Winnipeg | Indigenous Relations
Relations avec les Autochtones

JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION
LES CHEMINS DE LA RÉCONCILIATION

WELCOMING WINNIPEG – Request Summary

NOTE: Request summaries are compiled by Indigenous Relations employees to ensure that identifiable, or potentially identifiable, third-party personal information or information of a sensitive nature is excluded from what is made publicly available. Indigenous Relations permits viewing of the full original submission by appointment through 311.

Request ID: 2021-003

Name of Request: Creating New Historical Marker – Lawson Ogg

Address: Kingston Park – 320 Kingston Crescent

Demonstrated Community Support:

- Petition submitted: Yes, with 67 signatures.
- Letters of support provided: 4

Project Details:



We wish to honour Mr. Lawson Alfred Ogg, a young man who gave his life protecting our community during the 1950 flood, as our first project under a larger plan to create a walking tour of the Elm Park area of Winnipeg.

There are two distinct activities we aim to complete in Phase 1 of our historical project efforts:

1. Interpretive historical panels:
   We aim to produce two bilingual historical interpretive panels to be installed in Kingston Park, at the heart of the once famous Elm Park. The first panel would tell the heroic story of Mr. Ogg and his contribution to our community, the voluntarism from the residents of Winnipeg, and the gratitude in our community for support in times of floods. The second panel will explain the significance of the 1950 Flood on the Elm Park neighbourhood, focusing on

the specific challenges, and the mitigation taken to protect the community in the future. Carefully selected compelling photos would complement the text.

A banner will run across the top of the interpretive panels:
Winnipeg is located within Treaty No. 1 Territory, the traditional **lands** of the Anishinabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota, and is the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the heart of the Métis Nation homeland.

Draft Text:

Panel 1 of 2:

1950 Red River Flood April 15 to June 12

In the spring of 1950, the Red River reached its highest level since 1861 from melting, heavy snow. Thousands of volunteers worked day and night sandbagging to keep Winnipeg safe from the raging river. Despite heroic efforts, the dike failed and Kingston Crescent, surrounded by the Red River on three sides, was inundated by the flood waters causing an evacuation of all area residents on May 5th. The flood lasted a harrowing 51 days with widespread damage. This neighbourhood was one of the hardest hit in the city. Most homes sustained water damage to the second floor level. Kingston Crescent resident Ed Kuiper spent eight years leading the design of the Red River Floodway that saved the city from serious flood damage in 1997. The floodway, construction of a permanent dike around Kingston Crescent in 1950 and 1951, and improvements to the floodway and the dike system after 1997, have greatly reduced the risk of future flooding.

Panel 2 of 2:

Lawson Alfred Ogg (1924-1950)

Lawson Ogg served as a lieutenant with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles during World War II. He was a graduate of the University of Manitoba, a member of the Optimist Club, and sportsman active in lacrosse and hockey. At the young age of 26 his life was cut short as the only fatality of the 1950 flood in Winnipeg. He was one of the many volunteers building dikes to protect the city from rising floodwaters. Sometime after midnight on Saturday, May 6th the Fort Garry dike failed. Lawson and two other men were working at a Kingston Crescent residence when the surging, icy waters burst upon them. Tragically, he was unable to escape the full force of the water and drowned while on duty protecting this neighbourhood. Lawson is buried in Elmwood Cemetery. Kingston Crescent and Kingston Row residents, both past and present are forever grateful for the heroic efforts of so many volunteers and to Lawson Ogg who gave his life in the service of this community.

2. Honourary Street name:
   We have secured permission and support from our City Councillor Brian Mayes and the City of Winnipeg to name a small street in Kingston Park as an honourary street to be named 'Lawson Ogg Way' in honour of the only person in Winnipeg who died during the 1950 flood. The street currently has no name.

How does this renaming contribute to a 'Welcoming Winnipeg', as defined in the policy and what kind of evidence/research can be provided to support this state

The renaming opportunity (Lawson Ogg Way), and the interpretive panels proposed for phase one are focused exclusively on the events surround Mr. Ogg's volunteerism, contributions to flood protection, and his ultimate loss of life. Although this phase concentrates on the local impact of the 1950s flood, we will be engaging in extensive research for phase 2, exploring the history of our neighbourhood. Both phases will provide an educational opportunity for the many visitors we have to the neighbourhood (a popular walking and biking path) as well as for the residents of this street. Taken as a whole, both phases will achieve balanced perspective and honour the original peoples of this land. We hope to include Indigenous languages on our panels, as deemed appropriate by the community members with who will engage.

Preliminary research has included archival research (City of Winnipeg Archives, University of Manitoba Archives, University of Winnipeg Archives, Western Canadian Pictorial Index), consultation with local historians, and working with the St. Vital Historical Society. The second phase of the project will build upon the archival research conducted in the first and will expand to include relevant personal collections from local residents. In addition, the group will be reaching out the Manitoba Métis Federation to access the rich resources of the Louis Riel Institute and hopes to contract Indigenous history experts (such as Dr. Karine Duhamel) to explore Indigenous connections to this neighbourhood. Most importantly, through existing networks of our members, the group hopes to build an advisory circle with Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Treaty 1 territory.

Does this site have historical significance to the Indigenous community? Research Support:

We have determined through preliminary research that the site on which the commemorative/interpretive panels will be installed does not have any historical significance to the Indigenous community. We do, however, recognize that our neighbourhood situated in an oxbow of the Red River, likely has deep ties to the Indigenous peoples who originally inhabited these lands. Initial stages of research have uncovered ties to the Métis nation as well. As citizens of Winnipeg, we acknowledge

that we are living on the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. As we undertake the second phase of our project, we commit to respecting the Treaties that were made on these territories, and will move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

This request, if granted, provides a neighbourhood with the opportunity to celebrate its history in a respectful way – telling our stories through the lens of reconciliation within a decolonizing framework. Rather than focusing solely on the settler story, we are proposing a project whose research is grounded in respectful dialogue and trust building relationships with Indigenous and Métis community members. Understanding the relationship that the original peoples of this land have with the river upon which our community is built allows us to contribute to the ongoing dialogue of reconciliation.

If this application is not supported, what would the negative impact on the community be? (If applicable)

The application, were it not too be supported would have a large negative impact on the community. On November 20, 2020 the Riel Community Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service to approve the honourary street name designation for the north-south portion of Kingston Crescent between the Kingston Parks and east of Riverdale Avenue as “Lawson Ogg Way”. The plan is to unveil two plaques that tell of the heroic actions of Mr. Ogg and the story of the 1950 flood in a street naming ceremony. It would be most unfortunate to have the ceremony naming the street without any context. The plaques would provide both written text and visuals, primarily through photos to explain precisely what did happen seventy years ago. Dr. Peter Connelly, a close family friend of the Ogg family, a man now in his nineties has given his consent allowing this project to move forward. He has been invited to attend the neighbourhood unveiling along with politicians Brian Mayes and Jamie Moses, both of whom are very supportive of acknowledging these important historical milestones.

The Kingston Crescent Residents Association is mindful of the unique nature of the area in which we reside. Surrounded by the Red River on three sides and linked by a pedestrian bridge we are a neighbourhood that welcomes thousands of non-residents every year. Many buy an ice cream cone at the Bridge Drive Inn and then enter our neighbourhood, via the pedestrian bridge to leisurely stroll the streets. Cyclists use the area both for recreation and exploration. Still others come to our local park to enjoy the playground or to spend time in quiet contemplation. As the area is so well known and utilized by many we want to maintain the beauty of the area while at the same time elevating the consciousness of the public to our past. Eighty plus trees were planted

here this past year in a major reforestation effort. Now the first steps are being taken to bring the historical narrative of the area to fruition. Other parts of Winnipeg have had their history told and as Kingston Crescent/Row was severely impacted by the 1950 flood, it would be an opportunity lost were the history of that event and what came before it left unknown to the public at large.

Any additional information the applicant would like the CCM to consider in making their recommendation.

Our Association is a small group of committed volunteers who are passionate about the neighbourhood that we live in. The group was first formed out of concern for the loss of our beautiful elm trees due to Dutch Elm disease. Our committee set to work to rectify this terrible situation. Much consultation, lobbying, and research were required over the span of several years, but the results were well worth the effort. We now have dozens of new trees that only a year ago did not exist. With this project successfully completed we saw a further opportunity to tell the story of the peninsula. We will bring to it the same level of commitment and concern as we had for the planting of trees. It is of vital importance to us that the history of this area is well researched, consultative, respectful, and honest. That is our commitment to the Committee of Community Members.



ON SATURDAY, 6 May 1950, Lawson Alfred (Scotty) Ogg, 26, was swept to his death by flood waters surging into the basement at 357 Kingston Crescent, the home of Albert Johnson, a dentist.

Harold Loyns, a Winnipeg furrier, recalls, 'Several members of our Optimist Club volunteered on numerous flood assignments, and at the same time we tried to assist fellow members whose homes were threatened by the flood. We worked in three-man shifts in houses still above water level.

'On Friday, 5 May, Scotty was on duty at the Johnson home. It was not his turn, but he and his friend, Jim Chalmers, had a double date on the following night, Saturday, and he'd asked another friend, Dave Cooper, to switch nights with him. At that time, the entire area was surrounded by water, held back by metre-high dikes around each home. The three men on duty that night at 357 Kingston Crescent were Bill Taylor, Gil Schoales and Scotty.'

The rear door of the house, facing the advancing water was barricaded and nailed shut. A pump on the basement stairs continuouly drew seeping sewer water up a hose and emptied it out a ground-level window and onto the already flooded lawn.

Some time after midnight the radio reported the frightening news that the main Fort Garry dike had broken. The men realized they were in imminent danger. While they were deciding on their next move, the hum and throb of the pump ceased, so the three went to investigate. Scotty was the first one down the basement stairs, Gil was on the landing and Bill was still at the top of the flight. At that moment the back door crashed open and a torrent of icy water roared down the stairs. Bill managed to grab Gil's jacket and with great effort pulled him to safety. His hip waders were sucked off by the force of the water.

Scotty disappeared immediately. The two men were unable to see any sign of him in the muddy water. Their shouts for help went unanswered. In a short time, they and everyone guarding homes on Kingston Crescent had to be evacuated by boat.

The next morning Jim Chalmers telephoned Scotty's home where he lived with his parents to discuss their plans for the evening, and was told the incomprehensible news. The following day a diver, Sam Beiber, went down into Dr Johnson's home, now flooded almost to the second storey. He found Scotty's body wedged between two rafters in the basement.

The funeral was held the following Wednesday, but burial had to be postponed. Elmwood cemetary was under water.

Dave Cooper, now a resident of Vancouver, says,'If Scotty hadn't changed shifts with me, I might have been the casualty. I still become very emotional when I think of it.'

Related by Harold Loyns, James N. Chalmers and David Cooper to Author Donna Freeman.

The scene of the fatality, 357 Kingston Crescent. Top, Lawson Alfred Ogg.