



Heritage News

Discover Crowsnest Heritage

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Co-Editors

Barb Koch, Isabel Russell and Ken Allred

A Crowsnest Heritage Initiative Project

If interested in submitting an article, news piece, or update, please send it to cnhnewsletter.ca

Issue #40

September 2015

This issue is centred around the history of Frank and in particular two early pioneer brothers, Harry and Roderick Matheson. Unfortunately a photograph was not available of Harry Matheson, though his brother seems to have been more photogenic. Both of the Matheson articles were contributed by Greg Nesteroff to whom we offer our thanks for his extensive research.

What's On This Fall?

Crowsnest Pass Museum - hours 9:00 - 5:00

Open Monday to Saturday - October to May; 7 days a week - June to September

- **September 11 - Share Your Stories** - Crowsnest Museum - 1:00 - 3:00
- **September 12 - Fall Garden /Swap & How to Save Seeds** - Crowsnest Museum - 2:00 - 4:00
- **September 22 - iPhoneography** - Crowsnest Museum - 7:00 - 9:00
- **September 26 - Harvest of Memories** - 5:30 cocktails, 6:30 dinner
- **October is Bookmaking Month** - every Friday - Crowsnest Museum - 1:00 - 4:00
- **October 20 - Bookmaking Seminar** - Crowsnest Museum - 7:00 - 9:00
- **October 22 - Share Your Stories** - Chefs on 2 thirteen - Bellevue - 1:00 - 3:00

Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery - Mon- 10:00-3:00, Tue-Sat - 10:00-4:00; Sundays and Holidays 1:00-4:00

- **August 15 - Sept 13 - "In Conversation"** - a visual collaboration of painter Angelique Gillespie and potter Heather Fletcher
- **September 19 - October 18, 2015 - STILL LIFE"** - Kari Lehr
- **October 23 to November 21 - "THE ROAD TO....."** - Mali Docktor & Sarah Bing
 - Opening reception: October 24, 1-3pm
- **November 25 to December 23 - "HOMEWARD BOUND"** - Greg Pyra
 - Opening reception: Saturday, November 28, 1-3pm



BEING FRANK - painting by Angelique Gillespie at Crowsnest Art Gallery

Feature Article

The Matheson Brothers: Frank's Pioneer Newspaper Publishers

Greg Nesteroff

In the most infamous typographical error in Crowsnest Pass history, the *Frank Sentinel* of May 2, 1903 carried the headline "Apoalling Disaster".

While editor Harry J. Matheson could be forgiven for being rattled by the slide that devastated the town three days earlier, spelling was never his strong suit. He and brother Roderick had established the weekly newspaper a month after the town was founded, using the printing press of their previous paper. The *Sentinel* was produced in a tiny office on Dominion Ave leased from Alex Goyette.

THE FRANK SENTINEL.

VOLUME TWO FRANK, ALBERTA, SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1903. NUMBER 27



Union Made Clothing

Franks Greatest Bargains for Men are the Stratford Union Made Clothing, a perfect fit, latest styles and shades and the prices range from \$11.00 to \$20.00. NO TROUBLE to show goods.

J. J. Murphy Gents. Furnishings

Apoalling Disaster

Men Woman and Children Buried Under Ar Whole Families Are Wiped Out.

Frank Is Now A City In The Deepest M

Wednesday morning one of the greatest disasters that has ever befallen a Canadian community was visited upon this place. At 4:30 p.m. what must have been an explosion of gas that had evidently taken place in communication between the mountain and tear-blind but dangerous in the extreme... (The rest of the article text is illegible due to the image quality.)

The brothers were among at least seven children born to Thomas Grey and Charlotte (Osborn) Matheson in Simcoe, Ontario, where their father was a crown attorney and clerk of the peace. Henry James (Harry), was born October 6, 1864, and Roderick David on June 21, 1876.

Journalism was in their blood. Their uncle Robert was editor of a Chicago wine magazine, while two other uncles, John and Walter, ran competing papers in Billings, Montana.

Harry came west in 1885 and worked in mining and real estate, partnering with his uncle Walter in a firm in Helena. He married Catherine F. Bracken in Missoula on February 22, 1890. Their son, Walter Thomas, was born later that year.

They divorced in 1893 after Catherine alleged “cruel and inhuman” treatment. She claimed Harry struck and choked her twice and on another occasion threatened to stab her. As well, he failed to provide for her. Catherine sought custody of their son, but by 1905 he was living in Alberta with his father.

Roderick Matheson attended Parkdale Collegiate Institute in Toronto and the Ontario College of Pharmacy. In April 1897, he joined his uncle David who was a miner in the booming town of New Denver, on Slocan Lake, in British Columbia.

Roderick established a drug store in nearby Silverton and a few months later Harry joined him. In February 1898, Roderick acquired the local newspaper, *The Silvertonian*, to work as its editor and doubling as a druggist. For a few months he shared editorial duties with Harry. The paper was never very successful, but they kept it going until September 1901.

The British Columbia *Phoenix Pioneer* reported, “support dwindled to nothing and both plants — one for pill making and the other for paper making — have been transferred to Frank, where it is said a bonus of \$600 per annum has been secured.”

The *Frank Sentinel* debuted on Oct. 12, 1901. The first issue and the Slide issue with the typo in the headline are still in existence. Despite that error, Harry wrote a gripping account of the Slide under trying circumstances. As Frank Anderson put it: “To Matheson fell the unhappy task of setting in print the list of casualties — many of whom he had known personally.”

Roderick relocated to other Alberta towns and eventually overseas (see related story, below).

Harry moved the *Frank Sentinel* to Blairmore sometime in 1903, renaming it *The Times*. It folded in 1906 or 1907.

Harry was also on the boards of the Carbon Hill Coal and Coke Co., the Blairmore Brewing and Malting Co., and the Pass Turf Association (formed to build a race track and athletic grounds). He was managing director of the North Kootenay Pass Collieries Ltd.

In 1911 he partnered with Thomas Cyr of Blairmore and H.S. Pelletier of Monarch. They planned a summer resort called Lake City, at Crows Nest Lake, half a mile west of Sentinel, with a hotel, stores, dance hall, restaurant, bowling alley and 300 lots for homes. Some lots changed hands, but the development never gained much traction.

On January 6, 1903, Harry married Ethella Lueretia Bradshaw in Spokane, Washington. They had a daughter, Althea, before Ethella died on February 10, 1906, at age 40, and was buried in the Old Union cemetery at Blairmore.



On July 21, 1910, Harry married a third time, in Moscow, Idaho, to Nellie Rosetta May Wallace, who was more than 20 years younger than he was. She bore him four children, Gertrude Elizabeth, Nona Vivian, Wyatt, and Adeline. By 1916, Harry was fruit ranching at Sentinel when he enlisted as a private with the 192nd Battalion. He was 52 but claimed to be 43.

Ad from Frank Vindicator Sept. 20, 1912.

Then something strange and tragic happened. Harry suffered “a sabre stroke while in the United States army in Mexico”. How he ended up there is a mystery.

He returned to Blairmore. The *Enterprise* reported he had a “serious illness” and was transferred to the military hospital in Calgary “suffering from symptoms of intra-cranial pressure.”

On October 2, 1916, he died of a brain tumour and was buried in Union Cemetery in Calgary.

Harry’s detailed account of the Frank Slide and its aftermath remains his chief legacy.

Hawaii Oh-Five: Roderick Matheson flees to the Aloha State

Greg Nesteroff

Roderick Matheson led a more colourful life than his brother Harry, although his time in the Crowsnest was brief and his character questionable.



Roderick Matheson

In December 1902, he left Frank and established the *Pincher Creek Round-Up*, which only lasted a few issues. He launched the *Raymond Chronicle* in 1903.

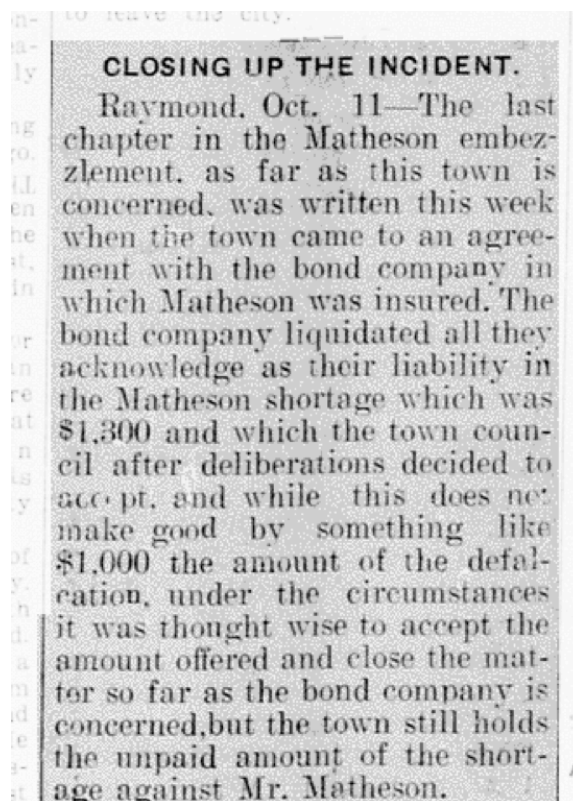
By 1904 Roderick became the town's treasurer as well. In November 1905, he joined the provincial department of education in Edmonton, but disappeared after a few days. An audit revealed he had embezzled more than \$2,000 from the town coffers (around \$52,000 in today's currency).

The *High River Times* noted Roderick's government appointment "was considered a popular one and members of the press were pleased to note

the advancement of one of the craft. The pleasure was brief, for last week the startling news was heralded broad that Matheson was a defaulter and had grossly abused the trust placed in him by his fellow townsmen. He is now a fugitive from justice and his whereabouts unknown."

The town's insurance company provided \$1,300.

Criminal proceedings began, but Roderick had boarded a train to the United States and then sailed to Hawaii. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported his arrival in Honolulu in December.



Roderick had married Ida Margaret Walker in Nelson, British Columbia on August 15, 1899. Their first son, Walker Grey, was born in Frank on December 16, 1901, — the first boy born there — while Charles Roderick was born January 27, 1906, in Milton, Ontario.

It's unclear when his family joined him in Hawaii, but Roderick was soon reporting for the *Advertiser*. He became its editor and served as chief clerk to territorial secretary John Mott-Smith.

In 1918 Matheson moved his family to Tokyo, where he edited the *Japan Times and Mail*, ran an ad agency, wrote for American magazines and was a correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Roderick died of pneumonia on July 10, 1928, in Karuizawa. His remains were taken to Honolulu for interment. His obituary in the *Blairmore Enterprise* didn't mention his crime, explaining instead that he "went to Honolulu on a holiday and liked it so much that he never returned."

"Greg Nesteroff is interested in the history of the West Kootenay region of BC, where he is editor of the Nelson Star."

Note: An extensive source list for these two articles is available from the Heritage Newsletter on request.

Harvest of Memories 




HARVEST OF MEMORIES GALA
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2015

THE CROWSNEST HISTORICAL SOCIETY WELCOMES YOU TO THE MOST EXCITING EVENT OF THE FALL, AND ITS BIGGEST ANNUAL FUNDRAISER: THE HARVEST OF MEMORIES GALA. THIS SPECIAL EVENT FEATURES AN EXCITING MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY AL RYPIEN, LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS, AND GOURMET CATERING BY COUNTRY ENCOUNTERS. ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE OPERATIONS OF THE CROWSNEST MUSEUM.

RESERVE YOUR TABLE TODAY. \$40/PERSON, \$75/COUPLE, \$280/PRIVATE TABLE, ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

5:30 COCKTAILS, 6:30 DINNER
ENTERTAINMENT 9-LATE
MDM COMMUNITY CENTER

CONTACT 403-563-5434
WWW.CROWSNESTMUSEUM.CA
CNMUSEUM@SHAW.CA



CROWSNEST MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Poetry Corner

Legend of the Frank Slide

Larry Ewashen

And on the twenty-third day ere the sun
came to stay

At three o'clock in the morn
A dog's howl echoed through the valley
that night

And a moment in history was born

The night shift was weary, their eyes
choked and bleary
With the coal dust and the dim miner's
lamp

They were looking forward to see
daylight again
Their bones ached with fatigue and the
damp

But their sunlight to see was not meant
to be

They found the exits barred and then
A low rumble announced the tragic
approach

Of a mountain awakening again

And in the great Pass their grim fate was
cast

The top of the mountain seemed to rise
and then

Came hurtling down for miles and miles
Covering all it discovered therein

Rocks large as a house were like a wild
beasts aroused

Crushed all life they found in their way
And when the dawn finally appeared not
a house could be seen

Not a man saw daylight that day

Book Review

The Mountain That Walked

Katherine Holubitsky, 207 pgs.

When 17-year-old Charlie is wrongly accused of killing one of his abusive sponsors, he flees from Macleod, Alberta, striking westward to the mountains and mines of the Crowsnest.

From the first page of *The Mountain That Walked*, Katherine Holubitsky pulls you into this 'Home' boy's story. Charlie's journey to the Crowsnest is realistic as he encounters people who help him and those who don't.

If the action of life on the run doesn't keep you turning pages, then empathy for Charlie will. Despite being an orphan in the harsh conditions of Edwardian England and surviving four years of neglect and abuse as a 'Home' child on a homestead in Macleod, Charlie is hard working, resourceful and determined to be independent.

Tempted by the \$3.00 a day wage that working in the Crowsnest mines would pay him, three times as much as he could earn elsewhere in 1903, he stops in Frank, Alberta. Because one of his sponsors is still tracking him, Charlie is relieved that he blends in with the growing mining community. His accent and ill-fitting clothing don't set him apart from the many men who have come to the Crowsnest, hoping for work.

Charlie finds a job, not in the mines as he hopes, but in a hotel in Frank on the night shift. This choice saves his life and gives him a chance for an independent future.

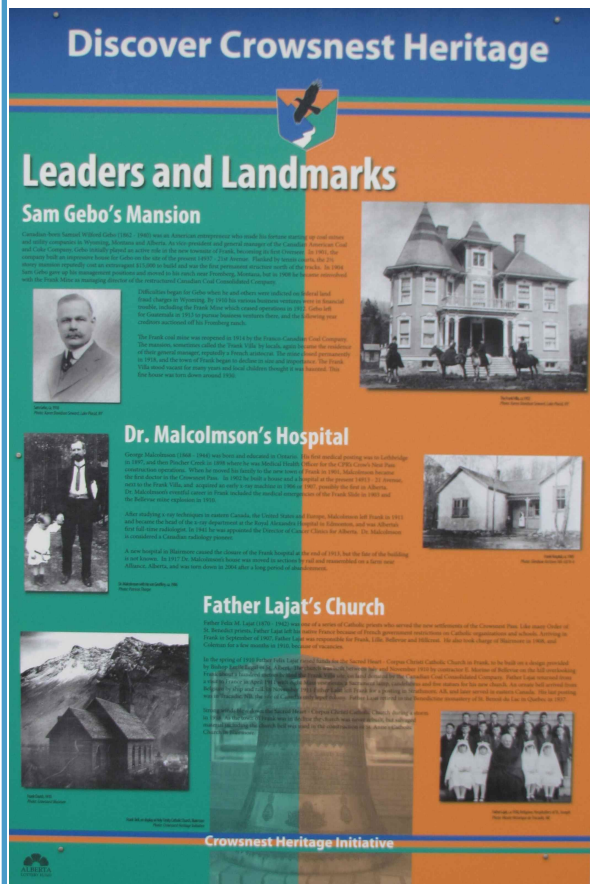
Rich with historical details, believable characters and suspense, *The Mountain That Walked* is a compelling read for all ages.

This book is on the shelf at the Crowsnest and Pincher Creek libraries.

Barb Koch

SIGNS OF THE CROWSNEST PASS

The Crowsnest Heritage Initiative has installed four information kiosks, about fifty signs and over a hundred building plaques, each revealing a small piece of our diverse history.



In this issue we recommend the Leaders and Landmarks sign located at the Frank playground site.

Have you read it yet?

110 YEARS AGO 1905

- September 1, 1905- The provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta are created. Alberta was previously a region of the Northwest Territories before gaining status as a province.

100 YEARS AGO 1915

- February 6th 1915 (Blairmore Enterprise)- News reaches the Crowsnest Pass about the new "Bill to Abolish Hanging". Though the bill never proceeded further than a first reading the M.P of St.Lawrence division in Montreal had many supporters behind him in the effort to get rid of the death penalty of hanging stating it to be a "blot upon civilization".

- March 11, 1915. (Coleman Bulletin) -"Wonderful new torpedo has been invented by a Coleman business man" The man claims that his torpedo can be used to much greater advantage than any other torpedo currently invented; "he also has an invention that can be used to defend the ships of the country using it from torpedoes of any description- magnetical or any other kind."

- April 2, 1915 (Bellevue Times)- Crowsnest Pass residents are told about the new war stamps that are going to be put into use after April 15th. There will be a "one cent war tax on letters and post cards mailed in Canada for delivery in Canada, United States or Mexico and on letters mailed in Canada for delivery in the United Kingdom and British possessions generally wherever the two cent rate applies. "

50 YEARS AGO 1965

- February 15, 1965 - The official ceremony swearing in the new Canadian Flag was held on Parliament Hill, with Prime Minister Lester B Pearson.

Credit - Crowsnest Museum & Archives

Historical Venues in Southern Alberta



• **CROWSNEST MUSEUM** - 7701 18th Ave. Coleman. 403-563-5434

• As well as exhibits on coal mining in the Crow's Nest Pass, there are galleries on Pass life in the early 1900s, natural history, the military, and on Emperor Pic and rum-running. There is a gift shop near the entrance. For tours and

educational programs: Contact: cnmuseum@shaw.ca.

- Open : Monday to Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm. Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (6-16) \$6, Under 6 free, Families \$24.



• **BELLEVUE UNDERGROUND MINE** - 21814 28th Avenue Bellevue, AB T0K 0C0 (403) 564-4700

• The Bellevue Underground Mine is the only authentic historic underground coal mine tour available to western Canada. The mine is a museum based, family oriented, historic underground coal mining museum tour site that offers its visitors the opportunity to

experience, first hand, what the underground miners from the first half of the 20th century would have experienced as they entered the tunnels of the Bellevue Underground Mine to go to work to each day.

- Open: Monday—Sunday 9:30 am—6:30 pm. Last tour 5:30 pm. Adults \$14, Seniors \$13, Youth \$10, Children 5 and under free, Families \$38. Discount pre-booked tours are available.



• **THE FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE** - off Hwy 3 Crow's Nest Pass
403-562-7388

The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre highlights the rich heritage of the Crow's Nest Pass amid the breathtaking beauty of the Canadian Rockies. The Centre is open all year and visitors are greeted by friendly, knowledgeable staff who share the fascinating stories of the Frank Slide through dynamic interpretive programs and presentations. State-of-the-art interactive displays

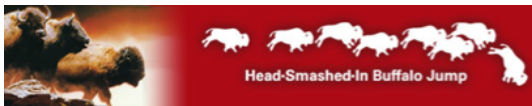
and exhibits throughout the Centre focus on the infamous Frank Slide of 1903 - Canada's deadliest rockslide. The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre is open year round 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (10 am to 6 pm in the summer) . Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28.



• **KOOTENAI BROWN MUSEUM** - 1037 Bev McLachlin Dr., Pincher Creek. 403-627-3684

• This year we will be opening a special exhibit to commemorate the 100th anniversary of WWI and the 75th anniversary of WWII. Members of the Pincher Creek Legion, local war veterans and RCMP will participate in our plaque dedication for the exhibit and be available to give tours. There will also be a flag raising ceremony, bouncy tents, obstacle courses, face painting and balloons for kids; a concession with hotdogs, burgers, candy floss and snow cones; and historical tours.

- Established in 1966, the Museum consists of 19 buildings housing over 18,000 artifacts from southern Alberta. The legendary George "Kootenai" Brown lived in southern Alberta and his cabin and some of his possessions form part of the Museum's exhibits. Kootenai Brown Museum is open to the public daily from 10 am to 6 pm. Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth (7-17) \$7, Under 7 free, Families \$25



•**HERITAGE SITE**) - Hwy 785 403-553-2731
Hikes to the Drive Lanes 10:30—3 pm.

•Experience authentic First Nations culture in the open air of our plaza. Our best native dancers perform to the beat of

Blackfoot drumming and singing. Hear stories of how drumming and dancing connect us with the ancient buffalo hunting culture

- Along with its displays, the interpretive centre has audio-visual presentations, a cafeteria featuring bison burgers, a gift shop filled with First Nations handicrafts, and hosts tour groups and runs educational programs. Open daily 10 am to 5 pm. Contact: info@head-smashed-in.com. Admission: Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28. The Centre can be booked for special events.



- **GALT MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES** - 502 1st St. S., Lethbridge 1-866-320-3898

- The Museum is open all year round. Monday to Saturday 10 am to 5 pm, Thursday 10 am to 9 pm, Sundays and Holidays 1 pm to 5 pm. Adults \$6, Seniors (60+) \$5, Post-secondary students and Youth (7-17) \$3, Under 7 free, Families \$15.



•**FORT WHOOP-UP NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** - Lethbridge, off Whoop-Up Drive. 403-329-0444

•Fort Whoop-Up existed before there was an Alberta or Mounties; it was a notorious frontier trading post. It lies nestled in the coulees of Indian Battle Park, near the Oldman River. Today, the fort still trades with the aboriginal Blackfoot tribes of Southern Alberta, supplying many ceremonial goods, hides, sweetgrass, and other items.

- The Fort is open daily from 10 am - 5 pm; Adults \$9, Seniors (65+) \$7.50, Students \$6.50, Under 5 free, Families \$24.50.



•**REMINGTON CARRIAGE MUSEUM** - 623 Main St. Cardston. 403-653-5139

•The Museum has the largest collection of horse-drawn vehicles in North America with over 240 carriages, wagons and sleighs. The 63,000 square foot facility features video displays, a fire hall, a carriage factory, a restoration shop, a working stable, carriage rides, carriage rentals, a restaurant and a gift shop. There are free guided tours. Group tours and educational tours are offered. Open daily 9 am - 5 pm. Contact:

info@remingtoncarriagemuseum.com. Admission: Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28.



•**WRITING-ON-STONE** - Hwy 4 South from Lethbridge. Then Hwy 500 West. Then South on Range Road 130A

•Open year round for camping. No reservations are necessary if you wish to use a camp site at the park in the winter. Fees range from \$13 to \$19 a day. Guided rock art tours are only offered from May to October. Writing-on-Stone / Áísínai'pi is a sacred landscape. The spectacular Milk River valley contains the largest concentration of First Nation petroglyphs (rock carvings) and pictographs (rock paintings) on the great plains of North America.



•**HERITAGE ACRES** - Located off Hwy 3 next to the Oldman River Dam.

•Alberta's largest independent Agriculture Museum, home to an extensive collection of pioneer and farm related artifacts and heritage buildings located on 180 acre site.

• Open from May long weekend until September - 9:00am - 5:00pm. Adults \$10., Youth \$5., Families \$25.

ARCHIVES

Copies of this newsletter and archived issues can be viewed at

<http://www.crownsnestheritage.ca/>

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