

SMOKE SIGNALS

Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District Newsletter

Image Courtesy: Esplanade Archives 0055-0863



President's Message

Medicine Hat and District Historical Society

Next Meeting:

January 30th @ 7pm
Esplanade Studio Theatre

That old saying 'Time Waits for No One' certainly is true. I came into this world in the 1940's decade and here we are at the start of the 2020's decade. Boy, it really does remind us how fast those years fly by and correspondingly how much we age in the process.

Speaking of age, I note that a great majority of our membership are senior citizens. Now, the great thing about being a senior and retired, is that you should have more free time on your hands. Many seniors get involved with projects that help improve the overall quality of life for our community. Some of our retired citizens may be looking for an ideal project that gets them involved with a limited commitment of time and yet rewards them with a sense of satisfaction of being involved with something of interest that they can enjoy.

Yes, I'm talking about giving some of your time to working with your historical society in the capacity of committee service. In most cases we are talking about one or two hours per month! Where else can you get that wonderful feeling of accomplishment? So, please consider giving a small amount of your time to your Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District. You will be surprised how much reward and sense of satisfaction can be gained and you do so, knowing that you are helping preserve our history for future decades to come!

Happy New Year to you all and please make one of your New Year's resolutions to get involved and help us to continue the good work of our society and its stated goal as an organization of members who desire to research and preserve the history of our city, district, province and country.

Sincerely,

Wayne Craven

President, Historical Society

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Programmes

Show & Tell with the Historical Society

Our upcoming programme for the January 30, 2020 meeting is a riveting evening of Show-and-Tell by our very own Historical Society Members.

Set up will begin at 6:30pm for our exhibitors in the Esplanade Studio Theatre. Business meeting will commence at 7:00pm, with the "Show-and-Tell" program to follow.

Please note that you should have at least **two persons** responsible for each display. This way, one person can trade off with the other, and allows each participant time to view other exhibits. If you are interested in participating as an exhibitor, please call Allan Jensen at 403-502-9006 as soon as possible. Tables and set up space is limited, so please contact Allan if you are interested in exhibiting your memorabilia to our Members during Show-and-Tell.

Not sure of what to bring? See below for an example of an excellent item brought to us for our last Show-and-Tell program in 2019. We look forward to what new and exciting historical objects you will choose to share with us at our Show-and-Tell program later this month.



Image Courtesy of June Picotte

Stone points collected from the Bindloss Area, arranged together, mounted and framed. June brought this stunning example to the Historical Society Show-and-Tell evening in 2019

Historical Society Showcase Opportunity

While attending Show-and-Tell, please take the time to visit the current display of artifacts in the Esplanade lobby (along the East Wall). We invite you to display artifacts from your collection for a period of time. Want to be featured? Phone Allan at 403-502-9006 to discuss this exciting opportunity.

A Sign of the Times

How Advertisements affected Our Boom & Bust

By J.U. Barrientos

For better or for worse, advertisements tell an interesting side to the history of Medicine Hat. I would argue that we wouldn't be the city we are today, if it wasn't for low down, right dishonorable and completely deceptive advertising practices. Was it the right thing to do? Well, it certainly wasn't uncommon.

Take a look at the picture I chose for the front of the newsletter. The prospering, booming, oil-rich Imperial Oil Company [picture circa 1920], with the front of the building literally stocked overflowing with hundreds of oil barrels. But does something seem a little off? If you can take a closer look at the line that comes down the mid-left of the photograph, you might notice it's been cut. As well, the barrels of oil seem shaded differently than the background buildings. This is because it is actually a doctored photograph. The two images have been cut and glued together, to make it appear that the Imperial Oil Company is bustling with production. Many of these style of advertisement "little white lies" were used very simply for promotion purposes. Of course you would want your company to put the best face forward; even if you have to do a little cutting and gluing to get it just right.

Yet this practice of directed advertising goes back even further in Medicine Hat's history. Prior to the widespread use of television media, many people received their news from newspapers and printed magazines. And what better way to get people to move to our area, than to do a little bit of directive promotion. Take a look at the advertisement below [circa 1913] and notice the extravagant population estimates: 30,000 people by 1914! Of course, this never came to fruition--In fact, it took us well into the 1960s before our population reached over 25,000 people. This is just a selection of the entire full page advertisement that was used to generate a huge buzz in our area. "Fortunes made", it reads, "inexhaustible supply of natural gas", it continues, " and houses sold as fast as they can be erected!"

5 YEARS' TERMS OF FINANCE
WHERE REQUIRED.

£100,000

FOR

£5

WITH GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED TITLE TO FREEHOLD LAND SECURITY.

HOW FORTUNES ARE BEING MADE FROM INVESTMENTS IN CANADIAN LAND.

The following extracts are from the London "Daily Express," dated June 12th, 1913:—

RECORD BOOM IN CANADA.

GREAT FORTUNES MADE BY LAND OPERATORS.

£100,000 FOR £5. "Express" Correspondent. Montreal, May 31. A block of land in Edmonton, Alberta, changed hands a few days ago for £100,000; twenty-in years ago the same block was sold for £5. These figures tell the story of a Canadian real estate boom without a parallel on the American Continent and probably without an equal anywhere. There is scarcely a clerk, shopkeeper, or wage-earner of any kind who has not feverishly invested his savings in a piece of land, hoping for a quick "turnover." It is estimated that in Winnipeg alone there are dozens of men who have made fortunes owing simply to the enormous rise in value due to the boom. One man bought a lot in Winnipeg for £200 a few years ago; last summer he sold it for £1,000.

Here are some farther examples which have come under our own notice.

40 lots, 2½ miles from the centre of a large Canadian Western town, were purchased at \$80 per lot. Circumstances compelled the owner to resell in two months but he realised a profit of \$10 per lot. The man to whom he sold, owing to an unforeseen local development, resold in twelve months at prices varying from 250 to 275 dollars per lot.

The decision of the Canadian Pacific Railway to build their western car shops in Calgary caused land in the vicinity to jump from \$20 per acre to \$2,000 per acre.

One fortunate man, after holding some City lots for five years, sold them for \$15,000 each, having only paid \$300 each in the first instance.

HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY
In the most extraordinary City in the World—**MEDICINE HAT.**

HOW MEDICINE HAT IS GROWING.

Figures that show a growth	1909	Population	-	3,000
almost like Aladdin's Palace.	1910	do.	-	4,000
	JAN. 1913	do.	-	12,000
	NOW	do.	-	16,000

MEDICINE HAT is estimated to have **30,000** before the end of next year.

SOME EXTRAORDINARY OFFICIAL FACTS

Monday, February 5, 1917.

MEDICINE HAT, D.

CITY OF MEDICINE HAT—LIST OF LANDS LIABLE FOR SALE FOR ARREARS OF TAXES IN THE CITY OF MEDICINE

Roll No.	Assessed Owner.	Lot.	Block.	Plan.	Name of Sub-Division.	Amount of Taxes.	Interest.	Costs.	Total.	Roll No.	Assessed Owner.	Lot.	Block.	Plan.
4814	Larder, L. E., Graham, W., Mitchell, J. R., Court, W.	8 1/2	10	1970M	"	9.82	101	1.50	12.13	6005	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-30	9	1550AK
4821	Larder, L. E., Graham, W., Mitchell, J. R., Court, W.	All	17	1970M	"	52.90	5.72	1.50	61.12	6009	Lowes & Co., F. C.	21-40	9	1550AK
4941	Martin, G.	E. 1/4 of N.E. 1/4	20	1970M	"	6.74	71	1.50	8.95	6015	Hornblower, E. S.	1-19	10	1550AK
4949	McGillivray, A. W.	W. 1/4 of N.E. 1/4	20	1970M	"	6.73	71	1.50	8.94	6019	Hornblower, E. S.	20-38	10	1550AK
4951	Costello, J. P.	8 1/2	20	1970M	"	44.95	6.26	1.50	52.81	6025	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-19	11	1550AK
4956	Grossman, M.	8 1/2	21	1970M	"	26.85	2.86	1.50	31.31	5029	Lowes & Co., F. C.	20-38	11	1550AK
5033	Wales, Smithson & Whiting	W. 1/2	29	1970M	"	36.95	2.86	1.50	31.31	6035	Lowes & Co., F. C.	2-16	13	1550AK
5049	Wales, Smithson and Whiting	All	30	1970M	"	53.90	5.72	1.50	61.12	6035	Cope, E. H.	21-30	13	1550AK
5074	Smith, Dr. A. E.	300' of N. 1/2	34	1970M	"	23.10	2.45	1.50	27.05	6063	Howell, T.	5-12	14	1550AK
5078	Malr, A.	8 1/2	34	1970M	"	17.32	1.93	1.50	20.75	6064	Liddle, A.	13-16	14	1550AK
5085	McLaughlin, Mrs. H. L.	N. 1/4	35	1970M	"	23.10	2.45	1.50	27.05	6065	Allan, T. C.	17-18	14	1550AK
5090	Malr, A.	8 1/2	35	1970M	"	9.62	1.01	1.50	12.13	6066	Turner, N.	19-20	14	1550AK
5116	Aird, J.	1-18	40	5978AV	"	21.94	2.32	1.50	25.76	6069	Lowes & Co., F. C.	25-30	14	1550AK
5119	Dagleish, D. and A.	20-24	40	5978AV	"	6.80	62	1.50	7.92	6072	Allen, T. G.	21-32	14	1550AK
5122	Barnes, R. A.	25-30	40	5978AV	"	11.43	1.17	1.50	14.10	6087	Bercuson, H.	1-2	16	1550AK
5125	Dagleish, D. and A.	31-38	40	5978AV	"	9.22	1.92	1.50	11.74	6088	Mitchell, B. F.	3-6	16	1550AK
5126	Calkins, Mrs. C.	1-4	A	8590AH	Riverdale	16.37	1.74	1.50	19.61	6089	Morrell, J. D. G.	7-8	16	1550AK
5147	Med. Hat Law T. C.	21-40	B	8590AH	"	59.01	6.35	1.50	66.86	6093	Montgomery, T.	23-26	16	1550AK
5173	Howell, T.	9-18	1	8590AH	"	26.85	2.86	1.50	31.31	6094	Hill, F.	27-28	16	1550AK
5190	Soans, J. H.	6-9	3	8590AH	"	12.95	2.38	1.50	15.13	6095	Hill, R.	29-30	16	1550AK
5193	Haw, J. A.	14-16	3	8590AH	"	9.24	1.02	1.50	11.76	6096	Nubel, J. F.	31-32	16	1550AK
5195	Holm W.	18	3	8590AH	"	3.08	32	1.50	4.90	6098	Avery, H.	34	16	1550AK
5197	Haw, J. A.	21-22	3	8590AH	"	6.36	68	1.50	8.64	6117	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-20	18	1550AK
5218	Todd, H. E.	1-12	6	8590AH	"	39.47	4.19	1.50	45.16	6121	Lowes & Co., F. C.	21-40	18	1550AK
5221	Weatherston, Mrs. A.E.	19-20	6	8590AH	"	6.74	71	1.50	8.95	6128	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-18	19	1550AK
5223	Anderson, Dr.	21-22	6	8590AH	"	6.54	69	1.50	8.73	6132	Lowes & Co., F. C.	25-40	19	1550AK
										6143	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-19	20	1550AK
										6147	Lowes & Co., F. C.	20-38	20	1550AK
										6153	Lowes & Co., F. C.	1-19	21	1550AK
										6157	Lowes & Co., F. C.	20-38	21	1550AK

Average tax arrears in 1917 were \$29. Or, \$580 in today's dollars. A hefty price to pay for worthless land

Unfortunately, things didn't turn out as rosy as "Aladdin's Palace" would have you believe. While it is true that we had a significant influx of people to the area, enticed by the idea (and advertisements!) of abundant lands, jobs, and natural gas, with the outbreak of WWI, Medicine Hat's growth came to a grinding halt. As you can see in the above full, two page spread in the Medicine Hat News [February, 1917], the list of lands liable for sale due to arrears of taxes suddenly numbered in the thousands. Was it really only WWI that turned our greatest boom into our greatest bust?

I would argue that while WWI did make significant social impacts to Medicine Hat's boom & bust cycle in the 1900s, you need to look deeper than the surface. For example, the two page list of properties in tax arrears. When you take the lot, block, and plans of these properties, you see that most of them aren't what you would expect. Many are *not* single family dwellings that were hit hard with the head of the household away for war. In fact, many, if not all, of these properties are out on the literal outskirts of town; indeed, almost none of them actually hosted a house or building at all. These were mainly lands sold to often unsuspecting dreamers, who had heard the tale of Medicine Hat's boom, and fell hook, line and sinker. They purchased speculated lands, sold sight-unseen on the 'idea' that they would be valuable one day, and lost their fortune when it very quickly didn't pan out. Many were unable to farm such difficult lands, and were forced to find other ways to make a living; often by leaving Medicine Hat entirely.

Perhaps you could call it false advertising, or perhaps just overly optimistic, the call of Medicine Hat at one time was so alluring it brought people from all over the world. While some did take their lives elsewhere, still others fell in love with our little part of the world, and made themselves a place here. Maybe some have a less-than-happy tale to tell, but I still think of Medicine Hat fulfilling that prophecy of the "Most Extraordinary City in the World". Just, maybe a little slower than the oil-tycoons, advertisers and land speculators predicted.

A Call for Volunteers

Become a Board and/or Committee Member with the Historical Society

It's that time of year when we need to have a good look at the future makeup of our Board and supporting Committees, in preparation for our AGM in May. We have a very strong Board at the moment, but our current Board Members can always use support for their tasks, through membership on the Committees they may head. Committee membership is also an excellent way to become involved in the operation of your Society, and an introduction to possible Board Membership.

We will be approaching potential candidates for Board Membership over the next few months. If you are at all interested in being on the Board, don't hesitate to make your wishes known! We are now appealing to you, our Members, to ***please come forward*** and offer your time and expertise to these important tasks...the activities can be a lot of fun, and will help ensure the long-term smooth operation of the Medicine Hat and District Historical Society.

The following are committees led by one of your Board Members:

- Casino – Application preparation and organizing Casino Events (every 18 months)
- Finance/Treasurer – Annual budget preparation and bi-monthly reports from Bookkeeper
- History & Archives – Maintaining history and records of Society
- Membership – List maintenance and updates
- Newsletter – Preparation of 5-6 newsletters per Year
- Preservation & Research – HRC representation
- Programs – General Program presentations
- Publications – Maintaining publications inventory at various sales sites
- Social – Christmas Dinner and other events
- Website – Updating and maintenance
- Promotion & Publicity – Newspaper and Media Advertising and Notifications

If you are interested in helping your Society by donating a few hours per month working with energetic and positive Board Members, please let me know and we will do our best to accommodate you!

TOM HAMP

Past President



**The Historical Society of
Medicine Hat & District**

Brief History of Coffee

The Bean that Changed the World

By Wes Krause

The mere word elicits a response in most that either brings out pleasure, satisfaction, relaxation or utter disgust. The magical bean has, in many ways changed the world. But where did it come from? Though not precise, there is general agreement among historians that coffee was first discovered in the mountains of Ethiopia (Abyssinia). According to legend, a goat herder named Kaldi discovered Coffee's unique properties in the 8th Century AD. After observing the animated and lively reaction of his goats after consuming a red berry, he decided to give it try. After consuming a few berries himself, he felt a surge of energy, as many of us can relate to. Word spread in the area named Kaffa and soon Kaffa became a Coffee growing hub as word of this magical nectar spread across the globe.

But not without controversy, coffee's history takes a turn when "A Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee Houses" was issued by King Charles II of England in 1675. This rule was revoked in 1676 due to widespread citizen protest. The previous and following centuries proved to be an incredible time in the development and widespread acceptance of Coffee as it finally reached all of Europe and the Americas.

Interesting dates in Coffee's history include; in 1773 Anti-England sentiment in the American Colonies precipitated the Boston Tea Party in protest. From this point forward Coffee gained substantial popularity as a beverage of protest and expression of Freedom. The famed Maxwell House brand was created by a grocer named Joel Creek in 1886, naming his blend after a Nashville Hotel. In 1900 the Hills Brothers began vacuum packing ground Coffee, which caused many Coffee mills and small roasters to go out of business. Developments in Coffee production through the 1900s are too numerous to mention in a short discussion of the "Nectar of the Gods".

A cup of coffee brewed to your taste, warm layers of wool clothing and a newspaper in one hand, life really couldn't be better, or more Canadian, at that moment. Now enter Tim Hortons and their extreme popularity to virtually all Canadians. The meaning of the phrase, "Double Double" is common knowledge in Canada. Admittedly not everyone is taken by the taste and soothing characteristics of Coffee, but it's a part of our Canadian Identity.

QUICK FACT: In 2015, a research study ranked Canada as No. 1 in the world (out of 80 countries) in coffee consumption per capita!

For more detailed information on this unique subject, contact Wes Krause, our own caffination historian.

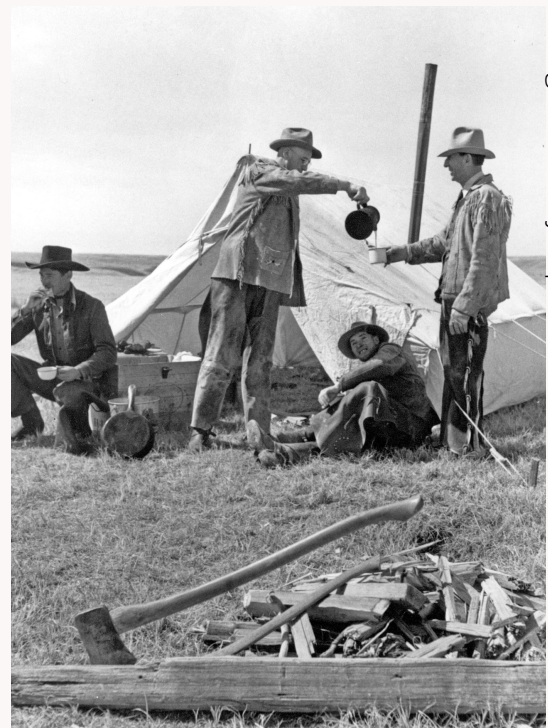


Image Courtesy Esplanade Archives

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Preserving your Own History

Family and Personal Materials are Important Assets

by J. U. Barrientos

Let me start off by saying, I am pretty much the luckiest person around. I get to wake up most mornings and head off to my dream job here at the Esplanade Archives. But to some, a day's work spent organizing and preserving family papers and photographs is something you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy.

To start, you need to look at things in a different way. Papers, negatives, slides, documents, and printed photographs are treasured items that should be preserved. Something need not be a million-dollar art piece to classify as archival. Local history, family history or personal histories are just as important. These could eventually become the backbone to your family's story, or help future generations understand their past.

People often ask: what's the best way to preserve these items so they last? The three main factors you need to watch out for are: light, moisture, and acid. Any combination of those can wreak havoc on your primary source materials. Try and keep documents in envelopes or boxes marked "acid-free". A sharpie-style marker can have a lot of different uses, but are actually VERY acidic. The data in a CD can last up to 100 years, but when you use an acidic marker to write over the fragile layer on the front of a disc, it's putting the information at risk. Instead, write on the outside of the disc's storage case, or, failing that, try purchasing an acid-free marker.



1070.0430

Image Courtesy of the Esplanade Archives

We suggest that when at all possible, try and keep items dry, and away from direct sunlight. Also, while it might be a strange thought, you might need to focus on the *newer* items in your collection, rather than the antiques. Photographs from the 1800s are actually more stable than a VHS tape, which only has a life expectancy of 10-25 years! Likewise, a magnetic tape, (like the ones used in tape-recorders), can begin to deteriorate within 30 years. Digitization of items is a good option, but keep in mind that USB storage sticks are not designed for long term storage. Your best bet is to try and get your collection into a CD/DVD/Blu-ray disc, and keep the sharpie markers far away.

Maybe as another New Year's Resolution, you could take a look through your own primary materials, and make a plan for long-term storage.

Membership Dues

Join the Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District

Your membership to the Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District allows you to cast your vote on deciding factors at our meetings, as well as receive 5 editions of our Smoke Signals Newsletter via email or printed copy. New to the Historical Society? You can pay your membership dues by cheque or cash. Please make cheques payable to: **The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District**, 401 1 Street SE, Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 8W2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Fees attached for _____ person(s) at \$10 per person, for a total of: \$ _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

In Memoriam

David Spencer 1944 - 2019

We are saddened to hear of the loss of one of our own. Of note, David, a longtime Historical Society Member, participated in an Oral History interview in 2017 with Allan Jensen, about David's Ranching and Farming legacy. The interview can be viewed at the Esplanade Archives.

Word of Thanks

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District partners with the Esplanade Archives in preserving and promoting our rich heritage. The Archives are a valuable resource for family research and local historical information. To make an appointment at the Archives, please call 403-502-8582, or email Jenni U. Barrientos at jenutr@medicinehat.ca. The Archives are located at 401 1 Sttreet SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8W2, and as always, are free for you to use.

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District website: www.histsocmedhat.ca

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