

Hi again. Charles Sankey here. After my ocean adventures I took veterinarian schooling and then wanderlust grabbed me and took me northwest to pan for gold. Yep, pretty random! Anyway, I only stayed a few months. Too rough and tumble. I had enough of that kind of drama on the high sea. The Prairie called me back.

I had lived near Boissevain earlier - farming and doctoring cattle on my brother's farm. But this time I settled in the village of Waskada. It's kinda like a ship. Everybody knows everybody's business.

When I moved here in the fall of 1899 the townsite was severely lacking trees – again, reminded me of the ocean – a flat landscape extending for miles – with the sun rising and setting over waves of wheat. I enjoy walking when the sun's low.

It was during one of those walks I happened upon an idea. The land south of the railway tracks was vacant and with some investment would make a fine park - a place for sports activities and community events.

The CPR agreed to sell 30 acres to the village. A few of us made the down payment ourselves. Later we gained another 2 ½ acres along the creek – for a great swimming hole! The kids sure enjoyed that feature!



Waskada Park

Next, were the trees! We raised money to buy an assortment of trees and bushes. The CPR even donated a thousand Russian Poplars to plant along the park's north edge to keep snow off the tracks.

Every spring we hold a St. Patrick's Day concert to pay for improvements to our Park. The young people come out with bells on for that! Something about rollicking music in the open air brings me back to my Irish roots! So much fun!

Other community events have taken place as well, like; horse races, football and baseball games, winter skating and curling!

We see the community flourish before our eyes.

Around 1922 the Waskada Ag Society built barns and pens for livestock and many an Ag fair was held on these grounds. The dirty 30's was tough on us though. Our animals looked rough for lack of grass and water, so that took its toll on the fairs.

You know, the world is tricky. We travel to see its wonders, only to find, with a little bit of effort, those wonders close to home. Probably any place is like that.

I found the more I gave, the more I gained. I spent 35 years on town council and 32 years on the school board too.

Anna and I have three children of our own, but in a way, you're all my family.

Thank you Waskada, each and all.

Betty Sawatzky and David Neufeld adapted 'Sankey Explores his Village' from a story written for Vantage Points 3.