

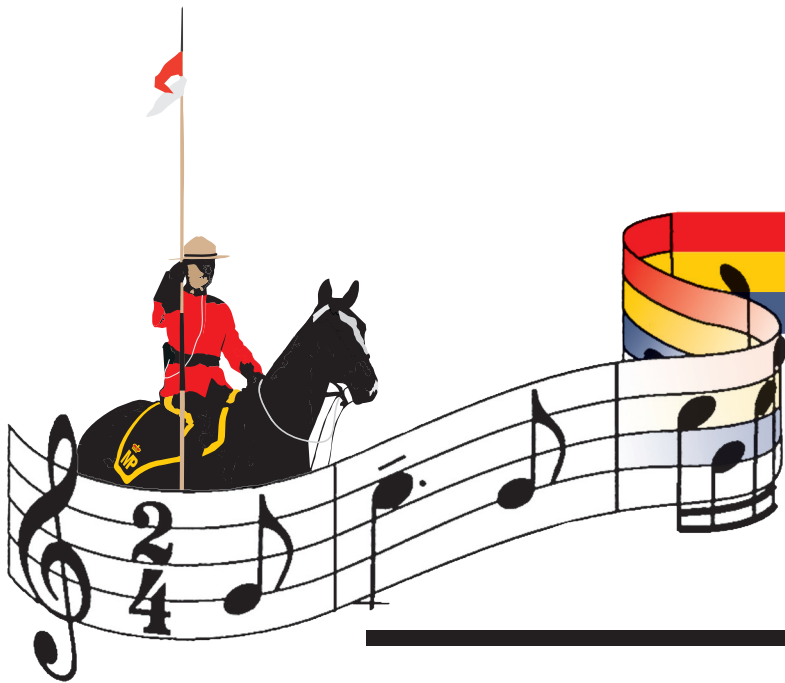
FRIENDLY NOTES

Friends Of The Mounted Police Heritage Centre

Les Amis Du Centre Du Patrimoine De La GRC

NOTES AMICALES

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RE-ENACTMENT OF THE MARCH WEST MAY 8 To JULY 24, 1999



The following is the final installment of the article which began in the Spring 2015 issue of the *Friendly Notes*. This account was edited by Murray Klatt from reports that were published for the reading pleasure of the rank and file members of the RCMP during the re-enactment.

"The entertainment included Andre Rondeau, a Metis fiddler from the area, and the school children from Limerick, Sask. The grades two and three class recited a special poem and the grade one class performed their version of the RCMP Musical Ride. A play, put on by local actors portrayed the arrival of the NWMP to Wood Mountain in 1874. The play was written by Thelma Poirier

and the actors included Anne Slade, Ken Lozinski, Cst. Pete Garvey from Assiniboia Det., Alain Beauregard, Terry Minter and Allen Kwasnicki. The play concluded with Anne Stade singing her own composition, 'He Wore a Red Coat', a love ballad describing a young woman who fell in love with a NWMP Officer who was later killed. Everyone enjoyed the entertainment, particularly the efforts of the grade one class who put on a very impressive musical ride performance. The response from Wood Mountain, like all the other communities, has been outstanding and very typical of warm prairie hospitality. More remarkable than the hospitality is the respect, admiration and support we receive from these people."

MARCH WEST *continued from page 1*

“Despite everything that goes wrong with the operational side of this march, we have accomplished our goal of getting back to our communities. This re-enactment is good for the members and the people participating, and especially good for the communities we encounter.”

June 11 – Wet but otherwise uneventful.

June 12 – departing Pambrun, Saskatchewan

“Maybe because it was Saturday and the weather was beautiful, people were out to watch the riders very early. One farmer driving a tractor pulling spraying equipment approached me to confirm the route. He had his camera with him and wanted to ensure he saw the riders as they went by his fields. Such has been the interest from the people of Saskatchewan. The riders have responded. When they encounter a large group, particularly if children are present, they stop to meet and talk with the people. This rare opportunity for the young people of Saskatchewan to see a special part of our history come alive.”

June 13 – Lac Pelletier to Simmie, Saskatchewan

“Today, the route presented somewhat of a challenge for the horses, in particular the teamsters. The route made its way through rolling hills, one of which took the riders to the second highest elevation in Saskatchewan. We were

informed of this fact by one local resident, but it seems we also had been at the second highest elevation point near Avonlea. The view was outstanding and the riders took their break to spend a few minutes enjoying the view.”

“The march arrived at the camp about 3:00 pm. Five riders were finished and were presented their discharge certificates at a special ceremony. The camp had a different look this afternoon. All the bell tents were up and additional military sectionals were erected. About 70 new riders will be registering tomorrow and additional accommodation will be required.”

June 14 – muster day – day off!

“As an aside, posted on the bulletin board the fact the war is over in Kosovo. It is interesting to see how information along the march is fairly similar to what it was 125 years ago. Yes, there are cell phones and such, but most areas do not have coverage. Even interviews with media are set up over a period of days and not minutes as is the usual case at the office. It’s arranged for the interviewee to have a cell phone on a certain day, the number then provided to the media outlet and finally contact made after a few days. Phone calls, unless extreme emergency will not result in direct patrol being made to the march and having it halted. Messages wait until lunch or when the march sets up camp at night. News, such as the war, doesn’t really make it out here. No NHL playoffs and no signs of serious withdrawal.”

June 15 – Simmie to Carmichael, Saskatchewan

“The weather was fine, scenery nice and the people just down right remarkable. Ex-member George Cutting 10980, who served from 1931 to 1958 is riding with us during this final leg in Saskatchewan. In his eighties and still riding strong, he was born in this area and lived near the old ‘A’ Division post. He is here with his nephew Terry McDonough, who is waiting for his mother Mina McDonough, who is 82. They are related to this block of the march as Percy Cutting, Grandfather and Father respectively, patrolled from Swift Current to Fort Walsh while employed by the NWMP. Mina has writings of memories growing up in the area, one done by her father titled, ‘The Capture of Almighty Voice.’ And the other done by her, ‘Early Days of the Royal North West Mounted Police.’ She will arrive in Maple

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Creek tomorrow and intends to travel along the trail for at least a couple of hours while here. It will certainly be an honor having her here.”

June 16 – Carmichael to Piapot, Saskatchewan.

“People patiently waited on the streets for our arrival in Piapot and gave us a warm welcome when we pulled in to town shortly after 15:30 hours. A few folks checked out the historical general store, a real treat with antiques throughout. The décor almost matched the uniforms worn by the riders. The town had not done a lot of pre-planning for an event. Actually they’d only called two days ago to say they decided to have a barbeque for residents and the youth would perform later.”

“Well, their preparation was certainly understated and we had no idea of the fine entertainment that was in store for us. While supper was going on, a trailer was pulled in and temporary stage set up with speakers. These talented youth sang our National Anthem and also signed it as they went. Afterwards, the students got in costume and performed the drama outlining how Piapot got its name. The railway was coming through when Chief Piapot camped on the tracks to stop work. The workers could not convince them to move and the Governor was alerted. He ordered the NWMP to impose a deadline for Chief Piapot to move. When they hadn’t, police removed the tents and people and construction resumed. While the history was being narrated, youth in appropriate costume for all players acted out the historical play. A fine job by all. They then did narration of NWMP history as well. The troops and support staff were very impressed.”

A sunset ceremony was then held at which time parchments were given to the mayor; reeve of the RM, school and land owner.”

June 17 – Piapot to Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

“...After resting up, the troops accompanied by Dale Mosquito of the Nekaneet Band, made their entrance into town at 15:30 hrs and made their way to Jasper Centre for presentations by both the town and rural municipality of Maple Creek. A stage was set up and local dignitaries present.”

“The speakers, as well as several town’s folk in the crowd were dressed in period costume

which added to the ceremony. Retired member Ben Broderick spoke on history, including local, of the NWMP. Quite interesting as he is very knowledgeable of past events and is quite a story teller.”

“Our troops then completed the day’s march, going two miles southwest to the old ‘A’ Division site for the planned dedication at the cemetery. After watering the horses, a mounted troop formed up alongside the cemetery for the dedication of the grave for George McIver. In attendance were town’s folk, along with descendants of George McIver. Chaplin Higgs from Depot Division, accompanied by the Anglican Minister from Maple Creek performed the ceremony. Flowers were laid at each grave in the cemetery before the dedication of the grave for George McIver. Members of the McIver family unveiled the cross while the service was being performed.”

“George McIver was shot and killed during the 1885 rebellion. He had been on his way home to Prince Albert when this happened. He was taken to the NWMP ‘A’ Division hospital near Maple Creek, where he passed away July 29, 1885. He was the first person buried at Maple Creek. His name was misspelled as William McIver. Stories of his demise were passed down through the generations, but no one knew of his whereabouts until last year. With permission of the Force a new cross was made with the correct name. This evening, while family members were here to re-dedicate the grave, it was the first time in 113 years that family had come and paid their respects.”

“Visit was held with retired Sgt. George Cutting 10980, and his sister Mona, who had been a civilian member. Their father, Sgt. Percy Cutting 3149, had been posted at the Maple Creek barracks, which is where the site of the ‘A’ Division cemetery is located. The two reminisced as they looked over the area, thinking back 80 odd years to their childhood when they used to play around the barracks. Both are thoroughly enjoying the experience that the March West re-enactment is providing, especially since their father patrolled the area on horseback while in the NWMP. When George was a riding instructor in Regina, he would also patrol down to Fort Walsh for horses, even attend with a troop to clean up the place.”

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MARCH WEST *continued from page 3*

June 18 – Maple Creek to Fort Walsh – Uneventful.

June 19 – Fort Walsh to the Alberta border – the final leg in Saskatchewan.

“Our troops made a magnificent sight traveling through the green coulees (The Conglomerate Cliffs) into Cypress Hills Park and then down to Fort Walsh where it was even emotional when a spectator yelled ‘Welcome Home!’ and then applause started.”

“We were joined by members of the Nekaneet First Nation and the Carry the Kettle First Nation who rode in parallel to the troops. Teepees were set up near to the NWMP camp, which is beside the Fort. It is quite an impressive sight.”

“Tonight the last sunset ceremony in Saskatchewan on the south route was held. At this time discharge certificates were presented to the Army staff which traveled with us and set up camp. As well, other riders who had not been present were given their certificates. There was a good turnout for the ceremony. Both participants and spectators.”

June 20 – The Alberta March begins this date from the Exhibition Grounds in Medicine Hat. The Alberta portion of the re-enactment was recorded by Cpl. Jamie Johnston of “K” Division (Alberta) Community Services.

“The 125 March West riders left their camp at the Medicine Hat Exhibition Grounds and paraded through the streets of Medicine Hat, to begin the Southern Alberta portion of the trek. The weather was perfect for the ride as 16 young 4-H riders joined the first day’s March. Residents and motorists were treated to the spectacular sight of the uniformed riders and wagons making their way through the city and along Highway three.”

“The ride proceeded without incident as the riders and support staff settled into what will be a daily routine for the remainder of the trek. All were in high spirits as the March entered the countryside and the uniformed riders put on a show crossing open prairie in formation.”

The ride ended the day at Rattlesnake Reservoir.

June 21 – Rattlesnake Reservoir to Bow Island Camp.

This trek matched that of the original March. Rattlesnake Reservoir was named after the large number of snakes noted and Bow Island was the name given the location on the Bow River. (Although other more colorful stories abound.)

June 22 – Bow Island to 40 Mile Coulee.

“The trumpet sounds at 5:30 AM and the day starts for the riders, first it’s to the horses to take care of their needs, feed and water, check them for any injury. Then before taking care of yourself a quick breakfast and cleanup then it’s saddle the horse and fall into the troop formations for the 7:30 – 8:00 departure depending on the days trek ahead. This has been the daily routine for Neil Penner of Morden, Manitoba.”

“The evening cavalcade arrived at 40 Mile Coulee Park camp at 3:30 PM to the standard greeting of a colour party raising the flag, the bugler playing the General Salute and the Camp Sgt. Major saluting the arriving troop. This traditional greeting heralds the end of each day’s ride and the start of another intensive work detail for the entire camp. For the riders it’s again horses first, they break off into their respective troop pickets, and put away the saddles and tack, water and brush the horses, feed and picket them. The vet and farrier arrive to inspect each horse and confirm its wellbeing before the riders break off to a cool drink and shower off the day’s dust.”

“The support for the March West has been exceptional. Residents and tourists have been turning out in large numbers to witness this historic trek and wish the riders well. They are warmly welcomed by the riders and camp staff.”

June 23 – 40 Mile Coulee to Foremost.

“The Fort Walsh and Medicine Hat riders met on the prairie outside of Foremost and marched into town together as they will for the remainder of the trek. The residents of Foremost and area turned out by the hundreds, filling both sides of the main street, the entire length of the town! They warmly welcomed the riders with cheers and applause. Scarlet pride runs deep here where the NWMP earned its first honours and developed the integrity, traditions and values that remain respected to this day.”

June 24 – Foremost to Deer Coulee camp.

“...the riders were again pleasantly surprised by the welcome from the Starbright Hutterite Colony. The entire colony came out to meet the riders at a barren cross roads on the prairie approx. 10 miles south of Foremost. The riders were treated to a wonderful lunch and cold drinks by the colony and serenaded with song by the colony youngsters during the lunch break. The youngsters had prepared posters of support and greeting for the riders and presented them with warm smiles.”

June 25 – Deer Coulee to Writing on Stone Park.

“Despite foreboding skies, the riders travelled from Deer Coulee Camp to Writing on Stone Park without incident or down pour. They arrived in camp dry and warm, with enough time to take care of the horses and put away the tack before a passing squall soaked the camp area.”

June 26 – Day of rest.

June 27 – Writing on Stone to Sleepy Hallow.

“The riders enjoyed a 26 km scenic ride today under blustery skies and arrived safe and dry. Not as easy a day for the wagons though. Traveling across the open grass land, through scenic country sides was a visual treat but the rain softened the open earth making it difficult for the teams to pull the wagons through. Careful not to stress the teams, the wagon masters set an easier pace for the teams than the saddle horses. The mounted troops made such good time the camp Sgt. Major had to scramble to get the flags and colour party ready for the arrival ceremony. The riders appeared over the ridge near the camp before the colour party was assembled but they made it again as they do every day, and the mounted troops were ushered in to the raising of the flag and General Salute.”

June 28 – Sleepy Hallow to Milk River.

“Today marked the largest contingent of Riders to date on the Southern Alberta section of the ride. Over 80 scarlet clad riders entered the town of Milk River at noon. They were met by a delegation, led by Mayor DC (Cam) McKay, and eight students, each holding a flag signifying the seven governments and the Hudson’s Bay Co. that have ruled this area. Mayor McKay was presented with the Commissioner’s Parchment

by Supt.(rtd.) D. Langevin on behalf of the 125 March West. The town turned out in force to welcome and cheer on the Riders. A barbeque and dance are being hosted this evening in recognition of the March West. The riders enjoyed the welcome and a lunch break in Milk River then continued West onto the Milk River ridge for the last wilderness camp of the South Ride.”

It was from this location that Col. French and eight men set out for Fort Benton for supplies. The men were so ragged that they said that he left with the best wishes of the men – *“that he may never come back!”*

June 29 – Milk River Ridge to Miami Beach!

This day was apparently, very uneventful. *“...the excited crowds at the camp watched the riders trek across the gently rolling hills for miles before they turned into the Miami Beach campsite. All along the road, people parked to get a look at the troops as they made their way off the fields onto the gravel roads. ... At a rest stop, one fellow was taking a well deserved snooze on the grass, when a fawn and a doe suddenly appeared. The fawn was so confused, it ran on a zig-zag course through the resting riders, and then leaped over the sleeping man!”*

June 30 – Miami Beach to Raymond.

After a very windy, rainy night, the riders enjoyed a warm breakfast and set out for Raymond, only 14 miles away. *“The trek is moving at a leisurely pace today, ... The scenery is beautiful, with rolling green grass hills unbroken by trees, roads or residences.”* Once the riders reach Raymond they were met by a local resident driving a horse and antique wagon, flying the town colours. He led them into town where there was a brief ceremony and then to camp at the exhibition grounds. *“The community was very excited when the March West rode into town. People were parked on the gravel roads leading into town and over 100 came to the town hall to see the Mayor greet them. The riders made a striking sight as they rode onto the square in front of Raymond Town Hall and formed a semi-circle on the lawn. Mayor Bill Brooks warmly welcomed them and made a presentation to Raymond’s Detachment Commander, Sgt. Gill Vincent (who was one of the*

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MARCH WEST *continued from page 5*

riders). The crowd was so touched by the riders that the children were hugging each other and some adults were reported to have been moved to tears. It's wonderful to see how much the RCMP means to Albertans."

July 1 – Raymond to Fort Whoop-Up (Lethbridge).

"The heavy black clouds that hung over the riders all day didn't burst until they were inside the gates to Lethbridge's Exhibition Grounds. The trek rode in and settled into a grassed enclosure while several uniformed members participated in the city's Canada Day celebrations. Face painted children were equally as excited to see the riders as any adult in the park. The riders donned their slickers and talked to the visitors while the horses munched away at the short grass. Within an hour the rain tapered off, the sun came out and the riders continued along the streets of Lethbridge and down into the valley where Fort Whoop-Up is located."

July 2 – Fort Whoop-Up to Fort Kipp.

"The sun was shining when the bugle sounded at 5:30 this morning. The campsite couldn't have been more picturesque, with Fort Whoop-Up in the background and the bell tents and teepees clustered in front. ... For much of the way the trekkers could be seen from Highway 3."

"It was the final evening the riders would all spend together, so once they reached camp, fed and watered their horses, then the troop tents filled with people ready to share some laughs. Cowboy poet Brian Smith told hilarious stories about growing up on the prairies. ... songs were sung to accompanying harmonicas and jokes went through the camp like wildfire. It all ended about 11:00 pm with the riders drifting off to their tents."

July 3 – Fort Kipp to Fort Macleod – the final day!

"Over one-hundred people departed Fort Kipp, heading for Fort Macleod. The trek stayed mainly in the farm fields, crossing land that varied from gentle hills covered with flowering cactus and thistle to deep coulees and flat prairie. The lunch break was taken in a small clump of trees in a field. The riders and horses tried to find relief

from the battering wind by nestling down in long grass and trees, but lunch was soon over and they were back on the trail. All over gravel roads, cars filled with sightseers parked to get a final glimpse of the March West."

"Horse clubs and the Fort Macleod Riders were gathered at the town's information centre, eagerly awaiting the March's arrival. The streets were lined with hundreds of people from all over Canada and many from the U.S. who had come to the town to participate in this piece of history. ... With the special guests, horse clubs, the 14 core riders who had travelled the whole way, and all the other March West riders, there were about 200 people riding through Fort Macleod to the loud cheers and applause of the crowd."

"A large crowd filled the stands set up around the ceremony site, and they applauded as the riders rode past, saluting. Once the horses were picketed, the ceremony got underway with a pipe ceremony led by Reg Crowshoe. The dignitaries all spoke with Senator Joyce Fairbairn saying that she 'doubts if there was a more significant happening in Canadian history than the creation of the North West Mounted Police. They secured the border, led to the signing of Treaty 7 and without them, Canada would have been very different.' Beautiful gifts of moccasins were given to each of the speakers and those on the March who had gained special notice. A circle dance was then held, with not only the riders and dignitaries joining in, but many of the crowd. It was a wonderful way of gathering people together, which is what the March West is all about."

Editor's note: Thus ends the March West South route which lasted from May 8th at Emerson Manitoba and ended at Fort Macleod on July 3, 1999. Special thanks to Sgt. Rick Wychreschuk and Cpl. Doug Coleman of "F" Division and Cpl. Jamie Johnston and Deleen Schoff of "K" Division for their daily reports of this historic event. The personal experiences of those involved are definitely stories in themselves. The re-enactment of the March West could not have proceeded without the likes of volunteers such as Bob Cocks of "F" Division and Assistant Commissioner (rtd) Gordon Grieg of "K" Division whose planning included the route, support staff, logistics and the ride itself. Congratulations to all on a job really well done!

HERITAGE CENTER ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER to DECEMBER 2015

- October 8-31 – Black Museum Exhibit
- October 15 – “Zombie Promenade”
(Adult Event)
- October 31 – Monsters Masks and Mounties
(Kids)
- November 7-12 – Pledge For Peace Program
(Schools)
- December – Twelve Days of Christmas Events
(still planning)
- December 12/13 – Santa Claus Day
- December 12/13 – Model Railroad Club
Display

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Thanks to those members of the *Friends* who have already indicated they would like to receive the *Friendly Notes* electronically.



Cheque presentation from the Friends to the Heritage Center. L to R: Bob Smart, President of the Friends; Supt. Paul Hebert of Depot Division; and Al Nicholson, CEO of the Heritage Centre. Photo compliments of Dani Anderson of the Heritage Centre.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

A warm welcome to the following persons who have become members of the *Friends*:

- Glen Berger, Emerald Park, SK
- Gary Hoskins, Moose Jaw, SK
- Leonard D. Kolakowski, Syracuse, NY
- Lou Vesh, Thunder Bay, ON
- J. Jean Baker-Lynch, Emerald Park, SK

DONOR WALL OF APPRECIATION

The following changes/additions have been made to the “Donor Wall” since our last issue:

\$1200 – LIFE*

Dave & Carol Slinn, Regina, SK
Peter M. Clarke, Dartmouth, NS

\$500 – FRIEND*

Norma McHardy, Saskatoon, SK

*These are cumulative amounts over the years

**REQUEST FOR
SUBMISSIONS
TO THE
FRIENDLY NOTES**

Anyone who has an interesting article, note, or photo relating to the history of the RCMP and wishing the same to be published in the *Friendly Notes*, may submit it to Murray Klatt at: m.klatt@sasktel.net, or mail to:

The Editor, Friendly Notes
c/o Friends of the Mounted Police
Heritage Centre
5907 Dewdney Avenue
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