The Big Rock, 1915.
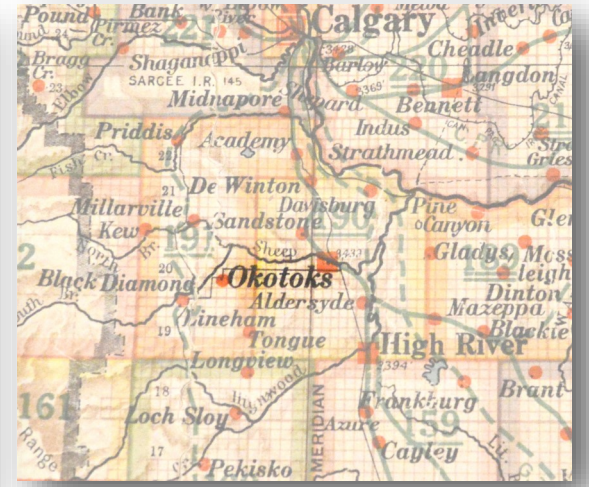

Okotoks, 1902

Okotoks

The name 'Okotoks' comes from the Blackfoot word 'óóhkotok' or 'okatok' which means 'rock' referring to the large glacial erratic located west of the present-day townsite. The rock was a significant landmark for the Blackfoot as they travelled through their traditional territory.

The Blackfoot language was an oral language. Early explorers attempted to create written words based on the pronunciation. That's why there are often different spellings on early maps and journals.

The first post office was established in John Macmillan's stopping house in 1884. This stopping house was one of two that established in the area to serve travellers on the Macleod Trail which linked Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary.

The first school in the area was built in 1890 and located close to the present-day D'Arcy Ranch farm house. It served the community for 10 years before a new school was built in the townsite.

Okotoks was incorporated as a village in 1893. It briefly changed its name to 'Dewdney' in the 1890s at the suggestion of John Lineham. Edgar Dewdney served as Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories from 1879 to 1888. It was changed back to Okotoks as another Dewdney already existed in British Columbia.

Okotoks was incorporated as a town in 1904, one year before Alberta became a province.

Okotoks has a population of 29,002 as of 2018.

Source: Century of Memories history book.

Edgar Dewdney