

Metro Article March 2021

Happy Centennial St. James!

The rural municipality (RM) of St. James was incorporated in 1921 and this year celebrates its 100th birthday! Established on Treaty One territory and the traditional homeland of the Metis Nation, St. James has a rich and interesting history.

Prior to its designation as an RM, St. James was part of the larger Municipality of Assiniboia, created in 1880. The growth and development of St. James, however, made the establishment of the community as a separate RM inevitable.

Situated along the Portage Trail, now Portage Avenue, St. James was the natural choice for the next residential development contiguous to the city, and the neighbourhood immediately west of the City of Winnipeg began to expand with an influx of European immigrants in the early 1900's.

The Red River carts loaded with furs and supplies that creaked and bumped along the Portage Trail in the 1800's were soon replaced by the automobile and the trolley car, and as the 'Trail' evolved into an 'Avenue' it bore witness to the triumphant return of soldiers from the battlefields of World War I, and an end to

the devastating Spanish Flu pandemic that killed millions worldwide. Residential neighbourhoods sprang up around established landmarks such as Deer Lodge Hospital, St. James Anglican Church, Linwood School, Assiniboine Golf Course, and St. Charles Golf and Country Club.

In the last century St. James has become a mature community and is home to one of Canada's largest aerospace centres: Canadian Forces Base Westwin, built in 1925, alongside James Armstrong Richardson International Airport, first established in 1928 and known then as Stevenson Aerodrome.

The RM of St. James became the *City* of St. James in 1956, the City of St. James - Assiniboia in 1968, and was finally absorbed into the City of Winnipeg through the unicity amalgamation of 1972.

A virtual meeting of community leaders was held recently to discuss ways to celebrate St. James' centennial while still complying with current provincial health restrictions. We are still in the planning stages but I encourage you to stay tuned for information about how you can participate in our community's 100th birthday.

This also presents an opportune time to strengthen and enrich the historical record of St. James. If you have stories, photos or artifacts related to our community's history please contact Murray Peterson, Heritage Officer for the City of Winnipeg at MPeterson@winnipeg.ca.

Over the coming months readers of the Canstar Metro can expect contributions from MLA's Scott Fielding, Scott Johnston and Adrien Sala, along with community correspondent Fred Morris, the St. James - Assiniboia Historical Museum, St. James Assiniboia Pioneer Association, St. James Biz, Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce and others, all dedicated to telling the story of St James past, present and future.

If you have questions or comments feel free to contact me at scottgillingham@winnipeg.ca or call 204-986-5848.