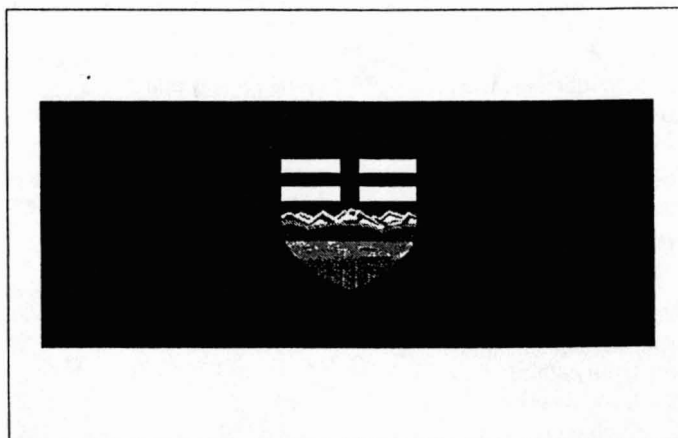


EDITORIAL MUSINGS

Recently I was browsing through some educational materials for primary school children. I came across a picture of the Alberta flag, with the following description: "Flag has a blue background. The centre crest is the Alberta provincial shield which consists of a red cross on a white background at the top (St. George's Cross), snow covered mountains, green hills, yellow prairie and yellow wheat sheaves." Sadly for the school children, this description omitted the rich history and sense of place that is Alberta. A flag is necessarily a representation of something, and I began to consider how the projects, speakers and tours of the Central Alberta Historical Society speak to the hidden history represented in our provincial flag.

This fall and early winter the Historical Society has sponsored speakers and discussed projects covering a wide range of local and provincial history. Sister Harriet Hermary remembered



ALBERTA FLAG

portions of convent history from several perspectives, recounted with fondness and humour. The stories of Joan Bamford Fletcher and of the surveyors who mapped this rugged and varied terrain reflected the grit and determination that is often seen as typical of

the Western Canadian psyche. Our upcoming events, too, from participation in the David Thompson Bicentennial tour and events to the 2006 tour celebrating Metis history take part in mountains, on plains and rivers. History is never boring.

HISTORY SYMPOSIUM MARCH 4, 2006 9:00-3:00 RED DEER COLLEGE 2300 WING

Red Deer College is presenting a History Symposium featuring work by students from the college and by senior students from Red Deer high schools.

Symposia such as these are avenues for students to learn the art of presentation, and provide the public with information and insight on topics that may be outside the

range of general reading habits.

Students also gain experience in answering questions relating to their presentations, preparing them for future academic conferences and symposia.

This is an excellent opportunity for interested members of the community to support future historians.

**DAVID THOMPSON
BICENTENNIAL**

The International David Thompson Bicentennial Committee will be meeting at Ft. Edmonton Park in March. Agenda items will include plans for the launch of the Bicentennial.

Broad themes being considered include:

- Indigenous perspectives
- Women and children of the fur trade
- Repatriation and spiritual trails of the Kootenays
- Scandals of the fur trade
- music

The David Thompson tour taking place in April will continue tracing the path of David Thompson west of Rocky Mountain House through the Howse Pass.

For further information on both the meeting and the tour contact Dr. Pat McDonald at pjmac@telusplanet.net or by telephone at (403) 845-5698.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Many thanks to the organizers and volunteers of the Homestead Christmas, held December 5 at the Golden Circle in Red Deer. By all accounts this event was

SISTER HARRIET HERMARY

In her talk "End of an Era of Caring, Faith and Education" Sister Harriet Hermary provided an overview of the history of St. Joseph's Convent in Red Deer.

In 1908 a mission was constructed on the hillside on the north of the Red Deer River by the priests of Ste. Marie de Tinchebray and Les Filles de la Sagesse (Daughters of Wisdom). St. Joseph's convent was constructed as an adjunct to the mission by the Daughters of Wisdom, intending to provide a boarding school for rural students, but also accepting day students from Red Deer and area.

Sister Harriet's history was a very personal history in which she gave an outline of the busiest years of the convent, punctuated with personal perception and memory. Originally a student in the 1940s and 50s, she decided to take orders and eventually taught at the convent herself.

The convent was a well-loved Red Deer institution, with day students of both sexes from both Protestant and Catholic homes, many of whom attended for the superior education their families believed was offered. Besides an academic education, girls were taught traditional skills such as needlework and piano playing in an environment at once strict and loving. Sister Harriet had many memories of playing games with the nuns and being a part of the perpetration of practical jokes, some not so well received!

At its peak, St. Joseph's counted in the range of one hundred day and boarding students, but in the latter half of the twentieth century saw fewer and fewer students enrolled. The number of nuns entering the Daughters of Wisdom began to decline rapidly until the school was no longer a viable proposition.

St. Joseph's Convent's later years were as a retirement home for a declining number of nuns, but it has a solid place in the history of education in Central Alberta and a solid place in the hearts of its former students.

**HISTORIC RED DEER WEEK AND
OPEN DOORS RED DEER: MAY 6-13 2006**

Historic Red Deer Week and Doors Open Red Deer is:

- A full week in May
- A community building event
- An opportunity for ethnic organizations to celebrate their cultures and heritage
- An opportunity for individuals to become involved through their contribution of time, money and talent
- An opportunity for businesses to demonstrate their interest in and support for our history and heritage
- An opportunity for free tours of buildings, parts of buildings, or historically significant areas of Central Alberta such as parks, cemeteries, bridges, churches etc.

For more information contact Don Hepburn at donalddh@shaw.ca

To become a participator contact Sheryl Krill at sh_krill@telus.net

CPR PARK

Planning for the park has taken place in many phases, as befits such a major undertaking.

The old CPR fountain has been recovered and installed in the park on the west end of Alexander Way, not far from the old railway station.

Plans include a garden to reflect the importance of the CPR in horticultural history, and a series of arches around

one side of the fountain, representing a roundhouse.

At this time, the committee is reviewing the proposed artistic representations that will appear on the arches in a permanent format. Both materials and subject matter are being evaluated in terms of the desired impact of the project.

Works on the arches are intended to complement the

already existing ghosts and murals and to further engage both residents and visitors.



Fountain circa 1903

LAYING DOWN THE LINES: A HISTORY OF LAND SURVEYING IN ALBERTA
BY JUDY LARMOUR
 CALGARY: BRINDLE AND GLASS PUBLISHING, 2005

In her talk "With Transit, Chains and Endurance," Judy Larmour related interesting stories, taken from her book, of adventure and heartache among early surveyors of Alberta's north. It is difficult to understand the incredible dedication these men brought to a job that required painstakingly careful work in often almost impossible conditions. One surveyor, Thomas Chalmers, with the help of a road cutting crew managed to cut a trail of what was then considered an astounding 100 miles over the spring and summer of 1888! In an attempt to hasten the progress of settlement at Athabasca Landing, the trail was promoted as being "passable for heavily loaded vehicles," which, in actual practice, was most definitely not true, occasioning a sad waste of horses, time and energy.

Surveyors' supply caches were often plundered by bears and other animals, resulting in the need to be resourceful and adventurous in maintaining a food supply. Bear meat, venison and porcupine were all candidates, and at times there were less palatable options. At least one surveyor had to use improvised survey stakes after a harrowing river accident, causing confusion a century later when the unconventional stakes were recovered.

The story of surveying the north is also the story of settlement and railway building, and intimately connected with the discovery of oil and gas. Players in the field were entrepreneurs, swindlers, educated men and company men; sometimes their families and frequently their dogs. The history of surveying is both technical and human, and Ms. Larmour eloquently described the interplay of both.

Related articles: "Tom Wilson" and "Letters Home" in *Alberta History* Winter 2006.

2006 TOUR
METIS IN THE WEST

Somehow, in telling the story of the West, we only hear about the Metis in connection with the Rebellion of 1885. Everywhere else, the Metis are missing. What about the rest of their story? Metis history will be the focus of this year's tour.

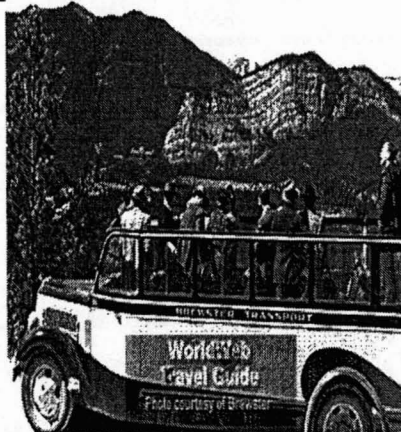
People of Mixed Blood played an important role in the development of our province and the West. At the time that Manitoba became a province, the great majority of the people who lived at the Red River Settlement had Aboriginal ancestors. In fact, the 1870 census showed that 10,000 of the 11,000 people who live there were of mixed ancestry.

Metis people are frequently represented in historic presentations of music and dance or the fur trade, but it is not often remembered that they were also buffalo hunters, trail and survey guides, farmers and ranchers, freighters, tradesmen, and entrepreneurs.

Many in the Red Deer area have heard of the Metis town at Trail Creed, once the largest settlement between the Red River and the Pacific coast. Some are familiar with Metis names such as McKenzie, Monkman, Wishart, Cardinal and others, but we do not know their stories.

The tour will take place in early June 2006 and will cost in the range of \$450 per person—a real bargain!

For further information, contact Don Hepburn at 342-2245.



The tour itinerary is not yet settled, but consideration is being given to the following:

- Rundle Mission on Pigeon Lake
- Century old pilgrimage site at Lac Ste. Anne
- Metis settlements then and now
- Musee Heritage at St. Albert
- Lac la Biche Mission
- St. Paul des Cris and St. Paul des Metis
- Dreamspeaker festival in Edmonton

READER'S CORNER

Did you know that the CAHS publishes quality books covering many areas of historic interest?

Titles will soon be available in the Red Deer and District Museum bookshop.

The publications committee would like volunteers to help with current projects. Two titles are being re-issued and need editorial and preface revision. Writing/editing skills are essential.

Please contact Bill Bargaen at (780) 742-2471

2006 CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

MAY 26-28 2006

AT THE GALT MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES, LETHBRIDGE ALBERTA

For conference information and registration contact Marion Snowden at (403)327-2662

CENTRAL ALBERTA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meetings are held at 7:30
pm
in the Stewart Room at the
Red Deer and District
Museum,
4525 47A Avenue

President: Don Hepburn
Past President: Dr. Robert
Lampard
Vice-President: Janet Walters
Secretary: Dr. Liu Piening
Treasurer: Marion Hives
Membership: Faye Hughes

Program coordinator:
Shirley Dye 346-5218

Newsletter Editor :
Sheila Bannerman
sheila.bannerman@hotmail.
com

DON'T FORGET THESE UPCOMING PROGRAMS!!!

Thursday Feb. 16: *The Tom and Norma Stewart Story*. The Stewart Brothers' enterprise and its contribution to community building in the Penhold area.

Thursday March 16: *Bones and Things: Fur Trade Reburial at Rocky Mountain House*. The precedent setting repatriation and reburial of disinterred remains. One of the interesting mysteries that will be discussed is the discovery of two skulls, but no bones!

Thursday April 20: *Canadienne-francaise de l'Alberta*. Francophone and Metis contributions to the history of Alberta.

Thursday May 18: *Ten Grandmothers*. Blackfoot women recall their history and in the process negate some of the stereotypical myths about native traditions.

HISTORIC RED DEER WEEK: MAY 6-13

MEMBERS NEEDED

Please remember to renew your memberships!!!

Programs offered by the Central Alberta Historical Society continue to be well attended although membership is falling.

Please remember that the programs you attend and participate in are not the only work the society engages in, and it is the membership contributions that enable a varied and valuable contribution to the publicizing, preservation, and exploration of Alberta history.

For membership information contact Faye Hughes at 343-1881.