

CLINKSKILL, James



James Clinkskill was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1853, and was established in business in Scotland as a grocer when he decided to come to Canada in 1881.

He started his life in Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He then went into partnership with another man to establish a merchandising business in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. He later moved and established a business in Battleford, Saskatchewan, where he lost his building and all his goods during the Riel Rebellion.

James Clinkskill was active in his community from the beginning. Besides serving in the Home Guard during the Rebellion, he also helped to set up a Presbyterian Mission for Battleford. In 1888, he entered politics for the first time, as a member of the Territorial Assembly representing Battleford, and later the area around Saskatoon.

Clinkskill came to Saskatoon in 1889, and purchased James Leslie's general store. He was an astute businessman, and expanded his business, erecting a block on 21st Street in downtown Saskatoon, where the sidewalk still bears the insert that spells out "Clinkskill", even though the building is now gone.



He was Mayor of Saskatoon when it became a town, and again Mayor when Saskatoon grew into a city, during which he was actively involved in guiding the installation of the light, water and sewer systems. He was also one of the Governors of the University of Saskatchewan at its very beginnings.

His obituary, in the August 6, 1936 newspaper, reported that he caught a chill, which led to his final illness at the age of 83. An early biography in the newspaper included a photograph of him captioned, "Saskatoon's Dad"

There is a family gravesite, with headstones marking the graves of Thomas Malaffy; Jean Andrew Baird, daughter of James and Dora Clinkskill; Captain James Clinkskill (killed in action), son of James and Dora Clinkskill; Dora Babington, wife of James Clinkskill; and Grace Baird, Wife of T.E. Malaffy; as well as James Clinkskill.

Photograph of J. Clinkskill from the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, August 6, 1936.