



Albertasource.ca

The Heritage Community Foundation is a charitable Trust committed to connecting people with heritage. As a new kind of community foundation, it is not bound by geography but based on interest in the value of heritage for individuals, their communities and society.

The Foundation's goal is for heritage to be valued by everyone. Heritage is broadly defined in all its aspects—historical, natural, cultural, scientific and technological. The Foundation exists:

1. To be a strong public voice for heritage
2. To build individual and community identity and pride through research, public education and youth programs
3. To build resources to sustain heritage institutions, organizations and related projects and activities.

The Heritage Community Foundation has the following primary areas of interest based on its charitable objects: Educational Resource Creation, Research, Digital Technology and Experiential Learning. All programs link people with place, stories, objects, landscapes, traditions—all of those aspects that define us as individuals and communities.

Heritage Community Foundation
 #54, 9912 - 106 Street
 Edmonton, AB T5K 1C5 Canada
 Tel. 780-424-6512, ext. 222
 Fax. 780-424-6579
www.albertasource.ca
 -the Alberta Online Encyclopedia
www.heritagecommunityfdn.org

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One advantage of Albertasource.ca over textbooks and print encyclopedias is that current research can easily be written into it. Think of it as an on-line encyclopedia that's never really finished. It's always being updated and revised.

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Troy Media Corporation
 Graphic Design
Sally Hewson Design



Linking you with your heritage

By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation

She was in tears when she called from California. She had been researching her family history and, when she searched her grandfathers' name on the internet, she discovered he had emigrated to Canada from Italy and lived and worked for a coal-mining operation in the Crowsnest Pass area.

Her search had brought her to "Celebrating Alberta's Italian Community," just one site of 73 that makes up Albertasource.ca – the Alberta Online Encyclopedia.

But there's more. Not only was she able to find a biography on her grandfather, she was also able to see his photograph and listen to a recording of his voice.

It was much more than she was expecting, Morris Flewwelling, President and Chair of Trustees of the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) and the Mayor of The City of Red Deer, said. If it had been hidden in a family member's drawer, he added, it may have been forgotten. "No one would have known it ever existed."

The California woman's experience is one illustration of how the site - originally designed to serve Albertans as "Everything you really wanted to know about Alberta but didn't know who to ask," - makes Alberta content available to the world. But equally important, it illustrates how easily it is for Albertans and, for that matter anyone, to connect with their heritage.



Albertasource.ca was started by Heritage Community Foundation, Dr. Adriana Davies, Editor-in-Chief said, "To link people with heritage through discovery and learning."

Davies said that the Foundation, a charitable trust, is committed to connecting people with their heritage. The Foundation is not bounded by geography but is based on the value individual's place on their heritage, their communities and society. Albertasource.ca is the conduit they use to access the information they are looking for.

Take Nature's Law, for example, a study of pre-contact Aboriginal Law. As with many of their projects, Nature's Law was developed in partnership with representatives of First Nations of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. The site, Flewwelling

said, draws on "Powerful, oral histories, making accessible material that has not been written down and provides a living record of the way that Aboriginal People governed themselves through traditional laws handed down from one generation to the next."

AlbertaSource, he added, is a way to not only search the past, but also to record the present and protect the future.

"Think of it as an on-line encyclopedia that's never really finished. It's always being updated and revised," he said. Over time "it will continue to grow."

One advantage of Albertasource.ca over textbooks and print encyclopedias is that current research can easily be written into it. Encyclopedias, he said, have to be re-written and republished with every new finding, such as the recent discovery that Pluto was never really a planet. "Things that are incorrect can be (easily) updated on Albertasource.ca," Flewwelling said.

The beauty of Albertasource.ca, Davies, who was the Science and Technology Editor of The Canadian Encyclopedia, said is that "the websites are elastic. Unlike the print version of an encyclopedia, where you have to decide how many volumes it will be, the website lends itself to a continuous updating of a broad range of current multimedia information."

Davies is referring to the plethora of rich media content – the videos, the audio records, the flash animations, the interactive content - that lends itself to a multi sensory experience and historical accuracy because of the first person experiences and digitized documents that are available for public view. Albertasource.ca's oral history recordings represent an enduring and moving record of our history. "Looking back 50 or 100 years from now," Davies said, "we can be that much more confident that things actually happened the way we believe." ●

AlbertaSource, he added, is a way to not only search the past, but also to record the present and protect the future.

— *Morris Flewwelling*
President and Chair of Trustees of the Heritage Community Foundation



Could Albertasource.ca become the toast of Toastmasters International?

Toastmasters, an 85-year old international non-profit organization, held its District 42 (Alberta and Saskatchewan) Spring 2008 District Convention earlier this month in Edmonton. Joan McAulay, Lieutenant Governor of Education and Training for the district, turned to the popular historical site to cull the facts she needed as host for the Communication & Leadership luncheon and awards ceremony.

"I had hoped," McAulay said, "to be able to both entertain and educate the over 300 Toastmasters and guests who attended the event with research based on multiculturalism and ethnicity within Alberta."

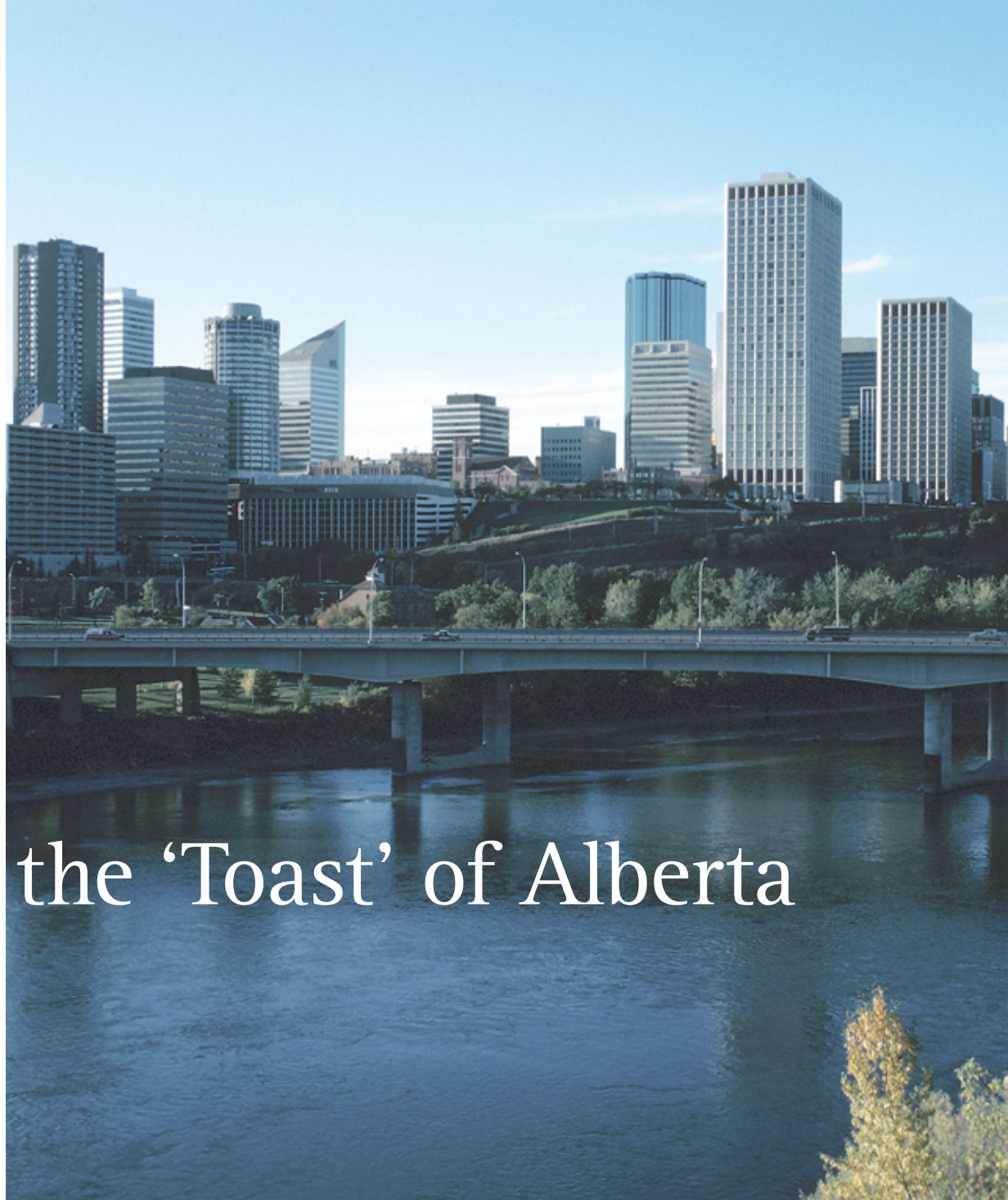
McAulay, a resident of Saskatoon, also wanted to incorporate historical information on the host city in her presentation. The District Convention was attended by dignitaries from the Province of Alberta.

Albertasource.ca the 'Toast' of Alberta

By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation



"I wanted to make sure that I not only had the right information, but I also wanted to give my audience information they perhaps didn't know, whether they were from Edmonton or not."

And that's why she turned to Albertasource.ca and the various sites of the Alberta On-line Encyclopedia. In fact, AlbertaHeritage.net was her single most comprehensive source for her research, she said. "I was amazed as to how easy it was to find what I needed (on Albertasource.ca)," pointing out that the site contains a vast amount of in-depth information, multiculturalism and ethnicity within the province. "As well, many of the references are actually first-hand accounts."

Because of the limited time she had for research, McAulay said she especially liked the site's ease of use. "I was able to quickly search and encapsulate the history of the region concisely. Just like a good Toastmaster – the ability to provide clear communication in a very brief period of time."

The amount of resources available, including alternatives to simply text based materials, impressed McAulay.

"This is an incredible source for any Toastmaster; it's a wealth of ideas for speeches," especially, she pointed out, Albertasource.ca's project called 'Bringing History to Life.'

'Bringing History to Life' is part of the 'Storytelling' Manual, which is itself part of the Advanced Communicator Program. Speakers are required to plan, write and present (tell) a story about an historical event or person within 7-9 minutes.

"From a Toastmasters perspective," she added, "the beauty of Albertasource.ca, is that if you were to tell a story about, for example, Premier William Aberhart, you get to not only read about him, but you can see pictures of him and hear him discussing democratic versus totalitarian principles in 1940 with Ernest Manning. This depth of information gives you a better sense about who he was and what he stood for – much as an actor studying his character and thus, bringing him to life. It also goes beyond

recreating and telling his story; it's also about leadership, another element of Toastmasters, and learning from the actions of great leaders in our history."

McAulay has been telling everyone she knows about the Alberta On-line Encyclopedia. She likes to know as much as she can about the places she visits: not only the tourism sites to see, but about the people, heritage and history.

Discovering the site couldn't have been better timing for McAulay. This year, over 2,000 Toastmasters from around the world will be in Calgary from August 13 to 16 as District 42 hosts the 77th Annual Toastmasters International Convention.

"People don't only come for the Convention," she said, "they also come to visit." She added that the last Annual Convention held in Alberta was back in the mid-70s, so this is a great opportunity for them to learn about the province.

One of the highlights of a Toastmasters International Convention, besides the Speech Contests, Education Sessions and great food, is Toastmasters' most prestigious award, the Golden Gavel, which has been presented each year since 1959.

It's awarded is to an individual who represents excellence in the fields of Communication and Leadership.

This year's honouree is Pamela Wallin, the Chancellor of the University of Guelph in Ontario and a former journalist. Past recipients of the Golden Gavel include Walter Cronkite, Art Linkletter, Dr. Joyce Brothers, and Deepak Chopra.

Albertasource.ca -the Alberta Online Encyclopedia is the main portal for 75 websites, more than 27,000 html/PHP pages, over 75,000 images, over 4,000 audio files and over 2,000 video files, and all are fully searchable. The site was created by Heritage Community Foundation, as part of a legacy project to celebrate Alberta's Centennial in 2005. In 2007 Albertasource.ca had just over 1.5 million unique visitors and just under 4 million site visits. ●

"This is an incredible source for any Toastmaster; it's a wealth of ideas for speeches,"

— Joan McAulay
*Lieutenant Governor of Education
and Training, District 42*



Albertasource.ca a safe and secure website for students

Grade 4 Student Jimmy Blower was becoming very frustrated recently while doing research for a school report.

While he's very apt with a computer, using Google produced a staggering amount of results, overwhelming his ability as a young person to either fully understand them, or to use them effectively.

But then his mother, Carolyn, while looking for suitable sites for him to use, stumbled across Albertasource.ca. "I was impressed by how well it was laid out and organized," she said.

Before Albertasource.ca, she said, Internet search engines for her son's schoolwork were just not very useful. "The number of hits was just phenomenally outrageous," she said. For example: if you searched "Agriculture," you'd end up with over 154 million results. Narrowing the search by including "Alberta" didn't help much either: There was still a staggering 643,000 entries. With search-engines, "The information wasn't specific enough" for a child, she said, and many of the results, even the top-ranked ones, were not always relevant. "Jimmy didn't know where to start."

Carolyn's discovery of Albertasource.ca was like striking oil. "I'd never heard about it before," she said, but found that it fit Jimmy's needs perfectly. He was able to easily find the information he needed on First Nations peoples for his report.

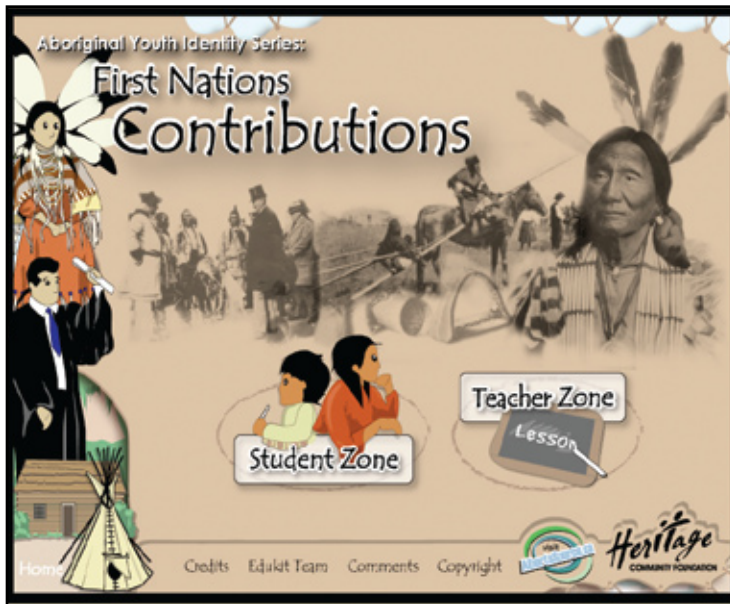
By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation

She was amazed at how relevant the content was, with some of the First Nations sites within Albertasource.ca including Nature's Laws, Treaties 6, Treaties 7 Past & Present and The Making of Treaty 8 in the Northwest.

In fact, one site, First Nations Contribution – part of the Aboriginal Youth Identity Series – was specifically geared to young people. Jimmy found it easy to get the info he needed by gleaning through the text and clicking on highlighted areas of interest to hone in on the information he was looking for.



ensures he is not inadvertently visiting sites she would rather he not surf to.

"We are very active in our sons' education" she said. "We keep the computer in the kitchen, so we constantly monitor what websites they are going to."

Carolyn also likes the fact that Albertasource.ca is a credible source. When you're looking to do research, she said, "Go there first."

"The navigation is easy," she said, then added that the information is presented even-handedly. "Albertasource.ca provides well-rounded ideas of the issues."

Carolyn was especially taken with the multimedia and the sound recordings of The Elder's Voices, in which traditional stories that have been passed down orally from generation to generation are located. "Not every kid learns from text," she said. "They could be visual or auditory learners."

She feels secure with her son using the web site, which

Dr. Adriana Davies, Editor-in-Chief of the Heritage Community Foundation, said that questions about reliability are all too common today. "Because of the ease of doing an internet search, many (students) now go to the internet first, even before going to the library," she said. In fact, "more students read on-line than by using conventional books."

Davies also questioned the accuracy of the vast amount of content on the Internet, stating that many links "have very little credibility at all. Much of the information is flawed or even pernicious and perverse."

She added that it goes way beyond just incorrect information. There is also the concern about possible access and exposure to inappropriate content. "An innocent inquiry can redirect a student towards porn or adult subject material."

That is one of the reasons the Foundation created Albertasource.ca, she said. Each site is researched, written and built with a specific purpose in mind. As one of Canada's largest web publishers, the Foundation's research methods are of the highest scholarly and museum standards, she added.

"The Foundation is dedicated to the development of on-line learning resources and interactive experiences. We're not just digitizing books; we're creating them and then drawing on specialized resources so that you get the text, images, audio and video. Generic history (of a country or a region), for example, doesn't give you the same perspective as getting it from the people themselves."

Albertasource.ca – the Alberta Online Encyclopedia – is the main portal for 73 websites, more than 26,000 pages, over 42,000 images, over 3,000 audio files and over 300 video files, and all are fully searchable. The site was created by the Foundation as part of a legacy project to celebrate Alberta's Centennial in 2005.

When Carolyn Blower introduced AlbertaSouce.ca to her nine-year old son Jimmy, he replied with a smile. "We use this one at school all the time". ●

Not all Alberta provincial elections end in a landslide

By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation

The year was 1905 and two candidates were vying to represent the riding of Innisfail in the Alberta Legislature – Sam J. Curry was the Conservative candidate and J.A. Simpson was the Liberal candidate. When the votes were tallied in what was Alberta's first General Election, Simpson took the seat by one single vote.

In other words, not all elections in Alberta are won by a landslide.

"People" Morris Flewwelling, President and Chair of Trustees of the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) and the Mayor of The City of Red Deer, said, "would be surprised at how close some elections really are. One vote can really make a difference."

Flewwelling well remembers a 2004 municipal election in the county of Red Deer in which a councilor initially won by one vote and called for a recount. The recount went against him and he lost by two votes.

Slim margins, however, are unexpected in Alberta.

"We're used to seeing landslide victories. Most of our elections are huge majority wins" he said, then quoted Mike Duffy as saying that, "Albertans don't vote, they stampede!"

So, does history really repeat itself?

According to Albertasource.ca, when the dust finally settled and the votes were counted, the election on November 9th 1905 was indeed a whirlwind landslide, for the Liberals. Alexander Rutherford became Alberta's first



premier, capturing 23 of 25 seats with 58% of the popular vote. In fact, R.B. Bennett, who was to eventually become Prime Minister of Canada, lost his seat in the 1905 provincial election while interim leader for the provincial Conservative party.

But despite the similarities between 1905 and today, there were differences.

The lack of mass communications contributed to a scarcity of information. Flewwelling said "word would go out that there would be a meeting at the local schoolhouse and anyone interested would come. These meetings were the only way you could find out about the candidate and even who the candidate was. This was the beginning of the Town Hall meeting we hold today."

And in the 1905 election 2,430 votes cast in Calgary and 1,725 in Edmonton, but, he said, "politics were taken seriously. Voting was considered a privilege. Turnout (which refers to the percentage of eligible voters, not the population) was much higher than it was now, even though getting to vote was quite a chore."

Voter eligibility was set by the jurisdiction, whether Federal, Provincial or Municipal.

"The (actual) right to vote," Michael Payne, City of Edmonton Archivist, said "was based on age, gender, occupation and ownership of property."

That is why in 1867 only 16% of Canadians had the right to vote. According to Albertasource.ca, these requirements were gradually relaxed until, in 1917, only white males could vote, but with one exception., The Wartime Elections Act of 1917 temporarily gave the vote to all servicemen, including natives and minors, and their female relatives. While, conscientious objectors and "enemy aliens" had their voting rights revoked.

Women didn't have the right to vote in Provincial Elections in the Prairies until 1916 and it wasn't until June 7, 1917 that two women, Louise McKinney and Roberta MacAdams, were first elected to a provincial legislature.

McKinney, one of the Famous 5, also has the distinction of being the first female legislator elected in the British Empire.

Again, according to Alberta Source.ca, Until 1948, many Asians could not vote federally, while Canada's Inuit and status Indians were not granted the federal vote until 1950 and 1960 respectively. Aboriginal Albertans first went to the polls provincially in 1967.

But despite the vote now being more open than ever before, voter turnout is actually dropping which, Flewwelling said, is not good for democracy. Everyone's vote can make a difference, he said.

Michael Dawe, City Archivist for the City of Red Deer pointed out that "the 1913 provincial election was a horse race between R.B. Welliver and Edward Michener, the provincial leader of the Conservative Party. With a Federal conservative government in place, Michener prevailed upon his Ottawa friends to announce a public works project to build an Armoury building in Red Deer. Michener, who was riding an uphill battle against the Liberal majority Government, was elected, but narrowly." Michener's son, Roland, later became the Governor General of Canada.

The Armoury, which was considered a real plus for a community at that time, was built in early 1914, just before the First World War broke out in August. ●





University of Alberta celebrates 100 years

By Greg Gazin
Writer
Troy Media Corporation



River Lot Number Five – an innocuous name for a piece of land covered with bush and wild roses that became the home of the University of Alberta in 1908. The University is currently celebrating its 100th anniversary of achievements in public education.

Looking back at the significant impact this institution has made on the province, it is humbling to know that it almost didn't happen. To commemorate the centennial, The Heritage Community Foundation, in partnership with the University Learning Services, has created The University of Alberta Centennial History website at <http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/>

"Because Alberta was such a new province, some thought that it was premature to have a university," Bryan Corbett, University of Alberta Archivist and University Centennial Website Coordinator, said recently.

In fact, Saskatchewan was deemed to be the province of the future, not Alberta. But Alexander Cameron Rutherford, the province's first premier, who also served as Provincial Treasurer and Minister of Education, had a vision, one shared by Dr. Henry Marshall Tory, a respected professor of Math and Physics from McGill University in Montreal. The vision was the establishment of a modern, central, co-ed and secular, full-service university in Alberta, "offering Medicine and Law, along with the liberal arts," says Dr. Rod Macleod, Professor Emeritus of History and Classics at the U of A, and the University's official historian.

With Tory as President, both men worked to transform River Lot Number Five into a thriving campus. But even the University's location was, at first, uncertain. During Alberta's first election as a province, on November 9, 1905, Rutherford promised that the University would be located on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River. Because Edmonton was the capital, there was the expectation that the University would be located in either Calgary or Red Deer, following Saskatchewan's lead, which placed its capital in Regina but its first university in Saskatoon.

The High Level Bridge had not yet been built and, technically, said Corbett, “the south side of the river was not Edmonton.” Strathcona, which became a city in 1907, quickly expanded its boundaries to include River Lot number 5. Rutherford lived in Strathcona at the time. It also happened to be Premier Rutherford’s riding. “Calgary,” said Corbett, “was not happy.”



River Lot Number Five was originally called the Simpson farm, but it was never a farm. Rather, it was uncultivated land. Simpson’s widow, said Corbett, “wanted \$200,000 [for the land], but it was purchased for \$150,000.”

The first term of classes began in September 1908, with 45 students and 4 or 5 professors, but they weren’t held on campus. “There were no buildings yet,” Macleod said. “The students used the top floor gymnasium of the Duggan Street School (now Queen Alexandra School).” Athabasca Hall, the campus’ first building, wouldn’t be complete until 1911.

Getting to the campus wasn’t easy. There were no roads and the LRT (Light Rail Transit) was still over eight decades away. “Eventually students would have to walk through (Strathcona) and, then, one kilometre through the bush. Students from Edmonton would walk across the ice in the winter. But that didn’t keep people away,” Macleod added.

“The curriculum was fairly heavy,” he said. “Arts students also had to take Math, Physics and Chemistry. Science students also took English and two foreign languages. Students today would find it very scary.”

Enrolment jumped to 400 or 500 students by the start of the First World War. Tory’s determination and drive led

to the establishment of a medical school by the early 1920s, which became his claim to fame. “The University was the only medical school between Winnipeg and Peking,” Macleod said.

While faculty, staff, and student accomplishments at the University of Alberta are too numerous to mention, Corbett and Macleod agree on a few early achievements that must be mentioned:

- Professor Robert W. Boyle was instrumental in the development of sonar, which was later used by the Allies in WWI and WWII.
- Dr. J.B. Collip, professor of Physiology and Biochemistry, was the co-discoverer of insulin. Collip purified the insulin extract for use in humans in 1922. Macleod and Corbett noted that it is now widely acknowledged that Collip never received the credit he deserved.
- Karl Clark, Scientific and Industrial Research Council (later the Alberta Research Council), patented a practical extraction process to be used for the development of the Athabasca Oilsands in Northern Alberta.
- CKUA, the first public broadcaster in Canada was set up in 1927 for non-commercial education.
- The university also became a North American and world leader with its Department of Extension, now called distance education. Its first faculty members were early adopters of technology, and would take films and lantern slides, powered by kerosene lamps, around the province in bookmobiles.

The University of Alberta Centenary History website is the largest site in the Alberta Online Encyclopedia Family. According to Dr. Adriana Davies, Executive Director of the Heritage Community Foundation, the website contains over 5,000 pages, audio clips, photographs and video clips, with more to be added. Albertasource.ca is the main portal for 76 websites, which currently house more than 27,000 pages, over 75,000 images, over 4,000 audio files and over 2,000 video files. All are fully searchable. ●



SOURCES:

*Dr. Rod Macleod
Professor Emeritus
University of Alberta
Department Of History
& Classics
Official Historian,
University of Alberta
(780) 492-4568
macleode@shaw.ca*

*Bryan Corbett, MA, CSP
University Archivist &
Centenary Website
Coordinator
University of Alberta
(780) 466-6123
bryan.corbett@ualberta.ca*

*Dr. Adriana Davies
Executive Director
Heritage Community
Foundation
(780) 424-6512,
ext. 222
adriana.davies@heritage-
communityfdn.org
www.Albertasource.ca*

Turn the clock back to the late 18th century to the mid 19th century Alberta and chances are you'd be eating fish, beaver tail and stewed moose, rather than roasted turkey and honey-glazed ham, for Christmas dinner.

Instead of rockin' to tunes emanating from audio systems and iPods, you're more likely to be dancing the jig to the sounds of a fiddle and perhaps a drum.

That was the height of the festive season celebrations during the period of the Fur Trade.

But while the culinary cuisine and the mode of music may not resonate with everyone today, the spirit of the festivities of yesteryear are not totally unlike those of today. Some have stood the test of time, other have evolved into traditions we currently enjoy.

Many of us travel worldwide today to spend the holidays visiting families and friends. During the Fur Trade, it was also time for family and friends, but the celebrations also involved the entire local community.

"People for the most part," Michael Payne, City of Edmonton Archivist, said, "lived at (trading) posts. People, including missionaries and members of the surrounding aboriginal community, visited the larger posts, like Fort Edmonton, during the Christmas season."

Payne, a historian and contributor to Albertasource.ca while he worked with Alberta Community Development, pointed out that life in Fur Trade posts, especially those like Fort Edmonton, are amongst the best documented of the early communities..

"The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)," he said, "required the officer in charge of post to keep a daily journal, like a ships log, a day by day account as to what they were doing or not doing as the case may be"

And while many history books tell us about the harsh winters, grueling cold and the challenging times of the era, Payne said that a lot of the work stopped during the holiday season, much like today.

Celebrating Christmas in 18th and 19th century Alberta

By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation



"The Christmas season lasted a week or more," he said. "It was also customary for HBC officials to meet (at the larger posts). There was some work, but it was mostly social, with much celebration. Christmas day tended towards the more religious, with feasting, while New Years and the period in between tended to be more fun."

Post journals and records that have survived, Payne said, gives us a vivid description of the start of the Christmas season.

In the journals and record, Peter Erasmus, who worked for a missionary, a trading company and was a trader himself around the Fort Saskatchewan River area in the mid 19th century, writes: "Two days before Christmas, there was a bedlam of noise with the arrival of each new dog team. Each arrival acted as a signal to all the dogs in the fort and nearby to raise their voices in a deafening uproar of welcome or defiance."

Gift exchanging, however, Payne said, was not significant. "Festivities rather revolved around feasting, and the amount of food people devoured."

Whenever possible, he added, "people at the Fur Trade posts tried to recreate the kinds of Christmas dinners they would have eaten in their homelands," such as Scotland, the Orkney Islands, England and Quebec. "For example, they actually imported dried plums so that they could make plum pudding."

Virtually every night of the holidays included a grand ball. "The rooms would fill with officers, trappers, natives, women, children and babies. And there was always plenty of toe-tapping music."

"The nightly festivities always began with the kissing line. The men would line-up and then all the women in the room would walk along and give a kiss to every man in the room. The intent was to underline the fact that they were all members of kind of the same community and the same society. It was, I think, a kind of a nice, collegial kind of gesture."

"The music played by the Métis or other First Nations fiddlers would be easily recognizable to people from Scotland,

particularly those from the Orkney Islands," he said.

Alcohol, however, was not always easily accessible especially the further into the backcountry you went, he added. "Shipping alcohol was simply too expensive so Christmas festivities were often fueled by large kettles of boiling tea."

During the 1800's, New Years Day ended with one last hurrah in salute to the Officer in Charge of the post. "Guns would be fired off, people would run up the flag and the officer in charge was expected to reciprocate," he said. A mixture of brandy milk and various spices - called 'Old Man's Milk' - was handed out to everybody who'd participated in the salute. "I guess it was kind of an early form of eggnog"

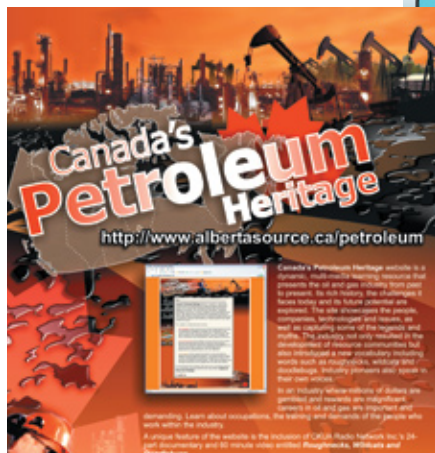
Payne tells of a story by Louisa McDougall, of the missionary McDougalls, in a letter she wrote home to her brother in 1880 about the New Year's celebrations in Edmonton.

"The first thing that was done was a duet, which was performed by Mrs. Hardisty, the Chief Factor's wife, and her sister, Mrs. Wood, and was followed on by a song titled "Don't You Go, Tommy," by Mr. Fraser, then Mr. W E Trail, of the famous literary family, did a recitation, entitled "Address to the Devil."

This was followed by a whole series of folksongs - Scottish, English, and, occasionally, Irish - and a canoe song by Jimbo and the Iroquois crew, as she refers to it.

And, just to round everything off, at the end of the evening they all sang "God Save the Queen." ●





A gusher of information

By Greg Gazin
Writer
Troy Media Corporation

History doesn't have to be dry and boring. Just ask the people at Albertasource.ca. Want to find out who the first Woman Constable in Canada was; see footage of the opening of the first Klondike Days in Edmonton; or an animation of a ceremonial Pow-Wow? You'd be hard pressed to find any of that anywhere, unless you visited Alberta's on-line encyclopedia – Albertasource.ca. Using today's technology, its vast wealth of knowledge on Alberta's past, present and future is yours for the asking.

But, Dr. Adriana Davies, Editor-in-Chief of the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF), which runs the website, said that the on-line encyclopedia goes beyond just history.

"It's authoritative information about Alberta's historical, natural, cultural, scientific and technological heritage," she said.

The site's intent, Nena Jovic-Andrejevic, HCF's General Manager said, is "to bring Alberta to the world and the world to Alberta." It was created by HCF as part of a legacy project to celebrate Alberta's Centennial in 2005.

Albertasource.ca is the main portal for 73 websites, more than 26,000 pages, over 42,000 images, over 3,000 audio files and over 300 video files, and all are fully searchable. The index alone is a whopping eight pages, and the content ranges from, to name only a few, Aboriginal to Architecture to Communications to Environment to Industry to Natural Resources to Religious Life to Science and Technology to Sports and Recreation, and to Tourism and Travel.

The portal's gateway, and a select number of sites, is also available in French. Best of all, the information is freely available to the public.

Each site was initially built to stand-alone, Davies said, but they have now been brought under the Albertasource.ca banner, with a common database for searching. However, she added, each individual site still has its own search engine. "So not only can you search an individual site, but the entire encyclopedia as well."

Take the Treaty 8 website. For those of you who don't know, the treaty covers a large land mass in Northern Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan and was signed by the First Nations of Lesser Slave Lake and the federal government. (Thank you Albertasource.ca)

While "Treaty 8 has its own website," Davies said, (it) "also appears in other websites such as How the West was Young and the Methodist Missionaries in Alberta." The site-specific and common database search engines, she added, make it easy to find all related Treaty 8 content.

Where else can you read the treaty, read about the treaty, see the treaty document in its digitized form, and listen to Victoria Calliou, former Band Councillor of Sucker Creek Reservation, talk about the treaty day celebrations, all in one place? Nowhere but at Albertasource.ca.

"Thirty percent of the content of Albertasource.ca is on Aboriginal topics. We have the largest repository of Aboriginal content, anywhere in the world," Jovic-Andrejevic said.

Another website that is searchable on its own and through the common database is Alberta Inventors and Inventions: you can search a database of patents and patent records covering the years 1907 up to the 1970s.

But quantity hasn't come at the expense of quality. "Some of the content" Davies said, "comes from archival and digitized documents, but the majority has been researched and written by HCF and its partners. (For example) sites like Nature's Law were built in partnership with Aboriginal Elders as well as legal and academic historians."

"We go through a rigorous writing and storyboarding process," added Jovic-Andrejevic.

Building partnerships became a major requirement in the development of the sites. Museums, archives, community

organizations, the National Congress of Italian Canadian, the Estonian Society, Black Pioneers, Year of Coalminer Consortium and many more were instrumental in ensuring the accuracy of the information.

Albertasource.ca also makes available content that may otherwise be hard to access. For example, the Spirit of the Peace Museums Network, may have thousands of items in their collection but they can't have them all on display at the same time. But you can see them at Albertasource.ca.

The most popular website at Albertasource.ca, however, said Jovic-Andrejevic, is the Alberta Naturally web site.

Alberta Naturally! explores Alberta's natural wonders – its ecosystems, geology, natural regions and environmental issues. It is replete with audio, video and quizzes.

The second most popular website is How the West was Young, which takes us back in time to Vermillion Lakes, near Banff, where it's estimated that the first peoples of Alberta camped over 10,000 years ago. There is also detailed information on the First Nations and Métis as well as the history of the fur trade.

These two sites alone had over one million hits in the first half of 2007. In 2006 Albertasource.ca received over 60 million hits with over 1.5 million unique visitors. The average visitor returned three times and stayed on the average 25 minutes. Thirty percent of the visitors are from outside Canada. The site gets requests from people looking to work in Alberta, move to Alberta or simply looking for information on Oil Sands leases.

Davies said that she has even received an inquiry from a teacher in California: her students wanted to know if they could use material from the Famous 5 website for a national competition project on women's issues.

But despite its overwhelming popularity, Albertasource.ca still remains one of the world's greatest secrets. A Google search for Gretzky's record breaking 1851st point may land you on to the Oilers Heritage site so you can view the video, but what you may not realize is that you are at Albertasource.ca. ●

**"It's
authoritative
information
about Alberta's
historical,
natural, cultural,
scientific and
technological
heritage,"**

— Dr. Adriana Davies,
Editor-in-Chief of
the Heritage Com-
munity Foundation

Alberta's volunteerism traced way back to early settlement

By Greg Gazin
Writer
Troy Media Corporation



Summer in Alberta is filled with fun, sun and festivals and it's not hard to turn and find someone wearing a white t-shirt that has Volunteer prominently emblazoned across the back.

However, volunteerism is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, its roots date back to before 1905, when Alberta became a province. And while the face of volunteerism may have changed over the years, it is still an integral part of our society, still helping shape Alberta's socio-economic landscape.

According to Albertasource.ca - the Alberta Online Encyclopedia - volunteerism was born out of an Aboriginal tradition of community, in which survival depended on members of the community helping one another - a key component of Aboriginal Cultural Values.

Aboriginals extended these acts of charity to early European settlers. Like fish out of water, the newcomers to Canada were unfamiliar with the hazards of the rugged Canadian wilderness and desperate to manage the bitter cold winters to which we have now become accustomed. And despite some of Hollywood's depictions of the old west in films, many of the Aboriginal peoples offered their time, knowledge and resources to help many struggling settlers survive.

As fur trade posts and settlements developed, the Europeans responded with a charity of their own and, when the need arose, reciprocated, giving aid in the form of food and shelter to the Aboriginal people they traded with. Missionaries, although focused on spreading Christianity, also helped establish hospitals, schools and orphanages.

During the first 20 years or so of the 20th century, that is, during the province's formative years, volunteerism's focus shifted from simple survival and towards community building. Albertasource.ca points out that, in the province's early days, the majority of the population shared a common language (English), ancestry, values and, often, the Protestant faith. These strong bonds led to the emergence of volunteer organizations such as The Masonic Lodge and the Canadian Order of Foresters. In fact, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) began in Calgary in 1902 as a place where men could explore their spirituality and pursue recreational activities. Women's volunteer groups focused on reform and education. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), for example, opened in 1910 to provide travel aid to women. Between 1926 and 1930, ethnic community groups began to emerge after an estimated 30,000 non English-speaking immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe decided to make western Canada their home.

Volunteerism expanded its range beyond the provincial and national borders during World War I, with local groups like the Red Cross and The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, helping church groups raise funds and supplies for the troops overseas. Alberta, in fact, had one of the highest enlistment rates in Canada.

Once the war ended, volunteerism refocused again, to represent an outward expression of Alberta's values. For example, Louise McKinney, one of The Famous Five, brought the Women's Christian Temperance Union to Alberta. This led to the suffragette movement that would eventually lead to women's right to vote.

During the drought of the 1920s and the Dirty Thirties, volunteerism changed its face again, turning to activities that diverted people from the harsh times in which they were living. Groups like the Rotary Club and Boy Scouts of Canada provided summer camps for underprivileged boys. The YWCA provided job training for unemployed women and girls, while the YMCA offered wrestling classes to unemployed men. Even the Calgary Herald chipped in by sponsoring a toyshop operated by the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

With World War II, a large number of Alberta women volunteers formally enlisted in divisions of the armed forces, including the Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC), and the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS). Locally, volunteer groups rallied to save stamps, sell war bonds, collect paper and scrap metal.

After the war, and with the discovery of oil at Leduc #1, economic prosperity returned, which helped revitalize community organizations. The end of the war, unfortunately, also brought on a new set of challenges and the need for a new type of volunteer – for support crisis agencies dealing with substance abuse, suicide and loneliness. But it wasn't all doom and gloom. Organizations, such as the Calgary Stampede Board, also emerged, along with groups which supported sporting events such as the 1978 Commonwealth Games, cultural groups like AMPIA (Alberta Motion Pictures Industries Association) and the Writers Guild, and the Heritage Festival, which began in 1974 to celebrate our ethno-cultural background and which relies on over 6,000 volunteers each year.

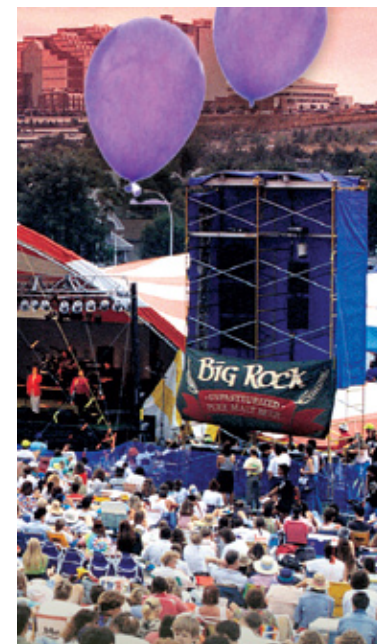
According to Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Ministry, the voluntary sector in Alberta consists of

more than 19,000 charities and non-profit organizations. Volunteers can be found in sports, recreation, arts, culture, health care, social services, faith and education. Volunteerism can take on many forms, from raising money for a cure for cancer, to managing a crew to fight forest fires, and even operating a zoo.

It's also become part of our corporate culture: companies are encouraging volunteerism among their employers and prominent Albertans, like the late Lieutenant-Governor Lois Hole, are embracing its benefits for society.

- According to the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP), roughly 1.2 million Albertans (48%) of the population volunteered 214 million hours to charitable and nonprofit organizations, or the equivalent to more than 111,000 full time jobs,
- Volunteerism has evolved over the last 100 years. It has shaped our community and will continue to do so. What hasn't changed is the underlying thread- that people are willing to donate their time, their services and even their own money to help others for a good cause.
- To commemorate the centennial of Alberta Volunteerism, in 2005 The Heritage Community Foundation, added Volunteerism in Alberta – 100 Years of Celebrating Community to the Alberta On-Line Encyclopedia.

For more information on volunteerism in Alberta, visit Albertasource.ca. Albertasource.ca – the Alberta Online Encyclopedia – is the main portal for 75 websites, more than 27,000 html/PHP pages, over 75,000 images, over 4,000 audio files and over 2,000 video files, and all are fully searchable. The site was created by Heritage Community Foundation, as part of a legacy project to celebrate Alberta's Centennial in 2005. In 2007 Albertasource.ca had just over 1.5 million unique visitors and just under 4 million site visits. ●



Search for water led to first oil well in Canada – in Ontario

By Greg Gazin

Writer

Troy Media Corporation

A plank from the first oil well for North America's petroleum industry. In 1858, men working for J.M. Williams were digging for water at the edge of a bed of bitumen near Black Creek in Ontario's Enniskillen Township but found crude oil. Williams switched from bitumen to crude oil to refine kerosene lamp fuel and established the world's first substantial oil company. Angus Sutherland, foreman for Fairbank Oil Properties, is shown examining the plank in 1957. Photo courtesy Lambton County Museums



If you had asked me two weeks ago which province was the birthplace of the Canadian oil industry, I probably would have said Alberta, back in 1947, but I would have been very wrong. The birthplace of the Canadian oil is actually in Ontario, and it occurred 150 years ago, in 1858. Canada, in fact, may have the best claim to being the first country in the world with the ability to supply crude oil to a substantial refining industry.

It all started when a party of men dug a well, looking for water, near the banks of Black Creek, located in Lambton County, about 30 km southeast of Sarnia, ON. They struck oil instead. Black Creek was renamed Oil Springs after the discovery.

"The find happened by accident," Earle Gray, author of Ontario's Petroleum Legacy: The Birth, Evolution and Challenges of a Global Industry, published by the Heritage Community Foundation, said recently. "Their well marked the discovery of the world's first oil field (that) would supply a large and booming refining industry." Gray, an authority on the oil business, was editor of Oilweek Magazine for almost two decades.

The discovery was significant, he added, even if the age of the "horseless carriage" was still a few decades off. "The first uses of oil were for lamp fuel and lubricant."

The foundation of the oil industry, he said, was already in place at the time of the Black Creek discovery because there were as many as 70 refineries in the Eastern US producing kerosene, from coal. Interestingly, the process to turn coal into kerosene was developed by Nova Scotian Abraham Gesner, who some consider the Father of the North American Petroleum Industry. It was Gesner, in fact, who coined the term "kerosene" for coal oil.

Up until the discovery of oil off the banks of Black Creek, crude oil was only available from soil seepages, and was used primarily as a medicine.

Up until the discovery of oil off the banks of Black Creek, crude oil was only available from soil seepages, and was used primarily as a medicine - a cure-all, taken internally and used externally, to treat almost every imaginable illness at the time, including coughs, diphtheria, bruises, sprains and sores. The seepages didn't, however, produce enough oil to create an industry.

That had to wait for Black Creek when it became cheaper to produce kerosene from crude than coal. The discovery, Gray said, had a significant effect on the economy and the commercial impact was immediate.

"While the boom lasted only until the turn of the century," he said, "for about 30 or 40 years, the production was enough to meet (Ontario's) needs." There was even enough left over for export.

The birth of the Canadian oil patch is filled with drama: incredible stories of rags to riches, of boom and bust cycles, of discoveries and disappointments. In fact, the birth itself could have played out differently, if not for unforeseen circumstances.

Charles Nelson Tripp, from Schenectady, NY, came up to Canada to find his fame and fortune working as a prospector, wildcatter and promoter. "Except for a rock," Gray said, "Tripp would almost certainly have discovered the first commercial oil field two years before the strike at Oil Springs."

Using an iron pipe in an attempt to widen a hole in his search for oil, Tripp struck a rock at 27 feet. The pipe broke, and Tripp abandoned the attempt. Ironically, seven years later, a major find, the Bothwell field, was discovered not far from the site of the infamous broken pipe.

The Black Creek/Oil Springs strike is credited to James Miller Williams and his Canadian Oil Company. Williams, a

carriage maker from Hamilton and Tripp's creditor (likely from Tripp's purchases of wagons), took over Tripp's bankrupt operations. Tripp, meanwhile, died at 43 in a lonely hotel room within a decade, of what was referred to as "congestion of the brain."

Gray said that the early days of the oil industry in Ontario is not unlike the tales of the old west and the gold rush. Sadly, he added, history books are mostly silent about the oil industry: "There seems to be more talk about mines than about oil."

The wild fluctuations in the price of oil today don't surprise Gray. He said that, during oil's early period, the price fluctuated from \$0.10 to \$10 a barrel then back down to \$0.25 (in late 19th century dollars).

Oil is still flowing from the Black Creek/Oil Springs discovery. In fact, Gray said, "the properties at Oil Springs are likely the oldest continuous oil producing wells in the world. They may be producing only a trickle but they are producing nonetheless."

One of the original producers is still pumping oil out of the properties. Charles Oliver Fairbank III is the great grandson of John Henry (J.H.) Fairbank, who first pumped oil at there in 1861. The technology J.H. invented, called the Jerker Rod and Field Wheel, is still in use there today for numerous low-yield, closely spaced wells. Gray describes the process as a system that pushes and pulls a series of slender rods suspended by hangars and connected to a teeter-tottering walking beam: when set in motion, it pumps oil from up to 100 wells.

The Oil Springs' site and surrounding area have been nominated by the United Nations (UNESCO), to be designated as a world heritage site.

To find out more information on the 150th Anniversary of Canada's Petroleum Industry, and buy Ontario's Petroleum Legacy: The Birth, Evolution and Challenges of a Global Industry, visit the Canadian Petroleum Heritage web site at Albertasource.ca – The Alberta On-Line Encyclopedia. ●