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Medicine Hat and District Branch



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The purpose of the Saamis Seeker is to inform members regarding A.G.S. and Medicine Hat & District Branch affairs, to print material to further member's research, and to publish local resource and research materials.

Final authority regarding the acceptance of material rests with the editor. Neither the editor nor the Branch accept any responsibility for opinions or errors on the part of the contributors.

The Medicine Hat and District Branch of the A.G.S. meets the first Wednesday of the month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m. in the Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery - 1302 Bomford Crescent S.W., Medicine Hat, Alberta.

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Irrigation and the Growth of Suffield, Alberta

The following is an excerpt from the book "Dinosaurs to Defence - A Story of the Suffield Block". The book was researched and written by a group of soldiers, their friends and family, from the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS). Proceeds from the book's sales help to support a small herd of buffalo that graze the 'British Block'. The book may be purchased for \$4.00 by calling BATUS at 403 - 544 - 4141. Suffield is located about 25 miles north west of Medicine Hat, Alberta.

In 1904 irrigation projects were becoming widespread in an attempt to improve crop yields and therefore encourage settlement.

In the Lethbridge area the Mormons had constructed 480 miles of canals and ditches. At this time there was also a large scale British investment in Canada and in 1906 the Federal Government started negotiations with an Englishman, Guy ROBBINS, who represented the Robbins Irrigation Co. which he had formed with Mr. E. H. CUTHBERTSON after the turn of the century. ROBBINS applied to purchase 300,000 acres of land at a cost of \$1 per acre, to which the Government was agreeable, on the condition that ROBBINS spend 1/2 million dollars irrigating the area. His plan was basically to direct water from the Bow River some 50 miles away and carry it to the Suffield area by a canal system.

For reasons which never became clear, by Boxing Day of the same year he had sold out to the Southern Alberta Land Company, for the same price with the same commitments to irrigate, and in 1907 crews started work on the banks of the Bow River.

By 1909, as it was apparent that more cash would be needed, a new subsidiary company, Canada Wheat Lands Ltd., was formed with 64,000 acres and they immediately farmed 25,000 acres of this, and some 20 farm units using large scale dryland techniques were established through their holdings. The proceeds from the crops were to be used to fund the irrigation scheme and eventually the land was to be resold as small, partly improved farm units, irrigated from the canal. By December 31, 1909, 241 lots had been sold for approximately \$45,000.

In 1909 the Southern Alberta Land Company decided to lay out a town site at Suffield, selling off subdivision lots to raise additional capital.

Suffield, named after Charles HARBOND, 5th Baron Suffield and one of the main financiers of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was the site of the railway section buildings. The CPR had reached Suffield in June 1883. The rate of track-laying during the season varied from 2 miles a day to a record 6.02 miles established further up the line at Dunmore. The railway was built in "sections", the Suffield section being 2 miles on either side of the company buildings. The Section Foreman, who was only responsible for the track, had a home of his own provided by the company. A station agent had responsibility for trains, passengers, freight and the station itself. The remainder of the section gang (from 4-10 strong) bunked together in a section house. A member of the Suffield Section gang from 1896-1926 who eventually rose to Foreman was Joseph NOWICKI, a Lithuanian immigrant who arrived in Alberta in 1896, his family following in 1902. His grandson Jess (still living in Medicine Hat) comments that when his father started work on the railway in 1904, he had to use another name (KONOWSKI) as he could not work for his father. He eventually left Suffield in 1947 as Section Manager. Jess' aunt, Mrs. Nellie ORR, having come to Suffield when just a few weeks old, is now one of its oldest residents. She recalls the original water tank, built in 1883-5. A pump took water from the South Saskatchewan River and moved it into a header tank on the Northern Bank. It was then fed by gravity into the Suffield water tank. Nellie remembers that the water tower was a big wooden tub on stilts which had to be encased as it froze in winter. In the summer months it dripped so the children used to stand underneath it to keep cool! Building construction commenced in Suffield in 1910. Thereafter followed the boom years when Suffield became the fastest growing town in the West. A million feet of lumber was freighted through Suffield; it was not an uncommon sight to see 10-15 four horse outfits pulling out in the morning. It housed the

Headquarters of Canada Wheatlands, the Southern Alberta Land Company, and many of the contractors involved in the irrigation scheme. To the astonishment of visitors, Suffield boasted business blocks, a 2-storey school, a branch of the Bank of Montreal, a Chinese laundry and restaurant, pool hall and barber shop, confectionery, meat market, two lumber yards and a post office. There were three hotels, one of which, the Alamo, was fully booked and people drove from Medicine Hat to dine in the restaurant. The 32-roomed 3-story hotel built in 1910 at a cost of \$30,000 had beautiful hard maple floors, oak furnishings, hot and cold running water, and lace curtains. Its main claim to fame was the bar which at 40 feet was the longest in the West! The Alamo has since be rebuilt at Sylvan Lake, Alberta, but minus one of its square flush toilets presumably removed by an enthusiastic souvenir hunter!

The Canada Wheat Lands started well with a crop of excellent quality in 1912 - although the yield of 12 - 15 bushels per acre was somewhat less than the anticipated 20 bushels. The ground had been broken initially by families of Doukabors originally from Russia but now settled in Saskatchewan. Although they worked hard progress was inevitably slow, and being vegetarians they caused additional expense as cheese, eggs and tomatoes had to be supplied. The Canadian flat tractor came into service in 1912, until this time horses, mules and oxen pulled the ploughs.

By 1913 the Southern Alberta Land Company's position was weakening - from a high of 551 on the stock markets of 1911, it now stood at a mere 171. There were delays in the irrigation scheme but the management were still confident of a good future.

Then disaster: in 1914, 22,000 acres of wheat, oats and flax were put to seed, but due to one of the hottest, driest summers on record, not one acre was harvested. The Southern Alberta Land Company was still experiencing construction delays, there were also local management problems, and then the outbreak of World War I dried up cash supply from Britain. A receiver was appointed by the British High Courts and land from the two companies was leased out. Ironically, the next two years crops were good.

Despite efforts of a new company, the Canada Land and Irrigation Co. Ltd., formed in 1917 and which was no longer obligated to irrigate on the scale originally planned, the whole project finally foundered. They had succeeded in constructing the canal through to Suffield, but it never carried any water. The canal can still be seen to this day beside the Trans Canada Highway 11 kilometres from Suffield near Bowell.

With the collapse of the irrigation schemes Suffield's boom years came to an end.

Peg DEMOSKY was born Margaret Jean ROBINS on December 17, 1921 in Griffin, Saskatchewan. She grew up, with four brothers and two sisters, in a setting similar to that portrayed in W.O. Mitchell's book "Who Has Seen the Wind". As a young girl, Mrs. Demosky developed an early love of poetry. The next several issues will feature excerpts from her recently published book, "Yesterday's Children - Growing Up In The Dustbowl", where she shares her many fond memories of childhood during the depression.

THE OUTHOUSE

A poem from "Yesterday's Children -Growing Up In The Dustbowl"
by Peg Demosky

It stood a stone's throw from the house
At the end of a well worn path:
No sink with running water,
Nor roomy porcelain bath.

Two holes, carved in a wooden seat
To fit both old and young,
While on a nail within ones reach
The out-dated catalogue hung.

It had a proper shingled roof
And linoleum on the floor
I remember, it was painted white
With a moon, carved in the door.

There was wooden latch on the outside
And a metal hook within.
And should a prankster happen by
You found yourself locked in.

It was scrubber with sudsy water
Until the wood was smooth and white;
The smell of lime and lysol
Lent a pleasant pungent bite.

My mother hated cobwebs
And brushed them all away,
But a most persistent spider
Spun a new one every day.

Suspended from one corner
Coiled a sticky sweet disguise
To attract unwanted insects
And trap the blue-bottle flies.

The outhouse held a secret.
I discovered it one day.
In a nitch, high in one corner
It was cleverly tucked away.

There, a pouch of Vogue tobacco
And a pack of Chanticleer.
I never knew which brother
Had so slyly hidden it there.

It was often in the summer
I would disappear outdoors
And linger in the outhouse
To avoid distasteful chores.

In winter 'twas a hasty trip
Through cold and blowing snow.
The frost upon the toilet seat
Set both cheeks aglow.

I rather liked the outhouse
With comics pasted on the walls
And the catalogue to thumb through
With its pretty clothes and dolls,

It was a rather special place
Where I could hide away
To sit, to dream and ponder
In my own private way.

Library Report

By Betty Padfield

The library continues to receive newsletters from various societies in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan that contain many helpful suggestions and items of interest.

The following items have arrived since our last publication:

1. An index to the 1891 census for the District of Saskatchewan
2. An index to the 1891 census for Assiniboia East
3. Calgary to Medicine Hat
4. Murder of Albert Johnson
5. The Frank Slide Story
6. Hanging in Canada
7. The Riel Rebellion

We have also purchased some book ends and hope to finish getting the library organized and more accessible for our members. A new library holdings list was recently handed out to all members. Any help or suggestions for the library would be greatly appreciated.

NEW MEMBER PROFILES

My name is Jean PEARCEY. I was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, and that is the area I will be researching. My maiden name is PUTT, so I will be researching that as well. My research will probably lead to England or Ireland.

My interest in genealogy started when my daughter asked questions about her ancestors and I was amazed at how little I knew. So, I decided to see if I could come up with some information for her and my benefit.

QUERIES

Please send your queries to:
The Medicine Hat and District Branch A.G.S.
Box 971, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 7G8

DAVIES, James Winston - believed born Wales or Lancashire about 1900. Emigrated to Canada pre 1927. Married Grace Gray FRICKLETON, July 21, 1928, in Bellevue, Alberta. Occupation - coal miner. Worked Bellevue, Drumheller and Mountain Park coal mines. Also an avid soccer player. Died December 11, 1940 in Mountain Park, Alberta. Any information.
Contact: Jim Robins - 316 Fleet St. S.W. Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7Z5.

ROBINS, William - Born about 1843 in Stroud, Ontario. Father - James Robins, Mother - Ann Gimby. Brother - John, sisters - Elizabeth, Louisa, Maria, Julia and Amilia. Believed to be a carpenter and may have settled in Barrie, Ontario. Also believed to have married Catherine Sloan(e) on September 29, 1863. Any information.
Contact: Jim Robins - 316 Fleet St. S.W. Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7Z5.

COMPUTER CORNER

by Gordon Bruins

Shortly after I started working on my family tree I became bogged down in paper. I hated writing pedigree charts and family group sheets. I was slow, messy and impatient. so when I purchased a computer a few years ago I decided to try using it for my genealogy. I was new to genealogy, knew little about computers and less about genealogy software at the time. Through trial and error I have become quite handy with my genealogy software and now have 2000 people on computer. I probably would have given up long ago without it.

During the past few years I have picked up an number of pointers that I wish I had known from the beginning. In coming issues I will attempt to pass on a few hints that will make your genealogy easier and more enjoyable for you and more presentable to your family.

Software Selection: There are literally dozens of genealogical software programs from which to choose. Some of the most common are: Brother's Keeper, Everyone's Family Tree, Family History System, Family Roots, Family Ties, It's All Relative, Personal Ancestral File, Reunion, Roots III, and The Family Edge Plus. Prices range from a few to several hundred dollars. Many are excellent. Some can be expanded later while others will become a disappointment as your knowledge and expectations grow. My advice is to read about them and talk to people who are using them to see if the program will do what you expect of it.

I use Personal Ancestral File, commonly known as P.A.F. which is published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. It is available to anyone for about \$40.00 U.S. P.A.F. is excellent software for the money and is in very common usage.

Whatever software you choose, I would very strongly recommend that you make sure that it can link relatives, document sources of your information and that it includes a standard GEDCOM file.

GEDCOM or Genealogical Data Communication enables you to transfer all or part of your data to another software program without having to retype everything. You can use it to add someone elses data to your records. You can send diskettes with your data to a family member or to the Family History Department's Ancestral File. LDS members can prepare submissions on diskettes to be processed for temple ordinances. GEDCOM also allows you to exchange information by modem over the telephone lines.

If you become dissatisfied with the software you are using and later decide you want to switch to another program you can transfer all of your data in a few minutes using GEDCOM. You may want to transfer data to another program just to print out your reports in a different format. For these reasons, GEDCOM is a must! Most good programs have GEDCOM. Don't choose software without it.

CEMETERY LISTINGS

NEWBURG CHURCH OF GOD CEMETERY

Location: SE 1/4 Section 16 Township 10 Range 03 W4

Newburg Church of God was begun as a German-speaking congregation. Minutes available record the first meeting February 3, 1925. Meetings were held in various homes.

On December 11, 1925 estimates for material for the church and barn were obtained from Revelstoke Sawmill Company Ltd. In May 1926 materials were purchased and the church was erected on the South East quarter 16 - 10 - 03 - W4. The oil for the floor was purchased June 22, 1926. This would put the church in the final stages of construction, if not complete. Mr. Jacob DEIS was appointed as builder with numerous volunteers helping.

Members of the Church Board that appear on the promissory note, payable to Revelstoke, were August JANS, Dan WIRSCH and Emanuel DOERING.

The minutes of meetings were recorded in German from 1925 to 1948 and in English until 1966. In 1966 the congregation began to fade; the last minutes were from 1966. The horse barn was sold in 1951 and moved off the site. Since the church was not being used people began abusing the building and its contents. The clock, stove and organ were removed by thieves. The church was sold and dismantled in 1973.

In 1975 the cemetery was fenced and a tombstone, with all the names of people known to be buried there, was erected on the cemetery site. The cemetery is the only reminder of the church and its congregation.

Some of the Minister and Evangelists that served the church were: Reverend BUTGEREIT, J. VEISN, I. MILLENSIFER, M. BABEL, J. TJART, C. ARBEITER, A. SCHNEIDER, K. KRAUSE, J. REMCHEN and R. FARMER.

CEMETERY LISTING

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BORN - DIED</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
DERHIEM, Lydia	int 10 Jul 1938		
DOERING, Ewald	10 Nov 1915-18 May 1927	11y6m8d	pts Emanuel and Karolina
FISCHER, Infant Girl	int 14 Oct 1934		
HIEB, Martha	int 25 Nov 1930		
JANS, Bertha	int 22 Jul 1928		
JANS, Beverly Earl	int 30 Aug 1936		
LUST, Infant Boy	int 12 Apr 1939		
MAIER, Maria	int 18 Apr 1926		MAYER
MAYER, Eva	int 18 Apr 1934		
MAYER, Leslie Richard	int 06 Mar 1927	infant	
MEIER, Lilley	int 05 Apr 1928		
MEYER, Eva	int 14 Feb 1926		MAYER
MEYER, Samuel	int 13 Oct 1926		MAYER
RAMFET, Juliana	int 27 Jun 1944		
REDELBACK, Jack	int 23 Nov 1935		
REDELBACK, Jacob	int 28 Aug 1927		
SCHEFFELMEIER, Andrew	int 12 Nov 1936		
SCHORR, Allen Ben	int 26 Apr 1936		
SCHORR, Infant Girl	int 15 Jan 1936		
SCHORR, Infant Girl	int 19 Jan 1938		
WEISS, Infant Girl	int 16 Aug 1926		

JOSEFBURG BAPTIST CEMETERY

Location: NE 1/4 Section 35 Township 09 Range 04 W4

CEMETERY LISTING

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BORN - DIED</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
AMAN, Vera	N/A		
AMAN, Viola	N/A		
BECKER, Albert	N/A		
BOSCHEE, Clarence	N/A		
BOSCHEE, Jackie	N/A		
BOSCHEE, Rosa	N/A	Infant	
DERHEIM, Fred	N/A	18y	fa Frederick
KOENIG, Eileen	N/A		
KOENIG, Norma	N/A		
LAUTERMILCH, Baby Girl	N/A		
LEHR, Christina	20 Feb 1840-22 Dec 1902		
LEHR, John Sr.	27 Mar 1837-04 Nov 1912		
LEHR, Sofia	01 Dec 1876-02 May 1910		
LUST, Annie	N/A		
LUST, Baby Girl	N/A		
LUST, Baby Girl	N/A		
LUST, Baby Girl	N/A		
LUST, Baby Girl	N/A		
LUST, Christian	09 Apr 1880-1918		w Anna Marie Seitz
LUST, Eddie	1916-Jan 1923		pts Fred and Rosa
LUST, Edna	1919-1919	7m	pts Fred and Ottilia
LUST, Eva Miller	circa 1848-circa 1905		
LUST, Herbert	N/A		
LUST, Jacob	22 Dec 1849-circa 1911		w Eva
LUST, John	1885-Feb 1918		w Mary Sureman
LUST, Martha	N/A		
LUST, Mary Sureman	d Feb 1918		
LUST, Rosa DuFloth	d 1917		
MACK, Adeline	N/A		
OLHAUSEN, Anton	N/A		
SCHARFF, Baby Girl	circa 1929		pts Mike and Emilia
SEITZ, Baby Girl	N/A		
STURM, Frieda	1851-1934		
STURM, Peter	1844-Jun 1909		
WEISS, David	N/A		pts David and Dorthea
WEISS, Reinholt	N/A		pts David and Dorthea
WERNER, Infant Boy	N/A		
WINDLAND, Katie	N/A		

GROS VENTRE BAPTIST CEMETERY

Location: SE 1/4 Section 02 Township 10 Range 04 W4

CEMETERY LISTING

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BORN - DIED</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
FAUNDRICK, Ludwick	1844-1917		
HAUCK, Peter	08 Nov 1886-01 Jan 1943		
KAPPENSTEIN, Emma	18 Sep 1904-31 Oct 1931		Salem United Records
RATH, Mary	12 Dec 1893-21 Sep 1911		
RENKE, Irene Elisabeth	12 Mar 1931-30 Sep 1931		Salem United Records
RIEGER, Edwin	N/A		possible burial
SULZ, Mrs.	N/A		possible burial
WEBB, John	d 26 Apr 1914	18y2m	MHN