to COLEMAN

Highway 3 (Crowsnest Highway)

West Access

Crowsnest Mall

Crowsnest River

20th Avenue

Canadian Pacific Railway

129th Street

Centre Access

East Access

to FRANK

Crowsnest Pass BLAIRMORE

West End Blairmore (Victoria Street), 1920s

Legend

- **1** Heritage Driving Route
- **1** Heritage Sites on Route
- **2** Heritage Sites off Route
- **3** Former Location
- ⚒ Former Coal Mine Site
- ✝ Cemetery

HERITAGE SITES - BLAIRMORE

1. Tim Buck Boulevard (East end of 20th Avenue) In the 1930s, the east end of Blairmore's main throughfare (Victoria Street) was a boulevard that, during the time of strong union activity and Communist-leaning town councils, was renamed in honour of Tim Buck, the imprisoned leader of the Labour Progressive Party of Canada (a.k.a. the Communist Party of Canada).

2. Blairmore Courthouse (Nippon Institute of Technology Inter-Cultural Campus; 13437 - 20th Avenue) A number of serious crimes in the Crowsnest Pass in the early 1920s prompted the provincial government to upgrade police and court facilities. In 1923, a new Courthouse that included police offices, barracks and a jail was built, the first such building in Alberta to accommodate both police and court facilities. Police used the facilities until the Alberta Provincial Police was disbanded in 1932. Court facilities in the building were used until the 1980s. Today, a branch campus of the Nippon Institute of Technology - a Japanese university - is located in the Courthouse.

3. St. Luke's Anglican Church (13307 -20th Avenue) The building, built in 1903, was a RNWMP post before becoming St. Luke's Anglican Church. In more recent times, the church has been shared by Anglican and United parishioners.

4. Gushul Studio (University of Lethbridge Artist-In-Residence Studio; 13301 - 19th Avenue) Thomas Gushul, along with his wife Lena, photographed the Crowsnest Pass from 1914 through the 1950s. In 1921, Gushul opened his studio in Blairmore.

5. Blairmore South Mine The Blairmore South Mine, operated by West Canadian Collieries, was opened in 1907 and was worked until 1913, when W.C.C. shifted the focus of its Blairmore operations to the Greenhill Mine.

6. Blairmore/Pass Powderkeg Ski Hill This was one of Alberta's earliest ski hills, opening in the late 1930s. By the late 1940s, a 1,200 foot tow rope had been installed. Today, it is known as Pass Powderkeg Ski Hill and it attracts locals and visitors during the winter season.

7. Oliva Block (Copy Magic; 13201 - 20th Avenue) The building was constructed in 1909, and over the years has housed a number of commercial enterprises, including furniture stores in the 1920s and again during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

8. Orpheum Theatre (13125 - 20th Avenue) In 1910, Peter Ubertino purchased an old brick building in Frank, cleaned the bricks and hired local builder, Enrico Pozzi, to construct a theatre. Ubertino continued to operate the Orpheum Theatre until the late 1930s. The theatre was sold to the Cole family and later to the Dobek family.

9. Morency Plumbing (Crowsnest Optometric Clinic; 13119 - 20th Avenue) Built during a building boom in Blairmore prior to World War I. One of the first tenants was Alex Morency, who had a plumbing and tinsmithing business. For many years, the building housed the Blairmore Savings & Credit Union.

10. Thompson's Store (Fields; 13101 - 20th Avenue) F.M. Thompson, known as "the merchant tailor of the Pass", opened his first dry goods store in Lille in 1908. In 1913, Thompson relocated to Blairmore. In 1919, the wood frame building was destroyed by fire. Thompson hired Enrico Pozzi to construct the present brick structure.

11. Lethbridge Brewing and Malting (Royal LePage Real Estate; 13055 - 20th Avenue) Limestone quarried from nearby Michel, B.C. was used in the construction of the Lethbridge Brewery building in 1907. Proprietor J.B. Reuter sold domestic and imported wines and liquors as well as cigars.

12. Cosmopolitan Hotel (13001 - 20th Avenue) The original Cosmopolitan Hotel, built in 1904, was destroyed by fire in 1912. A new brick hotel with fifty rooms took its place as Blairmore's most impressive hotel.

13. Gazebo Bandstand (13000 block - 20th Avenue) The bandstand, which was constructed prior to 1914, provided a forum for union speakers and organizers as a central rallying point for strike activity in the Crowsnest Pass.

14. Blairmore Cash and Trading Company (John's Barber Shop; CNP Real Estate; Pass Herald; 12919 - 12925 - 20th Avenue) Built around 1910 as the Blairmore Cash and Trading Company, the building later housed the Blairmore Garage Company and Red Trail Motors, a car dealership.

15. Blairmore Hotel/Alberta Hotel (Mountainside Medical Clinic; 2010 - 129th Street) Sick's Lethbridge Brewery constructed the Blairmore Hotel in the early 1900s. In 1918, the hotel was purchased by infamous bootlegger, Emilio Picariello, who ran his rum running operations out of the now renamed Alberta Hotel. This included tunnels under the road to the railway station to bring in illicit liquor. The building later housed a furniture and hardware store, a clothing store and later a drug store.

16. Union Bank/Royal Bank (CNP Chamber of Commerce; 12707 - 20th Avenue) The Union Bank opened in Blairmore in 1906, and in 1923 it moved into this Enrico Pozzi designed brick building. In 1925, the Union Bank merged with the Royal Bank of Canada.

17. Blairmore Legion No. 7 (2132 - 129th Street) One of the first in Alberta, the Blairmore Legion received its charter in 1926. In 1985, the Blairmore Legion built the present building, which contains significant military memorabilia, including details on the minesweeper "Blairmore", which saw action on D-Day in June, 1944.

18. Mine Locomotive (12700 block - 20th Avenue) "Old Maude" was the name given to the steam engine that pulled coal cars up and down from the Hillcrest Mine tipple to the C.P.R. mainline until the closure of the Hillcrest Mine in 1939. For the next 20 years, Old Maude worked at the Greenhill Mine. In 1967, as a Centennial project, Old Maude was moved to its present location on Blairmore's main street.

19. Greenhill Grill/J.E. Upton Building (Centremore; 12317-12331 - 20th Avenue) Constructed in 1922 by Enrico Pozzi, the east half housed the Greenhill Grill cafe and the west held the J.E. Upton tailor shop.

20. Thompson Grocery/Alberta Liquor Store (Stone and Tile Tec; 12321-12325 - 20th Avenue) Another Enrico Pozzi creation from 1920. In the early years, F.M. Thompson's West End Grocery occupied the west part of the ground floor, with the Alberta Liquor Control Board store in the eastern half.

21. West Canadian Collieries Office (North & Co.; Headlines Hair; 12305 - 20th Avenue) This substantial brick building was constructed in 1920 by Enrico Pozzi to serve as the new general offices for West Canadian Collieries. Apartments for company employees were located on the second floor.

22. Greenhill Hotel (12326 - 20th Avenue) West Canadian Collieries had the Greenhill Hotel built in 1921. It provided convenient accommodation for visitors and a suitable place for meetings. The "Greenhill" was also popular with miners from the nearby namesake mine as a "watering hole" after work.

23. West End Confectionary (Vacant building; 11777 - 20th Avenue) Built in 1949 by Emil Blas and his family, it served continuously as a confectionary until its closure in 2008.

24. Mine Rescue Building (Private residence; 11762 - 20th Avenue) Constructed around 1915 by Enrico Pozzi and used as a Mine Rescue Building until 1959. The main front room held mine rescue equipment and the side front room was used as a teaching room.

25. McLaren/Blairmore Sawmill (Crowsnest Mall) Prior to the turn of the 20th century, Senator Peter McLaren was one of the first entrepreneurs to set up logging operations in the Crowsnest Pass. One of his first mills was at Sentinel. In 1917, the Sentinel mill burned and operations moved to Blairmore. In later years, beginning in the late 1930s, Blairmore Sawmills, owned by Charles Sartoris and Joe Bielli occupied the McLaren site at the west end of Blairmore, where the Crowsnest Mall sits today.

26. Old Crowsnest Hospital (Crowsnest Centre; Chinook Educational Consortium 10501 - 20th Avenue) The Crowsnest Pass Hospital, built on land purchased from West Canadian Collieries, opened in 1949. Improved through a number of additions, the hospital eventually closed in 1987 with the opening of the new Crowsnest Pass Hospital. Today, the old hospital functions as the Crowsnest Centre, which has advanced education, convention, social event and hostel facilities.

27. Crowsnest Pass Golf and Country Club (Highway 3) The original 9-hole course and clubhouse were built in the 1930s. In 1955, a new clubhouse was constructed, and in 1998 the course was expanded to 18 holes.

28. Greenhill Mine (North of Highway 3) West Canadian Collieries began operations at the Greenhill Mine in 1913, closing permanently in 1961. Over its working life, the Greenhill Mine was the mainstay of the economy of Blairmore.

Blairmore

The first settlement in the Crowsnest Pass was made in 1898 at a location designated by the Canadian Pacific Railway simply as Tenth Siding. The name was soon changed to The Springs, after the sulphur springs to the east of the town. On November 15, 1898, the town was officially named Blairmore, in honour of the federal Minister of Railways, A.G. Blair. Local legend has it that the townsfolk weren't happy with the name "Blair" for their town, and someone suggested that something *more* be added to the name, hence "Blairmore". Another version claims the "more" was for the C.P.R.'s divisional superintendent, a Mr. More (or Moore). The opening of the coal mine in neighbouring Frank in 1901 caused a building boom in Blairmore and the town grew quickly. Over the next few years, significant litigation between two of Blairmore's major landowners brought growth to a virtual standstill. By 1908, the problem was resolved when one of the parties sold out to the other. Blairmore boomed again, with over one hundred and fifty buildings constructed in a little over a year. In 1911, with a population of 1,137, Blairmore was incorporated as a town.

In 1907, West Canadian Collieries (W.C.C.), a French-owned company, located their management offices in Blairmore, and in 1909 opened the Blairmore South mine. **5** There was not enough accommodation for workers in the town, so W.C.C. opened a new subdivision to the west of the main townsite. Blairmore's main street had many impressive brick buildings. The demand for construction material supplied by two local companies, the Pelletier Brick Co. and the Rocky Mountain Cement Co. The opening of W.C.C.'s Greenhill Mine **28** on the north side of the valley in 1913 brought another round of expansion to the community.
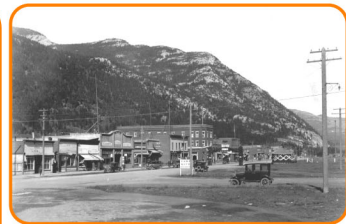
Enrico Pozzi, an Italian immigrant, was the most prominent builder in Blairmore during the 1920s. Born in Italy in 1878, he received training in coke oven construction before immigrating to Canada in 1905, eventually settling in Frank. Pozzi was hired by Canadian Metal Company to oversee the building of their new zinc smelter in Frank. In 1914, Pozzi moved his family to Blairmore, where he purchased the lumber yard and contracting business of Thomas Frayer and Daniel Sinclair, two early builders in Blairmore. Over the next sixteen years Pozzi developed the largest and most successful contracting business in the Crowsnest Pass. Virtually all of the significant buildings along Blairmore's main street that date back to the 1920s have Pozzi's mark on them. When Enrico Pozzi died in 1930, the business was taken over by his son Louis, who ran it until 1936.

Rum Running

On July 1, 1916, following a province-wide referendum, the Alberta Liquor Control Act, or "Prohibition," became law, limiting the amount of alcohol a private citizen or business could possess. The law also effectively ended the legal liquor import business. In areas like the Crowsnest Pass, where the vote had been "wet", or against Prohibition, there quickly emerged a demand for alcohol - legal or otherwise. "Bootleggers" provided local supplies of illicit liquor and "rum runners" brought booze in across the border from B.C. and Montana.

Emilio Picariello, known affectionately by locals as "Emperor Pick" was the kingpin of the Crowsnest rum runners. Using his Alberta Hotel **15** in Blairmore as the front for his rum running operation, Picariello began supplying the needs of the local community. With a limited number of officers and the general populace defying the law, it was impossible for the police to control the illegal liquor trade.

In 1922, Emperor Pick was at the centre of one of the most infamous events of the rum running era, when he and accomplice Florence Losandro were involved in the shooting of Constable Steven Lawson. The murder of Constable Lawson shocked the nation. Both Picariello and Losandro were convicted of murder and hanged.

Union Activity

The coal mining industry shaped life in Blairmore as it did other towns in the Crowsnest Pass. Labour-management relations deteriorated during the 1920s, and by the 1930s had become bitter. In 1932, a massive strike paralyzed the coal mines. Following a number of union rallies and demonstrations, miners battled with 75 R.C.M.P. and more than a dozen miners were arrested.

In local politics in the 1930s, miners in Blairmore used their vote to elect slates of Communist-leaning civic officials. "Red" Blairmore became known as the "Communist Capital of Canada". May Day was delared a civic holiday, and Blairmore's main street was renamed Tim Buck Boulevard after the imprisoned leader of the communist party of Canada.

The gazebo bandstand **13** in Blairmore was a focal point for many speeches, rallies and demonstrations during the heyday of union activity, and today it still remains a symbol of union solidarity.

Main Street, Blairmore, circa 1925

Gushul Studio

Over a fifty year career, Thomas Gushul took thousands of photographs of the people and places of the Crowsnest Pass. He won numerous awards, introduced new techniques in mine photography and was greatly admired for his portrait work. Most importantly, Gushul's photographs captured the life and times of the Pass, giving it an enduring sense of place. Today, his photographic collections are found at the Crowsnest Museum and the Glenbow Museum.

Gushul was born in Ukraine in 1889 and immigrated to Canada in 1906. In 1914, after several years as a coal miner, Gushul turned his hobby of photography into a career and opened his first studio in Coleman. He worked together with his wife, Lena, and in 1921 they opened a studio in Blairmore. **4** A large skylight was added to the Blairmore studio in 1937 and the front part of the studio was converted into living quarters in 1945.