

MONTGOMERY PLACE MEMORIAL CAIRN

Montgomery Place is a Veterans Land Act community established in 1946 following the Second World War. In 1987 two veterans raised the idea of building a memorial cairn in Montgomery Park to recognize this unique community and to honour the contributions of Montgomery Place residents to the war.

Fifteen veterans and their families moved into the newly established area in 1946, followed by three more families in 1947. Under the Veterans Land Act, lots of ½ acre were created to provide small agricultural holdings for families. Named after the famous British Field Marshal of the Second World War, Bernard Montgomery, this area was a community separate from the City of Saskatoon until 1955 when it became a part of the city. Homes continued to be built between 1956 and 1977, when the Veterans Land Act was closed off. Montgomery Place streets are named after battles, personalities, a destroyer and a bomber from the Second World War. The present park-like setting of the community is a tribute to the men and women who served Canada from 1939 to 1945 and in the Korean War.

The two veterans who proposed the memorial cairn were Bernard Newman of 3303 Caen Street (built in 1956) and Lewis Winger of 3437 Normandy Street (built in 1960). When Bernie Newman raised the idea at a Montgomery Place Community Association meeting, a small group of residents and friends agreed to form the Cairn Committee. The President of the Community Association, Jim Earle, recruited Glen MacDonald of 3106B Ortona Street to chair the Cairn Committee.

When an advertisement was placed in the community newsletter, asking for a resident with architectural drafting experience to assist the Cairn Committee, Michael Molaro of 3345 11th Street West volunteered to join the Committee. Other Committee members in addition to Bernie Newman, Lew Winger, Michael Molaro and Glen McDonald included : Gordon Dewar (1679 Bader Crescent), Ruth Murray, Wendel Dent, Fred Hodgkinson, Ivan Bowman, Harold Olson, George Thompson and Ed Price. Dave Scott acted as City of Saskatoon liaison.

The group sought permission from the City of Saskatoon to erect a cairn in Montgomery Park. On May 9, 1988 Saskatoon City Council passed a motion " ...that permission be granted to place a cairn commemorating the founding of Montgomery Place in the north-west corner of Montgomery Park. " In the following year the City approved the construction details and exact location of the cairn.

Many of the construction details were worked out between Bernie Newman, Lew Winger and Jim Sabino, the stonemason who had been chosen to build the cairn. The final plans were drawn by Michael Molaro in July 1988.

A community meeting was held on January 26, 1989 when the cairn proposal was endorsed by the Montgomery Place residents who attended. Almost \$1000 was raised at that meeting towards the overall budget requirement of \$9,900. The community fundraising drive pushed forward successfully and work began on the cairn in the spring of 1989.

Many individuals and businesses rallied to support the project. The stonemason, Jim Sabino, was critical to the success of the venture. In theory, he was paid for his work; in fact, a great deal of his time and effort were given voluntarily. Other organizations and businesses that assisted included : Army, Navy & Airforce Veterans, Beverage Central Ltd., CJWW Radio, Cindercrete Products Ltd., Dent Holdings, Estevan Brick, Intercontinental Packers Ltd., Labatts Saskatchewan Brewery Ltd., Lakeshore Nursery which provided landscaping around the cairn, Macdonalds Restaurants, National Stone and Bronze who provided the granite and the original bronze lettering, Ramstead Construction Ltd., Revelstoke Redi-Mix Ltd., the Rent-It Store, Tim Hortons Donuts, Trinity United Church, Weldon's Concrete Products Ltd. And Western Caissons.

It was Bernie Newman who suggested the north-west corner of Montgomery Park and who worked diligently with the Committee to pursue this location with City of Saskatoon officials. Members of the Committee also worked tirelessly with the City to provide additional lighting for the site.

The wording selected for the cairn plaque stated: " This monument commemorates the Canadian forces veterans who built their homes here during the years 1946 – 1977. Montgomery Place was established with small

land holdings under the Federal Government's Veterans Land Act for men and women returning from World War II and the Korean War. "

On September 10, 1989 a program was held to dedicate the cairn officially. Participants at the service included : the Honourable William McKnight, Minister of National Defence; Ron Fisher, M.P. for Saskatoon-Dundurn ; Roy Romanow, M.L.A. for Saskatoon Riversdale; His Worship Henry Dayday, Mayor of Saskatoon ; Pat Lorje, Saskatoon City Councillor ; Reverend Father Urbanski ; Reverend Arlene Reynolds ; Vic Dubois as Master of Ceremonies ; and Cairn Committee members – Bernie Newman, Lew Winger and Glen McDonald. The important role of the cairn as a memorial to the lives of Canada's returning war veterans was reflected by a Fly Past of Snowbirds aircraft during the Opening Ceremony. A time capsule, a project with local school children and youth groups, was buried at the base of the cairn.

The dedication attracted a very large crowd of residents and visitors, many of whom signed a guest book which was later donated to the Nutana Legion. A Service of Remembrance is held annually at the cairn on November 11 to honour the memories of those who died to bring peace to our world.