

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

of Medicine Hat and District Newsletter

Image Courtesy Department of National Defence
DND CN.6504

Image of HMCS Valleyfield



President's Message

Medicine Hat and District Historical Society

Hello Members;

My first President's report! We have had a busy summer around town. We gave the budgeted money to the Friends of Medalta and funds to help Etzikom. Photos below of myself and Melinda Arthur (Chair of the Friends of Medalta Society) during our cheque presentation.

I am writing this in my hotel room in Quebec City with tons of sweat pouring off my head from a walk back uphill from the convention centre to my hotel. Wow, is it muggy outside. Glad we don't get this in Medicine Hat!

Our first general meeting will be in the Esplanade theater on the 27th of September, a Wednesday. Starting soon, we will also be holding our meetings in a blended format with both in-person and Zoom available at the same time. Hopefully this will enable more people to attend, as well as increase the ability of speakers from a great distance giving presentations to us. Looking forward to giving it a try.

In upcoming news, our Christmas dinner will be at the Medicine Hat Golf and Country Club. We are joining members of the Archeology Society and Friendship Force for this event on December 5th. More information will be provided at our September 27th meeting.

Looking forward to a good turnout to our general meeting, and an exciting new programme, hosted by our very own Bruce Sheppard.

All the Best,
Judy Morris
Historical Society President

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Sept 27 @ 7pm
Esplanade Studio Theatre



In this Issue

- President's Message · 1
- Programmes · 2
- Tony Frost · 3
- Tony Frost, con't · 4
- Carleton Flath · 5
- Membership · 6
- This Day in History · 6
- Board of Directors · 6

Programmes

History is not The Past

by R.B. Shepard

Announcements that hundreds of possible grave sites had been found at former Residential School locations across Canada have sparked varied emotional reactions in the country. For some, it has been a sorrowful confirmation of family and community stories of lost loved ones. Others have seen it as a vengeful attack on the very foundations of the country.

In our great southern neighbour, some states have been busy re-writing school curriculum so that racial slavery, and racially inspired violence, seems to be less severe. Educators have been told what to teach, and what not to discuss, on pain of dismissal from their positions. Others have published graphic depictions of some of the most horrendous examples of human violence and there have been calls for monetary compensation for the descendants of those who suffered.

In both North American countries, statues of former political figures have been attacked, defaced, and destroyed. There have been campaigns to have streets and schools re-named. There have also been marches, demonstrations, and protests.

Almost universally what all of these events have in common is the varied use of past events, their meaning, and interpretations of them. Social media seems at times to be filled with calls to change history or to cling to it. Tragically, far too many of these claims and counter-claims misuse the word history as a synonym for the past apparently not realizing that history is not, and cannot be, the past.



With a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree and a Masters of Arts degree, both in History, our Director of Programs, R.B. Shepard, is positioned to lead a discussion on this topic. He also holds a Doctorate in multi-disciplinary studies which included the examination of other research methodologies, including Politics, Sociology, and Economics.

He has had a history book published, co-edited a work of political essays, and been the author of dozens of articles and book reviews which have appeared in international, national, and local journals.



Image Courtesy of the Calgary Herald -- STUART GRADON

What's in a Name?

Anthony Pydee to Tony Frost: A Dramatic Connection

By J. Barrientos

At times, the simplest connection can be so elusive.

The name “Tony Frost” may be familiar to some: Tony was the founder of *Fantasy Theatre for Children*, which is Winnipeg’s oldest children’s theatre. Upon Tony’s retirement in 2011, *Fantasy Theatre for Children* amalgamated with the Merlyn Productions Theatre Company, which still operates with John Chase as Artistic Director. Tony was a close mentor and friend to John, from the early 1990s until Mr. Frost’s death in 2013, just two short years after retirement.

I learned that Tony Frost had grown up in Medicine Hat, but the trail after that had gone cold. Until John Chase made a stop in our city while passing through on a tour of Alberta’s offerings of Arts and Culture. While here, John let me know that Tony Frost grew up in Medicine Hat as Anthony Pydee. When Tony moved to Winnipeg, he began to use his mother’s maiden name, “Frost” instead of Pydee -- certainly a very becoming stage name!

The connection was now made, and I was able to search through the newspapers for the numerous community involvements of the young Tony Frost/Anthony Pydee. Tony was involved with Medicine Hat Civic Theatre, Alexandra Junior High, Salem Memorial United Church Drama Association, Banff School of Fine Arts and Medicine Hat Musical Theatre.



Tony was well-known in the theatre scene in Medicine Hat, and was also a lover of all things jazz and music. Tony helped found the Ember Music (Jazz) Club, which was a non-profit organization created to have a meeting space for jazz or classical musicians.

Located in the Klaiber Building on 4th Avenue SE, the Ember Club hosted notable musicians such as Lew Bobb (a personal favourite!), and the club was in operation until around 1975.

Tony also won numerous awards such as the Best Actor Award (1957) from the Salem Memorial Drama Festival, and was the Government of Alberta Scholarship winner in 1964.

He was described in a 1958 edition of the *Medicine Hat News* as “a rising theatre star”, and that he brought “truth, sincerity and uniformity to the stage”. --con't

July 28, 1965



Medicine Hat News

HERE IN AUGUST — The Banff School of Fine Arts will present the new musical *Made in the Mountains* here Aug. 11. The production is the division's se-

cond since the founding of Canada's first Musical Theatre last year. Local players Tony Pydee (extreme left) and Adele Armstrong (second from left kneeling) have parts in the musical.

Well-known name, Adele Armstrong, kneeling, 2nd from left.

Tony Pydee (Tony Frost), head back in mid-song, extreme left.

Both worked together and had parts in the Banff School of Fine Arts' production of "Made in the Mountains", 1965

Tony Frost left a lasting impact on Medicine Hat for the formative years he was involved in local theatre, jazz and musical productions.

When he moved to Winnipeg to pursue other opportunities in 1965, he found his niche almost immediately in the budding drama scene, and only a few months after moving, received the Best Supporting Actor Award (1965) from the Manitoba Regional Drama Festival.

From there, he went on to collaborate with over 300 local productions in Winnipeg during his lifetime. Actor, Director, Artist and Friend, it was a pleasure to be able to continue telling the dramatic tales of Tony Frost.

Tony Pydee To Direct One-Act Play

It was announced recently by the Medicine Hat Civic Theatre that Tony Pydee will direct the one-act play for the provincial one-act play festival to be held in Banff sometime in November.

Mr. Pydee directed a play for the regional one-act play festival last year.

October 1, 1963

Medicine Hat News

From Elkwater to the Open Sea

Service and Remembrance of Lt. Carleton Flath

by Jenni Barrientos

If you happened to visit Elkwater Lake this summer, you should probably hear the story of Lieutenant Carleton Flath, a local man who turned his love of the lake into his love of the sea and gave his life in Navy service during the Second World War.

Carleton grew up alongside his brother, Louis, spending summers at Elkwater Lake. Their father, Jack Flath, owned the the first store in Elkwater, the Flath's General Store and Dance Hall. A place known for fun, watersports and merrymaking, the Flath boys enjoyed fishing, diving, shooting, boating and dancing in the early 1920s out at the lake, and lived the rest of their time in town at 149 8 Street NE in Crescent Heights -- a home which is listed as a Historic Resource today.

Carleton Flath was a schoolteacher with the Athabasca School Division, and had a passion for military service. During the 1930s was a member of the Calgary Highlanders militia and the South Alberta Regiment. Once the declaration of the Second World War came through, Carleton left his position as a school teacher, and joined with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. His love of the water seemed to dictate his path forward, and he completed his basic naval training, and did work with High Frequency direction finding (abbreviated as H/F D/F or, "Huff Duff") with anti-submarine warfare. Carleton was promoted to Lieutenant on August 10, 1943 and was appointed to the HMCS *Valleyfield* for duty as a HF/DF Officer.



Esplanade Archives 0055.0348

Unfortunately, Lt. Flath was lost at sea during active duty when HMCS *Valleyfield* (pictured, front page of newsletter) was torpedoed and sank on May 7, 1944. Lt. Flath was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp, the Defence Medal and the War Medal. Sadly, his brother, Sgt. Louis Flath was also killed in action a mere three months later, on August 1, 1944.

Carleton Flath was further honoured after the Navy League Cadet Corps No. 66 was commissioned in his honour. The No. 66 *Carleton Flath* held their final parade after 48 years in Medicine Hat, on May 16, 2009. Carleton's medals remain held in trust, history and honour by the Navy League Corps.



Carleton and his brother, Louis as children in Elkwater. Ca. 1920.

Archives Image 0271.0029

Special thanks to Chris Varley, CD, President/Historian of the HMCS Catarqui Association for his assistance & research for this article. All errors or omissions are my own.

Membership Dues

Join the Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District

Membership dues for 2023-2024 are now being accepted.

Your \$10 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 Historical Society Newsletter via email or printed copy. *If you do not remain up to date, this might be the last copy of the Newsletter you receive!* You can pay your \$10 membership dues by cheque by mail to the address below. Please make cheques payable to:

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District
401 1 Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB
T1A 8W2

This Day in History

September 27, 1900

The News reported on the varied things that citizens were able to grow in Medicine Hat, and remarked: "How is *that* for the Banana Belt?" The unique climate of Medicine Hat must have appeared varied and adaptable to the many newcomers. It also might be of some surprise that bananas were in the area as an import by 1900. Image to the right, C.A. Linfield's store, with a hook of hanging bananas to the left, ca. 1914. Esplanade Archives 0560.0003



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 Barrientos at jenbar@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

Executives

Judy Morris

President

Tom Hamp

Past President

Bruce Shepard

1st Vice President

Earl Morris

2nd Vice President

Leahandra Peterson

Secretary

Nick Martin

Treasurer

Board of Directors

Bruce Shepard

Programs

Sheila Tiegs

Book Sales

Lynn Rance

Membership

Lorine Marshall

Director-At-Large

Jenni Barrientos

Newsletter Editor