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A Walking Tour Of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (Look Up, Canada!)



Synopsis

There is no better way to see Canada than on foot. And there is no better way to appreciate what you are looking at than with a walking tour. Each walking tour describes historical and architectural landmarks and provides pictures to help out when those pesky street addresses are missing. Every tour also includes a quick primer on identifying architectural styles seen on Canadian streets. Saskatoon greeted the 20th century with an official population count of 113 and dirt streets. The town began as a vision of the Toronto-based Temperance Colonization Society to establish a "dry" community in the quick-growing Canadian prairies. In 1882 the anti-liquor contingent acquired land straddling the South Saskatchewan River and John Neilson Lake, a one-time Methodist preacher and commissioner of the Temperance Society, led a band of colonizers west. Unlike hardship tales that accompanied many 19th century settlers Lake's group was able to take the train most of the way and used horse carts from Moose Jaw up to the site of its grants. Lake staked out the spot for a settlement which eventually picked up the Cree name for a sweet-tasting, violet-coloured berry that grew along the river. Lake's group, however, was unable to cobble together a large enough block of land to make the temperance community viable. The Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railway built into town in 1890 which opened the west side of the river to development and by 1906 there was a city of 4,500 residents large enough to be chartered a year after the province of Saskatchewan formed. In 1907 the first Saskatchewan premiere Walter Scott mulled over the merits of the nascent province's communities and selected Saskatoon for the home of the new provincial university and agricultural college. With the University of Saskatchewan and its inherent geographical advantages that favoured its growth as a western Canada railway hub Saskatoon boomed in the years before World War I as the population exploded to over 20,000. The post-war years brought tough times and the Great Depression of the 1930s forced families off bankrupt farms but Saskatoon reacted to the lessening reliance on agriculture by expanding its potash and oil industries. The potash deposits in particular are the richest on the planet. With its eight river crossings Saskatoon has earned the sobriquet of "City of Bridges" but in recent years the economy has hummed along to such an extent it is sometimes called "Sask-a-boom." Our walking tour will commence on the banks of the all-important South Saskatchewan River where Saskatchewan's largest city remembers mileposts in its heritage...

Book Information

File Size: 10052 KB

Print Length: 30 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: December 1, 2014

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00QG6LSC6

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #2,098,576 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #15

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