



# Central Alberta Historical Society Newsletter

Central Alberta  
Historical Society  
Newsletter  
Fall 2010

Layout &  
Edited by  
Shirley Dye

## CENTRAL ALBERTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15  
@ 7 PM

SNELL AUDITORIUM  
DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

### Inside This Issue:

AGM	1
Presidents Message	2
Remembering the Children	3
A Dream Realized	4
Hepburn Award	5
Bill Baergen's Bio	6
Church Tour	7
Our Precious Heritage	8

After the meeting;  
Michael Dawe will  
talk about "How  
Red Deer chooses  
street names"



## Note from President



Summer is coming to an end, and I hope all of you have had as many good days with family and friends as I did. Although we might not have had as many hot days as some summers, my garden flourished and I enjoyed many days outdoors. I hope

you, too, are all feeling refreshed and looking forward to this year's activities and CAHS programs.

Fall brings our AGM, on **Wednesday, September 15** (our usual meeting night) at **7:00 pm** in the Snell Auditorium at the downtown library. Following the business portion of the meeting, we are privileged to have Michael Dawe coming to talk to us about Red Deer street names and the histories contained in the choice of these names.

At the meeting, you will be able to pick up this year's brochure of programs, and have a chance to provide some input into both early planning for Red Deer's Centennial celebrations in 2013, and the Arches plaques design.

The following link came to me through the HSA, and is well worth perusing:

<http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/index-eng.jsp>

In particular, the 'Canada's got Treasures' link is really fun to view, and offers each and every one of us the chance to share our treasures with the rest of Canada. Pretty cool.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, and I look forward to seeing you all on September 15.

Sheila Bannerman

## CAHS Board 2009—2010

President	Sheila Bannerman	
Vice president	Dr Bill MacKay	Innisfail
Secretary	Dr Lu Piening	Lacombe
Treasurer	Gorm Hansen	
Past president	Dr Don Hepburn	
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Darlo Albreicht	
Rod Trentham	

### Contacts:

Central Alberta Historical Society  
4525 - 47A Ave  
Red Deer AB  
T4N 6Z6  
Fax 403-342-6644 Attention CAHS  
President: 403-347-7873  
email: [s.bannerman@hotmail.ca](mailto:s.bannerman@hotmail.ca)  
Membership: 403-343-1881  
**Visit our website**  
[www.albertahistory.org](http://www.albertahistory.org) Link CAHS



**"Remembering the Children"  
Ceremony at Fort Normandeau**

See story on page 3

## Remembering the Children

On June 30, 2010, I had the extraordinary experience of volunteering at the 'Remembering the Children' ceremonies held at Fort Normandeau. This intensely emotional event marked the long overdue recognition of the many untended and largely forgotten graves at the Red Deer Industrial School Cemetery, across the river from Fort Normandeau. It also served to recognize the suffering of the families, and the disturbing legacy of emotional pain still strongly felt by survivors and family members.

The following is a synopsis of the information provided at the ceremonies, by the Working Group responsible for the research and organization that culminated in this day of remembrance. Our own Don Hepburn has been deeply involved since 2005 when the existence of the cemetery was first brought to the attention of Sunnybrook United Church. The Working Group has and will continue to work for the preservation of the cemetery, and the sharing of the history and legacy of the school. In the current portion of this endeavour, Don worked closely with Lyle Keewatin-Richards and many Sunnybrook ministers, with Cecile Fausak of the United Church Residential Schools Committee, and with Paul Duval, Alberta and Northwest Conference staff minister.

The Red Deer Industrial School operated from 1893 to 1919, financed by the federal government, and managed by the Methodist Church. They felt that Christianity and the adoption of European ways through education was the Native peoples' only hope of survival.

The children came from the northern Alberta Methodist missions and Cree reserves known as Saddle Lake, Whitefish Lake, Goodfish Lake, James Seenum, Little Hunter and from around Hobbema and Pigeon Lake, and also from Nelson House in Manitoba. Children also came from the Stoney communities of White Whale (Paul), Sharphead and around Morley. Many students were also identified as "stragglers" which usually meant Metis, or "half-breed" descent.

From the beginning, there was insufficient funding for the school, a matter of great concern to the Methodists who struggled to provide adequate food, clean water, sanitation, clothing, medication and housing for the students. Like most Indian residential schools, there was a high illness and mortality rate among the students.

According to some reports, Red Deer Industrial School suffered the worst mortality rate of all comparable industrial schools during the period before 1907. The burials were once marked by white crosses and rounded wooden headboards, four of which have been preserved. Although 20 grave depressions have been positively identified, it is thought there may be as many as 50 burials at this site. ('Remembering the Children Ceremony' pamphlet, 2010. United Church of Canada).



### Reading the Student Register

The day began with a Stoney ceremony at the Cemetery, followed by a Cree ceremony at Fort Normandeau. Following the ceremonies, a Feast was held to remember the children. Speeches were made by the Grand Chiefs, the President of the Metis Nation of Alberta, a representative of the Government of Canada, the Moderator of The United Church of Canada, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, followed by Metis dancing and singing.

At Fort Normandeau, an Interpretive Centre tent held displays by the Red Deer and District Archives and the United Church Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some of the participants brought photos and memories to share with others in the tent, and spent considerable time reading the student registers. For many, this was a very personal and emotional journey.

From the Interpretive Centre tent, I witnessed the Cree ceremony, in which each name from the student registers was read out loud. Descendents or representatives of the families were given a small stone with a quotation or saying engraved on it. One stone for each name, received with heartache and accepted as a part of the healing process. This ceremony, and the stories I heard as a volunteer in the tent, affected me deeply. There is no way through reading history to understand the impact of these schools, and no way to understand the way that this history is internalized by those involved either in first-hand experience or through the legacy of a community of disinheritance. It was a humbling experience that I will never, ever forget.

Sheila Bannerman

## A Dream Realized by Pat McDonald

As I neared completion of *Where the River Brought Them* I had a goal solidly entrenched within me. That goal was to visit the place where David Thompson's remarkable journey began and the place where his journey ended. I have had the opportunity to visit the Grey Coat School twice in the past ten years with the kindness of the Headmistress Ms. Rachel Allard and have had the opportunity to tell Grey Coat students of the remarkable adventures of their Alumnus who became "The Mapmaker" the man who literally drew the map of Canada.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit the graves of David Thompson and his wife Charlotte Small in the Mount Royal Cemetery in Montreal. Snow was still on the ground but I did manage to clean a place in order to reveal the plaque of his beloved wife Charlotte, "*The Woman of the Paddle Song*".

People seek information about David and Charlotte on a daily basis and as my web site attests, over 150 thousand visitors from 118 countries have accessed this web.

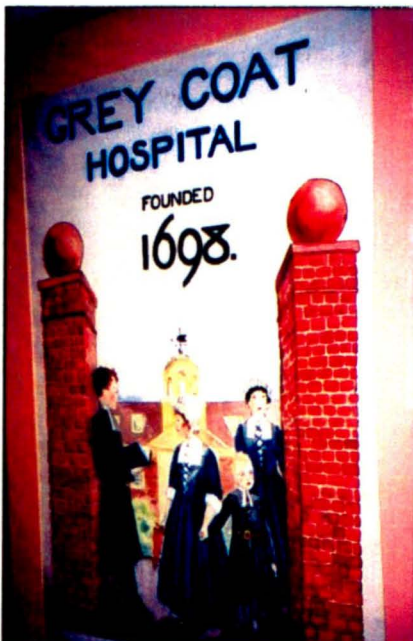
It was from the **Mountain House** that David Thompson mounted his two spectacular treks through Howse Pass and then through the Athabaska Pass effectively opening up the Trans Mountain Trade for years to come. I have often visited our Historic Site and sat on a bench overlooking the remains of Thompson's Northwest Company Post and thought of them here two hundred years ago. A glance at the North Saskatchewan River encourages a visitor to imagine the fur trade canoes arriving. It is not hard to envision Thompson and Charlotte in those canoes. The miles they covered, the rivers and mountains they traversed, and the hardships they endured in later years never weakened their great love for each other.

As I stood a few days ago in the Mount Royal Cemetery touching Thompson's Pillar I said a prayer for Charlotte Small and David Thompson and remembered the words of Robert Frost-

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*



Thompson's grave marker in Montreal



Pat with Grey Coat students in London England





## ***Honorary Lifetime Membership***

*"An Honorary Lifetime Membership may be presented ... to an individual member or former member of the society. To be eligible, the recipient must have provided meritorious service to the Historical Society of Alberta over a period of years"*

awarded to  
**Donald Hepburn**

*Nominated by: Ronald Williams*

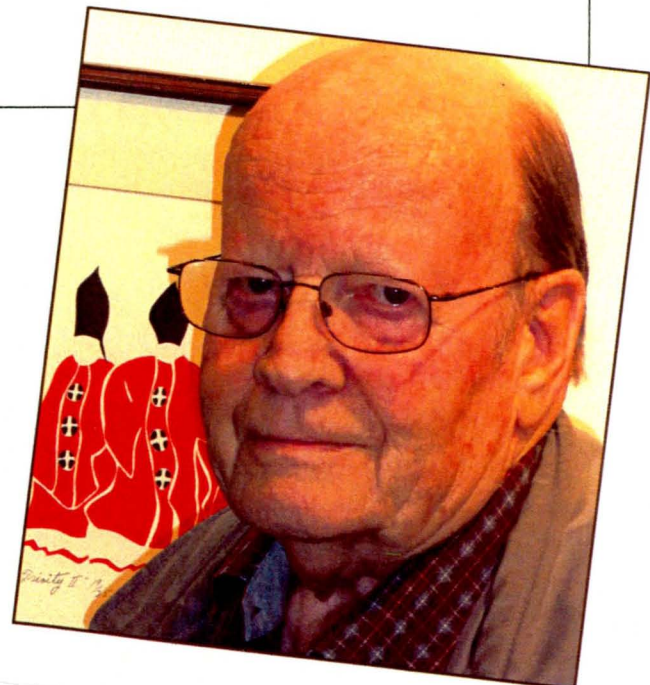
Through his quiet, patient, but persistent leadership style Don has made an astounding contribution to the promotion and dissemination of Alberta history — in the context of western Canada. His passion about the importance of history is combined with action. He just initiates projects, brings people along, and they happen — on many fronts.

Don Hepburn was a charter member of the Central Alberta Historical Society (CAHS) founded in 1995. He took on the presidency when Allen Armstrong passed away in March 1997. From its inception, Don Hepburn made an astounding, ongoing contribution to the vitality of this chapter. His quiet, determined leadership, his ability to bring people together to work in partnership on history and heritage initiatives, and his exceptional organizational skills had a profound impact when it comes to preserving, promoting and presenting Alberta's history.

Don served on the Publications Committee of the CAHS for several years. Early on, the publications committee partnered with the Red Deer and District Museum and later the Central Alberta Regional Museums Network to publish local history.

Don served on every committee of the Central Alberta Chapter and in most cases instrumental in the development and delivery of the activities of the Chapter since 1995. Don also served as President of The Historical Society of Alberta and co-chaired the 2005 Centennial Conference in Lloydminster with our sister Society, the Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society.

The Historical Society of Alberta is pleased to recognize your ongoing commitment as we offer you an Honorary Lifetime Membership to the Society.



Don Hepburn

## **My Biography** submitted by Bill Baergen

I can hear you saying: Does anybody remember asking Bill Baergen for his biography? Well, your editor-in-chief did, so here goes. And I know the rest of the board will do it too.

I was born in 1935 at Irma, Alberta, where I lived on a farm the first nine years of my life. My parents were Dutch Mennonite immigrants whose ancestors had moved from Holland to Prussia. In 1788 Katherine the Great of Russia invited Mennonites to farm the sreppes in the Ukraine, and promised them freedom of religion and exemption from military service. When these rights were taken away by the Russian Revolution in 1917, my parents emigrated to southern Alberta in 1925, then moved to the north in 1930. They had known each other in the Ukraine but were married in 1931 at Sedalia, then moved north to Irma.

After spending all his money digging dry wells for 12 years, Dad decided to move south to a farm at Vauxhall in 1944. Here, I attended a one-room school at Rossland, 14 miles from town for Grades 4-6. Bus rides to town school until Gr. Eleven, then off to Rosthern Jr. College, Saskatchewan, for Grade twelve, where I was suspended a week for going to a show on study night and breaking the two-week room arrest.

Two years at U of A, 1953-54, Faculty of Education, then my first teaching job in Brooks Jr. High. Trip to Europe fall 1956 to January 1957, taught Grade eight at Drayton Valley, back to Brooks as vice-principal in charge of Junior High fall 1957. Met Donna Green, nurse in Brooks, Married in August 1959, taught two months in Fort Assiniboine. Always summer schools between teaching terms. Got my B.Ed. in 1960, daughter Patricia Jo born October, 1960. 1960-1962 vice-principal in Wembley High School, coached basketball to County championship 1962. Taught Biology (didn't know a garter snake from a dandelion).

Back to University 1962-63 for B.A. in History. Son Grant born in 1963. Red Deer 1964-1968 taught Social Studies, English at Lindsay Thurber Composite High School. Met Don Hepburn there who was working for the College. Has been a lifetime friendship. 1967 to Fort Smith for 6 months-finished my MA thesis on the fur trade at Lesser Slave lake. Gave me knowledge of the Métis-now an abiding interest.

Second son James Garth born at Ft. Smith 1967-centennial project. Back to Red Deer for a year teaching.

Off to Whitecourt principalship 1968-70. Stettler in 1970 as Assistant Superintendent 1970-1985. University of Oregon for PhD 1982. Superintendent until 1991, retired. Researched Ku Klux Klan book, published 2000, in time for the provincial conference and AGM with help of Don Hepburn pushing Dennis Johnson, designer and layout man.

1995 invited by Morris Flewwelling to speak about my book at the charter night of CAHS on June 22. Was told then by Allan Armstrong if nobody published my book to come see the CAHS. Done. CAHS made a few thousand dollars on the book which were donated to the Starting Anew project-also spearheaded by our Donald.

School trustee 1994-2003 for Clearview School Division, Chairman last three years.

**PIONEERING WITH A PIECE OF CHALK** researched 2000 to 2005, published in 2005. CAHS tied up with different projects so self-published at cost of \$26,000. Printed 1000, sold them for \$40. each. Not earn \$14,000 clear because many gifts, advertising, and sold them for \$35 each if two or more purchased. Still netted \$10,000.

While chairman of the publication committee of CAHS helped Dr. David Jones of U of C edit Fred Schutz's **WEST OF THE BLINDMAN** columns for publication in 2003. While vice-president of the Historical Society of Alberta helped Lynn Norman and others put together our last book, Carl Morkeberg's **THE MARKERVILLE STORY** for publication in 2008.

**Métis Interest:** In 1987 attended the stage play **RIEL VS. THE QUEEN**, presented annually in Regina, then had it produced in Stettler, in which I played Riel, having memorized his Address to the Jury in 1885. I have presented it some 70 times to many Métis groups in Alberta and am continually impressed with their increasing pride in their heritage. In 2006, after a performance at Boss Hill, on Buffalo Lake, I was given a sash and pin and made an honorary Métis in Métis Unit #292, Region III, Métis Nation of Alberta.

Continued on page 7



**I'm proud to submit my picture with a new friend I made this summer from Whitefish River (See Atikameg). His name is Lester Grey, and he bought an old fishing boat that Donna's uncle had built in 1973 but was still going strong-maybe 7 miles an hour with the wind, driven by a 16-horse Briggs and Stratton engine.**

**Lester was very happy to have it and my whole family is so pleased that it was sold to a man who really wanted a boat and will look after THE SLAVIE.**

**Wrap this up: I've been honoured to have been involved with the publication committee of the CAHS since I joined in 1996. Don Hepburn has kept me busy on Provincial Council so I'm president of that now, for one more year.**

**In retirement, nothing has been as interesting to me as my connection with historical societies of Alberta and Métis development. A recent bus tour, DISCOVERING METIS, was a highlight for me and many others.**

**Our daughter, Patricia Jo (BA[.Hons].MFA) (now goes by Rishya) works on the Buckton Tower near Fort McMurray in summers and does industrial first aid around Fort St. John in winters. Son Grant (BEd, MA) married in Quebec, has three children, divorced, re-married, got two children into the bargain, principal of an English-speaking school, Riverside Regional, in Jonquiere. Second son, James Garth, MD, married Monica O'Gorman, MD, have three children, live in Canmore, where he will finish residency in December.**

## **Historic Churches Tour by Sheila Bannerman**

On June 16, 2010, Don Hepburn led a most interesting tour of historic churches south of Red Deer in Willowdale and Innisfail (and one in Red Deer).

The tour group of about 20 was lucky to tour Zion Presbyterian Church in Willowdale, as the last service was to be held the Sunday after our tour. Many of us were particularly taken with the stained glass windows, each of which had been donated in memoriam, and each of which represented Alberta views or flora in the vibrant colours of the parkland.

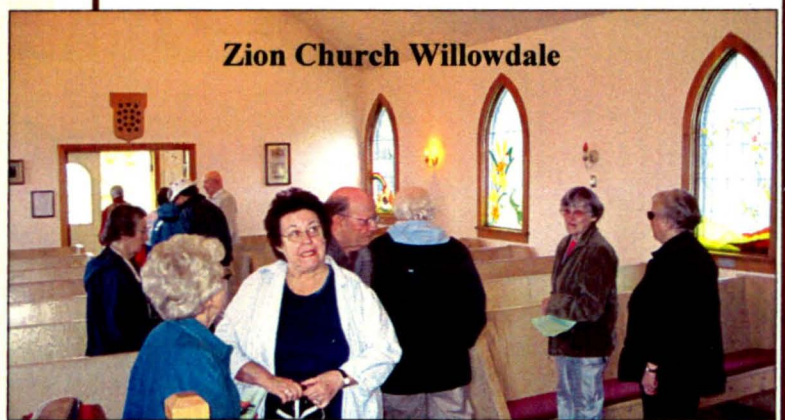
Our next stop was St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Innisfail, dating from 1892. The first minister of this church faced sectarian prejudice, and was accused of "poaching" Methodists, making his job interesting, to say the least! This unpretentiously pleasing church has an agreeable mix of original and newer fittings within the carefully maintained original building.

At the Historical Village in Innisfail, where we enjoyed our picnic lunches, we visited the Hespero Church, which was moved to Innisfail after its sale in 1976. The tiny church has a still working organ, a lovely old wood burning stove, and a continually growing register of marriages that have taken place inside the church.

St. Mark's Anglican Church was the largest church on our tour. Built in 1892, it serves a thriving congregation. Much grander than the previous churches on the tour, the church has original woodwork and a spectacular baptismal font. We were also shown a very interesting archive of photos and records of parishioners who served in WWI, WWII and the Korean War.

We ended our tour back in Red Deer at the New Life Tabernacle Church. Built in 1913, it has the distinction of being the oldest wooden church in Red Deer. Built at the foot of Michener Hill, it was moved to its current location across from the Associate Clinic, in 1920. The interior of the church has been refurbished, but with attention to maintaining the historical detail and architectural features of significance. This is particularly evident on the exterior.

Thanks to Don for a great day!



# OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE



## **Signing the Dominion-Provincial Agreement on Old Age Pensions in the office of the Minister of Labour, Ottawa May 1928**

Standing, L-R Saskatchewan Members of Parliament: Fred Johnston, Jack Vallance, Ed Young, Cameron MacIntosh R MacKenzie, Gordon Ross, Fred Totaky, George McPhee, Malcolm MacLean, William G Bock. (MP Bock is Faye Hughes grandfather)

Seated, L-R: Hon. Peter Hernan, Dr. Donnelley, John Miller, Hon. W Motherwell - Minister of Agriculture, Hon. MacKenzie King—P.M., Hon. Charles Dunning - Minister of Railways

The old age pension was available to British subjects aged 70 or over who had lived in Canada for 20 years. They were paid \$20.00 per month or \$240.00 per year. It was restricted to seniors whose income was less than \$365.00 per year. This was determined by a means test. Status Indians were excluded. Although eligibility was limited, the act was a modest beginning to a nationwide benefit for the poorest elderly.

Submitted by Faye Hughes