The Heritage Boom: Evolution of Historical Resource Conservation in Alberta

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ABSTRACT. Alberta's generous expenditures on historic preservation reflect not only oil wealth but also public demands. While historical museums were initially favoured as the means of restoring the past, heritage parks and archaeological site preservation have also become important since the 1960s in the overall heritage scheme. In the 1980s, the view that heritage and tourism could be linked saved heritage projects from falling victim to government cost-cutting efforts that followed the declining fortunes of the province's energy industry after 1982.

SOMMAIRE. Les sommes généreuses que l'Alberta consacre à la conservation historique reflètent non seulement la richesse due au pétrole mais aussi la demande du public. Bien que le musée historique fut, à l'origine, le moyen favorisé pour restaurer le passé, ce sont les parcs du patrimoine et la protection des sites archéologiques qui, depuis les années 1960, sont devenus un facteur important dans le plan global de conservation du patrimoine. Au cours des années 1980, on s'est rendu compte qu'on pouvait relier patrimoine et tourisme et on a pu, de ce fait, éviter à des projets de conservation du patrimoine d'être victimes des compressions budgétaires du gouvernement à la suite des revers de fortune de l'industrie énergétique de la province après 1982.

Introduction

Not unlike the province's general history, Alberta's heritage conservation movement developed relatively late. Yet it is marked with exuberant growth in recent years. Alberta was the last province in mainland Canada to establish a provincial museum (1967), normally the foundation of historical appreciation. Similarly, until the 1960s the province's interest in local or private museum development, historic site preservation, archaeological and palaeontological research, and associated resource management, appeared equally languid. Yet today Alberta's heritage programs are among the most ambitious in the country. Between 1980 and 1992 approximately $120 million will have been spent by the provincial government alone on a wide range of capital development projects related directly to heritage resource interpretation.

Why such a change? And, has this latest impetus been made despite the recent recession or partially because of it? The key for much of this mystery is in the nature of the audience involved. Alberta's population was relatively small prior to oil development in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, and for the "old-timers" in Alberta before the oil boom, their history was often too immediate to be appreciated. In addition, Alberta's heritage was certainly not a great initial concern for the late waves of "immigrants" largely from Ontario and other eastern provinces. Rather, widespread interest in heritage in Alberta resulted from the amalgamation of three factors.

In the late 1960s, public attitudes towards heritage matured. Many second-generation Albertans began to react to the loss of the first generation and its history. Furthermore, assimilation had started among the "new Albertans" who now called the province their home. Accompanying this was a growing concern for the built and natural environments. By this time, the base mechanisms for serious heritage promotion had developed through slow progression in the field.

Finally, and most significantly, by the 1980s politicians, businessmen and the general public began to appreciate that historical resource development had not only cultural value, but could produce strong economic benefits as well.

It is the purpose of this article to describe and analyse the evolution of heritage conservation in Alberta, focussing particularly on provincial government programs and historical resource development. To accomplish this task, the field will be examined in three chronological periods.

The Early Efforts, 1884-1954

Although most of the drive in the field of historical resource conservation within the province has occurred within the last three decades, there certainly were earlier undertakings. In Fort Macleod, the site of Alberta's first North West Mounted Police post and the oldest white settlement in southern Alberta, an historical society had begun as early as 1884.[1] Interestingly, the original secretary of that group was lawyer Frederick W.G. Haultain, later the premier of the North-West Territories (1897-1905) and founder of the University of Saskatchewan. Four years later, Lethbridge also began a local historical society.[2]

Around the turn of the century, the region's first museums were established by physician Dr. Henry George in Innisfail, and by federal authorities at Banff.[3] These were primarily natural history exhibits of mounted animals, although some historical objects were also included. George's first collections were displayed in his house in the 1890s, but in 1907 he moved to Red Deer, creating a larger and more significant museum facility.[4] The museum at Banff in the "Rocky Mountains Park of Canada" was opened in 1904, and three years later reported an annual attendance of over eight thousand visitors.[5]

Two years after the province of Alberta was established, its first heritage-related legislation was passed. The Historical Society Act, 1907, created the Historical Society of Alberta, an organization that continues today. In its original form the society was comprised of the upper crust of government, including the premier, lieutentant governor and many members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), with a goal

> to encourage the study of the history of Alberta and Canada, to rescue from oblivion the memories of its original inhabitants . . . to obtain and preserve narratives in print . . . to secure and preserve minerals, archaeological curiosities and objects generally illustrative of the civil, religious, literary and natural history of the country and to establish a museum and library.[6]

Related to this latter goal, a provincial library was created about this time, and an exhibits room developed on the top floor of the legislative building some time later. The library staff began to collect some historical manuscripts, although the collection could not be construed as an archives. The exhibits room, which

many considered "the nucleus of the Alberta provincial museum,"[7] again consisted of stuffed animals, a few fossils and minerals, and some arrowheads. It is interesting to note that regard for the preservation of artifacts relating to human history was only a secondary growth of facilities developed for the interpretation of natural history.

The forerunner to the Provincial Museum, the Exhibits Room in the Legislative Building. Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, PA43/2.

In the 1920s, the first efforts began towards historic site recognition and preservation. Throughout this period, provincial officials exchanged considerable correspondence with, and eventually placed a member on, the recently formed (1919) Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. By 1927, this board had erected eighty-five historical markers nationally, with six recorded in Alberta. These initial plaqued cairns commemorated the fur-trade posts of Fort Edmonton, Fort Augustus and Jasper House, the North West Mounted Police posts in Fort Macleod and Calgary, as well as the sites of the Frog Lake Massacre of 1885 and the signing of Treaty Seven (1877).[8] The plaquing of historic sites continued from this time as the major form of heritage conservation in the province until the late 1950s.

The first known attempt at the preservation of an historic building within the province was a project headed by two Oblate priests from 1927 to 1929 in St. Albert.[9] To restore the 1861 log chapel, originally built by noted western Canadian missionary Father Albert Lacombe, Fathers Jan and Bidault undertook work which "involved the replacement of approximately 40% of the

original material and the construction of a protective brick shell.''[10] Funds had been provided by both the provincial and federal governments, the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways, and private donations.

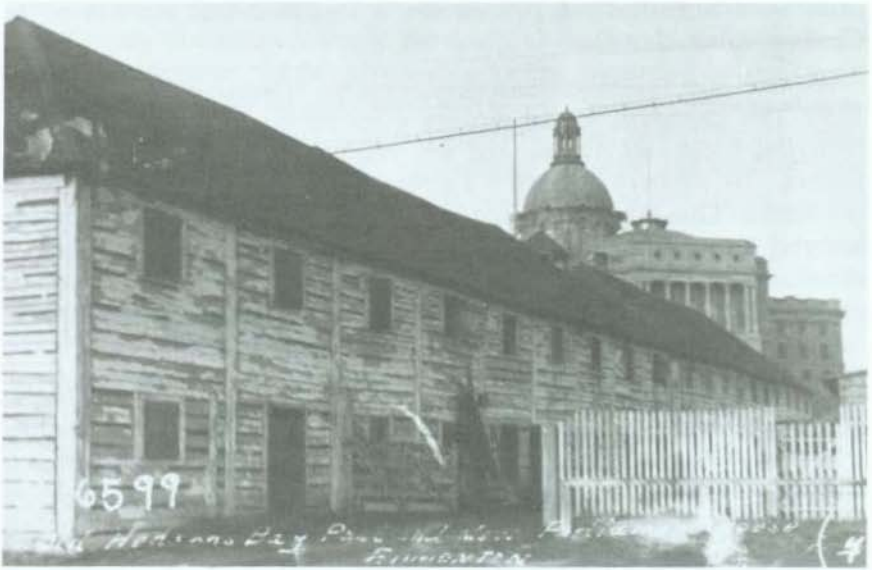
A major contributor was Patrick Burns, well-known rancher and meat packer, who unveiled a bronze statue of Father Lacombe at the building's opening ceremonies on 21 July 1929, which attracted a crowd of over five thousand.[11] The chapel, Alberta's oldest remaining structure, has served as a museum commemorating the work of Lacombe since that time.

Despite the restraints of the Great Depression, Alberta took a growing interest in heritage conservation throughout the 1930s. Further federal historical markers were requested and erected, and initial discussions began between the dominion and provincial governments on the concept of the preservation of historic sites.[12] In 1931 an MLA, A.D. Mitchell of Leduc, in a debate on the throne speech ''urged that the government re-erect old Fort Edmonton as a monument to the old-timers and for the purpose of housing relics of the early days.''[13] The last remnants of Fort Edmonton, one of the west's most important early fur-trade posts, were dismantled in 1915 to make way for landscaping improvements for the newly completed legislative building. In 1932, Mitchell's proposals were raised again and linked to demands for a true provincial museum.[14] Both issues arose periodically over the next three decades with equally unsuccessful results.

The following year, early photographer Ernest Brown established his ''Educational Exhibition and Museum'' in Edmonton.[15] This private facility contained not only his own extensive collections of Albertan and western Canadian pictures and manuscripts, but the works of several other first photographers that he had acquired to form a photographic archives. Brown's principal interest was ''to educate and inspire children and their teachers with a sense of the pioneer heritage of Alberta.''[16] Brown lectured extensively to school groups and prepared teaching aids even after his museum closed in 1939, until his death in 1951. His main photographic collection, consisting of over fifty thousand negatives, was purchased by the province in 1947 at a total cost of $50,000. At that time, it was reported that the collection would be a primary element of a new provincial museum to be established in the Old Government House building in Edmonton.[17] However, the museum and archives did not come about until twenty years later, and while on the same site as Government House, it was developed in a new facility.

Professional archaeological research in Alberta began with Americans conducting brief investigations as early as the mid-1930s. However, Boyd Wettlaufer's work in 1949 ''might be viewed as the first systematic attempt to excavate an archaeological site in the province.''[18] Sponsored by the University of New Mexico, Wettlaufer dug at a locally known site approximately twelve miles northeast of the town of Fort Macleod. Specifically, the excavation was at

the base of a cliff over which early Native hunters had stampeded buffalo to obtain meat and hides. Subsequent publicity referring to the location as the "Early Man Site" stated that the investigation had "revealed materials such as arrowheads, scrapers and crude pottery made at least 3,000 years ago."[19] It was later discovered, however, that these workings had only begun to uncover the unprecedented archaeological wealth of a place eventually designated (1981) by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, as it is now known, is one of the oldest, largest and longest-used buffalo jumps in North America, and the best surviving site of its kind in the world. The jump is now the subject of extensive archaeological research and interpretive development by the provincial government.



A 1912 view of Old Fort Edmonton with the newly constructed Legislative Building in the background. Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta B6599.

Also commencing in the late 1940s was a second and better-orchestrated attempt to have Fort Edmonton reconstructed. Encouraged by the pleas of the Historical Society of Alberta and upon a recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, a major federal study began in 1949 "to prepare essential information preliminary to possible re-erection of Fort Edmonton, as a historical monument and museum."[20] The project report was submitted at the annual meeting of the board two years later, published in 1954, and the matter was heard again in the provincial legislature.[21] However, press coverage described "sparring" between the federal and provincial governments for several years after.[22] The on again/off again handling of the proposal continued until 1969 when the city of Edmonton, assisted by a citizens' group known as the Fort Edmonton Historical Foundation, and partially subsidized by

the province, began a four-year reconstruction program on an alternative site. This complex was built to interpret Fort Edmonton as it was in 1846.

In the 1950s, direct involvement by the Alberta government in public awareness projects relating to heritage began through the former Publicity Bureau of the Department of Economic Development. In 1952, Hugh Dempsey's "Historic Sites in Alberta" was likely the province's first heritage resource publication.[23] Due to heavy demand this booklet, consisting of brief historical sketches on sites across the province, went through numerous additional printings in the 1950s and 1960s. Dempsey, at that time a bureau employee, and perhaps the first true historical researcher hired by the province, became one of the early leaders in Alberta's heritage movement and has actively participated since that time. He is now a long-time staff member of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

Another related event was the appearance of the *Alberta Historical Review* in 1953. This periodical started through a revitalized and more democratic Historical Society of Alberta, and was originally printed by the Publicity Bureau.[24] The *Review* has served as a general forum for discussions of Albertan and western Canadian history, and has also occasionally taken an interest in lobbying for specific developments regarding museums, interpretive markers, site restoration and the like. The reconstituted society, spearheaded by a group of academics and civil servants, strove for broad public membership and support.

During that same year, the Historical Point of Interest Sign Program was also initiated. Arising from an earlier Industrial Sign Program, these "rustic signs" were erected by the Publicity Bureau, assisted by the Department of Highways on pull-offs along the province's major routes.[25] It is notable that a stated goal of the Historical Society of Alberta in the preface of the *Review* for its first two years was "the erection of historical road signs similar to those in Montana."[26] Six signs were installed in the first year, thirty-six by 1960, and over seventy exist today.

With printed materials and roadside signs, public recognition of the importance of historical preservation was stimulated. However, in reviewing the progress of heritage conservation in Alberta prior to 1955, it is evident that little had been accomplished.

Establishing a Mandate, 1955-1979

Alberta's Golden Jubilee year marked an important advance in heritage conservation within the province. A number of mechanisms established by the provincial government for the anniversary became permanently entrenched, including a regular budget for heritage and the formation of a "Government Historical Committee." A $25,000 per year appropriation was voted by the provincial legislature "for the purpose of preserving Alberta's history and

marking historic sites."[27] The original committee, consisting of three cabinet ministers, was assigned "to head the planning and to co-ordinate suggestions from citizens throughout the province"[28] on anniversary projects. However, in 1957 a reorganized committee was charged "to study the possibility for the preservation and restoration of historical sites and monuments in Alberta with a view to establishing a long-term policy," and prodded by the press "to develop a first rate historical program."[29] This latter committee, headed by the Honourable A.R. Patrick, then minister of Economic Affairs and later provincial secretary, began dealing with repeated public demands for the creation of a provincial museum, the reconstruction proposal for Fort Edmonton, the appointment of a provincial archivist, and other such issues.[30]

At the time of the jubilee, two other notable private efforts were initiated. In 1955, Calgary oil millionaire Eric L. Harvie and his family created the nonprofit Glenbow Foundation "for the purpose of collecting, preserving and displaying material relevant to human and natural history."[31] The following year Stanley Reynolds open the Western Canadian Pioneer Museum in Wetaskiwin, based on his father's collection of early agricultural, industrial and transportation equipment.[32] Both ventures were to later evolve into major museums in the province.

Lobbied by a now flourishing Historical Society of Alberta, the provincial government began expanding its direct activities and sponsorship of heritage concerns. In 1955, the provincial Parks Board began pursuing the purchase of the early fur-trade sites of White Earth Post and Fort Vermilion, as well as the Frog Lake Massacre site, which was the location of one of the initial incidents of the North-West Rebellion of 1885.[33] Early in 1956 the provincial government acquired the St. Charles Mission Historic Site at Dunvegan, and embarked upon its first restoration project. In cooperation with the local Knights of Columbus, the 1885 log church and 1889 log rectory were restored, a road was provided and the grounds were landscaped as the government's first historic park. While much of the work was done in 1956 and 1957, the official opening took place in 1961.[34] Other land purchases were also made, including Fort George and Fort Victoria in 1959-60.

Alberta's first reconstruction of a fort complex also began in 1957. A local group, sponsored substantially by provincial government grants, undertook the erection of a "replica" of the North-West Mounted Police post at Fort Macleod. Although the resulting complex was not intended to be historically accurate, the interesting log construction created a valuable tourist resource for the community.[35] Two years later, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police financed a museum structure within the fort's palisades. This project also established a precedent for similar fort constructions in the late 1960s at Lethbridge, Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton.

Two government initiatives of the period were the commencement of oral history recordings in 1957 and the historical cairn program in 1959.[36] The cairn program met with particular success and popularity. Twenty-one of the pre-cast concrete markers with bronze plaques were erected in the first year, and thirty more in 1960-61. The major responsibility for plaquing historic sites had shifted from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to the province.

By 1960, a strong public demand had grown for historical preservation. According to a government report at the time, "the Province of Alberta is actively engaged in an extensive program of research, restoration, preservation, recording and marking [its] history and historic sites."[37] Nevertheless, there was substantial criticism of government inactivity in heritage. According to the *Alberta Historical Review*,

> When it comes to history, there is no doubt that the provincial government has left much to be desired. It is only within the past few years that any real interest has been shown and we hope that this will continue.[38]

A focus of attention was the establishment of a provincial museum. In his 1958 "Five Year Plan" speech, Premier E.C. Manning announced:

> 1963—Finally, it is proposed to erect a Provincial archives and museum. While Alberta is still a young province she is old enough that we should make the necessary provision to preserve the records and milestones of the past for the enrichment of our future.[39]

In 1960, a critic noted that this was "an encouraging sign, because up to now Alberta has shown less interest in museums than any of the other eight provinces on the mainland of Canada."[40]

However, in 1962 the Museums Branch of the Department of the Provincial Secretary was formed to work on "surveys, research, and compiling of data and reports for guidance of the government in the establishment of a Provincial Museum and a Provincial Archives."[41] A museums consultant, R.O Harrison, was also hired by the government to assist with the project. The following year, the *Edmonton Journal* announced:

> Edmonton has been selected as the site for Alberta's provincial museum and archives . . . the government has [also] decided to make a smaller museum out of the old courthouse in Calgary . . . Renovations to the courthouse . . . should begin soon. Negotiations within the Glenbow Foundation . . . are nearly complete.[42]

In 1963 a search began for a suitable site in Edmonton for the future museum and archives, and planning started on a fifteen-year, three-stage development proposal for that facility. In addition, arrangements were finalized for Calgary's Glenbow Foundation-Alberta Government Museum.[43] An agreement between the two parties was struck in July 1963, initially with the government providing

Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton. Courtesy of Mark Rasmussen.

free space in the refurbished Courthouse and an operating grant of $35,000 per year. That facility was opened in December 1964. Two years later, the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Act was passed in the legislature outlining the museum's purpose, operating procedures, collections and a new arrangement on financing. Specifically, the Harvie family gift of a $5 million endowment and the original Glenbow Collections was matched by $5 million from the province, free rent on the building, and $100,000 per year for operating expenses. From its inception, the institute dealt with the collection and display of materials related to "art, archaeology, pioneer and agricultural life, fine arts, military history, ethnology, natural history and mineralogy."[44] A library and archives were also created to support research on these studies. At the same time, a provincial museum site had been selected in Edmonton—13.5 acres surrounding the old Government House, overlooking the North Saskatchewan River. Collections of historic materials owned by the government began to be pulled out of basements, warehouses and garages across the city to be consolidated temporarily in the Beaver House Building until the new facility was ready.[45]

In 1965 the first provincial archivist was appointed, and in the following years the Provincial Archives Act was passed.[46] Until that time, the Provincial Library had attempted to deal with the archival function for the government, yet

many valuable historic documents, including government materials, had been lost. With an archivist and legislation, an orderly and thorough accession of documents and photographs relating to Alberta's history began. A Public Documents Committee was established to ensure no more valuable public records were destroyed.

Finally, on 6 December 1967, the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta was opened. The building's total cost was $8.6 million, $2.5 million of which had come from the federal government's Confederation Memorial Grants program. The facility at that time could rightfully be called the state of the art for museums, consisting of 250,000 square feet in gross area, full climate controls, extensive galleries and an impressive Tyndall-stone façade.[47] Unlike the broad cultural and geographic approaches taken by the Glenbow, the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta focussed specifically on Alberta's natural and human history.

These two major facilities, however, were just a part of a large wave of museums development throughout Alberta and the rest of the country. In a 1966 annual report by the provincial secretary's office, it was noted that:

> Canada is now passing through a phase of major historical and museum development . . . The acute shortage of experienced personnel and competition with other institutions required much effort in recruitment [for the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta].[48]

Referring to the growth in museums, the Historical Society of Alberta at the time asked:

> Why the sudden interest in history? This is not confined to Alberta, but is a noticeable trend across the continent. More money, more leisure time, better educational facilities and a greater awareness of history that is slipping away from us—these are all factors which are involved. In some cases the incentive may be necessary to promote a tourist attraction. In other cases, an honest attempt is being made by citizens to enrich the life of the community.[49]

A survey based on government records, by the author, of seventy-eight historical museums currently operating across Alberta, and representing the vast majority of this province's facilities, revealed that 79 percent of these institutions began operating between 1955 and 1979. The peak for museum creation in the province was Canada's Centennial year, sparked by both community interest and special grants programs, when eleven new facilities opened. Within the survey sample, only 4 percent of these museums began before 1951.

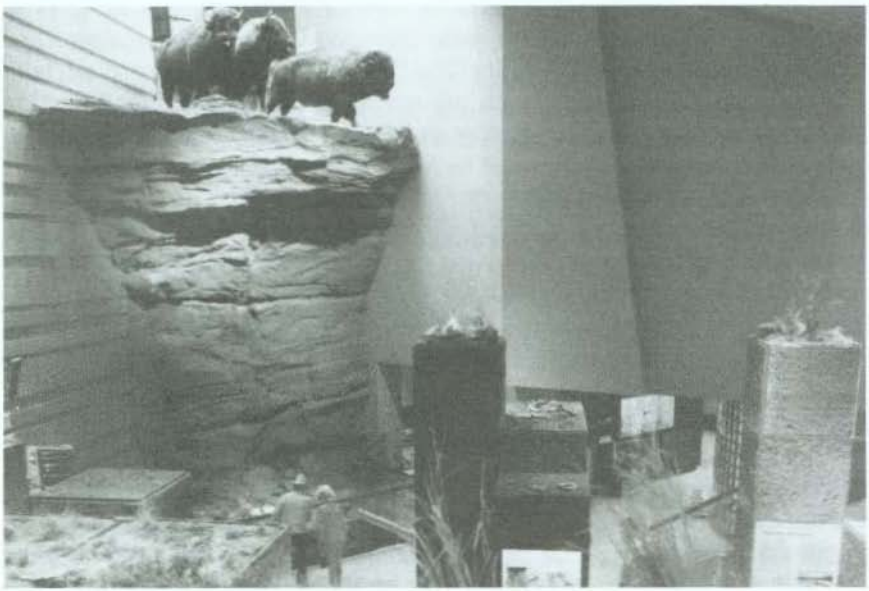
Aside from the proliferation of traditional historical museums, "heritage parks" were created, including the fort reconstruction previously noted and most significantly the developments at Calgary and Edmonton. These parks

blended period buildings (brought in), original equipment and artifacts with reconstructions and reproductions to interpret history in a colourful and entertaining way. At the time of the opening of the Calgary facility in 1964, one reviewer described it as "a unique idea which combines the preservation of history with a children's park."[50] A later article referred to it as "a living exhibit portraying life in the west from the days of the fur trader to 1914."[51] The Edmonton development opened its first phase, a reconstructed Fort Edmonton on a nonoriginal site, in 1974. Later it was to add period streetscapes much like Calgary's Heritage Park. While many preservationists have philosophical problems with the authenticity of these "fabricated" environments, few question the recreational and economic benefits of theme parks attracting over 165,000 visitors per year in Edmonton and over 315,000 annually in Calgary.[52] Both parks are administered by their respective municipalities, aided by citizens' foundations.

The field of archaeology in Alberta also became rooted at this time. In 1957 Dr. Richard G. Forbis was hired by the Glenbow Institute as "the first resident professional archaeologist in the province."[53] In 1961 he began sessional lecturing at the University of Alberta (Calgary) and converted to a full-time professional position in 1965. The following year this school, later known as the University of Calgary, "took the unprecedented step, for North America, of forming a separate Department of Archaeology,"[54] distinct from an anthropology department.

Complementing these developments was the establishment of the Archaeological Society of Alberta in 1960 and its subsequent growth. Throughout the decade, chapters were chartered in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge, and later in Medicine Hat.[55] This society, composed of both amateurs and professionals, took an active role not only in information exchange, but in lobbying to promote archaeological concerns on a provincial and national level.

A final aspect of the field of heritage conservation during the 1960s was a growing interest in actual historical and archaeological site preservation. In 1963 the provincial government's Historical Advisory Committee "agreed that the rustic sign program had reached the saturation point" and "that the province should now turn to [site] preservation, restoration and reconstruction."[56] The committee also called for a survey of historic sites across the province for the purposes of marking or preservation. The following year, the committee first acknowledged the principle of *in situ* preservation in relation to discussions on the Dunvegan site, questioning the wisdom of moving any historic structure from its original location.[57] Another significant development was the Provincial Parks Act of 1964 where, within park boundaries, selected areas could be designated as "historical sites, declared historical objects," and archaeological and palaeontological excavations would be controlled. Although limited to parks, this legislation provided the first aspects of historic site protection within Alberta.



Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre, near Fort Macleod, Alberta. Courtesy of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism.

With this interest in sites, further land acquisitions were made by the province during the period, including the St. Augustine Mission in the Peace River area in 1964, the Old Women's Buffalo Jump Site in 1966, the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in 1968, Rutherford House (leased) in 1970, the Cochrane Ranche (1971-77), and Stephansson House (1977). As well, supplemental purchases took place throughout the 1970s and 1980s for some of the earlier acquired sites, such as Victoria Settlement, Fort George/Buckingham House and Dunvegan. Negotiations often took years and occasionally it would be asked whether sites should be a federal or a provincial responsibility.

As previously discussed, the first formal move by federal authorities to develop a national historic park in Alberta involved the Fort Edmonton reconstruction proposal that took place in the early 1950s. It was reported that:

> the Federal Government, it is claimed, agreed to restore the old fort on a site on the legislative grounds while the province, on its part, undertook to provide the land where the original fort stood and to maintain the building . . . Provincial Officials say the next step is "up to Ottawa" as it is to supply the building.[58]

Mysteriously, this "agreement" seemed to disappear through time, with federal inaction blamed for the failure. In 1969, another attempt was made to create a national park, at the Cochrane Ranche west of Calgary. However, this time provincial authorities actively discouraged the federal government's bid at site acquisition. In this case, a conflict arose between federal interest in developing the site of western Canada's first major commercial cattle ranch, and provincial government plans for a new highway through the location. In a stinging letter from the Historical Society of Alberta to MLAs at the time, it was noted that:

> the tragedy of this situation is that the Federal Government was ready to preserve and develop the historic site, but now they are backing off in the face of Provincial objections. Is history to be destroyed for the sake of convenience?[59]

At the time, it was clear that historical preservation still lacked the necessary public and political support. Today, the Department of Transportation and Utilities conducts extensive archaeological surveys prior to contemplated developments and demonstrates a fair degree of resource sensitivity. With regard to the Cochrane Ranche, the province did eventually develop the site itself as an historic park.

One of the greatest problems that has traditionally stood in the way of federal government involvement in heritage preservation is its apparent inability to acquire land without exclusive jurisdiction and mineral rights. This problem was cited as the primary justification for federal withdrawal from negotiations on the acquisition and development of the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump site in the 1970s,[60] and is still repeatedly noted. The one exception was the compromise struck on the site of the 1799 North West Company fur-trade post at

Rocky Mountain House. Encouraged by the Historic Sites Advisory Committee, the Glenbow Foundation and the University of Alberta, the province purchased the site from a private party in 1965, proclaiming it a designated historic site under the Provincial Parks Act. In 1977, after two years of negotiations, the province transferred the parcel to the government of Canada to assist in the development of Alberta's first national historic park. A condition for the transfer, however, was that the province would not have to fully relinquish rights of access over the land to the federal government. This development remains the province's only national historic park run by the federal government.

Among the most significant developments of the late 1960s and 1970s was the rapid evolution of provincial heritage legislation. Following the previously discussed Provincial Parks Act of 1964, a brief reference in the Public Lands Act of 1966 (concerning authorization of archaeological excavations),[61] the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Act and the Provincial Archives Act also of 1966, the Alberta Heritage Act was passed. Proclaimed in 1970, most of this legislation dealt with formal guidelines for the operation and management of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, an institution created three years earlier. However, it also legitimized a small grants program for heritage groups, replaced the Provincial Archives Act, and authorized the government's involvement in historic sites related to research, plaquing and publishing. In addition it created an Historic Sites Advisory Committee, which could involve noncivil servants in advising the minister responsible "on all matters relating to historic sites." Again, this written mandate helped stabilize and regularize a committee which had taken various forms in the past.

While this act did acknowledge the work already being done by the government, it provided little new direction. Groups such as the archaeological and historical societies, the Canadian Archaeological Association, the universities and the Research Council of Alberta lobbied heavily for substantive site protection. The result of this pressure was the establishment of the Public Advisory Committee on the Conservation of Historical and Archaeological Resources in 1970-71. Associated with the Alberta Environment Conservation Authority, and chaired by Dr. R.G. Forbis, this committee met "to study and make recommendations on legislation and programmes desirable for the conservation of historical and archaeological resources."[62] This was achieved through an investigation of heritage legislation both nationally and internationally, hearings, a review of the Alberta situation and the development of suggestions for future directions of the government. This was seriously received by both the public (seventy-seven written briefs were made to the committee) and the government, which subsequently passed the Alberta Heritage Act of 1973 and radically expanded programs relating to heritage concerns.

The new act not only created broader powers for museums acquisitions, public records management and grants provision, but gave the minister responsible significant authority to protect heritage sites. The framework for this

protection included a Heritage Sites Service, with a director, a provincial archaeologist and a Heritage Sites Board. A primary tool of the legislation was the designation of heritage sites selected from across the province and protected in perpetuity. In addition, the act provided for permits for archaeological and palaeontological excavation, provincial rights of entry to designated sites, provisions for temporary stop orders on developments threatening historical resources, the ability to exempt selected sites from the building code and the application of penalties for violations. A further support for the effort was the creation through the legislation of a charter for the Alberta Heritage Foundation. The foundation was established to complement government activities by also being involved in the acquisition and management of heritage resources, to conduct public relations on the subject, and "to provide the people of Alberta with an opportunity to become directly involved in the programs."[63]

At this point Alberta's legislation with respect to site preservation was easily the most progressive in the country. Although all other provinces possessed "antiquity laws," problems existed with their lack of associated staff, programs and support monies, and the ability to enforce compliance. Federal heritage legislation, both then and now, only applied to sites on federally administered lands, as well as the ability to mark, but not protect, historic places under the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. By contrast, the Alberta legislation had "teeth" and rapidly expanding staff support. Changes in provincial government structure began when the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta and its related heritage programs were transferred from the Department of the Provincial Secretary to the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation with its own act in April 1971.

This change provided greater recognition and autonomy to cultural and heritage interests within the provincial government. Following passage of the Alberta Heritage Act of 1973, a Heritage Resource Development Division was established. Its branches included a separate Provincial Archives of Alberta and a Provincial Museum of Alberta (Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta), the beginning of a Heritage Sites Services in that year, and an Archaeological Survey of Alberta commencing in 1974. In a letter to divisional staff in 1974, R.O. Harrison, heritage resource planning consultant to the deputy minister, wrote:

> The past 12 years have seen our growth from a single office in the Legislative Building, to a major museum and archives, and then beyond, to become a comprehensive heritage resource agency serving people throughout the province . . . We are now entering into another new era in our development, in which the heritage resources of this province will undergo further evolution in response to great public interest.[64]

In 1975, the current Department of Culture was formed, which added greater profile and attention to provincial cultural affairs. However, the government

was not the only heritage agency to grow in the period. In 1974, a group of concerned citizens incorporated the Old Strathcona Foundation to sponsor and promote the conversion of a depressed core of historic buildings in south Edmonton into a developed heritage conservation area. Two years later, the foundation entered into a major agreement to coordinate funding for area redevelopment. A five-year, $1 million grant by the province was used to match monies provided from the Heritage Canada Foundation and the Devonian Foundation. With this money, other private donations and assistance from the city of Edmonton, the Old Strathcona Foundation began to recycle historical buildings in the area, either directly, through purchase, restoration and sale with protective convenance, or indirectly through encouragement of façade renovations to privately or municipally owned buildings. To this end the foundation, despite occasional problems, has been largely successful in revitalizing the area to the extent that the formerly declining neighbourhood is now considered fashionable by many young professionals.

A similar plan for district conservation was development in Calgary for the Stephen Square area, also known as the 8th Avenue Mall. Located in the heart of that city's commercial core, the street is lined with an impressive concentration of sandstone, brick and limestone buildings dating from the 1880s to the 1920s. In the late 1960s the city initiated the development of a pedestrian mall, which opened for the Stampede celebrations of 1970. In 1978-79, the Faculty of Environmental Design of the University of Calgary, sponsored by several groups including the Heritage Canada Foundation, developed a design concept for the district.[65] The attention drawn by the plan, along with a series of strategic historical building designations by the province, assisted at least temporarily in stabilizing the area from intense development pressure.

Based on provisions in the Heritage Act, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation was established in 1976. The foundation on its inception was seen as a vehicle to involve the private sector in heritage resource preservation.[66] While the business link never fully materialized, through an expanding government-directed lotteries allocation the agency has achieved considerable success in its efforts at public education and funding a wide variety of local heritage initiatives ranging from building preservation, pioneer cemetery restoration, historical research, historical markers and the like.

The Glenbow-Alberta Institute continued to grow substantially after its inception in 1964. With approximately $700,000 in direct artifact purchasing, numerous gifts and considerable in-house artifact and display preparation, the Glenbow outgrew the Old Calgary Courthouse. Therefore, in 1975 the institute moved into its new, 157,000 square foot, climate-controlled facility in the city's core retail district. The building was provided free rent by the province, with services covered by the city of Calgary. In the modern facility, the Glenbow began hosting major international exhibitions and its collections, focussing

particularly on northern plains ethnology, became widely recognized. Additional warehouse space also had to be procured.

By the late 1970s many municipalities had also begun to deal with heritage resource issues, beyond the sponsorship of local museums. Heritage planners were hired by the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, and Alberta Culture started working with sympathetic urban and regional planners elsewhere in the province to incorporate heritage resource concerns as an element in master planning. Typically, these individuals developed inventories of known heritage sites within their respective jurisdictions. However, some either formally or informally also began to promote the conservation of selected sites. In addition, societies for the preservation of architectural resources were formed in Calgary and Edmonton, and historical groups elsewhere around the province initiated lobbying campaigns with heritage site owners, the public, and municipal and provincial authorities. The major barriers faced by these organizations were problems with an antidevelopment image, practical difficulties in trying to justify the retention of a low density/high maintenance structure in an urban core, and the inability to utilize specialized heritage legislation at a municipal level.

Under the revised Alberta Historical Act, 1978, municipalities were empowered to designate local historic sites, but they were also required to pay compensation to property owners for any loss of value because of the designation. The province, however, was under no such obligation for its designations and therefore virtually all of the over 250 heritage site designations in the province have been made by the Alberta government.

In concluding the review of the period from 1955 to 1979, a mandate for heritage conservation in Alberta was established in both the public and the political minds. With that realization, facilities for heritage interpretation and professional staffs were developed to support these interests. While the primary justification for preservation remained the cultural rewards, economic benefits of resource development also began to be successfully promoted during the later part of this period. Those involved in facility or site development started to employ the appropriate "catch words" in tourism, such as "bed-night stays," "service support infrastructure" and "regional economic spinoffs." In urban conservation situations, discussions turned to "transfer-of-density rights," "plus zoning" and building code "equivalencies." It is important to realize that previous market limitations for cultural products had to a certain extent been overcome with a doubling of the province's population during this era.[67]

With the economic slowdown associated with national recession, and reduced gas and oil sales, many areas of the province began seriously to look at broadening their economic base. Tourism, which in part involved historical resource developments, became widely seen as assisting in the diversification. Furthermore, as a social cause, heritage conservation by the late 1970s bore

many parallels with concerns for energy conservation and environmentalism in the early 1960s, and the desire for natural park creation before then. As much as any concern for the education value of heritage preservation, citizens became interested in "environmental quality" and their "built environment," wishing to see some continuity and colour in their daily surroundings.

With growing trends towards greater specialization and more professionalism among those in the heritage resource field, and a better public appreciation for the resource, the image of preservationists began to change in this period. The stigma of the "heritage buff" started to give way to titles such as "heritage resources planners," "restoration technologists" and "plains archaeologist." In sum, this era brought credibility to heritage issues as resource management concerns.

Network Development: The 1980s and 1990s

Entering the 1980s, the field of heritage conservation and historical resource development had gained considerable momentum. Alberta's seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations, like those events in 1955 and 1967, further heightened public awareness and cultural appreciation for heritage matters. Perhaps more important, though, were the effects of a temporarily stalled provincial economy. In the heated economic climate of the 1970s, developments were occurring at such a pace and scale that historic resource management was made extremely difficult. The recession created a release from the development pressure and a chance to regroup, particularly in regard to the inventory, research and preservation of heritage sites. In addition, many of those who had previously viewed conservation as "antidevelopment" now began seeing historical resource development as an opportunity for low-cost urban revitalization or points of interest for increasing tourism.

With the 1980s, historical resource managers were provided time to plan further development and link previous resource areas as a system and network. A crucial government document in this advance was the *Master Plan for the Protection and Development of Prehistoric and Historic Resources Within Alberta*, produced by a joint task force of the Historical Resources Division of Alberta Culture in 1979-80. That extensive study became the province's first attempt to deal with the entirety of Alberta's heritage resources, noting that "with an inventory of over 35,000 (recorded) historic sites, and 12,500 prehistoric sites . . . the value and sheer volume of these resources requires a detailed and systematic design for their protection and commemoration."[68]

The systems plan was intended to prevent the *ad hoc* selections and overcommemoration of certain types of sites (such as fur-trade posts), which had previously plagued both provincial and federal heritage programs. The basis of the plan was a detailed historical outline of provincial history, with selected heritage sites from the inventory records slotted against the various themes. The plan then provided a rationale for selecting sites for various forms of

commemoration from plaquing to full-scale historic park development. Also included were brief descriptions of responsibilities of the agencies involved and implementation staging, as well as the costing.

Both the Ontario government and Parks Canada had formulated earlier systems plans for heritage resource evaluation. However, the Alberta version went beyond the historic sites selection process to a focus on specific capital development options for network developments. The approach proved highly successful, as shortly afterwards the province embarked on a regular series of historic park/site developments. Prior to the systems plan, limited interpretive programs had been run by the government at only five sites, commencing largely in the mid-1970s. These included Fort Dunvegan (first opened in 1961), Rutherford House (1973), Cochrane Ranche (1979) and some guiding at the relatively undeveloped sites of Fort Victoria and the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. The last was initiated by a group of private citizens in 1971 to demonstrate the Ukrainian settlement experience in east-central Alberta prior to 1930, and was purchased by the province in 1975.

In connection with Alberta's systems plan, new sites began to open annually. The Strathcona Archaeological Centre was opened in Edmonton in 1980, followed by a developed Fort Victoria site near Smoky Lake (1981), Stephansson House near Markerville (1982), and Leitch Collieries in the Crowsnest Pass (1983). In 1985 three more projects were completed—the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre, and the Royal Tyrrell Museum. In 1987, the Head-Smashed-In World Heritage Site was opened to the public. The latter development includes a seven-tiered visitors' centre buried into an adjacent section of the sandstone cliffs next to the buffalo jump.

In the mid-1980s, the first provincial development phase of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village east of Edmonton was completed, with approximately thirty restored complex buildings presenting both rural and small-town life-styles. This will be one of the largest of its kind in the country. Other developments include the $20.4 million Reynolds-Alberta Museum project in Wetaskiwin and the $10 million Remington Carriage Collection Interpretive Centre in Cardston, set to open in 1992 and 1993 respectively. Tentative proposals also exist for fully restored fur-trade posts at Fort Dunvegan and Fort George/Buckingham House, and interpretive development of the Devil's Coulee Dinosaur Egg site, the Turner Valley Oilfield, Leduc Oilwell #1, the early Bitumount Oil Extraction Plan, and other sites.

Each of these developments sprang from independent concepts, yet in some respects they were all linked by the philosophy of the original systems plan. The activity and interest created by each development helped to fuel a demand for the next project. Academically, a system of heritage sites was being developed representative of the province's entire history, not just particular eras. As well,

Leitch Collieries Provincial Historic Site, Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. Courtesy of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism.

The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. Courtesy of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism.

The Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre. Courtesy of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism.

the developments were not concentrated in the major urban centres, rather they were being established across the province. Economically, heritage resource developments became a major thrust of government cultural programming. Developed heritage resources not only possessed historical and cultural values, but they were something tangible, and capable of generating substantial economic returns across the province. The returns were not direct, but based on stimulating the regional economies involved, and for the long term. As an investment, the province has expected regional economies normally to recapture, from increased tourist dollars, amounts equal to its expenditure on such developments normally within a three- to seven-year period.

The other aspect of such developments is their role in rallying community pride. Perhaps the best case study of this is the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller. Although the palaeontological wealth of the Red Deer River Valley had been internationally recognized as a result of major American expeditions to the region from 1909 to 1915,[69] neither the area nor the province itself had much to show for its treasures prior to the Tyrrell project. Through to the 1930s, nearly five hundred dinosaur specimens had been removed from the area and eventually distributed to over thirty museums worldwide. However, the closest major exhibits to Alberta were those in Toronto, Ottawa and New York.[70]

A local museum was established in 1957, and despite its small size was attracting 150,000 visitors a year by 1979. Partially because of the success of this facility, local officials began lobbying the provincial government for the

Royal Tyrrell Museum, Drumheller, Alberta.

construction of a major palaeontological museum and research institute. After numerous well-developed local submissions were placed before the Department of Culture and the provincial cabinet, a budget exceeding $27 million was approved for the development of a facility in Drumheller. Since the opening in the fall of 1985, the 120,000 square foot, world-class facility regularly attracts approximately 500,000 visitors annually, nearly half of whom are from outside the province. The facility is not only the largest of its kind in Canada, but is widely recognized as the finest palaeontological museum in the world. Complementing the museum is an exhibition and research field station in the Dinosaur Provincial Park, an area designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1979. Although the substantial economic activity generated by the museum has been well appreciated locally, so is the unprecedented media attention and recognition Drumheller is receiving provincially, nationally and internationally.

As with other heritage resource developments, the Tyrrell project has highlighted the distinctive character of the area and promoted a "sense of place" among both residents and tourists. Unlike the creation of other new commercial businesses or conventional industries, which may benefit certain groups, these projects touch on the general public's common heritage. These sites and museums provide educational and recreational rewards for all who visit them.

Albertosaurus display within Royal Tyrrell Museum. Courtesy of Mark Rasmussen.

The independent museums of the province are also currently seeking a systems planning or a network approach. This is partially the result of institutional maturation, but also is in response to constricted operating budgets from their local funding base. A recent survey of a number of institutions firmly demonstrated support for the strengthening of their provincial organization, the Alberta Museums Association (AMA).[71] The major justifications noted involved the need for further staff training and an improved ability to effectively lobby for additional funding. As first steps towards the development of an Alberta museums systems plan, both the government and the AMA have recently conducted exhaustive surveys and an inventory of museum operations and resources across the province.[72] Similarly, a major movement in the field of archives is not only to cooperate provincially through the Alberta Society of Archivists and the Alberta Archives Council, but nationally through a proposed Canadian Archives System.[73]

Another level of systems planning was further refined to historic district planning methods, as seen in Fort Macleod. The refinement was not only in the level of detail of a district plan, but in the incorporation of input and support of all the necessary parties. In 1979-80, extensive historic building inventory work was conducted both locally and by Alberta Culture to establish a firm data base. In 1980, a major district study was commissioned by the province, technically assisted by municipal officials and the local chamber of commerce, and conducted largely by students and members of the Faculty of Environmental Design of the University of Calgary.

The *Fort Macleod Historic District Study* briefly reviewed the history of the urban core, discussed tourism strategy and presented a concept design for the district.[74] The following year the town council enthusiastically supported the district concept and requested the province to consider the legal designation of the area. In 1982 the Heritage Canada Foundation, partially backed by the town, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation and the Devonian Group of Charitable Foundations, began a three-year Mainstreet Program in Fort Macleod to encourage urban revitalization through building revitalization sympathetic to the unique historic character of the area. In 1984, following the development of elaborate agreements on district establishment/control and funding, Fort Macleod became Alberta's first Provincial Historic Area. A $1.5 million grant over five years from provincial lottery revenues has assisted the town and a local advisory committee with that development. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the initiative has been in the number of parties involved and the coordination of decision making between groups and agencies. The spin-off of this initiative has been a series of other historical mainstreet restoration projects in communities such as Lacombe, Drumheller, Cardston and the Crowsnest Pass, sponsored in large part by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation and the towns involved.

In summary, the 1980s and 1990s in Alberta's heritage conservation movement have become a period of significant capital development for selected historic resources. This success has resulted from a recognition of the cultural and particularly the economic needs for this resource development by the public and the politicians, tied to a sophisticated systems planning approach. Such planning was designed to deal with a large inventory of materials, sites or facilities and to coordinate efficient resource utilization and development. Unlike many earlier efforts, systems planning showed long-term direction and linkage with other interests. This approach pulled together large numbers of requests into a presentable package.

Conclusion

The heritage conservation movement in Alberta is now over one hundred years old. Appropriately, perhaps, it seems to have started, and in some respects culminated, in Fort Macleod. Unfortunately, however, the first eighty years

produced limited and sporadic results. From a few historical societies and natural history museums early in the century, the field evolved largely to a concern for historic markers starting in the 1920s, and roadside signage in the 1950s. Yet heritage celebrations in 1955, 1967 and 1980 all contributed to public awareness and appreciation of heritage, and to some extent marked stages in historical program development.

Following the establishment of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, and a proliferation of local museums in the mid-to-late 1960s, a body of heritage professionals and enthusiastic amateurs was created. With facilities and "promoters" in place, public interest in the field grew rapidly. In the 1970s, regulatory control aimed at resource protection, along with substantial heritage programming, gave the field vigour and direction. In the 1980s, with a slowed provincial economy and pressure to reduce sociocultural programming, the primary focus of heritage conservation in Alberta became historic resource development. Many decision makers who a decade earlier had labelled heritage as antidevelopment now perceived it as an option for increasing tourism and in some cases urban revitalization. In addition, the market for heritage attractions had improved greatly thanks to a doubling of the provincial population between 1956 and 1981, as well as a marked increase in tourism. With a demand established, opportunistic heritage resource managers adopted business techniques to promote the development of networks of sites and resources, and were highly successful.

Pondering the crystal ball for the rest of the 1990s and beyond, there is a possibility for both expansion of the provincial network as well as for a wider distribution of the responsibility for a new historical resource development to the municipalities, the private sector and the federal government. Specialist provincial organizations should also show significant growth and increasing influence in the heritage community. Following the development phase, greater emphasis can be expected in the interpretation, national and international promotion, stewardship and research of heritage resources.

Like the province's earlier booms in agriculture, oil and urbanization, in a smaller way Alberta's heritage boom came mainly as the result of a general recognition of the economic values of resource development. It was a discovery that heritage was more than "motherhood," but was alluring and intriguing. The challenge in heritage conservation now is to take advantage of this recognition and build on a system structured partially by economics, without losing sight of the cultural goals of the field. This movement from cultural to economic justifications for the field of heritage conservation should not be perceived as a pendulum swing, but rather a new maturity and quest for balance.

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