

Sutherland, William Charles (1904-1906)

William Charles Sutherland was born in Embro, Ontario, on June 7, 1865. He studied natural sciences at McGill University in Montreal and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1895. Upon graduating he taught school in Ontario before coming west and becoming a lawyer in Carmen, Manitoba. Although not one of the colonists himself, Sutherland arrived in Saskatoon in 1903 aboard a Barr Colonists' train. He was admitted to the NWT bar in 1903. He farmed in the Goose Lake district west of Saskatoon and is largely responsible for colonizing that area. He married Alice Mary Walker in 1904 and they raised four children: Jack, Douglas, Jean and Eileen.



Sutherland was active in politics locally and provincially. He was the first secretary-treasurer of Saskatoon and undertook its first assessment. He was a Town Councillor from 1904-1906. He resigned in February, 1906, having won a seat for the Liberals in the 1905 provincial election. He was Deputy Speaker during his first term and lobbied hard (and unsuccessfully) for Saskatoon to be named capital of the new province of Saskatchewan. He was able to help secure the University of Saskatchewan for Saskatoon, however. After his re-election in 1908 he served as Speaker of the legislature until 1912. He presided over the first sitting of the Legislature in the new Legislative Building. He was re-elected for a third term in 1912 and served as a MLA until 1917. He supported the bylaw to invest in Nutana Collegiate and was a member of the committee that founded St. Andrew's College. He chaired the Board of Management for St. Andrew's from 1912 until 1918.

From about 1908 until 1917 the Sutherlands had a large wheat farm known as Dunrobin Stock Farm east of Saskatoon, near the town of Sutherland (which was named in his honour). He traveled to Ontario and Scotland to acquire breeding stock. He bred Clydesdales and also specialized in Yorkshire hogs, shorthorn cattle and Shropshire sheep. He was the director of the Saskatoon Industrial Exhibition and was a director on several stock breeding organizations. His animals and poultry won several awards at fairs in Western Canada. In 1917 the farm was sold to the Kernan family who donated it to the University in 1977. In 1917 the family moved back to Ontario for health reasons. After returning for a visit in 1921, however, they decided to come back to Saskatoon for good.

Sutherland was an elder of Knox Presbyterian Church and supported the move to the United Church. He was one of ten businessmen who signed for the loan to buy the land and build the church. He enjoyed curling, and was a Mason as a member of the Saskatoon A.F. & A.M. lodge. He was also a founding member of the Saskatoon Club. He died on March 2, 1940, and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery. His widow Alice (died 18 April 1952) and daughters Jean (died 15 March 1981) and Eileen (died 22 September 1982) are also buried in Woodlawn.

(Photo LH 1687 courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library – Local History Room)

