



Heritage News

Discover Crowsnest Heritage

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Issue #58, March 2020

The first historians in any Alberta town captured oral histories before pioneers passed on, and collected whatever information they could in the 1950s - 1970s. The books they produced were the first (and, for a while, the only) local histories, and these authors were revered and unchallenged for years.

Today the internet, with its scanned documents, old photographs, search tools, and networking, has revolutionized historical research. With better tools come more accurate versions of past events, and inevitable corrections to the “old classics” of local history. Modern researchers also tend to concentrate on single topics, so their books are narrower in focus and they prove or defend their work in footnotes.

- Ian McKenzie

Bellevue Café (centre) August 1920, shortly after the famous shootout between train robbers and police. The 100th anniversary of that event is coming up this summer.

Photo: Crowsnest Museum and Archives
(6059 Gush Glass Neg)



Heritage News is a publication of the Crowsnest Heritage Initiative. We are a cooperative committee of local heritage organizations and interested individuals who seek to promote the understanding and appreciation of heritage within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. For more information on who we are and what we do, click here: <http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca/crowsnest-heritage-initiative/>

This issue was edited and produced by Ian McKenzie and proofread by Isabel Russell and Ken Allred. Inquiries, comments or submissions can be sent to cnhnewsletter@shaw.ca. Future contributors should send in their articles in MS Word or something similar, with any photos sent as separate jpeg files. Do not insert photos into your document; we will just have to strip them out and reinsert them into our newsletter format.

Heritage Partner News

The **Crowsnest Museum's** executive director Chris Matthews is back from a short-term paternity leave after the birth of his second child in late December. Planning is underway for special exhibits this summer featuring the 100th anniversary of the Sentinel train robbery and the Bellevue Café Shootout, and the 2020 Homecoming event.

Don't forget to visit one of our historic **Legions** this May to remember the 75th anniversary of VE Day, the end of World War Two in Europe. (VJ Day, the end of war with Japan, is in September.)

On the topic of anniversaries, the **Crowsnest Heritage Initiative** recognizes the 10th anniversary of its e-newsletter *Heritage News* in May, after the production of 58 issues since 2010. All back-issues can be found on www.crowsnestheritage.ca through the "Heritage Newsletter" link on the home page.

Frank Slide Interpretive Centre's facility manager Monica Field retires in March, after almost forty years there. All of us recognize and appreciate her interest in and support for local history events far beyond the Frank Slide.

Planning is on track for the **Crowsnest Heritage Initiative's** annual Doors Open and Heritage Festival this August long weekend. Major factors this year are the 2020 Homecoming, and the 100th anniversary of the Sentinel train robbery and subsequent shootout at the Bellevue Café.

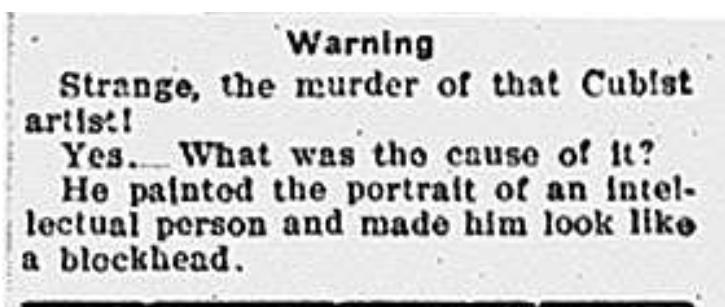
The annual **Crowsnest Pass Musical Festival**, which traces its roots to 1926 (see issue #50), will be held on March 9th through 13th. See the website www.crowsnestpassmusicfestival.com for details.

The **Nippon Institute of Technology** is downsizing its Blairmore operation, and is selling three of its heritage buildings (two houses built in 1916 and 1921, and the former Central United Church built in 1909). They will be retaining only the old courthouse.

The List

Nine Pass murders, prior to the Bellevue Café shootout (1920):

- Monte Lewis, bludgeoned by Mike Phillips, Frank, 1907
- Constable Willmet, shot by Fritz Eberts, Frank, 1908
- Mah Ling, shot by brother Mah Hong, Blairmore, 1908
- Casanta brothers, shot by Angelo Mont, Lille, 1908
- Angus Ruis, stabbed in a brawl by John Kulczycki, Frank, 1909
- George Lakatocz, shot by Sam Willinsky over wife, Frank, 1912
- Ignace Kalzek, face slashed by Wasyl Mudry, Passburg, 1913
- Alice Hart, shot by husband Philip Hart, Burmis, 1915



Blairmore Enterprise, August 29, 1913

Uncertain Memory Begets Uncertain History:

The Case of the Sentinel Train Robbery and the Shootout at the Bellevue Café

by Keith Regular

At about 2pm on August 7, 1920, two itinerant Russian labourers, George Akroff (sometimes Arkoff), and Thomas Bassoff, entered the Bellevue Café. They took seats in a booth and ordered a lunch. The men had been on the run from law enforcement since August 2 when they, and companion Alex Auloff, held up the Canadian Pacific Railway train between the town of Coleman and a station stop at Sentinel, just shy of the Alberta and British Columbia border. Why they emerged into the open and ignored the risk of being spotted and reported to the police is unknown. An anonymous phone tip to the Alberta Provincial Police (APP) barracks in Bellevue alerted Constables James Frewin and Frederick Bailey along with Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Corporal Ernest Usher. The reported sighting set in motion a series of events that ended in tragedy.

The basic facts of what transpired on that fateful Saturday afternoon are generally known, thanks to press reports, popularization by amateur artists and historians, published memories, and the preservation of local culture, especially on the World Wide Web. The particulars of the story, however, are subject to both confusion and contradiction. The story of the shootout at the Bellevue Café made available for public consumption is as much invented as it is real. The basis for most accounts can largely be traced to early press reports and the recall of then-retired Inspector J.D. Nicholson, and to others present or tangentially involved. How reliable, however, is the history that resulted from various personal musings and individual recall of the events years, and even decades, following the tragedy?

One of the earliest accounts of the train robbery and shooting came from a non-official source; Freda Graham Bundy in the *Calgary Herald* on August 26, 1933. Bundy provides light conversation between individuals on the train and offers descriptions of the shootout in a manner suggesting that she was present both on the train and later at the Bellevue Café. She acknowledges that the “Bootleg King,” Emilio Picariello, was the target that inspired the train robbery, an idea originally advanced by the press. It is significant that there is not the slightest evidence that Emilio Picariello was a passenger on the train. Bundy, in another error, had the train robbery occurring before the train reached Coleman, rather than after it departed that stop. When Conductor Sam Jones pulled the emergency cord, she asserts, the engineer brought the train to a sudden stop, a development that did not occur. Bundy stipulated that during the shootout Bassoff drew two guns, one a Mauser with ten shells, and “rushed from the booth like a madman, waving a blazing gun in each hand and one of his deadly bullets found Bailey.” It is significant, however, that there is no record of Bassoff having been in possession of a Mauser handgun at any time during the shootout or following. According to Bundy, “Although dying, [George] Akroff managed to make the front of the building and as he passed the fallen policemen, he emptied his gun,” and while leaving the café Bassoff shot Bailey twice. This was thirteen years following the events and although the court case had made clear that Bailey had been shot only once, the myth of Bailey dying of multiple gunshot wounds endured and still persists.

Bundy revisited the story of the shooting some twenty-two years later in the *Lethbridge Herald* March 25, 1955. This article makes clear that she was not present on the train during the robbery and had instead learned the details from her husband, an employee of the CPR, Lethbridge. Consequently, he was, outside of police officials, likely one of the first to receive a report on the armed robbery. This time Bundy added a new interesting detail. During the

hunt for the escaped Bassoff, a nurse standing on the station platform [Lethbridge?] was almost hit by “a small white missile thrown from the coach of the train, a piece of white paper wrapped around a cent.” On examination it contained a scrawled warning, “Drop this search for Bassoff or your life will be in danger.” On investigation it was found to be a boy’s prank designed to create an extra element of excitement. Both of Bundy’s accounts, although flawed, help to complete the story as it exists in the popular imagination but, as with all recall, must be treated with circumspect, and factual details must be treated with caution.

Much of what is accepted regarding the train robbery and the shootout appears to have originated with then-retired APP inspector J.D. Nicholson. Nicholson was dispatched to the Pass on August 9 to take charge of the search for Thomas Bassoff and, consequently, was intimately associated with the ongoing police work. When, in 1944, he recalled his experience for his biographer, J.W. Horan, for the publication of *On The Side Of The Law*, Nicholson revealed that his grasp of details was, at best, faulty. Unlike Bundy, Nicholson confirmed a direct link between the Sentinel Train Robbery, the prelude to the shootout, and Pass bootlegger Emilio ‘Emperor Pick’ Picariello. In a leap of faith Nicholson firmly established Picariello’s presence on the train as a fact and even provided the time on which he boarded, at 2:55 pm. Somehow, according to Nicholson, Picariello discovered the Russians’ nefarious intent to rob him and he fled the train at Coleman. Realizing that Picariello was no longer on the train the Russians turned to robbing the train’s passengers. Nicholson ignores the apparent lack of supporting evidence for his assertions.



Re-creation of the shootout. This photographic ‘evidence’ may have unfairly influenced Bassoff’s trial, and history.
Photo: Crowsnest Museum and Archives

Nicholson perpetuated similar errors of fact with his recounting of the Bellevue Café shootout. Once Akroff and Bassoff were spotted in town, Nicholson stated that Justice of the Peace Joseph Robertson, whom he mistakenly identified as J. Robinson, tipped off the police with a phone call, which Robertson did not do. Nicholson also stated that all three police officers were armed with .38 calibre Smith and Wesson revolvers. Usher, however, possessed an RCMP regulation .45 calibre. Similarly, he asserted that both Akroff and Bassoff were armed with Mauser

handguns; Bassoff, however, was not. This may seem like a minor detail, but is critically significant in determining who shot whom. Nicholson also reported that Akroff’s hand grasped Frewin’s gun before Frewin shot him six times. This is speculation on Nicholson’s part as Frewin himself could not recall how many times he shot Akroff, and Frewin, during several official statements, made no reference to wrestling with Akroff over his gun. Bassoff did wrestle with Usher for his gun, however, and this may account for confusion on Nicholson’s part. Constable Bailey, according to Nicholson, made no use of his firearm during the shootout, also an incorrect conclusion on Nicholson’s part.

Nicholson’s recall was filled with factual errors. Conductor Samuel Jones was identified as Sam Brown and he identified Mrs. Holloway who leased Blossomwood Ranch with her husband, and where Bassoff fled for assistance, as the ranch cook. He also stated that Bassoff was arrested at Pincher Creek attempting to board a train. There is no evidence that Bassoff made any such effort. At the time of his arrest by CPR Police, Nicholson stated a Mauser was found on Bassoff’s person. No such finding was made or reported. Nicholson maintained that Bassoff was hanged for the murders of Bailey and Usher. However, Bassoff was only tried for Bailey’s homicide and surely Nicholson should have been better informed.

Researchers could also be lulled into thinking that Samuel Jones, the conductor on the train during the robbery, is a reliable source. He was a victim of the robbers so had intimate contact with both Akroff and Bassoff. He was not, however, present at the shootout at the Bellevue Cafe. When he was interviewed by the *Medicine Hat News*, September 11, 1944, he provided general details that were essentially correct with the exception that Jones thought that two RCMP officers had been killed in the shootout, rather than one, Usher, and an APP officer, Bailey. He also confused Auloff with Akroff believing the former had been killed while the latter had escaped. A minor confusion perhaps. Or perhaps not, depending on how one wishes to use the testimony of participants to understand the events.

RG Carpenter, *Calgary Herald*, October 25, 1958, a former CPR police official was, like Inspector Nicholson, involved in the manhunt for Bassoff. Carpenter held the view that the Canadian Pacific train robbery and the shootout at Bellevue were simply extensions of the same event. "In the annals of crime on the Canadian prairies," Carpenter speculated, "there is no single episode which can compare in sheer cold-blooded murder." Carpenter's memory of what transpired was no more reliable than the others. He too credited Robertson with notifying the police. According to Carpenter, however, the shootout was a more drawn out affair than in reality. Frewin, he stated, "pulled back the curtains in the booth and recognized the occupants as two of the wanted men. He went for aid and returned to the scene." Bassoff, Carpenter charged, grabbed the .45 calibre revolver from the hand of the fallen Usher then cold-bloodedly fired three shots into each of the fallen men. Among Carpenter's most fantastic exaggerations was that Bassoff shot his fatally-wounded partner Akroff through the heart before fleeing the scene. Carpenter also erroneously added that autopsies "disclosed there were 11 bullet wounds in Baillie's body and seven each in the bodies of Usher and Akroff." As stated previously, Bailey was shot only once, and no autopsy was ever completed on Akroff's body. Carpenter also mistakenly stated that Bassoff made a "complete confession."

In 1990 the elderly Crowsnest Pass resident Orestes Serra, a young boy of 12 years at the time of the shootout, recalled the events for the publication of *Photo Companion – Crowsnest And Its People, 1900-1950*. Serra's memory is flawed, likely the result of the intervening seventy years and a lifetime of reading and listening to reports about the shootout. Like others, for example, Serra places Emilio Picariello on the train and suggests he is the inspiration for the train robbery. He also credits Joseph Robertson with shooting Bassoff in the leg, although Bassoff stated that it was Constable Usher who shot him inside the Bellevue Café booth, so this fact is not in doubt. Like others he wrongly credits Robertson for phoning an alert to the police and mistakenly identifies Robertson as the school secretary. One key statement by Serra, however, merits extra scrutiny. Serra states that Robertson "walked to where Arloff, [an alias for Auloff whom he has mistaken for Akroff], had fallen. There he picked up the Mauser which the robber had just used on the police." It is not clear if Serra is suggesting that it was Akroff who shot both Bailey and Usher, when conventional wisdom has it that Bassoff shot, execution style, both police officers.

Clearly, as illustrated by the above examples, and these are not intended to be exhaustive, the history of any single event is the result of cumulative stories grounded in many personal perspectives. This reality presents challenges to historians, whether professional or amateur, wishing to place events in the context of the time and place, and accord the various actors their proper role, especially in any event deemed to be historically significant. Insightful reconsideration of the past permits historians to provide a more authentic record for today's readers with keen interest in the community's past.

Editor's note: Keith Regular is the author of an upcoming book on the Sentinel train robbery and the Bellevue Café shootout.

Disappearing Remembrances

by Ian McKenzie

One of the saddest things within our many heritage cemeteries is the large number of unmarked or illegible graves, as we no longer know who is buried there. I witnessed the deterioration and subsequent disappearance of one marker myself.

In the summer of 2017 I came across some old wood shards scattered atop an otherwise-unmarked grave in Hillcrest Cemetery's oldest section (Section A, row 2, plot 23). I assembled them into what appeared to be the right order, and photographed it. Can you tell the name of the person? With some research I deduced that the marker originally said FRANK ROSE / DIED DEC 19 1913 / AGE 31 YEARS.



In 2018 I revisited the grave, but no sign of the wood shards could be found, despite searching the area including nearby brush. Thus passed the last physical reminder of Frank Rose's life.

Little is known of Frank Rose. Like so many miners, the only newspaper reference is about his death, when a "fall of rock crushed out the life of Frank Rose" (*Blairmore Enterprise*, December 27, 1913). He had been married three years, had been a miner for "a number of years" and had just recovered from "injuries received several months ago." Frank's brother remained in the employ of the Hillcrest mine; perhaps he carved the wooden grave marker.

Atop the grave is an enormous Douglas Fir tree. It now dominates his grave, as do other trees on graves throughout our Pass cemeteries. I had thought that these giants were centuries old, but a recently cut-down Douglas Fir nearby (a leaner in the fenced Thomas plot, Sec A row 5 plot 26) shows 87 rings in its two-foot diameter. That means this big tree was just a seedling around 1930, about fifteen years after Mr. Thomas was buried.

Antanina Zdanauckiene (1879-1945), Hillcrest Cemetery. Its relatively recent date explains why the inscription on this unusual wood marker is still partially legible. The marker resembles a chair-back, but it might be that one wood panel is missing.



Unknown, Blairmore Old Union Cemetery. One of my favorite markers, it lay face-down for many years, and is in sad shape.

Original marker for Vincenzo Pelle (1889-1934), Bellevue Union Cemetery. This wood marker with metal-covered roof is no longer in existence. (photo by Johnnie Bachusky, from www.ghosttownpix.com)



Book Review

Beneath the Faceless Mountain by Roberta Rees

Review by Ian McKenzie

This book won the Alberta New Fiction Competition in 1994. It may be the most unusual work of Pass fiction you will ever read.

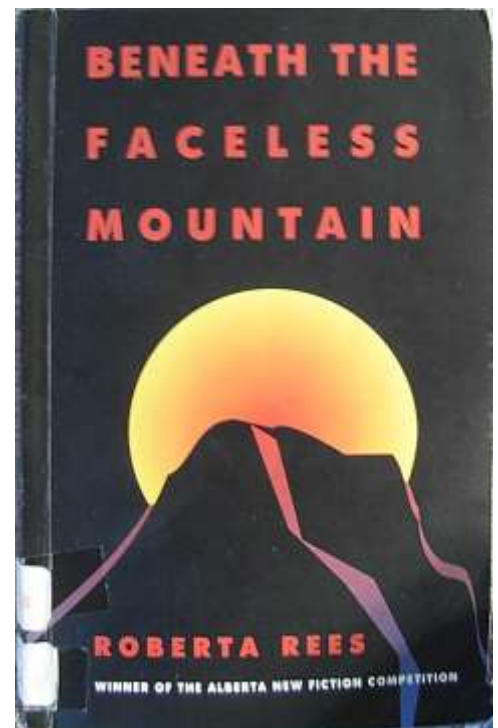
Chapters in the book move back and forth between short stories set between about 1880 and 1980. Some of the stories have tenuous connections, but others are completely unconnected. This slim relationship between stories is mirrored by the book's title, an obvious reference to the Frank Slide which does not figure into the book at all, except as a distant backdrop to events. Perhaps this is intended to remind us of Pass history itself, which is a series of not-necessarily-connected stories unified only by a common setting.

Pass residents, or readers of *Crowsnest And Its People*, will recognize the names of several buildings, landmarks, and people (although Henry Lee has been so highly reimagined that his name had to be slightly changed). This substrate of historical fact gives a "they-could-have-been-real" feeling to the principal characters who are the forgotten, invisible pawns of history, caught up in simple or terrible circumstances beyond their control. There are no villains in these stories.

Though framed within factual events, the characters' actions occasionally hover between the unlikely and the surreal, and are clearly the product of the author's imagination. This poetic stretching of likelihood is both a strength and a weakness of this unusual book.

Rees' background in short stories and poetry is obvious in *Beneath the Faceless Mountain*. The language is lyrical and colourful to the point where it is sometimes difficult to read. In the words of *Goodreads* reviewer Carolyn Gerk: "I wanted so much to love this novel... [but] due to the unrealistic flow of thought and language, which, while it lends itself well to music and poetry, doesn't do much for storytelling and dialogue... I just found myself wanting to be finished with it." Too harsh? Perhaps. But this book does not ask to be read, so much as to be felt. After reading it two decades ago, fragments of it still remained stuck in my memory before I picked it up again this year.

Beneath the Faceless Mountain can be borrowed from the Crowsnest Pass Municipal Library, and probably from interlibrary systems throughout Alberta. Read it, and decide for yourself. It could well be your favourite work of Crowsnest Pass fiction. Or not.



Heritage Mine Maintenance: Q&A with Brandy Gregory

General Manager, Bellevue Underground Mine Tours

Can you give us a very brief history of the original work required to prepare the mine for tourist operations?

The main haulage route (main or 3rd level) of our mine is 5.6km from end to end, and the total length of the mine's tunnel system is over 240km. We had to ensure that areas like the Gob ("worked out" areas completely emptied with no pillars for support) weren't likely to lead to dangerous issues like collapses that might in turn cause damage or pose a danger to the area being re-constructed for tours. The underground coal mine environment is incredibly unforgiving and the mine had been closed up from 1961 until they began the restoration in 1987 for the opening on June 26th, 1990. There was a huge amount of restoration and cleaning work to be done. Debris had to be removed, walls had to be lime-washed, timber sets rebuilt and the main tunnel had to be re-timbered. Engineers were brought in to inspect and ensure that the mine was properly stabilized and safe to be in.

What sort of work do your volunteers do now?

During the winter months, our volunteers do a tremendous amount of work, most of which is done inside the mine. Last winter they logged more than 700 combined hours of labour, re-timbering a large section of the main tunnel and installing cogging at the bend. This winter they've been busy reconstructing one of our original double chutes. This required cataloguing the structure at each step with photos and sketches, mapping out what needed to be done, and gaining approval from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for the project, followed by carefully rebuilding each of the structure's elements as closely as possible to the original structure to maintain the historical integrity.

Our volunteers also help out with a lot of tasks that we don't have staff for in the winter months. This can include painting, maintenance, cleaning, and helping with projects like refurbishing our outbuildings.

Do you look for specific skills in volunteers?

Generally, we just look for anyone who is willing to volunteer and just find them tasks that fit into their specific skill set. We are always happy to take volunteers who are skilled in trades, maintenance, mining operations or museum operations, but those skills aren't mandatory.



Staff observe a volunteer crew performing repairs to the "Man way" entrance tunnel.

Photo: Bellevue Underground Mine

Looking up at the double chute after debris has been cleared and as the men are preparing to start the re-timbering of the structure.

Photo: Bellevue Underground Mine



In any given year, when does this work start, and finish?

The work at the Bellevue Underground Mine is never finished! Typically, the volunteers begin post-season work in early November (after the Halloween Howler) and work until early spring, usually somewhere in late April.

What sort of professional oversight is there, and when do they get involved?

The local Fire Department do a walk-through yearly, and they were also kind enough to help review our Emergency Response Plan for us. We have inspectors, certified in mine rescue and safety who have first-hand experience in underground mining, that inspect every day prior to operations during tour season and as needed throughout the off-season. We were inspected by Occupational Health and Safety this past season and are up to code.

Engineers are brought in whenever necessary. As doing so is very expensive (and we're non-profit) we only do it whenever it's required, such as if we were to open another section of tunnel or under direction by Fraser Shaw (Heritage Conservation Advisor with Alberta Culture) or safety personnel. Fraser visits our site a few times a year to inspect the historical elements.

How can potential volunteers find out more information?

The office can be contacted at 403-564-4700 during our summer operating hours, or at bellevueundermine@gmail.com throughout the year.



Our maintenance crew hard at work cleaning the rotted portions and debris from our original 1903 double chute, in the main haulage tunnel. This includes digging, clearing mounds of debris with a bobcat, and removing rotted timbers. Then they rebuild and conserve the chute structure as closely as possible to its original glory - a safer version of the old style of reinforcing with support timbers and timber sets, re-fabricated metal chute, and rebuilt moving-release mechanisms, staging platforms, and ladders which replicate the original structures.

Photo: Bellevue Underground Mine

News, 100 Years Ago

The dramatic train robbery at Sentinel and the deadly shootout at the Bellevue Café was big news around here. Newspapers from as far away as New Zealand informed (or misinformed) their readers about these events. Our local papers provided the most detail, in ways which were sometimes colourful but not always accurate. Here are some excerpts:

Blairmore Enterprise, August 5 1920: “One of the most daring holdups in the history of Western Canada was perpetrated at a point about eight miles west of Blairmore on Monday afternoon, when the west-bound local in charge of conductor Sam Jones was held up by three or four bandits... with evident purpose of landing some individual supposed to have to board the train at some point in The Pass with considerable money for transfer to a firm’s headquarters. The men were well-known characters, not only to the train officials, but to a large element of the general public, and their actions have on different occasions been watched with suspicion. After leaving Coleman, the men located themselves at different parts of the train and at the point of guns ordered the conductor and train crew and passengers to “up dukes” while a search for money and valuables was effected...”

Blairmore Enterprise, August 12 1920: “On Saturday last, two of the desperadoes put in an appearance at the Bellevue Café, about noon, where they were quietly partaking of luncheon when disturbed by the presence of police, who had been directed to the suspicious looking characters by neighbours of the vicinity. Corporal Usher, of the R.C.M.P., Corporal Baillie, of the A.P.P., and Constable Frewin, of the Alberta provincial police force, were soon on the scene, the former entering the back and the two latter guarding the front entrance. The two men were located in the second booth from the front, and when ordered to hands up, immediately showed signs of resistance. A second order from the police was followed by prompt action by the bandits, who opened fire. Bassoff with two guns and Akroff with one. Several shots were exchanged, before Corporals Usher and Baillie fell victims. The bandits made an effort to escape, and in making their exit Akroff was met with the fatal shot from Constable Frewin, and after struggling away for about fifty yards in the direction of his partner, dropped to die. Bassoff led off for some distance before being winged by a rifle shot which however failed to stop him. Akroff’s body was moved into the feed store of F. Wolstenholme and placed beside those of the dead policemen.”

“Volunteer posses of citizens were armed with rifles and guns of various descriptions and an immediate search was made for the escaped Bassoff. Several days resulted in little or no success...”

“On Saturday, a special constable named Nick Kislik, better known as “Big Nick”, of the same nationality as the bandits, was shot dead by a policeman for refusing to halt when ordered. Kislik was buried at Hillcrest, following an inquest in which the jury returned a verdict exonerating the constable...”

Lethbridge Daily Herald, August 10, 1920: “Monday night passed here without any more deaths in connection with the manhunt. Daylight brought a fresh hatch of rumors and renewed efforts to locate Bassoff. From Blairmore came a report that a lad had seen a man with a bandaged hand near the Harrison ranch north of Blairmore, and the populace jumped to the conclusion that it was Bassoff, but it seems impossible that he could have reached there, in order to get to Blairmore he would have had to pass through a cordon of police guarding the road or travel more than ten miles through a mountain pass...”

“Mrs. Holloway [on her ranch above Frank]... heard a noise at the door and turned to be faced with the awful spectacle of dirty Bassoff. His face was almost black with grime and he certainly [could have] used a shave. Mrs. Holloway saw him disappear into the bush...”

Lethbridge Daily Herald August 11, 1920: “Three bloodhounds, Dan, Lightning and Dynamite, arrived in Frank this morning... Dynamite and Lightning are two old and experienced dogs. Dan is little more than a pup. They jumped off the express car at Frank, all on heavy leashes, and the crowd on the platform scattered. The dogs started to bellow – that is a good way to describe their voices. Several collies and dogs of other varieties were hanging around the station platform when the train arrived... and there was a general scattering of dogdom. The blood hounds started to pull the sheriffs around to investigate their canine relatives, but the relatives did not loiter for introductions.”

“The bloodhounds were taken to Bellevue to get in on the first trail left, that of blood across the open patch of country immediately west of Bellevue, where Bassoff was first chased by a posse after the murder Saturday. Following that they will be taken to the Halloway ranch.”

Lethbridge Daily Herald, August 12, 1920: “Practically the entire population, children, men and women, dogs and cats, all turned out to see the bloodhounds. Many more stories originated from Bellevue during the officers’ short stay there. One was to the effect that the bandit had gone to Lizzard Lake, northwest of the town, to wash the blood off his wounds. On investigation it was found that everyone had been told by someone else.”

“Engineer Hammond was pushing an east-bound drag to Pincher Station when the headlight from his engine was thrown on a tramp-like person on the right of way. The actions of the man aroused his suspicions, and on his return to Lundbreck he notified officials of the company who were in charge of the chase at Frank...”

“About a quarter of a mile west of Pincher the wanted man was seen again in the glare of the headlight. He hurried off the right of way as rapidly as possible, and engineer Hammond stopped the engine. The hunted man made for a shack close to the right of way. The special officers and train crew, all well armed, followed and surrounded the place. Entry was made into the building with drawn guns, and after three orders the man held up his hands. On being searched there were found two revolvers, one empty and one loaded, and a passport and exemption papers, bearing the name of Tom Bassoff.”

Lethbridge Daily Herald, August 18, 1920: “Tom Bassoff appeared in the police court room this morning for the second day of this preliminary hearing, using a walking stick. It was not the stick Bassoff used in making his way from the Halloway ranch to Pincher station where he was arrested. This was an ordinary walking stick supplied by the Alberta Provincial Police for the prisoner’s convenience. He used it for a step or two in the ordinary way and then lapsed into the custom he acquired while prowling around the Frank country – putting it between his legs and leaning heavily on it with both hands.”

Sign of the Times

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.

One panel on the Bellevue Kiosk features the Bellevue Café Shootout.



Have you read it?

Our Local Heritage Sites



• **CROWSNEST MUSEUM and ARCHIVES** - 7701 18th Avenue, in Coleman National Historic Site. 403-563-5434, cnpmuseum@shaw.ca, www.crowsnestmuseum.ca. Glimpse the rich social, economic and natural heritage of Crowsnest Pass from 1900 – 1950 with our two floors of themed rooms. Gift shop features local and regional books, and many other items. Open every day in summer, 9 am - 5 pm; closed on weekends in winter. Adults \$10, seniors (65+) \$8, youth (6-16) \$6, under 6 free, families \$24, Crowsnest Historical Society members free. Tours and educational programs available.



• Close to the museum, the newly-restored **ALBERTA PROVINCIAL POLICE BARRACKS** includes exhibits and artifacts on prohibition, rumrunning, and the legendary shooting of Constable Lawson and the subsequent execution of 'Emperor Pic' and Florence Lossandro. Free with Crowsnest Museum admission.



• **BELLEVUE UNDERGROUND MINE** - off Main Street in Bellevue, 403-564-4700, www.bellevuemine.com. The only authentic historic underground coal mine tour in western Canada, this family-oriented site offers the opportunity to experience what underground miners from a century ago would have seen and heard as they went to go to work each day. Open daily 10am - 6pm in summer; check website for shoulder season hours. Pre-booked tours are available through the winter.



• **FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE** - off Hwy 3. 403-562-7388, www.frankslide.ca. Friendly, knowledgeable staff 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 April 1903, Canada's deadliest rockslide. Open year round, 10am to 5pm (9am to 6pm in summer). Adults \$13, Seniors (65+) \$11, Youth (7-17) \$9, 6 and under free, Families \$35.



• **HILLCREST CEMETERY PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** – north edge of Hillcrest. Visit the mass graves of the 189 victims of the Hillcrest Mine Disaster of 1914, and the many other picturesque graves in this historic cemetery. On-site interpretive signs explain it all. The **Millennium Memorial Monument** is Canada's homage to miners killed across the country. The **park** features interpretive signs about life in Hillcrest and the effect of the disaster, and picnic tables. Accessible year round. Free.



• **LEITCH COLLIERIES PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - Highway 3 just east of town, www.leitchcollieries.ca. Check out the stabilized ruins of this century-old coal processing facility explained through interpretive signs, with on-site staff during the summer. Open during snow-free months, admission by donation. And check out the nearby **Burmis Tree**, a symbol of the Pass and probably Canada's most-photographed tree.



• **COLEMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE and MINERS PATH** - downtown Coleman. Take a self-guided tour of this authentic coal-mining town with a free pamphlet and map, amongst buildings from 1903 - 1986 spanning the entire coal-mining period, many of which have interpretive building plaques. Glimpse the ruins of the mine buildings and coke ovens, walk or drive through the 'miners cottage' neighbourhood of West Coleman. Don't forget your camera. An interpretive booklet can be purchased at the museum. Later, walk the pleasant **Miners Path**, retracing the steps of miners on their way to the McGillivray Mine. All free.

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