

July 23 - August 2



2021

Zooming Back: Unmasking Our History

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By Irene & Walt DeBoni *with input and/or photos from Doug Coats, Jackie Kleiner, Shari Peyerl, Kate Reeves, Janet McMaster, Alison Johnson, Kathleen Rogers, Shaun Hunter, Roberta Ryckman, Jennifer Prest, Mary Valentich, and Glenda Holst.*

Historic Calgary Week completed its 11-day run on August 2 following a modified format in recognition of the risks posed by Covid-19. Our planning committee in February decided to maintain flexibility in our program to account for the potential health restrictions. After a successful series of 27 virtual presentations from July 2020 through to June 2021, it was decided that a significant portion of the program would be virtual and even some of our planned in-person events could be converted to virtual if necessary. In the end, our 56-event program included 24 virtual presentations. One benefit of the virtual events was that it extended our “reach” with many people participating from outside of Calgary, including from as far away as Toronto, Montreal and Victoria and in some local seniors’ residences. A total of 1,320 viewers took in the virtual events, including an estimated 20 percent allowance for households where two individuals participated.

All of our in-person events required registration in order to ensure appropriate numbers at each event. The maximum number at any in-person event was 35, with several events requiring lower participation due to individual circumstances. Meeting locations were emailed to all registrants the day before the event. Mask wearing, although not required, was recommended. In-person attendance was 624, much lower than normal years due to the Covid restrictions. Most tours had several people on a waiting list.

The majority of the virtual events were hosted on the Calgary Public Library system with technical assistance provided by its staff to all presenters and organizers. Practice sessions were arranged prior to each event to ensure that all links worked and that presenters were comfortable with the technology. Library staff expertly moderated most of the Q&A sessions following the presentations.

Due to the uncertainty caused by the evolving Covid-19 situation and in order to maintain flexibility in the program until the “last minute,” it was decided not to print a brochure. All program information was uploaded on our website including registration information and event descriptions. The location of this information was promoted through various media, including our monthly e-newsletter and through partner organizations. To broaden the extent of our promotional activities, we commissioned a 5-minute video created by videographer Emil Agopian featuring four of our presenters and several historic sites around Calgary. This video and shorter excerpts were promoted on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and on our website.



The four stars of our promotional video. From left to right: Shaun Hunter at the Smith Building in Kensington, Harry Sanders at the former Public Market on 4th Avenue, Asia Walker at Historic City Hall and Shelly McElroy, Curator of Pioneer Acres in front of historic Dr. Carl Safran School, now integrated in the Calgary Board of Education complex.

Video clips were viewed 3,151 times on Twitter and an additional 667 times on YouTube and Facebook. Visits to our website in July totaled 2,776 which is about 20 times the number of visits in a “normal” month.

Said **Janet McMaster**: *I preferred the video to the brochure. **Shaun Hunter** was one of the presenters featured on the video. Here is what she said: *The quality was top notch (thank you Emil!) and I was pleased to be part of it. Thank you for including me!**

Every year, we solicit feedback from committee members, presenters, volunteers, and attendees. With 56 events, we can't include all the comments we received, but we have selected representative samples to give you the flavour of the feedback.

Normally, to begin the week we have greetings from the city during our opening ceremonies. But this year, **Mayor Naheed Nenshi** gifted us with his *Three Favourite Things About Calgary* in one of the most moving speeches many of us have heard. This then led into the first of our 24 virtual presentations of the week.

Shaun Hunter, like many, was more comfortable with virtual presentations this year – we had over 1,100 people attend these presentations which ranged from panel discussions to histories of Chinatown, to instructions on how to start your family research. This again from **Shaun**: *What a treat to have a variety of virtual offerings this pandemic year. I loved time-travelling from*

the comfort of home to historic Reinach Avenue to hear Harry Sanders' stories of the Jewish families who once lived there. Shari Peyerl's excavation into the story of sandstone was a delight, as was Doug Coats' unravelling of the riddles of Calgary streets. As a researcher longing to get back into the archives, I was thrilled to hang out with archivists from the U of C/Glenbow Western Research Centre, Fort Calgary and the City of Calgary. Their enthusiasm for their respective collections is infectious and makes me even more impatient for their sites to re-open to the public.

Others were happy to come out to go on walks or hear presentations in-person. Sometimes it is the “others” that attend these sessions that make these special. **Doug Coats** referred to two such instances: *In the Midnapore Walk I thought the best part was that one of the attendees was an older gentleman who could tell stories about his days as a student in the school, and in one of the 1961 photos he could even identify the family's outhouse and the clothes on their clothesline!* and on the Edworthy hike: *A highlight of our tour was that George Edworthy, grandson of original pioneer Thomas Edworthy, and himself now 88 years old, joined us for a few minutes as we started the second half of the tour and answered some of our questions.*

Often people are very familiar with a particular walk and go because it is a place they value. But often they come away with new knowledge or understanding. As **Shari Peyerl** said about **Alice Fedosoff's** hike in

Glenbow Ranch Park: *I'd never been on that trail before and was sorry I had missed out on it for so long; stunning views and not that bad a vertical climb*

Sometimes it is the friendliness of the locality that means the most to attendees. For example, we had an excellent presentation in Strathmore at the CPR Supply Farm #1 and its role in teaching immigrants how to farm in the dry belt of Alberta, but it was the committee that came forward to welcome us with treats, that really impressed. Ditto the folks in Chestermere. And at Mt. St. Francis Retreat, **Janet McMaster** said *They were very welcoming to our group....I would highly recommend that you make the trip out there at some point.* Indeed, year after year, communities such as Bowness, High River and others think of new ways to connect and bring back attendees. We also held events at Irricana (Pioneer Acres Museum), Banff, Okotoks and Turner Valley, all areas of significance in our history.

All of our presenters/tour guides are volunteers in their own right – they give freely of their time, research and expertise. And it is appreciated. They cover the gamut from historians to archaeologists to palaeontologists to writers to politicians – and yes, to “ordinary” folk who happen to have a passion for a given subject.

Institutions provide space and expertise ... we all look forward to sessions at the Zoo, YouthLink (Calgary Police Service), and museums both in Calgary and in neighbouring communities.

Some other organizations, such as Calgary Heritage Initiative did not participate directly in Historic Calgary Week but put on special exhibits or website articles in addition to promoting HCW 2021. To see the CHI efforts, go to:

In English: <https://calgaryheritage.org/wp/historic-calgary-week-2021/>

In French: <https://calgaryheritage.org/wp/semaine-historique-de-calgary-2021-demasquer-lhistoire/>

Many partner organizations promoted HCW 2021 in their eNewsletters or blogs, which we very much appreciated.

We couldn't put on HCW without the aid of volunteers. Many sign up year after year. Some are new, such as

Alison Johnson, whom we “recruited” to help on the bike tour: *First impression it was absolutely fantastic, I learned so much. Grateful for the opportunity & would be more than open to volunteer again.*

General comments:

From **Jennifer Prest**: *The pre-registration system for the in-person events seemed to work well; the reminder was an excellent idea, especially where there were waiting lists.*

Janet McMaster had this to say: *I was so glad to hear that HCW was going to be happening again this year, especially after it was cancelled last year because of the pandemic. HCW has always been one of my favourite parts of the summer, and the HCW Committee should be commended for once again scheduling a wonderful program of both in-person and virtual events. While the total number of events was less than in previous years, there was still a terrific variety of different options offered in Calgary and southern Alberta. I heard lots of positive feedback about the convenience of the virtual options, and hopefully this will be something that the committee considers offering again in future years. Two of the highlights for me this year were the in-person tours of the Calgary Zoo and the Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre near Cochrane. On both tours, our groups were warmly welcomed and given “behind the scenes” tours that would not normally be available. While I have participated in HCW tours of the Calgary Zoo in the past, each tour has focused on a different area of the zoo, and the various guides that we have had have all been excellent. Participating in Historic Calgary Week for many years has certainly deepened my appreciation of the many wonderful resources that we have in our province, and the Calgary Zoo and the Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre are two of these resources.*

As for the week as a whole, perhaps **Mary Valentich** sums it up best: *I have participated for several years in Historic Calgary Week and once again, was very impressed by the array of possibilities, sometimes making it hard to choose.....I thought there was a diverse selection of events that made for a great Staycation in Calgary! Without exception, the guides were knowledgeable, enthusiastic and organized. Thank you for all their preparation and delivery. And for the care provided by the Society's volunteers.*

Some representative photographs and descriptions of individual events.

Two walking tours of **Nose Hill**, one lead by **Laureen Bryant** (July 24) and the second by **Cory Gross** (July 31.) Both visited the Siksikasitapi Medicine Wheel located atop the hill. Both walks were engaging with Cory displaying his collection of miniature animals that lived in the Calgary region in prehistoric times. The erratics spread around the hill were another feature of interest on the tours.



Left: On the Nose Hill Park trail.

Above: Cory's collection of prehistoric inhabitants of the Calgary region, displayed on one of the erratics.

Right: History of Chinatown: A thoughtful overview of the history of the Chinese community including its art and culture and ties to the development of Canada and Alberta. Presentation prepared by **Peter Wong** and presented twice by **Marcus Cheung**. Photo on right is of a portion of a mural commemorating the contribution of the Chinese community to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.



Marcel Hebert led an engaging tour that explored the farming roots of the Parkdale community and the prosperity brought by the railroad. Lots of humour and tidbits about the neighbourhood. Photo on left is a scale replica of the old Parkdale station.



Kathy Coutts and **Nagille Walsh-Besso** led two tours of Okotoks, exploring the history and nooks and crannies of the town.



Above: One of the Old Macleod Trail markers in Okotoks. Above, left: One of the Okotoks tours in front of an historic, repurposed building, now a bistro.



Mark Schmidt led a tour that included the west side of Macleod Trail in Midnapore, an area not usually covered in our tours. The pictured building was used as a school and community centre.

Other tours on Saturday, July 24 included a tour of East Village by **Scott Graham**, a walk along 17th Avenue SW by **Patricia Paterson** and a tour of the historic markers in the former military base in Garrison Woods led by **Dave Holmes**.

Virtual presentations on July 25 comprised **Jim Benedict's** *Succession Proofing Your Family Story* and **Richard White's** *Invasion of the Infill*.

On July 26, **Allan Rowe** discussed the historical importance of Chinese laundries to the livelihood of this immigrant community.



Interior of CPR Supply Farm Building in Strathmore. Immigrants were taught farming techniques for the dry belt of Alberta. This restored historic site is now used as an event centre.



Two hikes of Glenbow Ranch Park were led by **Alice Fedosoff** on Monday, July 26 and **Sarah Parker** explored the sights of the park on a bike tour on Thursday, July 29. Great scenery in this historic site.

Ruth Manning outlined the history of the Deane House and its Gaspé Lodge era, including a tour inside the house on Monday, July 26.



Trudy Cowan engaged both children and adults with her performance of *Quarantine - Keep Out!* at Heritage Park and *Clarence's Engine* in the beautiful, historic Beaulieu Gardens.



On our way to explore the Eurasian denizens of the Calgary Zoo, **Jen Duffy** led us through the prehistoric park with its new animatronic dinosaurs. Bonus: Jen was a key member of the design team for the new exhibit.

Chestermere Historical Foundation hosted two events. **Eileen McElroy** presented her extensive research on the Chestermere Historic Blackfoot Trail. **Todd McBride** fired up his steam powered bicycle, seen on the right, demonstrating a passion for this unusual and engaging project.



Shelly McElroy introduced the team that moved the Grain Academy from the Stampede grounds to Pioneer Acres in Irricana. The story of the reconstruction of the model train display, with its intricate detail, was the highlight of the presentation.

Two virtual panel discussions were a feature of this year's festival. The first took us behind the scenes of MapMakers and the Calgary Atlas Project. Moderated by **Asia Walker**, the panel featured **Shaun Hunter**, **Kevin Allen** and **Jim Ellis**. The second panel was moderated by **Josh Traptow** and included panelists **Madeleine King**, **Gael Macleod** and **Asia Walker**. The panel explored the history and experiences of Women on City Council with an insight only possible from those that had been there.

Another mapping project was highlighted by **Larry Kapustka** of the Turner Valley Oilfield Society. This interactive map will allow users to take virtual tours of the places and events that shaped the petroleum industry.

Mapping Calgary's Labour History by **Kirk Niergarth** with illustrations by **Karen Mills**, another element of the Calgary Atlas Project, took us on a virtual tour. Using art and story they showed us how Calgary was built.





Heidi Gedlaman led a group around the Kiyooka Ohe Arts Centre, an outdoor sculpture garden on the outskirts of Calgary. Seen above are *Man Standing*, by Norman Sjoman and *Steel Wave* by Roy Leadbeater — two pieces in the Centre's collection.

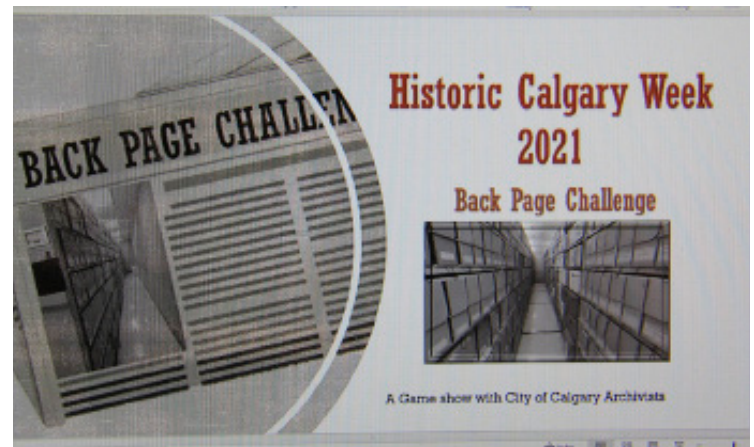


Youthlink's **Noreen Barros** and **Breanna Shorter** revisited Festival Express, Calgary's own version of Woodstock, in 1970. Interesting contrast between the hippie generation and the establishment at the time, a history many of us lived through but did not necessarily experience.

The evolution of our attitudes towards Canada's furry engineers, the beavers, from a source of fur for hats and coats to the realization of the important role they play in our environment was highlighted by **Katie Bakken** and **Frances Backhouse**.

Do You Live On An Airport? was the subject of **Richard de Boer's** entertaining in-person event. And some of the attendees, in fact, now live on former airport sites in Calgary.

David Peyto's Banff cemetery tour highlighted some lesser known Banffites. A volunteer who was working in the cemetery during the tour told the story of Two Jack Lake and one of the Jacks interred in the cemetery.



City of Calgary archivists, **Carol Stokes, Kristine Lehew, Bryan Bance and Lynn Bullock**, put on a creative virtual presentation using a game show format to highlight some of the stories in the archives.

If you have always wanted to know *How to Look After Your Heritage Home*, you would have enjoyed **Dave Chalmers'** virtual presentation. Dave has restored several key historic buildings in Calgary and region.

In a documentary work in progress, *Painting Climate Change in the Canadian Rockies*, **Caroline Hedin** details the artistic efforts of a collective of women of indigenous and settler heritage probing the effects of climate change. The artists are repainting the scenes Catherine Robb Whyte painted in the early 20th C.

The inimitable **Harry Sanders** took us on a virtual tour of Reinach Avenue, the forgotten Jewish street. Now named 4th Avenue SW, we were treated to a lively retelling of the many businesses over an important four-block stretch of early Calgary.

Tom Van Dewark outlined steps in recording oral histories. He illustrated the techniques with a mock interview and provided a detailed handout for attendees.

Christine Hayes outlined *Starting a Family History*.

This introductory presentation can evolve into a series of talks elaborating on various components of the subject.

The combination of information and artifacts in the reintroduction of Fort Calgary by **Allison Graham** and **Adrienne Dewsberry** was a fascinating retelling of the history of a unique part of our history.



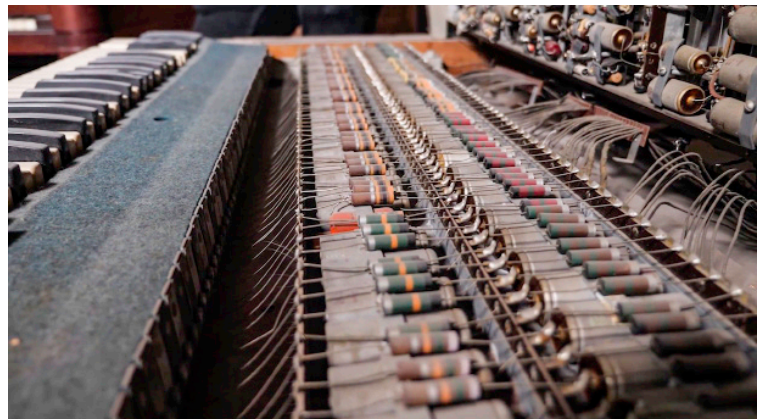
Susan Campbell related the history of Mt. St. Francis Retreat, originally a sandstone ranch house from 1908. In 1949, Franciscan monks converted it into the place of peace and contemplation that it is today.



Anita Dammer and **Rob Alexander** showcased the iconic images of photographers W. J. Oliver and J. Rosettis from the Glenbow Western Research Centre collection. Photo above is *Pack Train in the Mountains* by W. J. Oliver, NA-4868-159.



Nick Gillen gave a well-researched review of how the Armoury came to Mewata Park. It was a civic project built with a minimum of controversy.



Elizabeth Reade, Claire Neily and Jason Tawkin took us on a behind the scenes virtual tour of the National Music Centre's offsite facility. Here this vast, unique collection of musical instruments and memorabilia that is not on display is restored, maintained and housed.

Shari Peyerl shared her research into the building of our sandstone city. In addition to highlighting the importance of the local quarries, she zoomed into the stories of the individuals, their jobs, skills and lives.

Frits Pannekoek and **Catherine Evamy** featured the magnificent stained glass windows that grace Christ Church Elbow Park. Many of the windows commemorate the lives of well-known Calgarians in addition to telling Bible stories.



Irene Kerr and Olivia Cotton Cornwall conducted a walking tour to several historic sites in High River. Irene honoured Bill Dunn’s work on the Marking Macleod Trail project.



McDougall Memorial United Church held an open house showcasing the rebuilt facility. Tours of the historic site were conducted by volunteers who talked about the history of the site and the people in the area.



The final event of the week was an archeological tour of Edworthy Park led by **Frankie-Lou Nelligan**. This site of a sandstone quarry was an important source of building material in Calgary during the early 1900s.



The Historic Calgary Week organizing committee was comprised of:

David Ballard, MacKenzie Brash, Doug Coats, Irene DeBoni, Walt DeBoni, Marie Forester, Sarah Harvey, Heather Ingram, Gail Kessler, Jackie Kleiner, Shelly McElroy, Patrick Mealey, Shari Peyerl, David Peyto, Kate Reeves, Kathleen Rogers, Roberta Ryckman, Carolyn Ryder, and Jessica Zutz. Not formally part of the HCW Committee, our webmaster Nicole Marion-Patola, was fundamental in keeping our website up-to-date through many updates.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers and presenters without whom Historic Calgary Week would not exist. We also thank our 38 partner organizations who often host events. Their volunteers and staff bring a rich diversity to our festival and help us give life to the stories of our history. Hundreds of hours are required to research the topics, to prepare presentations and to organize and run this program.