

Melville continues to grow and prosper



Travelers heading into Melville from the south along Highway 10 climb the overpass and the first thing they see is the railyard.

That railyard, belonging to the CNR, is the reason Melville is a city of close to 4,600 people today. The Grand Trunk Railway came through the city back in the early 1900s with the first parcel of land sold to a Mr. Pope in 1906, representing the Grand Trunk Pacific Townsite and Development Company. At the time, Pope told people the land he bought would be a city some day.

Two years later, in 1908, the last spike of the railway was driven and Melville celebrated its birth. The community was thus named after the president of the railway — Charles Melville Hays. It was the second divisional point on the railway west of Winnipeg.

However, the town's history extends one year earlier to 1907 when J.W. Redgwick brought a load of lumber from Killaly and built The Pioneer Store. Thirty blocks were surveyed and staked out with a lumber yard and hardware store quick to follow. Lots were selling from \$60 to \$400.

The town grew rapidly in the early years, jumping from 66 people, to 625 and then over 1,000 people in 1909 with town status. The first council meeting was held Jan. 4, 1909 at the town's newspaper office—the Melville Canadian. The old Queen Street Arena was also built that year, although it burned partially in 1949 and totally in 1962. A new arena was built at the present location of the Melville Stadium but it burned down two years after construction and the present Stadium was built.

The second ice surface, the Merv Moore Sportsplex, was constructed just prior to the 1990 Saskatchewan Winter Games.

The years between 1910 and 1914 were important to the community with the construction of the community's first power

plant, hospital, the Melville Milling Company, Coal Docks and Luther College. The Melville Millionaires hockey team was also established in that time period and won the Allan Cup (national championship) just three years into its existence.

Since that time the city has grown to offer a plethora of services, including the home of the provincial government's Saskatchewan Crop Insurance head office as well as such industrial leaders as Babcock and Wilcox and Century Glass.

Melville has hosted high-profile sporting events including the provincial senior mens' and ladies' curling championships in 2009, the Tankard mens' provincial curling championships in 1998 and the Canada Cup national midget baseball championships in 2001 and 2002. There is also a very successful minor ball and hockey system, as well as figure skating, speed skating, batting cages, a swimming pool, two museums and several parks. To complement Melville's sporting background is the construction of a new Communiplex along First Avenue which will feature a new arena and a convention center for some time in 2011.

In present day Melville, visitors will notice the brand-new St. Peter's Hospital built adjacent to St. Paul Lutheran Home. The hospital is controlled by the Catholic Health Council and utilizes about 40 beds.

There are four elementary schools — Davison, Miller, St. Henry's Junior Elementary and St. Henry's Senior Elementary — and one high school — Melville Comprehensive School. MCS, as it's known locally, houses a full complement of student classes including metal, wood and automotive. MCS received a new tenant several years ago when the Parkland Regional College relocated to the south end of the school. The College, affiliated with its Yorkton campus, offers a wide range of classes.

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