

Museum Musings: Welcoming Visitors

The big front doors of the Historical Museum have been folded tightly closed since the beginning of September. But the east side door has been opening and closing with great regularity, keeping the staff and volunteers very busy with archival requests, museum tours, and special events.

Many of the people who use the Museum are from the City and surrounding area, but we have also had visitors from far away. A quick scan of the visitors' guest book indicates that we have had two sets of people from the United Kingdom tour the Museum, another from Japan, and several Americans have come in to visit and utilise the Bill Smiley archives. At least one French citizen participated in one of the walking tours.

It is always interesting to receive feedback from our visitors. One couple from the United States emailed us after their visit to let us know how much they had appreciated our helpfulness. At the time of their email, they were visiting David Wilkins, the former ambassador to Canada, and were able to tell both Wilkins and Premier Scott Moe (who also happened to be visiting Wilkins at the time) how our archives staff went out of their way to assist them during their visit.

It was also great to get a "shout out" from Diana Edes after her visit to the archives. Diana was born in Prince Albert, but moved away with her family when she was in elementary school. She enjoyed talking about the doctors with whom her father had practised, and some of her kindergarten friends (such as Marnie Lee Hjertaas) and finding the house in which her family had lived.

Some of the special events in which the Museum staff and volunteers have been involved since the beginning of September include a West Hill walking tour, the transfer of the totem pole, an Historic House tour, and our annual commemoration of Remembrance Day.

A highlight of the latter event was our opportunity to photograph William Hodgson standing beside the millstones which his three times great grandfather, also William Hodgson, had brought from Winnipeg in the late 1870s for use on McFarlane and Miner's Creeks in the Clouston and Lily Plain districts.

The Museum has also hosted an opening to coincide with the Santa Claus parade, and a Downtown walking tour with historical talk during the Downtown Association's late night opening for Christmas shoppers.

Amongst all this activity, and the renewal and reorganisation of our artifact storage and archives space, we continue to work with our First Nations and Metis Knowledge Keepers to ensure that we can appropriately present our area's history from before the arrival of the European settlers.

If you are interested in what we are doing at the Museum, or willing to help out, drop by any time Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or give us a call at 306-764-2992.

And stay tuned for our next column in which we will discuss our fund raising project to rebuild the Nisbet church and the historic Blockhouse.

Fred Payton
Prince Albert Historical Society
December 5th, 2019