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A Crowsnest Heritage Initiative Project

If interested in submitting an article, news piece, or update, please send it to: <<u>cnhnewsletter@shaw.ca</u>>

Issue #43

June 2016

This issue will feature the 100th anniversary of Prohibition in Alberta with an article by Ian McKenzie entitled *Prohibition and Rum Running*. Ian also highlights the murder of Constable Lawson and the capture and subsequent hanging of Emilio Picariello and his companion, Florence Lassandro.

Also of interest are two interesting book reviews related to the Picariello story.

The theme of the 2016 Doors Open and Heritage Festival also celebrates the 100th anniversary of Prohibition in Alberta.

What's ON this Summer?

Crowsnest Museum

Hours - 9:00-5:00, daily until September 30

- June 19 2:00PM Grand Opening Hillcrest Mine Disaster Memorial Park
- July 1 Canada Day free admission
- July 1 8:00 PM Midnight Coleman Pub Crawl
- July 28 7:00PM Booze and Bars Book Launch
- Sept 10 Fall Plant Swap
- **Sept 28** 6:00 PM 1:00 AM **Harvest of Memories** MDM Community Centre

Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery

<u>Hours - Mondays - 10:00:-3:00 - Tuesday - Saturday - 10:00-4:00; Sundays and Holidays - 1:00-4:00</u>

- June 11 July 10 - "Little Homes in a Large Landscape: The Coleman Project"
 a dynamic display of water colours, acrylic paintings of the Crowsnest Pass by Alison Master
- July 16 August 28 "As We Live and Breathe" annual juried summer show curated by Barbara-Ann Hession Opening reception July 16 1:00 3:00PM
- **Sept 3 Oct 2— "The Alleyway"** acrylic abstract scenes by Edmonton artist Justina Smith Opening Reception September 3 1:00-3:00

At Stone's Throw Cafe

- May 2 June 27 Graphite & Ink Drawings by Yurek Panek
- June 27 Aug 22 Portraits by Dorothy Sharp
- Aug 22 Oct 17 Acrylic Paintings by Karen Tamminga-Paton

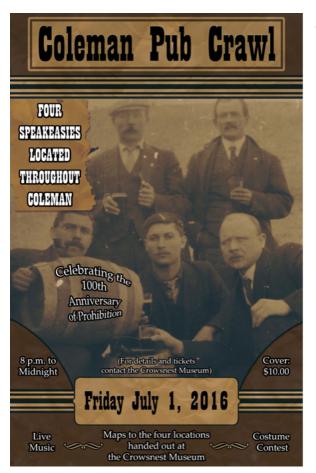
Other Venues

- June 17-18 Bellcrest Days
- July 1 Hog Heaven Picnic 5 7 PM Coleman Sports Complex
- July 8-10 Sinister 7 Ultra 100 km foot race
- July 28 August 1 Doors Open and Heritage Fest See pages 12-13 for full details

Feature Article

Prohibition and Rum Running

Ian McKenzie



July 1, 2016, is the 100th anniversary of Prohibition in Alberta, which is why this year's theme for our annual Doors Open and Heritage Festival is 'Outlaws of Prohibition'.

It's hard to imagine what life was like when our grandparents and great-grandparents were youngsters. In 1915 the world was at war, and society was poised for some big changes. The push for women's rights was behind a temperance movement which saw alcohol as destructive to society and Christian family life; per-capita alcoholic consumption in those days was triple what it is today. With many men of drinking age away serving in the trenches, provincial plebiscites on banning the sale and consumption of alcohol were successful in Alberta,

Manitoba and Ontario in 1916, and in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Newfoundland in 1917, with other provinces following. There was no law against producing alcoholic drinks for export, however, and this made it possible to legally produce booze that could be illegally distributed within Canada and the United States (which also had Prohibition between 1920 and 1933).

The Crowsnest Pass was in a unique situation as its interconnected communities spanned two provinces. Rum-running from 'wet' BC into 'dry' Alberta in 1916 continued after BC voted 'dry' the following year. Some businessmen, particularly those previously involved in legitimate liquor businesses, became rum-runners – illegal importers of booze for sale to

individuals or to other distributors. Their cause was helped by the fact that most in Crowsnest Pass didn't want Prohibition, and had voted against it in the plebiscite. The legal profession was ambivalent too, with many lawyers and judges concerned about the infringement on personal freedoms that the drinking restrictions imposed. Even the RCMP was reluctant to enforce the ban on alcohol, and withdrew its policing services from Alberta in 1917, to be replaced by the Alberta Provincial Police. Many of the APP's first officers were not issued transportation, firearms or even uniforms. The APP policed Alberta from 1917 until 1932.

Initially, rum-running proceeded with little difficulty, and citizens in the Crowsnest Pass and other parts of Alberta found it pretty easy to get a drink or a bottle. Many cafés, pool halls and hotels in the Crowsnest Pass quietly

served liquor, and were occasionally caught and fined for it.

There were many loopholes, including 'medicinal' alcohol prescriptions written by doctors who felt a shot in the evening might be beneficial to the nerves. Even Blairmore's police commissioner, Mike Rosse, was a rum-runner; you can read about him in our May 2013 issue #30. The Alberta Provincial Police had its own problems, with instances of bribery and incompetence helping the rum-runner's cause. But rum-running also gave rise to organized crime, and competition between operators was sometimes violent.

Everybody around here has heard of Emilio Picariello, also known as Emperor Pic or Pic the Bottle King. He was the best-known rum-runner in the Pass, maybe even Alberta, and his daring and



Emilio Picariello aka Emperor Pic

successful career made him a target for the Alberta Provincial Police. Some say that Picariello's doom was sealed because he got too ambitious, competing with the big boys (one literally known as "Mr. Big") and taking his trade deep into Alberta and the United States. An over-zealous police attempt to ensnare Pic led to the tragic shooting death of Constable Stephen Lawson and the subsequent execution by hanging of Picariello and his companion Florence Lassandro.

The Sentinel train robbery is another example of how violence sometimes followed rum-running. In 1920 three desperados stopped a train, hoping to find Picariello and his bankroll aboard. He wasn't, and they got away with only \$300. Someone spotted them in the Bellevue Café a few days later, and a police raid triggered a shootout with one robber and two police officers killed. A manhunt resulted in the death of a third officer before they collared a second wounded robber. The last of the three was apprehended in the United States years later.



The Emperor's McLaughlin Buick

These violent episodes shocked the Canadian public and helped bring an end to prohibition in Alberta in 1924. They were in part the reason for building the Blairmore courthouse in 1923. New legislation brought in government-controlled liquor stores which persisted for decades until the modern era of privately-owned stores arrived. Alberta is presently the only province with fully privatized liquor The last vestige of prohibition was a 1918 law against transporting alcohol from BC into Alberta, which was only repealed in 2012!

Romantic but violent, rum-running is an important part of Crowsnest Pass heritage.

Photo credits - Crowsnest Museum & Archives

POETRY CORNER

Man About Town K. Roome

Emilio Picariello was a man of Italian descent.

Who had the gift of making money everywhere he went.

From Italy to the United States he went.

Travel and getting married took his last cent.

He headed west and up to Canada by train and car.

He opened a store in Fernie, B.C. selling food and cigars.

In his spare time he collected bottles for Sick's Brewery of Lethbridge.

Being their sole collector and distributor was his privilege.

For another business he sold ice cream in town.

"Mr. Pic", the kids all hollered when he was around.

Moving his business to the Crowsnest Pass. He found his Empire at last.

He invested his money in the Alberta Hotel. Later he became owner of The Brick House as well.

He was elected to town council in The Pass. Attended the Opera House to show his class.

Through out The Pass he was known for good.

The locals thought him a Robin Hood.
His generosity he never did shirk
He fed poor families until dad found work.
Nobody but the Police thought him a hood.
Citizens ignored his dark side, loved his good.

To see this Emperor in a history book, With piercing eyes and imperious look. He had the mustache of a Twenties movie villain,

But hardly the face of a man involved in a killin'.

100 YEARSAGO 1916

February 4, 1916 - Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon is given authorization to organize and command a battalion of infantry "192nd Overseas Battalion, C.E.F.", with its headquarters at Blairmore.

April 7, 1916 - The newspaper "The Blairmore Enterprise" advertises the upcoming live production of the war drama "The White Feather". The venue is the Blairmore Opera House, the time, April 20, 1916, and the admission price for an adult is either 75 cents or a dollar or 25 cents for a child.

April 19, 1916 - Women are given the right to vote in the province.

July 1, 1916 - Prohibition becomes law in Alberta

Since 1901 the Mounties maintained a presence in the Crowsnest Pass but fearing trouble from "enemy alien" ethnic groups, Ottawa instructs police to set up a permanent detachment in Blairmore, with 1 inspector, 1 sergeant and 2 constables.

Archie McLeod is appointed Chief of Police and paid \$60.00 a month plus commissions.

The Town of Blairmore accepts an offer from West Canadian Collieries to supply power to the town at 12 cents per hour. A meter system is put into place after a few months because the flat rate wasn't realistic. A Mr. Walker is paid a \$25.00 honorarium to turn the light pole switches off in the morning and on at night.

Sources:

Bellevue Times, Feb. 4/1916

The Blairmore Enterprise, April 7, 1916

<www.crowsnest-highway.ca> (Crowsnest Pass, Alberta: History) Crowsnest and its People

BOOK REVIEW

The Rise & Fall of Emilio Picariello By Adriana A. Davies

"Isn't this redundant?" you ask, "I've seen the display at the museum."

Based on her exhibit by the same name, Adriana Davies' book is crisply and concisely written, thoroughly researched and effortless to read.

More than just a biography about the well-known Picariello, this book includes a brief history of immigration and the Italian communities in Fernie as well as the emergence and impact of Prohibition laws in southwestern Alberta.

From his Italian farm worker immigrant beginnings, to store owner in Toronto, Montreal and Fernie, the author follows Picariello to the Crowsnest Pass. Chapters covering bootlegging and introducing Constable Stephen Lawson and the Alberta Provincial Police supply the background history for one of Alberta's most renowned murders and trials.

Clear, beautifully preserved photos, newspaper articles, and

trial documents enhance the entire book. I found the strategically placed photos of trial exhibits and documentation helped continue the flow of the author's account of the trial, verdict and execution of Picariello and Lassandro.

The author doesn't end the story there though. Did Mark C. Rogers, who was known to be a bootlegger, have an involvement in the case? What does the evidence of more shattered windshield glass found inside the vehicle than outside mean? Where was the shot fired from?

What result did the execution of Picariello and Lassandro have on the Death Penalty laws in Canada and the Law of Prohibition?
What happened to the widows of Picariello and Lawson? How do we view Lassandro? Is she an innocent scapegoat or a killer?
These are the questions that the author raises. She has answers for some. Others, she leaves us pondering over.

This book, like the museum exhibit of the same name, is a delight to wander through, absorb, and enjoy at your own pace. It is available for purchase at the Crowsnest and Fernie Museums.

Barb Koch

BOOK REVIEW

Prohibition Lawman The Amazing Story of Steve Lawson By Steve B. Davis

...he should be remembered most of all as a husband, a father, and an officer of the law just trying to do his job...

Born in England. A career as a police officer in Macleod, Fernie and Coleman. Served overseas in the First World War. Survived Passchendaele. Awarded the Military Cross.

Tragic death in 1922. This concise biography outlines the life of Steven O. Lawson.

The author's intention in writing the book was to focus on the victim, Constable Stephen Lawson and not the sensationalism of bootlegging and the trial of Picariello and Lassandro

Except for brief chapters about Prohibition in Alberta and bootlegging, specifically in the Crowsnest Pass and Fernie area, the author focuses on the man, Constable Lawson.

Anecdotes from Lawson's career with the Macleod City Police force illustrate his compassion and strength of character. One humourous incident involves him mistakenly arresting the Chief of

Police for vagrancy. This resulted in Macleod's town council passing a vote for better street lighting and most distinctive uniforms for their police officers.

With a straightforward, flowing style, the author recounts Lawson's career moves from Chief of Police in Macleod and Fernie to hiring by the Alberta Provincial Police and posting in Coleman.

..."knows pretty nearly every bootlegger and crook running through the Pass."

The final chapters covering the murder of Steve Lawson, the inquest, and the trial of Picariello and Lassandro are written in a clear-cut, factual way.

Photos and details enrich this book, such as a list of Macleod by-laws that its police force was responsible for. Excerpts from newspapers, letters and the coroner's report focus on Constable Lawson, to remember the man, not the story of the crime.

The book is dedicated to the family of Stephen Lawson and his descendants and it is a tribute to the man.

Prohibition Lawman is available to borrow through the Chinook Arch Library system.

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.



This sign is located on 18 Avenue at 78th Street in Coleman

Historical Venues in Southern Alberta



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

•As well as exhibits on coal mining in the Crowsnest 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: daily until September 30, 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 ToK oCo (403) 564-4700 The Bellevue Underground Mine is the only authentic historic underground coal mine tour available in 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.

•Hours: July & August, open 10 am to 6 pm, every day of the week. Tours every half hour until 5 pm. Sept. & Oct. - open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Tours run based on interpreter availability.

THE FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE - North off Hwy 3 at Frank, Crowsnest Pass 403-562-7388



The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre highlights the rich heritage of the Crowsnest 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. Open year round 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (9 am to 6 pm July 1-Labour Day) Adults \$13, Seniors (65+) \$11, Youth (7-17) \$9, 6 and under free, Families \$35.



•KOOTENAI BROWN PIONEER VILLAGE - 1037 Bev McLachlin Dr., Pincher Creek. 403-627-3684

- •Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village is an outdoor heritage facility. Visitors are able to walk directly into any of the historic buildings and view the artifacts, which are displayed openly. The open concept and self guided museum means you are also free to wander through six acres of beautiful gardens, including a pond and waterfall (summer) and large community garden area.
- 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. Open: daily from 10 am to 6 pm until Labour Day, then 10 am to 4:30, Monday to Friday. Adults/Seniors \$10, \$7, Youth (7-17) \$5, Under 7 free.



•HEAD-SMASHED-IN BUFFALO JUMP (UNESCO WORLD 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 9 am to 5 pm until Labour Day, then 10 am to 5 pm. Contact: info@head-smashed-in.com.
 Admission: Adults \$15, Seniors (65+) \$13, Youth (7-17) \$10, 6 and under free, Families \$40.



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

Open 10:00 - 5:00 Mon-Sat; 10:00 - 9:00 Thursdays; 1:00 - 5:00 Sundays & holidays; Adults \$6, Seniors \$5, Youth (7-17) \$3, children free, families \$15.



- •**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.



•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 year round 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (9 am to 5 pm July 1-August 31). Adults \$13, Seniors (65+) \$11, Youth (7-17) \$9, 6 and under free, Families \$35.



- •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 \$26 to \$33 a day. 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.

Crowsnest Pass Doors Open and Heritage Festival 2016 July 27 - Aug. 01, 2016

Tentative Schedule at a Glance: (For an updated schedule go to < www.crowsnestheritage.ca>)

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Wednesday, July 27
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6 pm - 9 pm - Taste of Crowsnest Pass - Elks' Hall - 2025 - 129th Avenue Blairmore, AB.

Thursday, July 28

6 pm - 9 pm - Booze & Bars: A Brief History of Pub Culture in the Crowsnest Pass - book launch Crowsnest Museum - 7701-18 Ave. Coleman

Friday, July 29

8am – 12 noon - Crowsnest Pass Birds guided walk - Crowsnest Conservation Society 12707 – 20th Ave.

1 pm - 4 pm - Union Bank Tours - CNP Chamber of Commerce - 12707 - 20th Ave. Blairmore

1 pm - 4 pm - Lethbridge Brewing & Malting Company - Royal LePage - 13055 - 20th Ave. Blairmore

7 pm - 9 pm - Launch Event - Outlaws of Prohibition - Greenhill Hotel - 12326 20 Ave, (18 and over)

9 pm - Booze & Bars: A Brief History of Pub Culture in the Crowsnest Pass - Leaving from Greenhill Hotel

Saturday, July 30

8 am - Pancake Breakfast - Hillcrest Fish and Game Hall

9 am - 3 pm - Crowsnest Pottery Club - Coleman Sportsplex - 8702 - 22nd Ave. Coleman

10 am - 4 pm - Crowsnest Country Market - Coleman Community Society - Flumerfelt Park,

10 am - 4 pm - Teddy Bears' Picnic - Crowsnest Museum - 7701 - 18th Ave. Coleman

11 am - Auction at Country Market

10 am - 4 pm - Royal Canadian Legion Open House - Branch #9 Coleman - 7831 - 17 Ave. Coleman

11 am - 4 pm - 11th Annual Main Street Crowsnest Show & Shine -Downtown Historic Hillcrest

11 am & 2 pm - Mad Science Fun Workshops at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

11:30 am - 9 pm - The Historic Rum Runner - 7902 - 20 Ave. Coleman

12 noon - Chefs on 213 Luncheon - Hillcrest Fish and Game Hall - Hillcrest

12 noon - 6 pm - Artists' Studio Tour of the Crowsnest Pass and Area - throughout CNP

12 noon – 2 pm - Masonic Hall Open House – Rocky Summit Lodge #30 - Masonic Hall – 14806 – 21st Ave. Frank

2 pm - 5 pm - Meet and Discover the "Wild Life" of Alberta Parks - Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

4:30 pm – 7 pm – Spaghetti Dinner - Coleman Senior's Hall – 7801 – 18th Ave. Coleman

9 pm - 10 pm - Andrea Morehouse - Grizzly Bear Talk - Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Sunday, July 31

8 am - 2 pm - Hike the Phillipps Pass Rum Runner Route - Meet at Travel Alberta Visitor Information

9 am - 5 pm - We Have Stories to Tell You - Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

10 am - 4 pm- Artists' Studio Tour of the Crowsnest Pass and Area - throughout CNP

10 am – 2 pm - Mountain Bike Ride to Lille - UROC – meet at pipeline 2km past cattle guard left of road to Frank SlideInterpretive Centre

10 am - 12 noon - Meet and Discover the "Wild Life" of Alberta Parks - Chinook Provincial Recreation Area

11 am - 1 pm - Old Time Miners' Picnic - Bellevue Underground Mine - Main Street Bellevue

11 am - 12 noon - Guided Walking Tour of Historic Miners' Path - Crowsnest Museum - 7701 - 18th Ave.

1 pm – 3 pm – Miniature Train Ride - NIT Inter-Cultural Campus – 13437 – 20th Ave. Blairmore

2 pm - 4 pm - Meet and Discover the "Wild Life" of Alberta Parks - Island Lake Provincial Recreation Area

2 pm - 4 pm - Booze & Bars: A Brief History of Pub Culture in the Crowsnest Pass - Greenhill Hotel - 12326 20 Ave, Blairmore, AB (18 and over)

8 pm – Movie By Starlight - Bellevue Arena Memorial Park, located behind Wildrose Confectionary 21313 – 25th Ave., Bellevue

Monday, August 1

10 am - 6 pm - Shooting of Constable Lawson - comic book launch - Frank Slide Interpretive Centre
10 am - 2 pm - Meet and Discover the "Wild Life" of Alberta Parks - Frank Slide Interpretive Centre
11 am - 12 noon - Guided Walking Tour of the Historic Miners' Path - Crowsnest Museum - 7701 - 18th Ave.
1 pm - 3 pm - Booze & Bars: A Brief History of Pub Culture in the Crowsnest Pass -book signing - Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

Ongoing Events - July 27 - August 1

Self-Guided Tours: Brochures can be picked up at the Bellevue Mine, Leitch Collieries

Historic Site, Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, and the Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery, Crowsnest Museum, Old Dairy Ice Cream Shoppe – during their regular hours of operation. Brochures can also be picked

up at historic kiosks where listed.

Saturday to Monday Crowsnest Pass Prohibition GeoTour Challenge

Crowsnest Museum - 7701-18 Ave. Coleman

Start 9:00 am Saturday, July 30 - End 5:00 pm Monday, August 1

Historic Sites/Museum/Art Gallery/Bellevue Underground Mine

9 am - 6 pm- Crowsnest Museum - 7701 - 18th Ave. Coleman

9 am - 6 pm - Frank Slide Interpretive Centre - 1.5 km off Hwy #3, Frank

10 am - 6 pm - Bellevue Underground Mine - Mainstreet Bellevue

10 am – 5 pm – Leitch Collieries Provincial Historic Site – Hwy #3 - Guided tours at 11 am and 2 pm Crowsnest Pass Photo Exhibit and Art Gallery Exhibit - Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery, Frank

For more information visit: www.frankslide.org or www.cnpheritagefest.ca call 403-562-7388

ARCHIVES

Copies of this newsletter and archived issues can be viewed at:

http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca/

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