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# Alberta Century Farm and Ranch Award

A Storied Family Tradition



MARCH 2022

Alberta

Alberta Century Farm and Ranch Award: A Storied Family Tradition

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## Meet the Burton Family

### The Burke Creek Ranch story: A love affair lasting more than a lifetime

Summer 1886, Fort Mcleod, Alberta – Kit bag in hand and five dollars in his pocket, 18-year-old Frederick Burton stepped off the new CPR rail car and gazed over a sea of grass. Being a younger son meant Fred had to make his own way in the world, and he decided this land, land that would one day be known as Alberta, was the place for him to get his start.

Young Fred lacked capital, but he was full of ambition and smarts. He quickly moved from farm crew ploughing land to ranch hand to land owner, initially gaining his own piece of soil “squatting” on Trout Creek near Claresholm in 1890. He built a sod-roof cabin, a barn and some corrals, adjacent to a good spring. He then moved in a few horses and a small herd of cattle. His intention was not to turn the sod, as government policy at the time encouraged, but to partner with the natural resources to graze cattle.

In 1896, Burton married Minnie Furman, who had emigrated from Baker, Oregon. To help finance the operations and growth of their ranch they established Furman Postal Outlet.

Every two weeks, Fred would hitch up his team and head to the nearest postal service in Claresholm where he would gather up the mail for all the homesteaders in the coulees west of Claresholm. For this reason, Furman, Alberta is marked on Google Earth today.

Over their lifetime, the couple expanded the humble beginnings of the ranch, supporting their sons to also get places of their own in the area.

Youngest son Gordon left the area to pursue an academic career gaining a PhD in Agricultural Economics from Iowa State University, and later becoming a professor at McGill University. But the call of the land was too great. Gordon left his career, moving his wife Jean and young family back to manage the ranch after the passing of his father. Gordon continued to build on the legacy set by his family in ranching, contributed to the development of provincial and federal agriculture trade and policy, and was inducted into the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame in 1977.

Photo Credit: The Burton Family of Burke Creek Ranch in Claresholm, Alberta. Established 1890.



# Alberta Century Farm and Ranch Award

The Alberta Century Farm and Ranch Award celebrates families who have continuously owned and actively operated the same land for 100 years or more.

In 2020, the Burton Family received both the Century Farm and Ranch Award and the 125-Year Farm Recognition Certificate in honour of the family's 130 years of ranching on the original Frederick A. Burton homestead. The family operation today counts over 12,000 acres where they're busy raising the fifth generation of ranchers on the same piece of southern Alberta land.

Today, more than 1960 farms have been awarded with the Century Farm and Ranch plaque and over 40 have received both the Century plaque and the 125-Year Farm Recognition Certificate.

The contributions these families have made to Alberta's agriculture sector is immeasurable. Their dedication to agriculture, family and rural communities have helped build a vibrant and sustainable agriculture industry in our province.

Five generations of the Dumont Family, Girouxville, Alberta.  
Established 1914.



## Recognizing Century Farms and Ranches in Alberta since 1992

**1992**

The McPhee Family from the Penhold area requested the province develop a program to recognize farms and ranches that have been owned and operated continually for 100 years. They became the first family to receive the customized, cast bronze plaque in recognition of their 1892 homestead.

**2005**

To celebrate Alberta's centennial, a special edition plaque design was created. The program saw an unprecedented 199 farms awarded that year. The families were also recognized at the Harvest Gala in October, 2005.

**2017**

The application process was streamlined so families are no longer required to obtain their own establishment and continual ownership documents and are no longer required to prove kinship ties.

**2021**

The Alberta Century Farm and Ranch dashboard is published. Recipient families and the general public can now access an interactive platform showcasing Alberta's rich agricultural heritage.

**2021**

The Rosebud Colony becomes the first colony in Alberta to be awarded as a Century Farm. This opened the door to an extension of the program that awards colonies.

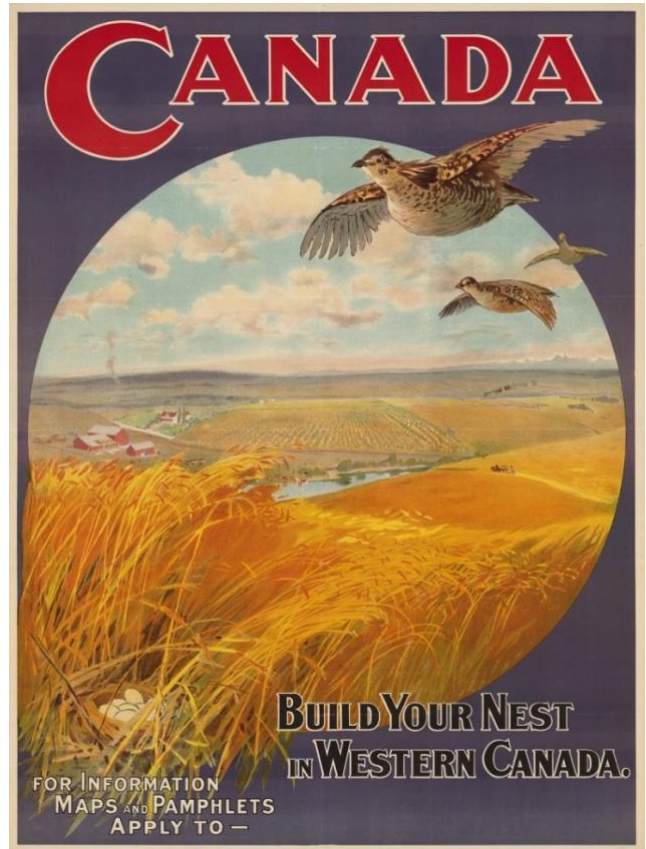


Photo Credit: Library and Archives Canada / C-126302

## Qualifying for the Century Farm and Ranch Award

Once you've submitted your family's award application, program staff will work to find your family's establishment and continual ownership documents on your behalf. These treasured historic documents will be yours to keep whether or not your application is approved.

There are several types of acceptable supporting documents depending on how the land was acquired.

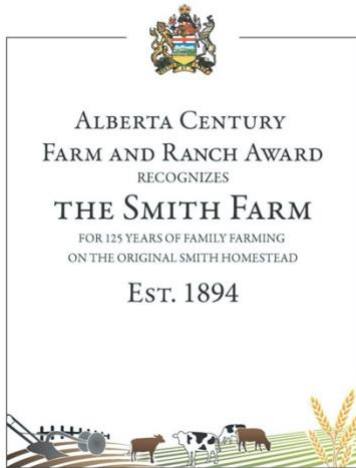
A minimum of 160 acres must be submitted on the application (there are exceptions).

Additional notes on eligibility along with an application form can be found at:

[Alberta.ca/alberta-century-farm-and-ranch-award.aspx](http://Alberta.ca/alberta-century-farm-and-ranch-award.aspx)



## Qualifying for the 125-Year Certificate



In 2018, the 125-Year Farm Recognition Certificate component was launched to recognize farms and ranches going back to 1885.

Recipients are presented with an honorary certificate, personally signed by the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development in a formal presentation folder to mark this milestone.

There is no requirement for establishment documents. The family must have already been awarded the Century Farm and Ranch Award and still own and operate the land at the time of application.

There are currently over 40 farms that have reached this significant milestone.

The Donald/Bergen Family of Oyen, Alberta. The family was awarded in 2021 with an establishment year of 1917. This original homestead house remains on the property today.





## A Documented History

Below are common types of documents used to support establishment.

### Homesteads and Land Grants

Under the Dominion Lands Act , a homesteader applied for a land grant and over the course of a few years, would provide proof that the land had increased in value through improvements made in construction, cultivation etc. Once stipulated improvements were met, a patent was issued by the Crown.

These documents are well maintained and easy to access. Due to the improvement criteria set by the Dominion Lands Act, the program accepts the application for homestead year as the family's establishment year.

No. Application 19165

EDMONTON, ALBERTA.

DISTRICT.

APPLICATION FOR

HOMESTEAD

And Affidavit in Support of same, by  
a person who has not previously  
obtained entry.

Name O. O. Neusteb

Date 10.5.05.

MAY 10 1916

Photo Credit: Ancestry.ca

Homesteads and Land Grants

*H. Cresser*  
DEPUTY GOVERNOR

# CANADA

**George the Fifth, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas KING, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India**

To all to whom these Presents shall come—**GREETING**,

Whereas the Lands hereafter described are Dominion Lands within the meaning of the Dominion Lands Act.

And Whereas John Matthew Jamieson, Farmer, of Township of One Range Twenty-one, West of the Fourth Meridian, in the Province of Alberta, in Our Dominion of Canada, Farmer,

hereafter called the grantee - has applied for a grant of the said lands and after due investigation has been found entitled to such grant in the terms hereinafter embodied.

Now Know Ye that these presents We do grant unto the grantee - all that Parcel - or Tract - of Land, situate, lying and being in the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Township, in the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Range, West of the Fourth Meridian, in the Province of Alberta in Our Dominion of Canada, and being composed of

the South East Quarter, Section \_\_\_\_\_ of the said Township, as shown upon a map or plan of survey of the said Township, approved and confirmed at Ottawa, on the 22nd day of March, A.D. 1909, by Edward Kelly, Surveyor General of Dominion Lands, and of record in the Department of the Interior,

containing by admeasurement One hundred and sixty \_\_\_\_\_ acres or less;

SAITH AND KNOW YE, nevertheless, unto Us, Our Successors and Assigns, the free use, passage and enjoyment of, in, over and upon all navigable waters that now are or may hereafter be found on or under, or flowing through or upon any part of the said Parcel - or Tract - of Land; also reserving all mines and minerals, whether such, liquid or gaseous, which may be found in said waters, together with full power to work the same, and for this purpose to enter upon, use and occupy the said lands or so much thereof and to such extent as may be necessary for the effectual working and raising of the said minerals; and also reserving (subject and therefrom all rights of fishery and fishing and occupation in connection therewith open, vacant and adjacent to the said lands, and also the privileges of landing, dock and mooring boats and vessels upon any part of the said lands and using the said lands in connection with the rights of fishery and fishing hereby reserved, so far as may be reasonably necessary to the exercise of such rights.

To have and to hold the same unto the grantee - in fee simple.

Provided, and it is hereby declared, that these presents shall not vest in the grantee - any exclusive or other property or interest in or any exclusive right or privilege with respect to any lake, river, spring, stream, or other body of water, within or bordering on or passing through the aforesaid lands, or in, or with respect to the water contained or flowing therein, or the bed forming the bed or shores thereof.

**GIVEN** under the Great Seal of Canada - **Witness**, Charles Joseph de la Roche, Esquire,  
Deputy of Our Right Trusty and Right Honorable Counselor and Councillor, Viscount de la Roche, Duke of Devonshire, Marquess of Hartington, Earl of Devonshire, Earl of Harrington, Baron Cavendish of Fleton, Baron Cavendish of Keighley, Knight of Our Most Noble Order of the Garter; One of Our Most Honorable Privy Council; Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Knight Grand Cross of Our Royal Victorian Order, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Our Dominion of Canada.

At OTTAWA, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of February in the year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty and in the \_\_\_\_\_ year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND, J. C. Campbell  
Deputy Secretary of State.

J. H. Spence  
Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

Received in the Department of the Interior,  
 File 46319  
 10th February 1910  
 J. H. Spence

412659  
 46319

Photo Credit: Ancestry.ca

## The Soldier Settlement Board

The *Soldier Settlement Act* allowed veterans to purchase land with the help of government loans for purchase and improvements.

In an effort to provide veterans with only rich farmland, the Soldier Settlement Board re-surveyed the land over the original Dominion Lands survey. As a result, some of these original purchases have land sizes outside of the standard 160 acres.

Veterans Affairs keeps excellent records on Soldier Settlement deeds. Although the turnaround time can be up to 12 weeks, these records can easily be accessed by program staff on behalf of the applicant.

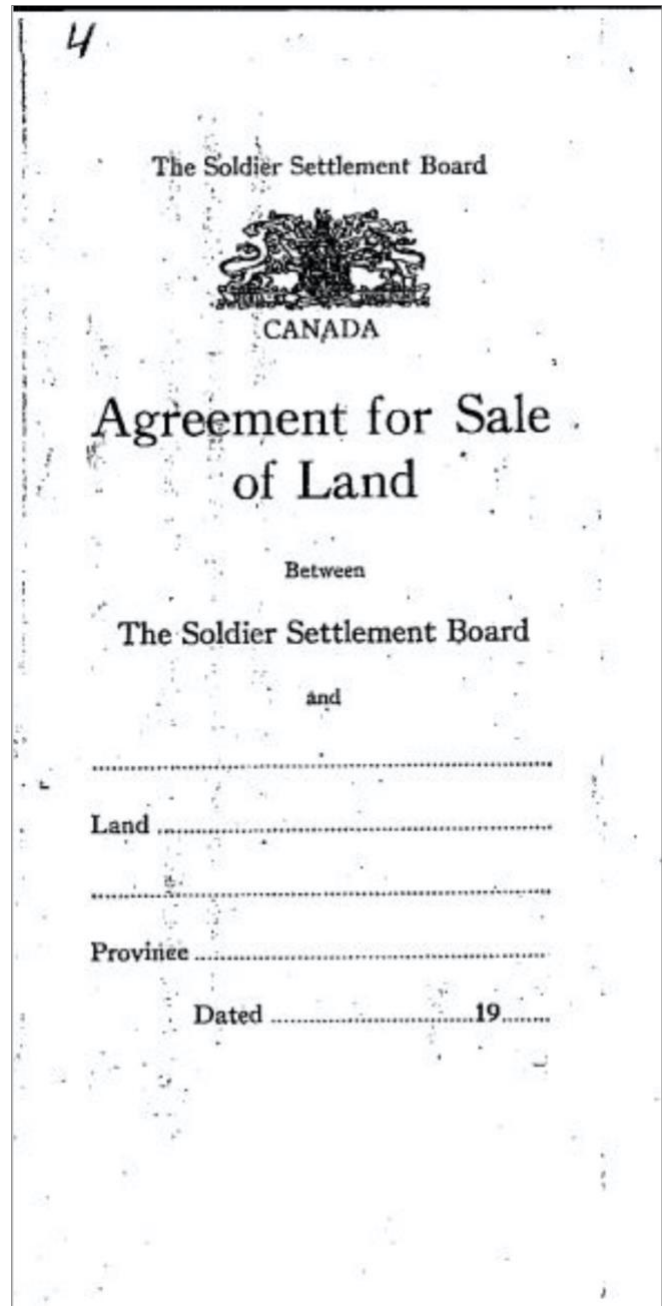
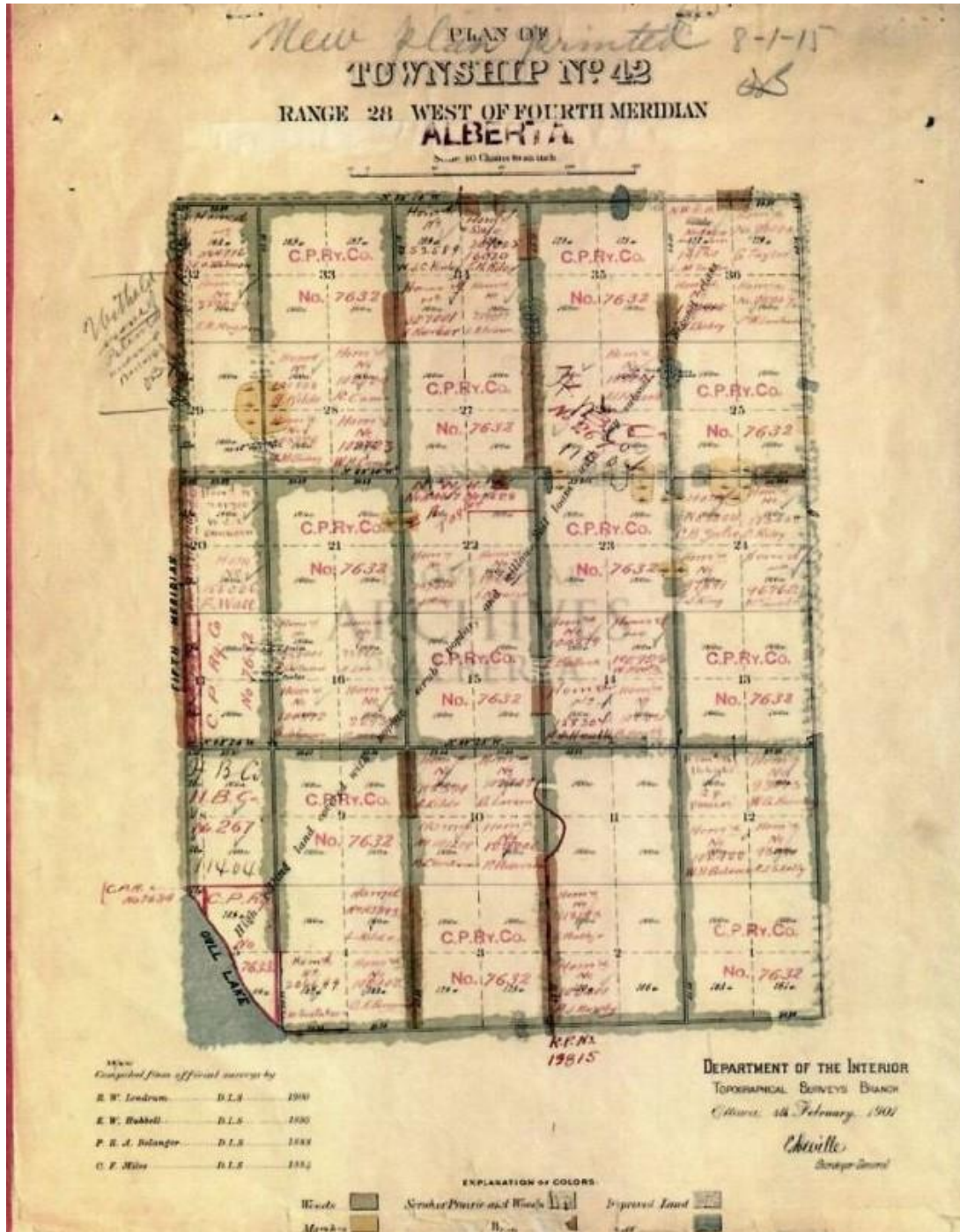


Photo Credit: Veterans Affairs Canada

## Canadian Pacific Railway Land Sales (CPR)

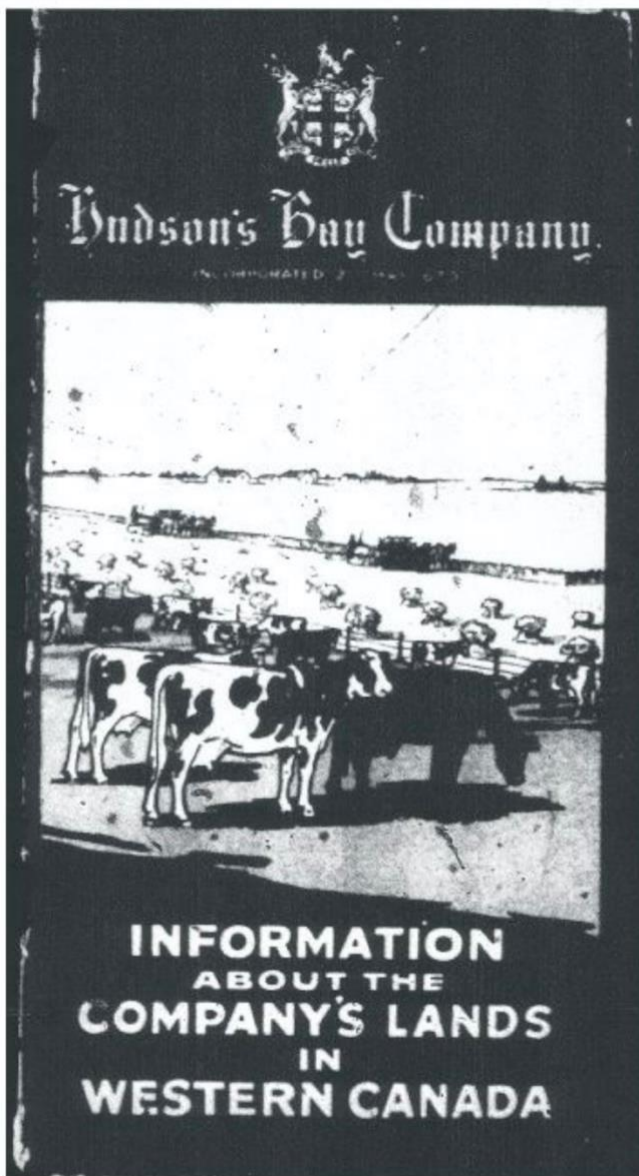
The CPR land sales catalogue is digitally housed at the University of Calgary - Glenbow Library and Archives . These records are often used when applying for Century Farm status; however, only about 60% of the rural ledgers where digitized. Often, other records need to be sought out including census records, township maps or historic title searches showing a family's endorsement of payment on a CPR title.



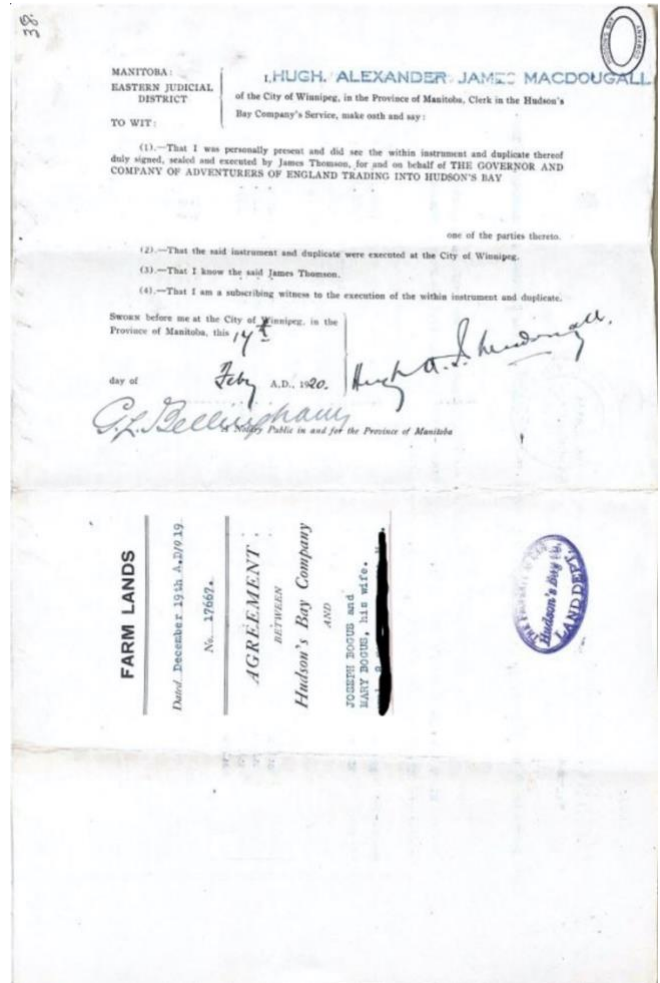
Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta. GR2004.0214.2035a

# Hudson's Bay Land Sales

Hudson's Bay land sale records are digitally housed at the Archives of Manitoba. These records are rare but easily accessed online.



Hudson's Bay Company advertising.  
Source: HBC (c1920)



## School Land Sales

School land records are housed with homestead records at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. These records often turned up many archived handwritten family letters describing the hardships and successes of getting the farm up and running.

*Make File*

Form No. 71  
L. 100 4-17

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.**

**SCHOOL LANDS.**

*290098*      *137.77 900*

*16777*  
*18*

The undersigned hereby acknowledges to have purchased the *1 1 6* of Section *7* Township *18* Range *18* of the *12* Meridian, at the rate of \$ *19* per acre, upon the following terms and conditions as to payment, viz.—One-tenth of the purchase money to be paid at the time of sale, and the balance in nine equal successive annual instalments with interest at the rate of ~~5%~~ per cent per annum, to be paid with cash instalment, on the balance of the purchase money from time to time remaining unpaid, the first of the said nine instalments to become due and payable one year from the 30th day of November, following date of Sale. Default in any of the aforesaid payments will, at the option of the Government, annul the sale and forfeit payments made.

The sale is also subject to the other terms and conditions announced prior to the sale by the Auctioneer.

**INDEXED**

WITNESS: *W. J. ...*      *W. J. ...*

(Place) **WETASKIWIN**

(Date) **NOV 15 1920**

*A. D. 19 Dec. 1920*  
*Re Pl. 5000 1/2 300*  
*Net Area 13 27 ac*

Photo Credit: Ancestry.ca

## General Land Sales

These are purchases from one individual or group to another. More than likely, the family was farming the land prior to the date on the title. Agreements made to purchase were not often registered until the title document. In these cases, program staff will look for any official document placing the family on the quarter prior to the title year. Official documents used to prove an earlier establishment year include tax receipts, Cummins maps, water well reports, school records, probate records showing a transfer of land, or any other official document showing the year, family name and full land description.

91 141

CANCELLED

**Certificate of Title.**

NORTH ALBERTA Land Registration District  
Supt. West. Sect. 16

This is to Certify that John  
in the Province of Alberta, Dominion of Canada  
Farmer

is now the owner of an estate in fee simple  
of and in the South West quarter of Section  
Range 11N  
The meridian

in the said Province, containing One Hundred and fifty eight  
1/2 acres more or less,  
Reserving unto his heirs, his Successors,  
and assigns the mines and minerals

CANCELLED

203 CERTIFICATE OF TITLE IS CANCELLED  
In full

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTES SUB-  
JECT TO THIS ACT AND IN FULL PAYMENT OF THE  
DUTY THEREON AND A LEGAL CONVEYANCE  
OF TITLE NO. 101-77-100

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my  
official seal this Fifth day of June A.D. 1917.

W. L. Brown, Registrar

91. Address: Murders Hill NORTH ALBERTA Land Registration District

The Title of this subject  
is a mortgage made by William G. Fisher  
to Nicholas G. G. in 1917  
per section 44 of the Act  
and is registered  
in the name of  
W. L. Brown  
on the 17th day of June 1917  
at the office of the Registrar

The above certificate is cancelled  
in accordance with the provisions of  
section 44 of the Act  
and is registered  
in the name of  
W. L. Brown  
on the 17th day of June 1917  
at the office of the Registrar

## Indian Land Sales

The Dominion Land Act of 1872 set aside land for First Nations reserves without consulting the indigenous inhabitants of the land. The Indian Act, established in 1876, allowed the government to control and manage indigenous land ownership. Although the Act has undergone numerous amendments, it still had a huge impact on the likelihood that Indigenous landowners could maintain continual ownership of their land.

Currently, out of over 1960 Century Farms awarded through this program, only 3 were established through the Indian Act.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Burton Family of Burke Creek Ranch for allowing us to share their story.

We would also like to thank the Donald, Hagman, Dumont and Beierbach families for allowing us to share their photos.

All recipients of the Century Farm and Ranch Award and 125-Year Farm Recognition Certificate are showcased on our [Interactive Dashboard](#).

## Resources

The following resources are used to locate establishment and continual ownership documents on behalf of the applicant.

- [Provincial Archives of Alberta](#)
- [Heritage Resource Management Information System](#)
- [Archives CPR Land Sales – Glenbow Library and Archives](#)
- [Alberta Genealogical Society](#)
- [Archives of Manitoba](#)
- [Indian Lands Registry / Registre des terres indiennes](#)
- [Alberta Water Wells](#)
- [Library and Archives Canada](#)
- [Ancestry.ca](#)
- [Canada Land and Irrigation Company](#)
- [Veterans Affairs Canada](#)