



# Heritage News

Discover Crowsnest Heritage

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### Co-Editors

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A Crowsnest Heritage Initiative Project

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September 2017

This issue features a story about Henry Kountz, an old time pioneer of Southern Alberta that spent some time prospecting in and around the Crowsnest Pass around the turn of the last century.

## What's On This Fall?

**Crowsnest Pass Museum** - Hours 9-5, Monday - Saturday

- **September 30 - 5:30 PM - Harvest of Memories Gala** - MDM Community Centre - \$40.00/person, \$75/couple

• **Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery** - Mon- Fri 10:00-3:00, Weekends and Holidays 1:00-4:00

• **Sept 2 - Oct 1 - "FUSION"** - Melanie Morstad

• **Oct 7 - Nov 5 - "PROPAGASM"** - solo show of sculptures from Gisele Peters

• **Nov 11 - Dec 10 - Photography Exhibit** from local artist John Sales

• **Jan 24 - Feb 21 - "On the Grid"** travelling exhibit courtesy of TREX program, curated by Sharon Bingeman, ASA.

• **Feb 24 - March 25 - "No particular topic"** annual, non-juried show of local talent

- **Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery exhibit at Stone's Throw Cafe**
  - **Aug. 28 - Oct 23 - Jennifer Blair - paintings**
  - **Oct 23 - Dec 18 - Watercolours and prints** from Yvonne Martinez
  - **Dec 18 - Feb 5 - annual Yule Season** group show from local artists
  -
- **Frank Slide Interpretive Centre -**
  - **Sept 29 - Oct 10 - "INTERPRETING CANADA" artwork for Alberta Culture Days**

**Harvest of Memories**



**Harvest of Memories Gala**  
Saturday September 30, 2017

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 musical performances, live and silent auctions, and gourmet catering by Country Encounters. All proceeds support the operations of the Crowsnest Museum.

Reserve your table today. \$40.00/Person, \$75 Couple, \$280 Private Table. Tickets only available in advance.

5:30 Cocktails, 6:30 Dinner  
Entertainment 9-Late  
MDM Community Center

Contact (403)-563-5434  
www.crowsnestmuseum.ca  
cnmuseum@shaw.ca



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## ***The Henry Kountz Story***

**Ian McKenzie**

One of the amazing things about the Crowsnest Pass is how it attracted all sorts of different people. The family histories within *Crowsnest And Its People* capture many of their diverse stories, but others wait to be discovered. This is one of them.

Henry Kountz (sometimes misspelled Kounts or Kuntz) was born in St. Louis, Missouri around 1846; his parents were German immigrants. At age 19 he served as a private in Company G of the First Regiment Colorado Cavalry. Although raised in response to threats from the South during the Civil War, the Colorado Cavalry was primarily used against Cheyenne, Arapaho and other native tribes during the so-called Colorado War of 1863 – 1865. The most infamous action of the war was the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 when elements of the First Regiment attacked a defenceless native village (the subject of many books and depicted in at least six movies). Henry Kountz was not present at the Massacre, but served at Bijou Station where he may well have seen action.

After leaving the Cavalry, Kountz's whereabouts are unknown, but he is said to have been a buffalo hunter, wolf hunter, prospector and whisky trader. Indians called him Stomak, or Lone Bull, referring to his habit of hunting alone. He once claimed to have lived for seven years on nothing but buffalo meat – an exaggeration, perhaps, but which roughly covers the time between his Cavalry service and his coming to Alberta.

### **The family histories within *Crowsnest And Its People* capture many . . . diverse stories**

Kountz came to Alberta in 1870 or 1871, one of the earliest white settlers in southern Alberta and probably the first permanent settler in the Claresholm area. He freighted supplies and liquor between Fort Benton and the Blackfoot camps in Alberta until he allegedly lost his wagon and oxen in a poker game. Another source claims the Mounties shut him down along with other whiskey traders. Kountz then built a rough cabin on Willow Creek, probably around 1875, which became a stopping place along the Fort Benton-Fort MacLeod-Fort Calgary trail for oxen trains and later the mail coaches. The spot was known as The Leavings, as travelers were about to 'leave' the last place with good water and firewood before crossing the open plains.

In 1882 John Craig purchased Kountz's cabin and whatever ownership rights he may have had for \$1500, and hired Kountz on as a cook, guide and ranch helper. Craig was representing English money, and Kountz's cabin at the Leavings became the first headquarters for what was to eventually become the 250,000 acre Oxley Ranch, one of southern Alberta's great 'Land Baron' ranches owned by English aristocrats. The Leavings and the former Oxley Ranch are now a provincial historic site.



### **Bull Train operating between Fort Benton and Fort Whoop-Up**

Kountz had his share of adventures while at the ranch. In his 1903 book *Ranching with Lords and Commons*, John Craig describes taking the visiting owners out on a long ride; Kountz came along as guide and cook but, despite having a four-horse wagon along, neglected to bring much food. Hunting was poor, and when a snowstorm blew in Kountz was sent back to the ranch for supplies, but didn't return for several days. The hungry party struck off home on their own, missing Kountz who finally made it back to the snowy camp after losing a horse to exhaustion, becoming slow-blind, and needing rescue himself. His struggle is recounted in Craig's book in Chapter 8 *Kountz's Story*, and also in the 1885 book *From Home To Home* by Alexander Staveley Hill, one of the ranch owners after whom the village of Staveley is named (and misspelled).

Kountz also prospected in the nearby foothills and mountains, including an unsuccessful coal claim on Kuntz Creek (misspelled). Around 1895 Kountz took samples from a quartz vein one or two kilometres west of present-day Coleman which showed traces of gold and platinum. After the arrival of the railway Kountz moved into Crowsnest Pass, and is shown as a lodger in Blairmore in the 1901 census (as 'Henry Counce') although it's not known if he was living there or just resident for a few days; the 1906 census shows him living on land close to Lundbreck Falls. He drew a pension in 1906 for his time in the Cavalry.

In 1909 he finally worked his Coleman quartz claim from some fourteen years previous with his partner George Johnson. After excavating about eight feet down, Kountz sent off more samples for assay and staked four claims with Johnson and partners W.L. Hamilton of Leitch Collieries

and N. T. McLeod of Lethbridge. This caused some excitement in the Pass and a handful of other claims were staked nearby. But Coleman's gold rush came to naught when the assay came back with no traces of gold at all.

A few months later on November 20 Kountz was seen from a passing train lying in the snow near the Mohawk tipple. The initial assumption was that he experienced heart failure after being startled by the train, which he hadn't heard coming being quite deaf. Based on Dr. Malcolmson's evidence, coroner Pinkney's inquest concluded that Kountz was probably still alive when sighted, and called for a charge of criminal negligence against the conductor for failing to stop the train to investigate. The conductor escaped charges when he claimed that he had not seen the body himself, but that it had been reported to him by a passenger after it was too late to stop and investigate directly.

### **Kountz was seen from a passing train lying in the snow near the Mohawk tipple.**

Kountz's funeral was in Knox Methodist church in Frank, but sources disagree on whether he was buried in the Blairmore or Coleman cemetery. His death at age 64 was reported as far away as Edmonton. He had never married, no relatives attended his funeral, and no grave marker has survived.

In 1988, geologist Ron Stewart created a stir when he reported traces of gold within the Crowsnest Volcanics west of Coleman which, like Kountz's quartz claim some eighty years earlier, proved to be in uneconomical trace amounts.

(My research was assisted by Ken Favrholt, executive director at the Claresholm and District Museum; Ken Robison of the Overholser Historical Research Centre in Fort Benton, MT; Shawn Gillette of Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, CO; and Jeff Campbell, author of *1st Regiment Cavalry, Colorado Volunteers*.)

## *The Leavings at Willow Creek*

The *Leavings at Willow Creek* consists of a one and a half storey log house, log and sandstone barn, log stable, and such landscape elements as a well, plantings, and cart trails, as well as various archaeological resources. The site occupies 30 hectares near Claresholm, Alberta.

The heritage value of the *Leavings* (Oxley Ranch) lies in its representation of early ranching activity in southern Alberta. In addition, the Leavings is significant for its association with the Fort Macleod-Calgary Trail, the major north-south thoroughfare prior to the Calgary and



Edmonton Railway in 1892, and with the establishment of law and order in the region through the North West Mounted Police (NWMP). The site thus provides rare structural evidence of initiatives by the Canadian government to secure the West from American encroachment after Confederation: the granting of large-scale ranch leases to British-Canadian investors, and the creation of a federal police force.

The term "*Leavings*" indicated a place where a trail "left" a water supply, where travelers could obtain supplies of water and wood. After Fort Calgary was established in 1875 there were regular supply "bull trains" and stagecoaches from Fort Benton in Montana to Fort Macleod and on to Calgary. The Leavings was one of four spots between Fort Macleod and Calgary frequently chosen as a camping ground. Sometime in the later half of the 1870s, a stopping house, operated by a former buffalo hunter and whiskey trader, Henry Kountz, began operating. Kountz's cabin was likely located to the south of the present site location, but it is possible that the building was moved and forms part of the house on this site. Visible ruts on the hills overlooking the creek are likely remnants of the original wagon trail.

In 1882, the New Oxley Ranch secured a lease for 200,000 acres from the Dominion Government, making it one of the four largest ranches in the foothills region. In 1882, the ranch's first manager, J.R. Craig, purchased the stopping house. The cabin was then used as the ranch's headquarters. By 1885, it appears that the location of the ranch headquarters had moved to this site and Craig had built the larger log house and the barn. The house is covered with siding with the exception of the back portion, which may be the original Kountz cabin. The house was used as a dwelling by Craig and his family, as well as a stopping house and as the ranch's managerial office. It also became a centre for social activities and, in 1884, a post office.

The barn is constructed into a hillside and has a connecting stable. The barn's first storey is constructed of sandstone, with the upper storey and loft being of logs and vertical planks. The floor of the stable is made of vertical posts, which gives it a cobblestone effect. There are many etchings on the interior sandstone, including two inscriptions of '1884' and numerous others that resemble cattle brands and other dates. In a dispute with ranch financiers, Craig left the ranch in 1886, but retained ownership of the property. At this point the ranch headquarters moved to a new location and Craig continued to operate the post office and stopping house. He had hoped to homestead the area, but eventually lost control of the buildings as a result of a legal suit.

From 1886 until 1903 the North West Mounted Police took advantage of the important location of the *Leavings* by manning an outpost from the site, sending patrols north and west through the Porcupine Hills. During this period, the NMWP rented the house and barn. After the completion of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway, however, traffic on the trail declined and the garrison moved to Claresholm. The grazing lease expired in 1906, at which point the *Leavings* became part of a homestead.

The house and stable at the *Leavings* (Oxley Ranch) are among the oldest structures extant in southern Alberta, and rare surviving evidence of a NWMP outpost.

*Credit - Historic Resources Management Branch of Alberta Culture and Tourism*

## Poetry Corner

### **Speaking without Speaking**

**Tynan Groves**

Mostly I stumble.  
You're a winged Pegasus.  
Mostly I wander, aimless.  
You know where your feet guide you.  
I am a child.  
You have been here since the creation.  
I see this as new.  
Your eyes are ancient.  
A field of stumps.  
Your face among it.  
You have been here since the creation.

Mostly I fumble.  
You're the wild one.  
Mostly I know nothing.  
You were born here.  
You were born in the quiet morning.  
I was born among my own screaming.  
You could run within minutes of life.  
I stood after months.

Your skin is all you'll ever need.  
We have covered ourselves in you.  
I mostly stumble.  
You careen into the darkness.  
Propeller of propellant.  
You are what you have always been.  
Run. Run. Run.

There is nothing left but hope.  
We will entwine ourselves.  
I will bind myself to you.  
Tie yourself to me.  
We will walk out together.

You're the wild one.  
Gentle to the Earth.  
I am a harbinger

Keys to open death.  
We need each other.  
Your winged feet, your dreams.  
My stone heart, my nightmare.  
We walk together.

You have never been lost.  
I am waiting to be found.  
I fear the night.  
You dine in the dark.  
I sold my soul.  
You found it.  
Your cloven feet.  
My boots of war.  
So many words.  
You're speaking without speaking.

**Check this out for a video on the  
Hillcrest Mine Disaster by  
James Keelaghan**

**<<https://youtu.be/nkfeq22su8u>>**



## *Book Review*

***The Lost Lemon Mine  
An Unsolved Mystery of the Old  
West  
By Ron Stewart***

The lure of a treasure hunt. Legend? Curse? Tall tale? No matter what you want to call the story, the Lost Lemon mine's location is still a mystery today.

Piecing together fragments of stories about the mine from newspaper clippings and periodicals, the author has organized this book into a collection of accounts from prospectors, settlers, newspaper articles and First Nation's stories. I especially enjoyed reading the original newspaper accounts from the Helena Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette and the Calgary Herald, dated 1870 and 1886.

The author's sources range from Canadian Senator Daniel Edward Riley who actually searched for the mine, to Neil Nicholson, who as a North West Mounted Police Officer, patrolled the area from Fort Macleod to the Crowsnest Pass from 1900 to 1905.

Does this mine even exist? Was the gold stolen from other miners and Lemon and Blackjack on the run from a posse? Or was the strike actually further north, near the headwaters of the Clearwater River as the First Nations' stories hint? The rumour of the mine even started a "gold rush" in 1931.

The "Cast of Characters" chapter rounds out these stories by giving background information about the accounts major characters. Was Lemon's first name Mark, Jack, Ben, Frank, James or Robert? Was Lemon's partner, Blackjack's name Nehemia T. Smith?

Is there gold in these hills? In the final two chapters, the author presents geological evidence to support this theory and reminds us of the mini-gold rush in the Crowsnest Pass in 1989.

This compilation of legends, articles and stories is a thought-provoking effort from an author who wants the story told and kept alive, because you never know where the gold could be.

The Lost Lemon Mine is available to borrow from the Crowsnest Municipal Library and Crockets Trading Company.

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 at Leitch Collieries

## **100 YEARS AGO 1917**

First votes for women: women allowed to vote if they meet an exception for military personnel stationed abroad; Army nurses (Bluebirds) in Europe in World War I are the first women to vote legally in a Canadian federal election (women who owned property could vote before Confederation, but after 1867 they were legally barred from voting).

Income Tax is introduced as a temporary wartime measure.

April 9, 1917 - Canadians capture Vimy Ridge.

May 18, 1917 - Robert Borden announces conscription.

In Alberta, Louise McKinney becomes the first woman elected to a legislature in the British Commonwealth.

In Alberta, the Province cancels its contract with RN-WM Police and the Alberta

Provincial Police is established under Major A.E.C. McDonnell to enforce provincial law.

The Old Frank Road was built through the debris of the Frank Slide.

In Bellevue, the Coles family opened the Rex Theatre.

In Frank, an explosion levelled the surface plant of the Franco-Canadian Collieries mine.

You could buy a Ford Touring Car for \$495.00 from a dealer in Blairmore.

You could attend the Blairmore Opera House on March 29, 1917, and watch the drama, "Little Peggy O'Moore". The price of tickets was 75 cents or \$1.00 for adults and 25 cents for children.

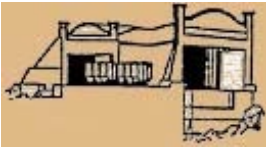
## Historical Venues in Southern Alberta



• **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](mailto:cnmuseum@shaw.ca).

- Open : Monday to Saturday 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 9:00-5:00, hourly tours.



• **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 (9 am to 6 pm in the summer) . 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

• 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 Monday-Friday from 10 am to 4:30 pm. Adults \$10, Youth (7-17) \$5, Under 7 free.



•**HEAD-SMASHED-IN BUFFALO JUMP (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)**- Hwy 785 403-553-2731  
Hikes to the Dirve 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 \$15, Seniors (65+) \$13, Youth (7-17) \$10, 6 and under free, Families \$40. The Centre can be booked for special events.



- **GALT MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES** -502 1st St. S., Lethbridge r-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 June - September. Monday to Saturday 10 am to 5 pm, Thursday 10 am to 9 pm, Sundays and Holidays 1 pm to 5 pm; Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$9, Your \$5., Under 5 free, Families \$22.



•**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. Winter hours -open daily 9 am - 4 pm. Contact:

info@remingtoncarriagemuseum.com. Admission: Adults \$13, Seniors (65+) \$11, Youth (7-17) \$9, 6 and under free, Families \$35.

•



•**WRITING-ON-STONE** - Hwy 4 South from Lethbridge. Then Hwy 500 West. Then South on Range Road 130A (403) 647-2364

•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 \$18 to \$25 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. Closed Sundays. Adults \$10., Youth \$5. Group tours available by appointment. (403)627-2082

## **ARCHIVES**

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