatchewan hard by the present Clarksboro, on July 28th, whence they both went south to Moose Woods, On the way back they camped "on the river" on Aug. 1st. Mr. Lake's statement on page 16 is that they "camped on the hill over the river thinking then it was a fine spot for a town." As they had not been able to talk to White Cap, the Sioux chief at Moose Woods, for lack of an interpreter, Lake returned from Clark's Crossing with a half-breed, Sayer by name, who knew the language. He thus got the information he wanted. According to a statement by Lake he was told that the land was good, and so determined to take the 2,000,000 acres north of Moose Woods. According to a second statement White Cap assured him that this was the only point on the river where the banks were low on both sides. The reference is to the region about Idylwyld. A commanding position on the hill and an easy crossing for a bridge seem to have been the determining factors in the choice of this spot for the town site, Hill and Blake, the surveyors, were sent back from the Crossing to make a detailed exploration, while Lake went north to Prince Albert and Canton, according to his diary, "to get information about timber, soils, crops, capabilities of the country, frosts and seasons." The entry of August 18 runs: "Whilst I was away at Prince Albert Hill and Blake made full examination of Moose Woods and surroundings." On the 19th Hill was sick and was sent home via Prince Albert and thence by steamer down the Saskatchewan to Winnipeg. The entry runs on: "Broke camp, at 7 a.m. and all the rest started for 10 base. Grant and I without any dinner, Camped at 2 p.m, Minnetonka, is the name of our camping place, the finest we have ever had. Sec. 29, Twp. 36, R. 5 (Aug.) 20. Preached at 11 a.m. to 10 persons, 4 of whom came 3 miles on foot. Text: Heb. 11-12, 13. Good time, feel very sick." This would be the Sunday on which the Saskatoon berries were brought to Lake's tent which led to the name Saskatoon displacing the proposed Minnetonka. In a statement prepared for the Historical Association in 1923, Mr. Lake says: "While lying in my tent one Sunday afternoon, one of the chain bearers brought me a handful of beautiful red berries, I asked him the name (for they looked like red currants). He said they called them Saskatoons. In an instant I remarked: 'Arise, Saskatoon, Queen of the North.'" ]

The exact location of Clarke's Crossing in township and range having been ascertained, it was decided to be too far north and not central for the Company's lands, notwithstanding the ferry's activity at that point, so that recommendation of the southern explorers was finally examined and selected as the central location, and camp was opened there for such time as was deemed necessary. Mr. Hamilton and Robert selected their locations and began work, building a house (which still stands, 1003 in which they lived till late in the year, when they went to Prince Albert until spring. Mr. Eby went to Prince Albert after locating, and returned in the ensuing year, and has lived continuously here ever since. He was joined by his family later on in 1883, and all have remained identified with the settlement for the greater part of the time since [Peter Latham's name should be added. He is spoken of in the Minutes of the Temperance Colony, Pioneer's Society, as "the first settler." The four probably took their lands this year, Latham signing for his first.]. Mrs. Eby died in 1901. Mr. Hamilton died in 1885, and Robert now (1903~ lives in Winnipeg together with the mother and brothers who had joined them here in 1883. They were all inclined towards scientific and professional callings, and left the struggling settlement in 1889. Of those officially mentioned, Messrs. Livingston, Turver, S. W. Hill and O. M. Rose have gone to their reward. The rest still survive.

The opening of 1883 was to the Company and agents one of anxiety and speculation as to the results of the settlement venture. The commission had selected a name, after Saskatoon berries, which seemed appropriate and attractive, and Saskatoon was launched on the world, a place to be reckoned with as a point of importance in the North-West Territories. But the ideal and the real had many contrasts, and time is only now realizing the imaginations of some or all of the many patrons of that day. The Canadian Pacific Railway was only in operation as far as Moose Jaw; that place was chosen as the point from which to leave the railway [On Sept. 26th, 1883, John N. Lake, on his way home, arranged to build a place at Moose Jaw for the T. C. Society, "Oct. 5th, finished building, etc., and left for Winnipeg." ], and the 150 miles of overland trail was faced without a flinch by the new arrivals for the second year, The charge of the work had been given to Messrs. Lake as commissioner, and Grant as assistant, and the first outfit left Moose Jaw on April 19th. It consisted of the assistant commissioner, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kusch and children, Joseph and Robert Caswell, Harry and Jim Goodwin. Close by were J. J. Conn, Mr. Pugsley, and Mr. McCord, and in the rear were Peter Latham and two boys, with some others. The first incident of this trip was camping for three days in a snowstorm a splendid introduction to pioneer life. Then came a huge mistake in the road by the assistant commissioner, in which he took the outfit down into the valley of Big Arm Creek, which they tried to cross, but had to return to high land. Trials in plenty followed, and the elbow of the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River was reached after some four days. Here the assistant commissioner was "treed" again by the band because he "didn't know where he was going, or the road he was travelling." They threatened to drown him in the river so he skipped out, riding seventy-five miles on horseback to Moose Jaw. They, however, came on courageously to their destination, and reached here in due time to meet the settlers of 1882, Messrs. Hamilton and Eby, already on the ground. Then followed Messrs. Clark and Sons, of whom Prank is still in the vicinity. They reached here and celebrated the 24th of May' as a holiday. Close by also were Mr. and Mrs. Copland and Mr. and Mrs. W. Hunter, each tasting for the first time but not the last, the trying experiences of pioneer life; and, indeed many experiences, the result of blunders by the Company adding much to the difficulties of locations, etc., which were difficult enough at best. Messrs. Pugsley and Coon had squatted on section 283~5. Messrs. Kusch and Latham had selected their well-known homesteads and operation began in earnest. Messrs. Coon and Pugsley were quietly "shunted off to more suitable location," (so the agents thought) and Saskatoon was founded about the time all the world interested was celebrating the Queen's birthday in 1883. Mr. Coon had built a sod house about opposite the present (1903) office of The Phoenix, on the east bank of the river, and in this and a tent were carried on the operations of the Company for the year. As a village, to Dr. J. H. C. Willoughby belongs the credit of opening the first store. He, together with his brother Gerald, opened in a tent in June. With him arrived the Commissioner, Mr. Lake, Messrs. Garrison and J. P. Lake and sons.

Soon after these arrivals came people from every land, and the extent of settlement promised for the future on that year has only been equalled since by that of 1901. But the blunder of locating the Company's scrip sold in '81 on

even numbered sections was beginning to take effect and the uncertainty of the proper procedure under the circumstances made the situation unpleasant and locations insecure. The first consignment of lumber and the first attempt at building began in August ["Aug. 27.-Lumber arrived, arranged for building. Sept. 1, J. P. Lake's house begun. Sept. 1, started office."-Lake's diary. page 11]. The lumber came by raft from Medicine Hat, occupying some three weeks under the generalship of S. Kerr. R. W. Dulmage had opened the initial work of a tinsmith, and he had the honor of putting the first roof on a building in Saskatoon. It is now forming part of the livery barn at the depot then erected by the Company." J. N. Lake was the architect, and Messrs, Horn and Arch. Brown were carpenters on this building. Mr. Dulmage has since continued to be one of the most important influences in the comfort and life of Saskatoon, and many can look back with thanks to the help at a critical moment which his kindness and that of his noble and motherly wife dealt out to the bachelor boys of the day, and many are the memories of pleasure at their family circle since. He returned in 1883 to Ontario to bring his family and a stock of goods for his store, which has ever since remained open to the public.

The consignment of lumber already referred to was supplemented by a large raft arriving at the end of October in charge of Florida and McIntosh. It contained some 60,000 feet, and had been four months on the way from Medicine Hat. The trials of this trip cannot be told here, but it consisted in part of making and unmaking rafts, of losing and finding sections thereof, of privations and starvation which few at this date can appreciate. The stock was sold at Saskatoon, and forms the main material in the construction of the portion of the town east of the river. The cost was high, and the results attained were small although they seemed large in their day. The season of '83 closed in the third week of October by a severe storm and snow, with intense cold, -20 below zero, -lasting for a week. It, however, cleared away and fine weather lasted till Xmas. The operations closed for the season with only a limited preparation for winter on the part of many settlers, and the experiences of this winter are best left to be told by those who passed through them, if at all. The settlers of the year included A. Brown, J. Fletcher, W. Horn, D. Lasher, F. Robinson, W. Irvine and his sister, Frankie, now Mrs. R. W. Caswell,~the first marriage in the settlement; also among them being Mr. and Mrs. J. McGowan, to whom belongs the honor of having the first baby born in Saskatoon in August of that year. They now reside in Iowa, U.S. A portion of the settlers returned east for the winter, to bring others in the following year. The agent closed the year by an overland trip to Moose Jaw, accompanied by some halfdozen of the settlers who went for supplies to that point. where, after a trying trip, they arrived on Xmas eve. From here they did not leave on their return trip till February, owing to severe storms [Archie Brown was of the party. He makes the delay "two weeks." He describes the return trip on page 80.]. The return experience can best be told by those who made the trip, among whom are Dr. Willoughby, Will Horn, Robt. Hamilton and John Littlecrow (Indian guide).

In this year Frank Clarke's horses were stolen [Archie Brown tells of this incident in full detail on page 31. Page 12]. Fortunately for Frank, and very unfortunately for the thief, Frank's driving horse was left when the half-dozen working horses were driven off. The police were informed and the telegraph put into requisition, but they were too slow, and the thief would have got off to the States with the whole lot if Frank had not acted on the motto, "When you want a thing done, you must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others." He borrowed Will Horn's rifle, hitched up his only nag, and went in pursuit himself. No clue could be got; therefore he took chances and headed for the south. Some distance away he struck what he believed to be the tracks of his horses, and kept following on, occasionally finding signs, and oftener none, till he finally struck the bunch, with the thief asleep, some miles south of the Elbow, and nearly a hundred miles from the place where the horses were taken from. The settlers were gratified to see Frank returning with the bunch of horses, and his story was a most interesting one, but he declined to repeat the exact words he used when he awoke the thief and had him covered with the rifle. Frank disarmed the rascal, but allowed him to keep his mule, and let him go.

To relate the experiences of 1884 is hut to renew those of 1883. The settlement was enlarged' by the arrival of many new faces, and the return of former settlers. Mr. and Mrs. Powe were added to the list in June, accompanied

by Mrs. Dulmage, and with them came Mrs. N. R. Willoughby, who so recently passed away on her second Visit to Saskatoon. We also had the Blackley family in part, and a large detachment from Winnipeg, under the leadership of Sam Kerr. This important addition had among others Capt. Andrews, Sandy Marr, Louis Gougeou [Xavier Gougeou, commonly called "Louis."], Fred Smith, Geo. Kerr, Fred Kerr, and many others who have since left. Jos. Fletcher also added to the list some new settlers, and the general progress went steadily on. The first ferry was operated at Saskatoon this year, the Company sending a cable and windlass for the purpose. Andy Plante was the ferry manager for some time, but was succeeded by Mr. J. W. Stewart, who has operated it ever since.

Mr. Henry Smith selected his land this year, and settled on it with his sons in the fall of 1885. Thus was founded the Smithville settlement, the progress and prosperity of which has been so marked, and to this family followed some time after by David Lusk, is chiefly due the development of the west side of the river in the early history of the colony. Who sees Smithville sees what the influence of one good man may accomplish.

In May of 1884 we have to record as the first incident the death of Mr. Clarke, husband of Mrs. Eleanor E. Clarke, so long known as one of the energetic, motherly women of the district. She, with her children, were left to mourn his death even before they knew what pioneer life was. He died from the effects of over exhaustion in fighting a prairie fire which over took the district on the day of his arrival in the colony. Thus was opened the first cemetery [This is "The Old Cemetery" near the present Exhibition Grounds].

The year was marked by general progress and the expansion of settlement. Cultivation was extending and the settlement had a hopeful tone. Building extended as far as the material on hand would permit, and additions to the stores had been made. Two tinsmiths were working at their callings. and new general stores were opened. The Post Office was opened in the autumn under the postmastership of Dr. Willoughby. The mail was received from Batoche fortnightly, and so continued till the arrival of the railway. The mail carrier for a part of the time was Frank Clarke.

One incident of this year was a visit to the colony in the autumn, which no doubt will be remembered by many who witnessed it. Some sixty Indians came down at a gallop on the village, with the object of causing dismay and fear, and then demanded food. For a short time the prospects were alarming, but all turned out right. One lady was scared, and after giving them all she had to eat, ran off and left them to devour it; but Mrs. Copland, like the brave woman she is, successfully stood off the whole band though her husband was away in the hay field. During all the time up to this year the intercourse between the colony and the White Cap Indians was pleasant and agreeable; and so also with the half-breed population both north and south. There was little indication of the unrest which so soon after developed into the well-known rebellion of the ensuing year.

The Inspector for Colonization Companies [C. J. Brydges. Page 13] made his regular annual visit to the Colony in the autumn and on this occasion was settled finally the question of odd and even numbered sections under the scrip of the Company. He ruled that all the even numbered sections must be entered as homesteads, and in order that the count of settlers might be made, some sixty homestead entries were made in one day. And thus ended, to all intents and purposes, the settlements of sections under T.C.S. Scrip.

The season showed at the close decided progress in the settlement, and when business for the year was ended, the prospects for further advancement seemed hopeful. The winter closed down about Christmas, and all went merry as a marriage bell till on the 26th of the following March the whole country woke up to the terrible fact that a rebellion among the native population at Batoche had broken out. That it meant great danger to our little colony was undoubted, as we were situated between two settlements of native Half-Breeds.

That this is not the place to comment on why these people took this action, will be admitted. We were sufficiently cognizant of the dissatisfaction in regard to river front surveys, among the Half-Breeds also their claim that they were being ousted out of their native land by an invasion of white people then taking place, more marked than even

the present one, only less effective in settlement. That these grievances were aggravated by agitation is undoubted, but lack in the exercising of common sense on the part of officials, of whom much was expected, had more to do with the outbreak than anything else.

From Saskatoon was sent the first word to Toronto announcing the arrival of Louis Riel on Canadian soil on this occasion, July 2nd, 1884, and his development as leader on the opening of the disturbance was well known.

True to the expectations of the Saskatoon people, the agitation extended to the White Cap Indians [These were Sioux, by repute the fiercest of the tribes of the Prairies. They had taken part in the defeat and slaughter of the Custer column in 1876, by Sitting Bull. They took refuge in Canada, but did not return with the rest. They were given a Reserve at Moose Woods, with White Cap for chief. Page 14] under the influence of the Half-Breeds settled near the reserve, and as a result the entire population struck camp to join the rebellion at Batoche. On their way they had to pass Saskatoon, where preparations had been made to receive them either as friends or foes, as the case might be. The settlers had mostly been sworn in to defend the women and children, and had elected E. S. Andrews as captain of their home guard. They had also taken the precaution to let the Half-Breeds and Indians know that they were prepared for the emergency. We believe Chief Whitecap did not wish to leave the reserve, and join the rebellion, but the hot-headed warriors, influenced by a few Half-Breeds and emissaries from Riel, were disposed to be hostile, and the result was that the whole tribe appeared in sight of the village one fine morning. Our scouts had been watching them, and we knew of their coming. We suspected, too, (what we found afterwards to be true) that they had Riel's instructions to wipe Saskatoon out on their way north. They could not get round the village for the deep snow, and after trying in vain to do so, they came on and were stopped in the heart of the village for a conference. Mr. Hamilton was chosen as the representative of Saskatoon people, but could not take the job, and Mr. Copland had to step into the breach as the alternative choice. An attempt was made by friendly advice and warning of danger to get the Indians to go back to their reserve, but without result, and the whole party moved on, leaving Saskatoon unscathed. and still watching them so as to keep telegraphic communication.

The quick following events of the next few weeks culminated, upon the arrival of troops from the east, in the well-known battle of Fish Creek, the result of which was to again bring Saskatoon into the foreground as an important point. The necessity for hospital accommodation was immediately filled by the people placing all their resources in houses and stores, and the best help they possessed, at the disposal of the authorities. It was accepted, and for three months the village was one active scene of military life, and for the time it might be said that all attempts at settlement or agriculture were abandoned.

Through this opening of the houses to the wounded, diphtheria (for which there was no remedy known at that time) was brought to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Copland, who were thus bereft of their daughter, Jessie.

In September, one highly esteemed settler, the pioneer of all, Mr. Hamilton, paid a visit to his old home in Ontario, from which he never returned. His death, from asthma, was a shock to those left behind. The autumn of this year witnessed many difficulties in the adjustment of claims arising out of the rebellion, replevins of stock, losses of property, and all sorts of readjustments of rights. So far as the season was concerned the progress for the year was nil in many directions. The people, under the alarm of the year, had applied for and been accorded the right to settle under the hamlet system, and it continued to be so conducted for a considerable time. The privilege was subsequently withdrawn, and things all seemed to be going their usual course, but the settlement had got a setback by the rebellion of the Half-Breeds which it took years to recover from.

The first school was opened this year as a voluntary one [Not 1885 but 1884. A committee of the Temperance Colony Pioneers' Society raised \$271.64 for the salary of the teacher. Much assistance came from the T. C. S. A building was raised. It was equipped with maps presented by the T. C. S.], under the management of J. W. Powers as teacher, followed by Mr. Davidson and Gerald Willoughby.

The year closed and the winter passed without any marked event. At Xmas a police station was opened and has continued up to the present time. When the 1886 season for settlement opened, the injurious effects of the rebellion made themselves apparent, and a decidedly dull season was opened with practically marking time. Some incidents of everyday life, of more or less importance in their influence, were taking place, -marrying and giving in marriage,--- but no great advance was made in any direction.

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