

# HERITAGE VIEWS

History and Heritage in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta



Issue 67

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Little by little, our built heritage is disappearing. Apparently, that time has come for the Crowsnest Lake Dancehall. Despite its unique style and history, it just got too old and repairs were left too long, and soon it will be gone. This is part of a natural cycle of renewal, but we like to cling to our physical memories as long as we can. Which old building will be the next to go?

In light of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the infamous shooting of Constable Stephen Lawson by Emilio “Emperor Pic” Picariello and/or Florence “Philumena” Lassandro, you may be wondering why there is no Heritage Article on the topic. That story has already been completely covered in books and by the APP Barracks interpretive centre, and need not be repeated here. We will, however, report on some new archival information on this significant event in our next edition.

- Ian McKenzie, Editor

On the cover: One of the better images of the Crowsnest Lake Dancehall (or Crowsnest Lake Pavilion), date unknown, viewed from the rear with Crowsnest Mountain in the background. Competition from newer, in-town dancehalls may have contributed to the closure of this popular social hub in the early 1960s.

Photo: Crowsnest Museum and Archives, 01555/01735

*Heritage Views* 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 [heritageviews.cnp@gmail.com](mailto:heritageviews.cnp@gmail.com). Future contributors should send in their articles in MS Word or something similar, with any photos sent as separate jpeg files. Do not embed photos into your document; we will just have to strip them out and reinsert them into our newsletter format.

Back issues of this free newsletter are available at [www.crowsnestheritage.ca](http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca) by clicking on the “heritage newsletter” link on the home page.

## Local Heritage News

The province is undertaking three-dimensional scans of the interior and exterior of the **Crowsnest Lake Dancehall**, prior to its upcoming demolition.

Crowsnest Lake Dancehall, interior centre post, with four phases of the moon cut into its capital.

Photo: Harry Tidge, 2006



The **Bellevue Inn** is being renovated into residential apartments. The “B.I.” and the **Greenhill Hotel** are 100 years old this year.

Progress for reopening of the historic **Roxy Theatre**: <https://www.crowsnestcando.ca/>

The July/August 2022 **Doors Open and Heritage Festival** will be themed “Music, Moonshine and Mayhem” on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder of Cst. Stephen Lawson by Picariello and Lassandro, “Canada’s most infamous rumrunning murder.” [www.cnpheritagefest.ca](http://www.cnpheritagefest.ca)

The C. P. R. ran a special train to the dance in Coleman, Friday night. Quite a number of Frank people went to the dance.

*Coleman Miner*, November 27, 1908

**Heritage Crowsnest**, a new consortium of heritage facilities including the museum, underground mine, and APP barracks, was officially launched in March. Check out <https://www.heritagecrowsnest.com/>.

An expanded version of Michael Leeb’s article **The Raven’s Nest: Seeking Ancestral Origins** which appeared in our Issue #53 is being published in upcoming issue #41.1 of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*.

Conversion of the historic **Blairmore Courthouse** into residential apartments and commercial office spaces should be finished this spring or summer. Next year will be its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Did you know...

... that the Crowsnest Dancehall was constructed in 1931 by Alex Morency, and operated for over thirty years?

... that dancehall floors were often built atop old auto tires, to give them a pleasant bounce during dancing?

... That the Crowsnest Lake Dancehall may have been the last surviving example of rural, inter-war dancehall architecture in western Canada?

## The Doukhobor Trading Store In Blairmore

by Jonathan J. Kalmakoff

Although the historical Doukhobor connection to Cowley and Lundbreck is well known, few would associate them with the Crowsnest Pass. Yet for decades the Pass was an important market for Doukhobor communally-grown field and garden products. And for a brief time, they even established a commercial retail outlet there.

Beginning in 1915, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (“the Community”) purchased land near Cowley and Lundbreck for a new agricultural colony. They kept some farm products for their own consumption, and shipped railcar loads to Community settlements in B.C. in exchange for fresh fruit, jams, and other goods produced there. Surplus grain was marketed by rail, and surplus feed, flour, and vegetables were sold locally or conveyed by wagon up the Crowsnest Pass.

In February 1924, the Community purchased the former Poggiali store in Blairmore. Lots 10, 11 and Pt A of Block 2 were located at the east end of Blairmore on Victoria Street at the present site of 13601 and 13609 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The store on Lot 10 was of a typical boomtown design – a 35 x 45 foot two-storey wood-frame structure with whitewashed clapboard exterior and a rectilinear false façade attached to a gable roof, with large display windows, and a bracketed cornice. It was built in 1910 or early 1911 by Italian immigrants Antonio

and Angelina Poggiali who ran a grocery and dry goods store there (as part of a chain of three stores in Blairmore, Bellevue, and Frank) in conjunction with their next door residence/rooming house. In May 1922, Poggiali sold out to Tompkins and Murray and moved to the Bronx, New York. A 20 x 20 foot post-frame barn with hip roof (Lot 11) and a 20 x 25 foot log stable with hip roof (Lot A) at the rear of the property housed up to four horses used to pull the store drays (delivery wagons).

The Community assigned Nicholas J. Verigin to manage the new store, assisted by his son-in-law Alex M. Salekin. A nephew of Doukhobor leader Peter V. Verigin, Nicholas was regarded for his integrity and knowledge of basic business principles. Alex shared these qualities and also possessed basic fluency in English. They took up residence above the store with their combined family of eight. Reporting to the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood branch office in Cowley, the men were responsible for all aspects of store inventory management and sales. Samples of merchandise were prominently displayed in the store windows. Verigin and Salekin erected a one-storey 52 x 45 foot wood-frame warehouse on a concrete slab with flat slanted roof (Lot 11) adjoining the east side of the store in mid-1924, using lumber shipped from the Community’s Kootenay sawmills.

The store primarily sold flour, livestock feed, and chicken feed. It also offered bagged wool as well as fresh eggs, butter, cheese and cream by the pound, and a wide array of seasonal fresh vegetables including potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, carrots, and cucumbers. In addition to field and garden products produced by the local Community, the store brought in seasonal fresh fruit (apples, pears, plums, peaches, and cherries) grown in the Community orchards in the Kootenays along with the famous 'K.C. Brand' jams produced at the Community jam factory in Brilliant. Community-milled lumber, poles, shingles, and fence posts from the Kootenays were sold on order.

The Doukhobors' costs were markedly lower than other retailers, since the Community produced all its own goods and used unpaid communal labour at all stages of the supply chain without middlemen or commission agents. Its only external cost was for rail

freight, which all local merchants bore. The Doukhobors did not advertise in the *Blairmore Enterprise*, relying instead on word of mouth. Verigin and Salekin sold and delivered dray loads of goods throughout Blairmore, Sentinel, Coleman, Lille, Hillcrest, Frank, Bellevue, and Maple Leaf. In addition to selling farm products, the Doukhobors offered cartage services, hauling freight by wagon for hire. Paul N. Potapoff (1885-1958), branch manager of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood office in Cowley, made periodic visits to Blairmore to oversee and inspect the store operation, examine the ledger and account books, and collect the cash revenue held in the office strong box.

The Verigin and Salekin family lived the same simple life as other members of the Community. They were issued clothes (shoes, boots, etc), foodstuffs (flour, salt, grain etc.) and provisions in exchange for living and working at the store. Their days



Blairmore, east main street, about 1925. Doukhobor store marked in red. Photo: *Crowsnest And Its People*, page 91

were spent in communal labour with few opportunities for leisure. Nikolai's wife Anastasia and their daughter, Alex's wife Mary, performed all domestic tasks including cooking, baking, housecleaning, washing, sewing and mending clothes, and child-rearing. They milked the milk cow allotted to the family and grew a vegetable garden behind the store for their own use. Upon their arrival in town, the youngest Verigin child Anastasia attended the Blairmore Public School. The Salekin children followed upon reaching school age. The Doukhobor children spoke only Russian, but readily acquired English and excelled at their studies.

In terms of spiritual life, the family held prayer meetings (*moleniye*) on Sunday mornings in their living quarters, conducted in the Russian language. The afternoon was spent in group singing of hymns and folk songs or visiting Doukhobor friends and family in from Cowley/Lundbreck, followed by Sunday dinner.

After a successful first year, the Doukhobor store in Blairmore seemed poised to continue business operations into the foreseeable future, had it not been for a series of events that left the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood devastated and divided. Following the death of Peter V. Verigin in a mysterious train explosion at Farron, B.C. in October 1924, the Community was plunged into grief over the loss of their leader. By December, a split arose over succession. The minority Community officials and Verigin's family members backed his niece Anastasia

Holuboff and the status quo, while the majority rank and file 'Working Brothers' chose his son Peter in Russia and called to replace the managerial elite with their own candidates.

Amidst this all, Nicholas J. Verigin found himself at odds with the Community majority. He had continued to let his children attend public school in Blairmore. As a Verigin family member, he was presumed to support Holuboff as successor. And as a Verigin who held a good job in the Community, he was now viewed as a privileged *apparatchik* and nepotee living on the shoulders of the working Doukhobors.

Consequently, within weeks of the election of a 'Working Brother' to the Cowley branch directors in January 1925, the Verigin and Salekin family in Blairmore allegedly ceased receiving supplies and rations from the Community, their milking cow wintering in Cowley was not returned to them, they were relieved of their posts at the store, and were advised they were no longer members of the Community. A notice in the *Blairmore Enterprise* read: "The Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood of Alberta, Limited, wish to state that they will not be responsible for any debts incurred by Aleck Seliken and Nick Verigin, who were running our store in Blairmore. All business may be transacted care of head office, Cowley. Dated at Cowley, Alberta, this 16th day of February, 1925."

It was expected that the Verigin and Salekin family would vacate the store, and be replaced by another Doukhobor family to

carry on the business. However, Nicholas stood his ground and refused to leave, claiming he was entitled to the property as his share of the communal organization. By 1926, Community officials decided on a new tack. Upon obtaining legal title to the store property in February, they sold it to John D. Anderson of Trail, B.C. who initiated eviction proceedings against the Doukhobor "squatters".

By then, Nicholas had more family living on the property. The 1926 Census shows Nicholas, 60, wife Mabel, 52, and daughter Mabel, 15; their daughter Mary, 25, husband Alex Salekin, 26, and sons Pete, 5, Wasyl, 4, and Alexander, 5 months; and their other daughter Helen, 35, husband Kuzma W. Glookoff, 36, and daughter Mabel, 16. Listed on the same lot in a different building were their niece Vera, husband Jack J. Smoroden, both 34, and children John, 15, Jack, 6, and Vera, 4.

Faced with eviction, Nicholas doubled down on his ownership claim, producing a 1924 letter from his uncle, the late Peter V. Verigin, deeding him the premises. This unexpected move frustrated not only the eviction action but Anderson's purchase, with title reverting to the Community in October 1926.

In January 1926, Nicholas launched a suit in the Supreme Court of Alberta against the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, alleging he was unlawfully expelled from it because he educated his children according to the laws of Canada, claiming \$21,466.00 as recompense for 26

years of labour performed for the organization, \$5,000.00 damages, and an order establishing his right to the store.

The suit was an important test case, for if successful it would make it possible for other members to secede from the Community with serious financial consequences. However, Community officials rebutted the claims by contending they had always counseled that the children be sent to public schools when possible; that Verigin was mistaken in his belief that he

## The Century Home Club

Address: 27 Avenue, Bellevue

Year built: 1907, Frayer & Sinclair

Features: Eight identical 1 storey cottages with open corner porches, built for West Canadian Collieries. Amongst the oldest houses in Bellevue, all still exist but each has been extensively altered.

Significant occupants: NWMP/APP police barracks (21309 27 Ave)



Cottages on Poplar Street, about 1910. Crowsnest Museum and Archives, Ruth Cousens collection.

was expelled; that he was still a member with full rights; and that he would be given a comfortable living for the rest of his life. After a three-day trial, the case was dismissed on the basis that Verigin failed to prove he was expelled.

Nicholas remained undeterred. In mid-September 1927, he filed a formal appeal to the Alberta Court of Appeal alleging that, irrespective of whether he was evicted, the Community, by organizing itself in such a way that individual member shareholders were debarred from obtaining their share of the organization's assets, and by removing its children from public education, was contrary to public policy.

If Verigin's initial lawsuit threatened to pave the way for member succession from the Community, his appeal threatened the Community's very existence, since for the first time in the history of Canadian courts, it was alleged that the formation of community along the lines of the Doukhobors' was illegal.

Days before the appeal was to be heard, Nicholas' first cousin, Peter P. Verigin, arrived in Alberta from Russia to assume leadership of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood in Canada. Recognizing the risk posed by the appeal, the new leader hastily settled the matter out of court in October 1927 by agreeing to transfer the Blairmore property to Nicholas.

Following these somewhat dramatic events, Nicholas J. Verigin lived at the property with his family for another two years. By November 1930 Nicholas, now widowed, sold the property and retired to Lundbreck, thus ending the brief but unique and eventful Doukhobor tenure in Blairmore.

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*For information on the Doukhobors, see <https://doukhobor.org/doukhobor-history-of-the-lundbreck-cowley-area-of-alberta/>*



After 1930, the former Doukhobor store was used as an auto wrecker's, and later as an auto service station. This photo shows its last use as the East End Service Garage, which was closed and demolished around 1953.

Photo: Crowsnest Museum and Archives, CM-BL-06-54



Heritage Feature

# Crowsnest Lake Dancehall in Photographs

All photos by Vic Bergman, January 2022





Left: the stage, with roof holes and drifted snow

Bottom: relatively recent temporary roof supports in the large main dancehall



## Summit Lime Works: Q&A with Tetsuo Kitaguchi (1918-2009)

Excerpts from a 2005 Oral History interview by the Alberta Labour History Institute

. . . The war come on in '39, and we got a notice to get out, all Japanese. So I only worked [in Vancouver] 4-1/2 years, then we had to pack up and get out of the area, coastal area, 100-mile zone, they called it.

*Were you allowed to take your belongings?*

No. Myself, I had a lot of stuff like an accordion and books, I had a good collection of books. You were only allowed one suitcase and one duffle bag. So I sold my accordion right there on the wharf, and I don't know what happened to the rest of the stuff. We had to go Vancouver and then register in Hastings Park. We were called enemy agents, which I could never understand.

*But you were born in Canada.*

We were all registered there, and wait for the time to be evacuated out from the coastal area. We had an option there. If we knew somebody in the agricultural area of Alberta or anywhere outside of BC, we had an option to put our name in and go there. So we went to Raymond, because I had a sister married in Raymond and living there for a number of years. In that way we were lucky to go somewhere that we knew someone, and a little support there too . . .

The war ended August 8th, 1945. We were free to go. So the farmers there, they

clamoured for good help . . . I said, no, I had enough of farming. We were allowed to move anywhere after that. My brother found a job in a lime kiln. That's where I ended up after the war. The first job working in the lime kiln, which is situated right on the BC-Alberta border. The head office for Lime Works happened to be in Lethbridge, at the centre of the sugar beet industry. So they hired people that were coming off the beet fields. They had a great choice of people, because they were all scrambling for jobs to get off the farm.

We got the job up in Lime Works, my brothers and I and their families. So we moved up there. But the big disappointment was they told us we'd having housing there, but the home that we had was not much better than the shack we left. In fact, they were worse. But we had no choice but to stay because it was a job for the time being. That time being lasted 10 years.

During that time I was never involved in union work or anything like that. We met with these people that had been working there for a number of years, these men. They come from the Baltic states, like Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia. Some of them couldn't speak English, but been there for a long time. We learned a lot about this place. I thought, how come you're living in these shacks for so long? He said, we tried to talk

about improving things, and we were told if they made any kind of racket about their work, they would be deported. I thought, that's not right. We learned more and more about the place. The manager there never lived there at all, just the foreman. The owner owned a big ranch and was quite wealthy. The foreman there was Yugoslav too, but he'd been in Canada for some time and spoke perfect English. They were exploiting these immigrants, when they told them that they'd be deported. So they approached us. What I mean by us is . . . a university student who was just working there, and myself and my brothers. But my brother wouldn't have nothing to do with that kind of work. I didn't either. I was never a union man. But somehow it grew on me, the things I'd seen throughout the years.



I said, you fellows want a better standard of living, you're going to have to get a union in here. I don't know how to get a union myself because I've never been involved. I says, the first thing you have to do is contact a representative of some union. So I happened to know a couple of fellows in Coleman who were coal miners. They put me onto Jack Evans. He belonged to some chemical union. He came to visit us and said, you want a union? I said, ya, these fellows here want a union. They want better living conditions. Ya, I can see that right now, the minute I come in here I was wondering what those shacks were. I said, they're homes. It was all company owned.

Jack said, you've got to have 51% to sign up to get a union in here. So I said, okay. I had a problem there, because these people come from Croatia, Bosnia, and that has a history of people that never got along for years. The only reason why they got along was because Tito kept them under his thumb. But these people come back to Canada, they still have that ill feeling towards one another. But we managed to sign everybody but two of them. We still needed the 51% for next morning. Jack was coming back to get this signed petition. During the night I said, we gotta get hold of those two guys somehow. Almost midnight I went to their home and said, you gotta sign this. He was a real grump. He wouldn't sign anything. Young fellow and his wife. But he finally signed it. I guess that bothered him for a couple of days at work. One night at work, he didn't like me at all, he was going to clobber me with an iron pipe. But I had a friend with a black belt behind me, grabbed him and threw him against the wall. Kinda shook him out and straightened him out a bit. He said, we're not going to get anywhere, you just make trouble for us. Never mind, I said, we'll find out what's going to happen. So he signed it, we got a union.

Jack notified the company that you have a union, now you deal with a union. So we were called down to Lethbridge, to head office, with a proposal of what we wanted, which is very easy. We went down there. It opens like this, the door to his office. We

were sitting there discussing things. He had a lawyer by the name of Gladstone. I don't think he'd ever dealt with a union all his life. He says, what are you guys looking for? I says, it's all on the paper there. He says, maybe we should think about this. I told him, before we think about it, Mr. Gladstone better come there and have a look at the place, then he'll know what we're talking about. The owner roared "come in here" to his secretary. So they went in. I wonder what they're going to talk about? He says, when I invited a man up to see the place, that's when he hollered from the other office, come in here. They come back out and says, you guys can go home now. We'll think about this and call you back. So we left and went back in five days. He says, we'll have another meeting. Come back and he says he'd give us everything we wanted and then some. We had them in a place where nobody wanted to see his employees living in them. This lawyer apparently never seen

these shacks. So we got everything we wanted. In two meetings we had it all settled. But it took another year and a half before they built new homes. They built them out of cinder bricks and some out of wood.

*What did the [lime workers] think when you got the deal?*

They were happy, because they got more money. And they were promised a new home. And we got them too. Within three years they were all built. They had something like 30 families there. I stayed there till 1957.

*Why did you leave Lime Works?*

The lime rock is put through these big furnaces and they come out white. That's where your white lime is cooked in kilns. It was a bad job. That's why I quit there. The lime dust was breaking down the membranes in my nose, and it would never heal. So the doctor said, you'd better get out of here.

*The full content of this Alberta Labour History Institute oral history interview is at <https://albertalabourhistory.org/interview-transcripts/tets-kitaquchi/>*

The 1928 Summit Lime Works kiln at Crowsnest Lake. It still exists, next to the modern kilns.

Photo: Crowsnest Heritage Initiative



## Book Review

### *Drowning in Darkness* by Peter Oliva (1993)

Review by Ian McKenzie

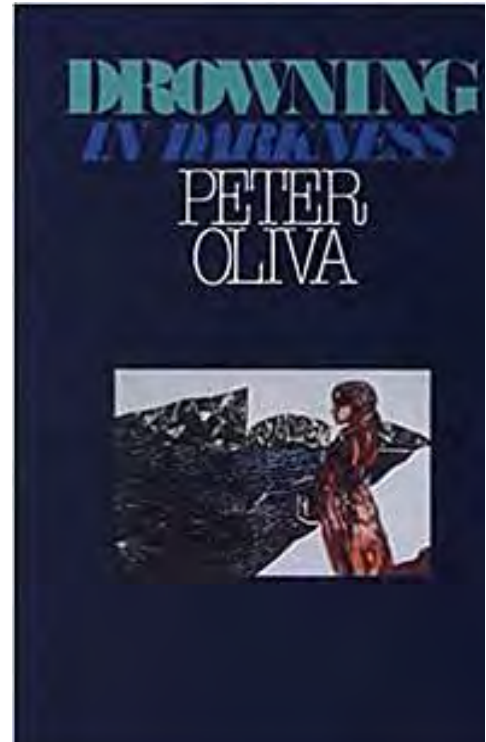
Most fictional novels set in Crowsnest Pass portray their characters as struggling, hard-working immigrants who eventually find some form of happiness and belonging. To some extent the heritage community has echoed this romantic, happy-outcome theme in much of its interpretation. Peter Oliva's novel takes the opposite approach, portraying individuals who did not succeed and who did not find happiness or contentment in the Pass. This is not the most pleasant way to tell a story, but it does present an important and largely-ignored viewpoint.

Though not expressly stated, careful readers will find the settings to be primarily Coleman and Frank in about the mid-1930s and the 1960s/1970s. Some well-known Pass legends are re-interpreted; for example, Big Charlie the mine horse does not die in the Frank mine, but in a local saloon.

The book is skillfully and beautifully written; in the words of another reviewer, it is "dreamy, lush, and pensive." There are no strong plot-lines, with much of the story being recollections of past events in Crowsnest Pass and Italy. The absence of quotation marks around the sparse dialogue heightens the detached, surreal, and oppressive mood which pervades this book and the lives of its characters. Readers are strongly reminded that life for coal miners and others in the past perhaps wasn't so great. It is a lesson we might already know in our heads, but this book tells it to our hearts and guts. The author's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were coal miners in the Crowsnest Pass, which lends authenticity to what he has to say.

This book won the Writers Guild of Alberta Best First Novel award. It is now a bit hard to find; the Chinook Arch library system does not have it, but the Calgary Public Library does. Copies are available from various online book sellers, and although it might still appear on some big-box bookstore catalogues it is seldom in local stock.

You won't get a good laugh or a good cry out of this book, but it will make you appreciate how beautiful writing can make a novel out of a slow and unhappy story.



## Frank Slide Railbeds Hike

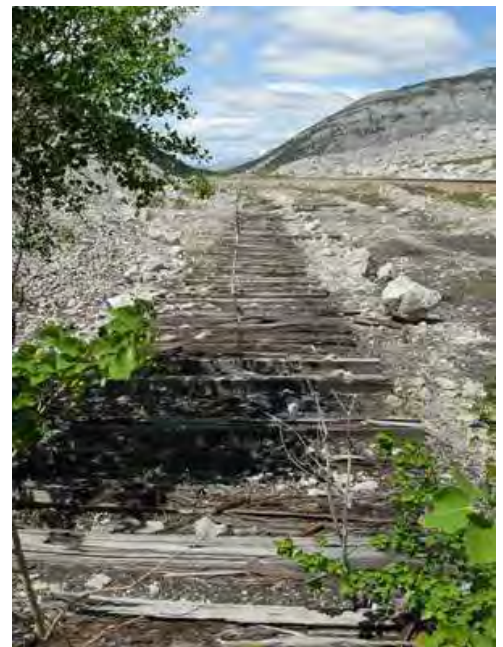
The 1903 Frank Slide destroyed 1.5km of CPR mainline, but by chance left a relatively shallow depth of rock atop it. Crews cleared a route for temporary tracks as quickly as possible (three weeks), then build a proper roadbed and rails afterwards (six months). That and subsequent upgrades account for the several railbeds evident today.

Drive the Old Frank Slide Road to the east edge of the Slide, and stop at the right-angle bend near the lime kilns information sign and the old Brazzoni house. This corner, actually a T-junction, reflects the old Lime City street grid.

Start your 3km (round trip) walk by heading east along the gravel road to a former rail crossing; this road once continued to Bellevue. On your left is the overgrown rail spur to the lime kilns. Cross the modern tracks (train drivers will not expect to see people here, so exercise *extreme* caution); look around and remember this spot, as you'll need to find it on your way back. *Stay off the tracks*; walk west (left) in the grass on the north side. In 300 metres the tracks gently curve to the right; here you'll veer right, through a distinct linear gap through the trees, where a couple of old railbeds diverge from the modern (the oldest railbed may have run through the present trees to the right of the break, but I'm not certain of this – have a look and see what you think.) At the north end of the gap there is a broken, twisted rail fragment marked

“1883”; ponder this, photograph it, and leave it be. Continue atop the old railbed for about 200 metres past the last tree, where you can sort of pick out another old railbed emerging from the highway fill on your right. You'll soon notice that the two old railbeds curved around the former toe of the big rockheap on your left - over a sixty year period the CPR quarried away that slope, using a rail-mounted steam shovel (rail spurs are still visible beneath the modern slope.) Of the two old railbeds, the one nearest the present line seems to be built from coal slack, while the other one is stone built partially overtop it. Turn round when you like, and return to the Lime City level crossing; if you wish, you can bushwhack atop the old siding (some windfall and deadfall here) directly to the lime kilns, from where you can see your car.

In the age of steam, the rail line through the Slide was a “hump” of 2.2% which for years meant westbound trains couldn't stop at Hillcrest Station, and “helper” locomotives were housed at the Frank yards. The approach slope is now longer and more gradual, but on wet or frosty days you might still see a train stopped here waiting for help.



## Dance Hall in the News

After opening in early 1931, dances were held at the Crows' Nest Lake Dancehall most Saturdays throughout the summer, but also periodically on Mondays and Wednesdays. Local bands often presided, but occasionally bands from Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver or further afield attended. Rental cabins and a boat launch were constructed around the same time as the dancehall. In the 1940s Ferstay's bus service would transport Pass residents to and from dances. All were announced in the *Blairmore Enterprise*:

June 25, 1931:

*The second weekly dance at the Lake Pavilion on Saturday evening was again very largely attended. With warmer weather, this resort will become extremely popular, especially with the added attraction of a launch trip around the lake.*

July 13, 1933:

*The Len Davis' dance orchestra, of Lethbridge, will supply music for a mid-week dance at Crows' Nest Lake pavilion on Wednesday night next. We are informed by the manager, Mr. Morency, that he has received word that the recent regulation closing dances at 1 a.m. has been rescinded, so the dance will continue beyond that hour.*

August 9, 1934:

*The Arcadians' seven-piece orchestra will furnish the music for a dance to be held at the Lake Pavilion on Wednesday night next.*



*Blairmore Enterprise, May 14, 1937*

July 23, 1937:

*A most enjoyable party was held at the Lake pavilion, Crows' Nest Lake, on Monday night, the occasion being the celebration of the golden wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Fife, 75 and 76-year-old residents of Coleman.*

June 19, 1942:

*The season's opening dance at the Crows' Nest Lake Pavilion on Saturday night was a largely attended and most enjoyable affair. The dance hall had lately been re-decorated and is very attractive and comfortable. A refreshment counter is operated in connection. Weather on Saturday night was just ideal and roads were in fair condition. These dances will be continued every Saturday night throughout the season.*

August 14, 1942:

*Mr. A. Morency, of Blairmore, has been granted three leases by the Alberta cabinet, authorizing him to use certain lands near*



*Crows' Nest Lake for various businesses. One lease, at an annual rental of \$15, permits him to use certain lands for the operation of a dance pavilion and refreshment booth. Another, at a cost of \$2.50 per year, permits the use of an area for the purpose of a boathouse; while the third lease authorizes him to use the area for a dwelling and auto cabins at an annual rental of \$25.*

This last news item is curious, as all of the buildings and activities mentioned had been in place since 1931. It might suggest that Morency's occupation of the land had been unofficial, or perhaps that the Province had acquired his titles and then leased them back. There could be other explanations.

This last item is from the *Blairmore Graphic*:

August 13, 1948:

*No one was seriously injured in the car wreck on Saturday at Crows Nest Lake at about 12:25. The 1930 Plymouth, driven by Joe*

*Trotz, sideswiped a car driven by Henry Plumtre. The Plymouth turned over and was completely wrecked, while the other car crossed the ditch and stopped against the wire fence, with little damage. A large crowd returning from the Lake Pavilion dance witnessed the accident and stopped to assist the victims.*

## 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.

The Crowsnest Dancehall is featured on the sign at the east end of Crowsnest Lake.



*Blairmore Enterprise, July 23, 1931*



Have you read it?

## Our Local Heritage Sites (check each website for rates and schedules)



• **CROWSNEST MUSEUM and ARCHIVES** - 7701 18th Avenue, in Coleman National Historic Site. 403-563-5434, [cnmuseum@shaw.ca](mailto:cnmuseum@shaw.ca) , [www.crowsnestmuseum.ca](http://www.crowsnestmuseum.ca). Glimpse the rich social, economic, and natural heritage of Crowsnest Pass from 1900 - 1950 in two floors of themed rooms, plus large artifacts outdoors. Gift shop features local and regional books, and many other items.



• 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. 403-563-5434, [cnmuseum@shaw.ca](mailto:cnmuseum@shaw.ca) , [www.appbarracks.com](http://www.appbarracks.com).



• **BELLEVUE UNDERGROUND MINE** - off Main Street in Bellevue. The premiere authentic historic underground coal mine tour of western Canada offers a family-oriented experience of what miners from a century ago saw and heard at work each day. Pre-book tours online; [www.bellevuemine.com](http://www.bellevuemine.com).



• **FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE** - off Hwy 3. 403-562-7388, [www.frankslide.ca](http://www.frankslide.ca). Knowledgeable staff share fascinating stories of the Frank Slide of April 1903 through dynamic interpretive programs and presentations. State-of-the-art interactive exhibits focus on Canada's deadliest rockslide. Closed winter Mondays (but open Family Day).



• **HILLCREST CEMETERY PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - Hillcrest. Visit the mass graves of the 189 victims of the Hillcrest Mine Disaster of 1914, and many other historic graves. Interpretive signs explain it all. The **Millennium Memorial Monument** is Canada's homage to miners killed across the country. The adjacent **park** features interpretive signs about life in Hillcrest and the effect of the disaster, and picnic tables. All free.



• **LEITCH COLLIERIES PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - Highway 3, east edge of town, [www.leitchcollieries.ca](http://www.leitchcollieries.ca). Stabilized ruins of a century-old coal processing facility explained through interpretive signs. Parking lot closed in winter. Free (donation). Check out the nearby **Burmis Tree**, probably Canada's most-photographed tree.



• **COLEMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** - downtown Coleman. Free map and pamphlet for a self-guided tour of this authentic coal-mining town amongst buildings from 1903 - 1986; most have interpretive building plaques. Glimpse the ruins of the mine plant and coke ovens, walk or drive through the "miners cottage" neighbourhood of West Coleman. 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.



• **LILLE PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - A 6km long trail leads to this remote site. Ruins in or near this former mining village include the powerhouse, hotel foundation, and coke ovens. Interpretive signs on site. Enquire at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, 403-562-7388. Backcountry safety and etiquette apply. Free.

More information on these sites and other activities is at [www.crowsnestheritage.ca](http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca)