



Heritage News

Discover Crowsnest Heritage

ISSUE #20

March 25th, 2012

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The Crowsnest Historical Society elected its new executive for 2012 at its Annual General Meeting at The Polish Hall in Coleman on the afternoon of March 11th. The new Board consists of Fred Bradley, Paul Schepelle, Matthew Hiesie, Lori Prentice, Isabelle Russell, Belle Kovach and Rudy Pagnucco. They will have the opportunity to invite two more members to the Board after their first meeting should they deem the extra members necessary.

As part of the meeting, Monica Primrose gave attendees a short history of the Polish Hall. Guest speaker, Katherine Zilm, talked about native American pictographs found in southern Alberta, including ones on Goat Mountain and at Crowsnest Lake Cave.

John Salus (past Chair), Terry Hrudy (past Treasurer) and Donna Zwicker (past Secretary) addressed the financial situation of the Society and their decision to lay off staff members at the Museum. The safety of the Archives and the Museum Collections was stressed. Chris Matthews (Museum Executive Director), Michelle Cavanagh (Archivist) and all the dedicated Museum volunteers were thanked for their hard work over the past year.

The incoming Board has committed to keeping the Museum safe and the collections accessible. Changes to the Museum's open hours should be expected in the near future.

Editor: Claire Allum
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A Crowsnest Heritage Initiative Project.

If interested in submitting an article, news piece, or update, please send it to cnheritage@shaw.ca.

WHAT'S ON

THE CROWSNEST MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

7701-18th Ave. Coleman 403-563-5434



Crowsnest Pass Historic 2012 Calendars: \$10. There are a few calendars left for sale at the Museum. This calendar features unique photographs of the Crowsnest Pass taken during its historic development and housed in the Museum Archives. If you wanted to buy a copy of one of these images separately from the Museum, it would cost you \$15.

Along with its displays and archives, it hosts a Gift Shop and runs tours and educational programs. Contact: cnmuseum@shaw.ca. The Museum is open from Tuesday to Saturday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (6-16) \$6, Under 6 free, Families \$24. These hours may change, depending upon the decisions of the new Crowsnest Historical Society Board. Please phone before visiting.



The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre is open year round 10:00 am to 5:00 pm . Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (7-17) \$5, Under 7 free, Families \$22.

HEAD-SMASHED-IN (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

Hwy 785 403-553-2731



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 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Contact: info@head-smashed-in.com. Admission: Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (7-17) \$5, Under 7 free, Families \$22.

FORT WHOOP-UP NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Lethbridge, off Whoop-Up Drive. 403-329-0444



The Fort is open weekends from 12 - 4 pm. Admission: Adults \$7, Seniors (65+) \$6, Students \$5, Under 5 Free. The Fort has a great gift whop filled with cowboy hats, jewelry, Blackfoot crafts and books. They will ship.

REMINGTON CARRIAGE MUSEUM

623 Main St. Cardston. 403-653-5139



The Museum has the largest collection of horse-drawn vehicles in North America with over 240 carriages, wagons and sleighs. The 63,000 square foot facility features video displays, a fire hall, a carriage factory, a restoration shop, a working stable, carriage rides, carriage rentals, a restaurant and a gift shop. There are free guided tours. Group tours and educational tours are offered. Open daily 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Contact: info@remingtoncarriagemuseum.com. Admission: Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (7-17) \$5, Under 7 free, Families \$22.

KOOTENAI BROWN MUSEUM

1037 Bev McLachlin Dr., Pincher Creek. 403-627-3684



Summer staffing positions

The Pincher Creek & District Historical Society is looking for staff for the following positions at Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village in Pincher Creek, AB:

- Gardening/landscaping
- Tourist Information

Exhibit Development & Maintenance

Positions available from May 14 to August 24, 2012. Closing date for applications April 23, 2012. Successful applicants will be cross-trained for all positions.

Interests in history, museum work, tourism, gardening, special event preparation and excellent people skills are a definite asset. Forward resume to Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village Box 1226, 1037 Bev McLachlin Drive, Pincher Creek or email resume to tglen.kbpv@gmail.com.

Most positions are for returning students only. We thank all that apply but only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

More information available on the web site.

FERNIE MUSEUM

491 Victoria Ave. (2nd St.). 250-423-7016



The Power of Powder - Tracing Fernie's Ski Heritage: January 28th - April 30th.

This special exhibit was put together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ski hill. The story of the ski hill has become an important part of Fernie's story. It's had a huge impact on the economic, social and cultural aspects of this community. You don't want to miss this exhibit which takes up both floors of the museum. Powder Highway Productions has produced a short film based on the narrative, photos, and old film footage collected for the exhibit. This is a fun and entertaining way to experience the story.

The Fernie Museum & Visitor Information Centre is located in one of Fernie's distinctive heritage buildings at 491 2nd Ave. The building itself, an important example of Fernie's rich history, boasts a main floor exhibit hall with the visitor info centre, as well as a lovely Museum Gallery on the 2nd floor. Public washrooms are available on each floor. Our dual service as info centre and Museum allows visitors to discover a little about Fernie's colourful past while learning what Fernie and its businesses have to offer for recreation, entertainment, shopping, accommodation and services.

What Really Happened to Frank?

by Ian McKenzie

One of our most enduring myths is that the town of Frank was closed by government order after the Slide and had to move to its present location. This spring marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the end of the south townsite, so it seems a good time to set the record straight.

First, a little background. After the Slide in April 1903, Frank consisted of thirty-three company-owned houses and a burgeoning downtown, all south of the CPR tracks. An expansion north of the tracks had been planned before the Slide, and in 1905 the mine company began to sell its lots here (the present-day site of Frank). Over the next five years about sixty-five new houses were constructed, as was a zinc smelter and the new Rocky Mountain Sanatorium hotel to the west. To the south, two new commercial buildings and a new railway station were built. Around 1908 the mine company erected twenty-four new houses in two rows centred on Colomer Avenue, near the river, west of the commercial district (see map). There was also a new tippie, powerhouse and shaft mine (No. 2). Frank's population increased from about 600 in 1903 to about 1500 in 1910.

This activity flew in the face of warnings from the Geological Survey of Canada that Frank might be at risk from a collapse of the 'north peak'. This was first mentioned in a GSC report made just six weeks after the Slide, and was repeated in correspondence from the GSC to the mine and the province of Alberta, and again in their 1910 annual report. The tone of the warnings was serious; the mine company could not have anticipated the first slide, but they might be held legally and financially responsible for a second slide.

A commission appointed jointly by the federal and provincial governments and the mine company arrived in Frank on October 3, 1911, consulted with local and district representatives, and ascended Turtle Mountain in the company of W. H. Boyd. Boyd was a GSC employee whose fieldwork had formed the basis for their 1910 report and who presented the commission with his detailed maps and notes. The commission's formal report, received in Frank in March 1912, supported the Geological Survey's contention that almost all of Frank was at risk, although at an unknown time, and included a map indicating the area that a north peak slide might cover. The north peak was actually thought to be fairly stable, but the continuance of mining beneath the south peak could cause a slide there, which in turn might trigger a north peak slide.

The only conditions under which mining should be carried on in the danger area above described are: (1) The townsite should be abandoned and the risk to the property of the Canadian Pacific railway assumed. (2) The present entrance to No. 1 (drift) mine should be abandoned and the mine should be operated by deep levels from the [No. 2] shaft mine or from an opening at the extreme southern end of the property in the vicinity of Hillcrest. (3) Unusually heavy pillars should be left [within the mine] throughout the danger area, and not more than 50 per cent of the coal should be extracted. (4) The excavated areas should be packed [with sand]. *(1911 Commission report, published in 1912)*

The mine's powerhouse, shaft mine tippie, and Colomer Avenue subdivision were outside of the danger zone but "practically all the rest of the town-site should be abandoned." By the spring of 1912 some 40 families had already moved out of Frank.

The mine decided to move its south townsite houses next to its Colomer Avenue houses, and was also surveying new lots for the relocation of the north townsite and the downtown commercial buildings. This new Sulphur Springs subdivision included thirty commercial lots west of the Sanatorium, and over a hundred residential lots south of the railway between the Crow's Nest River rail bridge and the Colomer subdivision. If you stand on the bridge and look due south - towards the old mine entrance - the planned residential area is the flat land in front of you next to the river, most of the way to the industrial park.

In August 1912 tenders were received for some of the building removals. Thomas Scott of Pincher Creek was awarded the contract for moving the mine-owned houses onto temporary foundations on Colomer and Carbon avenues. Scott commenced work in September with the last of the 33 houses moved before spring thaw in 1913. Some of these houses were now only a dozen metres outside of the danger zone.

C. W. Palmer from Butte, Montana had the contract to move most of the commercial buildings onto the new lots west of the Sanatorium. Palmer's outfit constructed a temporary bridge across the Crow's Nest River and graded the route in November 1912, prior to moving each building by 'traction engine'. By May 1913 the Blairmore Enterprise reported that

Of the main business section of Main street only three or four buildings remain, i.e. on the west side. These are the old Union Bank, the old drug store and A. I. Blais' store. The next to be moved will come from the east side of the street, the first of which will be the P. Burns building.

A few commercial buildings were not moved and were presumably torn down. The triangular 41 Meat Market closed after being badly damaged by fire. The A. I. Blais general store was also damaged by fire, and the business was relocated into new premises in 1914, constructed in the north townsite just outside the danger zone (the present Frank Slide Liquor store). The brick two-storey Frank Wine and Spirits building was the last store to go, in 1916 or 1917; its fate is unknown, but it was probably torn down.

Most of the houses north of the CPR tracks were supposed to be moved into the new Sulphur Springs subdivision. Since the mine company had originally sold the lots within the 'danger zone', there was talk of providing the new lots free in exchange for the old lots. No houses were ever moved to Sulphur Springs, however. The only documented move from north Frank prior to World War One was a house relocated by F. M. Pinkney in 1913, and it went to west Blairmore (still at 12342 - 21th Ave).

Why didn't the north subdivision move? Perhaps the government assistance money had all been spent on the first two phases of the move, but it is more likely that the demise of the Canadian Coal Consolidated Company Ltd in late 1912 meant that there was no one to transfer the Sulphur Springs titles. With the end of the CCCC, both Frank mines closed in 1912, and residents of the north subdivision were likely reluctant to spend their own money moving their houses after jobs were lost and Frank's future was uncertain.

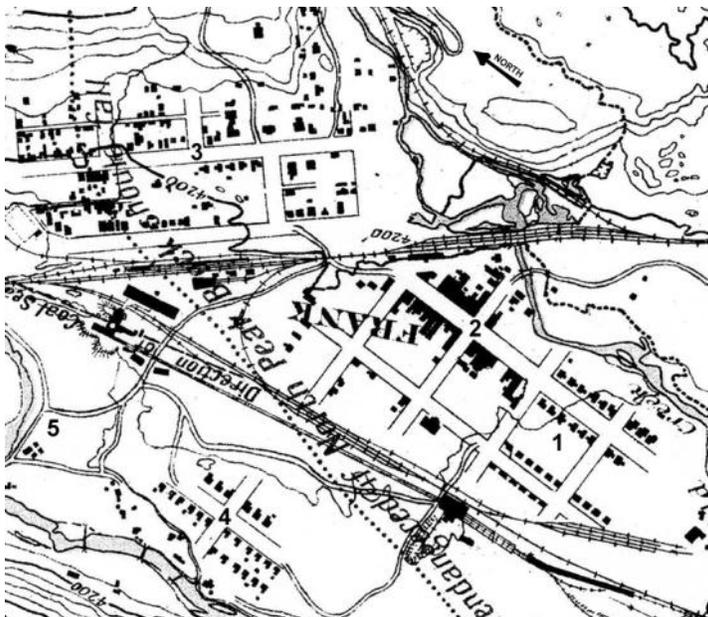
None of Frank's four downtown hotels were moved into the new subdivision either. The Imperial Hotel was dismantled in 1912 with much of its fixtures and materials shipped to Vulcan for rebuilding. The mine-owned Miner's Hotel was badly damaged by fire in November 1912 and torn down the following year. In 1914 the Union Hotel was cut into two pieces and moved across the tracks onto a new foundation in the north townsite only a few metres outside the 'danger zone' (the site of the present Pure Country Saloon), was renamed the Frank Hotel, and burned down in the 1950s. The original Frank Hotel, the oldest in town, was closed in 1916 after the sale of its furnishings and was likely torn down in 1917. It was the last downtown building to go; the mine infrastructure and CPR buildings remained in place.

The firehall's tower blew down in a windstorm in October 1917, and it was replaced with a new hall just behind the new Frank Wine and Spirits store (the present art gallery building). The Knox Methodist church and Frank's two-storey school were demolished in 1916 or later, after the new Methodist church (present Masonic hall) was built and the school's foundations were poured. These replacement buildings were built in the existing north townsite, but outside of the danger zone.

Although the mines were reopened in 1914 by the Franco-Canadian Coal Company, they did not implement any of the Geological Survey's mining recommendations, and all interest in moving the north townsite seems to have disappeared. The drift and shaft mines closed permanently in 1917 and 1918 respectively, and within a year the population of Frank had declined to just 300 persons.

In 1921 many empty houses were moved from Frank to Blairmore, which was experiencing a housing shortage. These houses were almost certainly a batch-lot purchase of the Colomer Avenue houses from the liquidators of the Franco-Canadian Coal Company. The building-moving company was owned by Dr. Olivier, with Frank Baker his foreman. Many other vacant houses in the remaining (north) townsite also began to disappear, but some of these were likely torn down by the village as fire hazards, a trend continued after the onset of the Great Depression in 1929.

Today, most of the community of Frank and its industrial park remain within the 'danger zone'. A few of the houses built in 1905 are still there.

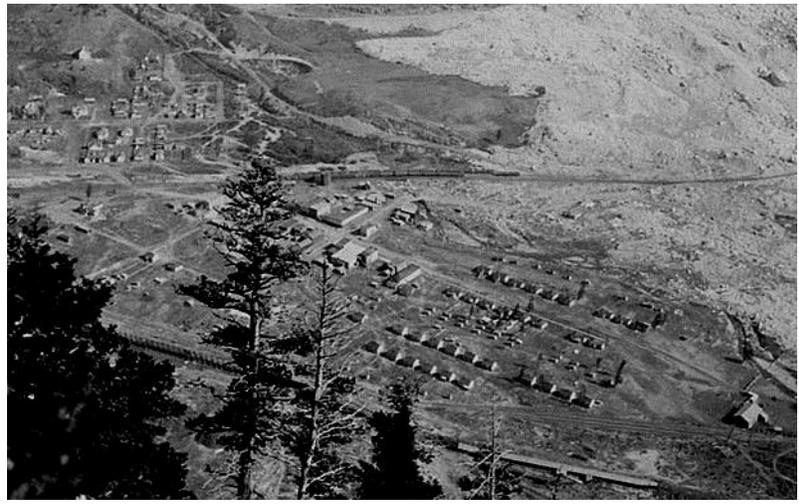


Map of Frank, 1910/1911, before moves. Buildings are shown accurately. The 'danger zone' is everything to the right of the dotted line.

1. Mine houses (1901)
2. Commercial centre (1902)
3. North subdivision (1905)
4. Mine houses, Colomer Avenue (1908)
5. Future site of Sulphur Springs subdivision (surveyed 1912, not developed)

(Map from Commission Report, 1912)

View from Turtle Mountain, 1911, before moves (same as map). Colomer Avenue houses are hidden behind the tree at lower left. (source unknown)



View from Turtle Mountain, ca. 1916, with moves almost completed. Colomer Ave at lower left now has over 50 houses. North subdivision has changed little since 1911. (Provincial Archives)



Ian McKenzie is a writer and historian who lives in the Crowsnest Pass.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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Hwy 785 403-553-2731



HIKE TO THE DRIVE LANES: First Saturday of each month, May through October.

11 am - 3 pm. Bring a lunch. Phone to book. Blackfoot guides will lead these hikes.
May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th, September 1st and October 6th.

CROWSNEST PASS DOORS OPEN AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL



Thursday August 2nd to Monday August 6th.

The festival has been extended by one day this year to accommodate new activities and celebrations. Keep this time open to volunteer and/or attend the many heritage activities that will be offered during the festival.

BOMBER COMMAND OF CANADA



- Sunday, May 6th Salute to the Air Cadets
- Saturday, June 2nd Planes, Trains and Elevators
- Saturday, July 28th Joe English Memorial Fly-by
- Saturday, August 18th, The Calgary Mosquito

1729 21st Ave. (Hwy 2 S) Nanton 403-646-2270

Lancaster Merlin Engine Run-ups.

May 6th, June 7th, July 7th, August 6th, August 18th and September 22nd.

Please confirm engine run-ups and their times by visiting the web site before the event: <http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca>

- March 28th. Town of Blairmore has Disastrous Fire:Cosmopolitan Hotel and Several Other Buildings Are Reduced To Ashes. One Man Meets Death in Flames. Blairmore Enterprise.
- April 4th. The inquest into the death of Frederico Calabresco, who died in the Cosmopolitan Hotel fire, is concluded. Mr. Calabresco had returned voluntarily to his room after the fire had started when he was overcome by fumes. Blairmore Enterprise.
- April 10th. RMS *Titanic*, the largest ship ever constructed up to that time, began its maiden voyage from Southampton, England at noon, with a final destination of New York City
- April 11th. Sensational Trial Reaches a Climax: Fritz Eberts Sentenced To Hang At Macleod On June 1st For Murder of Constable Wilmett. Wilmett was gunned down in Frank while on duty and in pursuit of burglars on April 12th, 1908. Blairmore Enterprise.
- April 12th. The French liner SS *La Touraine* sent a radio message to Captain Smith of the *Titanic*, giving the ship the first warnings of an ice field as far south as 42°S (roughly the latitude of Chicago).
- April 14th. At 11:40 pm ship time, RMS *Titanic* struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean. Only one minute earlier, crewman Frederick Fleet spotted the iceberg straight ahead, but the ship was running at almost top speed, 25 mph, and tore the side after attempting to steer around. The collision occurred roughly 400 miles east of Newfoundland.
- April 15th. The *Titanic* sank at 2:20 am ship time. Only 705 of the people on board had survived. 1,522 died, most of them men, but including 103 women and 52 children. The first lifeboat had been lowered at 12:45 am, Evacuation had been ordered at 12:05 am and the last at 2:05 am. The RMS *Carpathia* arrived at 4:10 am to rescue the survivors who had been able to reach a lifeboat.

BUNNY BONSPIEL MEMORABILIA

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MEMORABILIA NEEDED

The Crowsnest museum is asking for the loan of Bunny Bonspiel Memorabilia for a Museum exhibition celebrating the 65th anniversary of the historic curling event. If you have photographs, programs, crests, trophies or anything else from early Bunny Bonspiels that you would be willing to loan to the Museum, please contact Ian McKenzie at lynnian@shaw.ca.

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

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