

A Walking Tour of High River



Printed in Canada

Alberta
CULTURE



INTRODUCTION



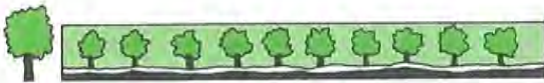
Town of High River, viewed from the west

“Billy Cochrane of High River has introduced the first automobile into Alberta.” So observed Bob Edwards, editor of the town’s newspaper, *The Eye Opener*, on August 8, 1903. “High River,” he concluded, “is the pioneer of progress.” With his newspaperman’s eye for both the novel and the important, Edwards had called attention to the central importance of transportation in the establishment and growth of the town of High River.

In the 1870s the Canadian West was a land in waiting. The great herds of buffalo had disappeared. The North West Mounted Police had imposed law and order. The American whiskey traders had been banished from the land. The Blackfoot had signed Treaty Number Seven and had retreated to their reserves. The stage was set for one of the world’s largest migrations; by the outbreak of war in 1914 nearly a million people from all over the world had settled the prairies of Western Canada.

In 1879 Orville H. Smith and Lafayette French built a stopping house on the Macleod Trail about one mile west of the ford where the trail crosses the Highwood River. Here men, horses, cattle and wagons could find the only accessible place to negotiate the otherwise steep banks of the river. This spot was known as “The Crossing”.

The first person to actually settle in High River was Jasper “Buck” Smith. In 1878 he built a sod-roofed



cabin just south of the Smith and French Stopping House. At this time there was much traffic along the Macleod Trail which led to Fort Calgary, as well as cowboys herding large numbers of cattle to new range in the Canadian West. Seeing the business potential of providing beds, meals and supplies to travellers, Buck built a one-and-one-half storey log hotel close to "The Crossing", on the site of the present United Church. Although he lost his establishment in a mortgage foreclosure, the undaunted Smith erected another log building across the trail and slightly south of his former establishment, and carried on business.

Many of the first arrivals to the area stayed to ranch in the foothills. The free-wheeling life of the open range was not to last, however. First, surveyors imposed their order on the land, then settlers arrived to take up the land. The first farmers in the area were Kate and John Quirk from Ireland and John Sexsmith from Ontario, who arrived in 1882. The following year Robert Findlay, Dick Wallace, and Joseph Short from Ontario, and Dan Riley from Prince Edward Island arrived. The population grew slowly as the area was suffering from an extended drought. In 1899 there were only thirty people in the township. By 1905, with the return of a wet weather cycle, the rural population numbered close to five hundred.

"The Crossing" had also grown. From its humble beginnings as a stopping place, a village had sprung up. Churches, banks, schools, four hotels, four livery stables, legal offices, lumber yards, land agents, a meat market, blacksmiths, and a newspaper now served the population. In 1905, when Alberta became a province, the village was incorporated as the town of High River. The name is taken from the Blackfoot word "Ispitzee" which means "high" and refers to the high cottonwood trees which grew along the banks of the river here. The town's official insignia, the Medicine Tree, is derived from Blackfoot legend. Near the Highwood River two tall cottonwood trees had stood joined together by a single branch. The Blackfoot held that the trees possessed magical powers, hence the name



"Medicine Tree".

High River has produced at least two famous sons. Bob Edwards moved to Calgary in 1904, where the witty and irreverent *Eye Opener* shocked and amused Calgarians for another eighteen years. Joseph Clark, the son of another of High River's newspapermen, became famous in a more traditional way. He was Prime Minister of Canada in 1979-1980.

The buildings documented on this walking tour are all associated with some of the more significant people, events, and themes in the town's colourful history. Each structure reflects both the skill of the individual craftsman and the owner's taste, dreams, and feeling of place in the community. All the buildings demonstrate the desire of the people who came to High River to put down roots, to build a stable community, and to prosper.



MUSEUM OF THE HIGHWOOD

4 Avenue and 1 Street West

1



Museum of the Highwood

This building was originally part of the Canadian Pacific Railway Station which was constructed in Calgary about 1906. When it was dismantled in 1911 to make way for a larger station, the sandstone blocks, four flat cars of them, were saved and used to build stations at High River and Claresholm.

The High River building follows closely the standard small-town plan for C.P.R. stations, examples of which can be found throughout western Canada. The station, however, has a particularly picturesque character. The long, low, hip roof with its sweeping overhang and prominent supporting brackets, the low-pitched gable dormer, and the light-coloured but heavily textured sandstone all add to the station's rustic charm.

In 1968, when passenger service on the railway line was discontinued by the C.P.R., the High River station was temporarily abandoned. Shortly thereafter, under an agreement with the C.P.R., the town's museum collection was moved into the empty station. In 1976, the High River Town Council purchased the station and renovated it to serve as the permanent home of the Highwood Museum. Take some time to browse around the museum and look at the collections.



QUON'S GROCERY STORE

311 - 1 Street West

2



Quon's Grocery Store

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 1880s was one of the most ambitious political and engineering projects ever undertaken in Canada. Some 17,000 workers, many of them recent Chinese immigrants, laboured under the most trying conditions to complete the line. When the great undertaking was finally finished in 1885 some of the Chinese returned to their homeland but many stayed to make the most of the available opportunities. These industrious and hard-working people found employment as ranch cooks, laundry men, domestics and labourers. Many sent money back home to support families while others sent funds to a village matchmaker so that an appropriate bride could make her way to Canada.

By the turn of the century, several Chinese families had settled in High River. Sou Lee, Wing Kee and Mah Sam ran laundry operations, while others, like Man Hop, were engaged in the restaurant business.

Quon's confectionery and grocery store is an enduring example of the contribution the Chinese community made to the growth and development of High River. Locally known as Long Tom, Man Hop opened a restaurant here by 1909. The restaurant thrived and the O.K. Cafe, as it was called in the 1920s, remained in business until the Second World War. Long Tom then moved to Longview and operated a restaurant there for some time.



By 1941, the Quon Chong Company General Store bought the O.K. Cafe and converted it into a general store with many grocery and confectionery items. The business continues to prosper today under the ownership of the third generation of the Quon family.

The original building, constructed around 1907, was a one-storey wood-frame structure with a projecting cornice at the roofline and two large windows flanking the front door. As such, it was similar in appearance to the Lane Block and the Heslip, Kelly and Young Block which were adjacent to the grocery store. The exterior has been changed over the years and recent renovations to the main facade have again harmonized Quon's Grocery Store with the neighbouring buildings.



THE MACLEOD STORE 111 - 3 Avenue West

3



The Macleod Store, 1908

This fine commercial building was constructed under the patronage of Mr. A.J.H. Koch during High River's boom years before World War I. Koch was one of the town's major land owners. The 1910 *School Tax Records* indicate that in addition to the Koch Block he also owned the land on which the St. George Hotel stood. In its early years the Koch Block was divided into two parts. The eastern half housed the Northern Crown Bank and the High River Meat Market. The Northern Crown was one of five banks in a one-block area, proof of the town's prosperity in the pre-World War I era. The western half was a general store and this use is still evident today in the Macleod Store operation. While these businesses occupied the ground floor, the second floor provided a place for Masonic Lodge meetings and had apartment suites which were rented out to town inhabitants.

This impressive two-storey brick-faced building was constructed about 1908. On the face of the eastern half, the bricks were removed in the mid-1970s and replaced by concrete blocks. In contrast to this modern image, the western half has retained a significant amount of the original fabric. Of importance are the detailed projecting cornice at the roofline and the brick corbelling about the second-storey windows. On the street level, the original



window and door configuration remains. The large window openings are framed by fine, wooden mouldings and flank the recessed doors in a manner typical of commercial buildings of the pre-World War I era.



BRADLEY'S WESTERN WEAR 123 - 3 Avenue West

4



Bradley's Western Wear

In 1880 Levi and J.W. Bradley moved with their parents from Muskoka, Ontario to a farm near Bowness, west of Calgary. Levi quickly found employment driving teams of horses doing grade work for the Canadian Pacific. He and his brother eventually moved to Calgary in 1898 to learn the leather business at Hutchins and Riley. After a two year apprenticeship, "J.W." moved to High River and opened the town's first harness and leather shop. In 1902, Levi joined the business. As late as 1905, *Henderson's Directory* listed the Bradley Brothers as the only harness makers in the area. Levi and J.W. were proud to claim to have made the first hand-stitched harnesses for horse teams used by the homesteaders and ranchers in the district.

Bradley's Western Wear successfully weathered the changing fortunes of the harness and leather goods trade and, until its recent sale, had the honour of being High River's oldest family-run business still operating out of its original building.

This wood-frame building with its boomtown front was built in 1900. The log lean-to was built some years later. The boomtown front (or false front) was an attempt by small-town merchants to make their simple shed and gable roof buildings appear larger and more important, like the flat roof buildings of eastern cities. The false front also offered a large area for the merchant to advertise his wares.



WILLIAM MACDOUGALL RESIDENCE 5
135 Macleod Trail



William MacDougall Residence

William “Billy” MacDougall left Ontario in 1883 and headed west to San Francisco. In 1886 he came north and homesteaded north of “The Crossing”. At the turn of the century he had this residence constructed so that his children could attend the school in town. Billy was a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church and served on the town’s first council and on its school board.

This house is an interesting example of the Second Empire Style of architecture. This style, made popular in France during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III (1852-70), was characterized by a mansard roof — a double-pitched roof with steep lower slope and prominent dormer windows. The steep-sided roof allowed the use of the attic space and the dormer windows provided light. Although less ornate than many buildings in the Second Empire Style, this house does exhibit many typical features, including a boxy cubical shape, mansard roof with gable dormers, a central doorway and symmetrical window pattern. The house has remained in the MacDougall family to this date.



R.A. WALLACE RESIDENCE 6
145 Fort Macleod Trail



R.A. Wallace Residence

R.A. Wallace moved from Ottawa, Ontario to a homestead three-and-one-half miles north of “The Crossing” in 1883. In 1891, he became the first teacher at the Tongue Creek School, where he taught for two years. In 1906, the year he moved to High River, he was elected the first president of the High River Agricultural Society. Wallace was a prominent local politician. He served on the North West Council from 1889 to 1893 and was re-elected for a short term in 1902. He also served as High River’s mayor from 1911 to 1913.

Wallace had this imposing two-and-one-half storey wood-frame residence built in 1906. The house displays many of the characteristics of the Queen Anne Style popular across North America at the turn of the century. These characteristics include the variety of textural patterns created by the horizontal wood siding and bands of shingling, the wrap-around verandah, and the two-storey bay window topped by a pediment-like gable containing a well-defined oval window. The oval window pattern is also found in the dormers at the sides of the house. The basic purpose of this style, according to a leading Canadian architectural authority, was to display affluence and at the same time give a look of romantic antiquity to new neighbourhoods.



SAM HESLIP RESIDENCE
303 Macleod Trail

7



Sam Heslip Residence

Sam Heslip, a blacksmith from Ontario, worked for the C.P.R. forging railroad spikes when he first moved west. In 1890, he moved to High River where he established and operated a blacksmith shop for ten years. In 1903, he opened a hardware store which was destroyed by fire two years later. Not easily discouraged, he rebuilt the business with two partners, Kelly and Young. The company, Heslip, Kelly and Young sponsored a parade in 1905 to commemorate the delivery of 87 field binders and 12 carloads of barbed wire. This delivery aided considerably in the development of the surrounding farm lands. In 1909 Heslip sold his interest in the business and moved northeast to Youngstown, Alberta.

This one-and-one-half storey dwelling was built for Sam Heslip in 1890. It is distinguished by its off-set front gable with fine large bay windows. It is one of the earliest frame residences in High River and is now operated by the Municipal District of Foothills.



JOHN NOBLE RESIDENCE
440 Macleod Trail

8



John Noble Residence

John Noble came to High River in 1906, farming a large tract of land southwest of the town. Noble married in 1909 and had this beautiful two-and-one-half storey brick home constructed by local builder Billy Wakeford. The Noble family resided there until about 1927 when they had another home built farther west on Macleod Trail. The house was then converted for use as a nurses' residence.

The Noble house is the only example of a brick Queen Anne Style residence in High River. Like many Queen Anne houses across western Canada, the Noble residence is less ornate in architectural detailing and simpler in plan than its counterparts in eastern Canada. The house, nevertheless, has many of the characteristic design features of the style, including a massive off-set tower with bell-cast roof and a large open front verandah. Decorative brickwork around the tower, leaded glass in the front window transoms, and the palladian-style window in the front gabled dormer add variety and serve to relieve the somewhat massive and austere appearance of the structure. Altogether, the Noble house remains one of the finest middle-class residences built in High River before World War I.



PHIL WEINARD RESIDENCE
512 Sybil Street

9



Phil Weinard Residence, c.1900

Phil Weinard and his parents emigrated from Russia to the United States in 1872. In 1879, Phil ventured westward from his home in Minneapolis to Montana. There he witnessed the surrender of Chief Sitting Bull and met the famous painter Charlie Russell. For two years, Phil drove a team of oxen along the Whoop-Up Trail between Fort Benton and Fort Macleod. In 1882, after his employer sold the outfit to the I.G. Baker Company, Weinard moved north and joined other early settlers, including John Quirk and John Sexsmith, in claiming homesteads at "The Crossing".

In 1883 Weinard eloped with his girlfriend, Mary Ellis, and travelled in the United States. They returned in 1894 to establish the River Bend Ranch west of High River. In 1899 Phil decided to try his luck in the Klondike Gold Rush. He missed the boat north and travelled on to the Hawaiian Islands instead. Upon his return to the mainland he starred in a Hollywood movie entitled "Phil, The Fiddler". His thirst for travel and adventure quenched, Weinard returned to High River to continue ranching.

With the death of his wife and child from typhoid in 1909, Phil moved into this one-and-one-half storey frame house. For years, Weinard worked as a bartender in several local hotels, earning a reputation as one of the town's best story-tellers. In



1912 he had the distinction of being asked to drive a bull-team in the first Calgary Stampede Parade.

The house is a modest wood-frame structure with gable roof, open front verandah, and wood-shingle siding. It has a shed-roof or "lean-to" addition at the back, typical of many homes in this style. It is a low-cost way to add needed space. The house is a reminder of one of the most colourful personalities in High River's past.

The other building on the property, a rustic, one-storey cabin built of squared logs, is of uncertain origin. Although evidence is scarce, there is reason to believe it is Buck Smith's original 1878 stopping house which was later used as the first school in the area. As such, it would be the oldest structure in the High River district.



ALEX FLEMMING RESIDENCE
512 Macleod Trail

10



Alex Fleming Residence

Alex Fleming joined the North West Mounted Police in 1881 and was initially posted to Fort Walsh. An experienced horseman, he was selected by Major Walsh as his personal driver. He was later given the honour of escorting the Marquis of Lorne, the Governor General of Canada, and his party on their first visit to the Canadian West. After serving in the military at Duck Lake during the Riel Rebellion of 1885, Fleming left the police force to settle in High River.

In 1907, Fleming set up a livery stable in town, but sold it in 1910 and went to work for George Lane at the Bar U Ranch. There, he assumed responsibility for a herd of pure-bred Percheron horses. Under his care the herd grew from one-hundred-and-fifty to eight-hundred head, making it one of the largest pure-bred Percheron herds in the world. From 1910 to 1924, he served as vice-president of the George Lane Ranching Company. He is also remembered by many old-time cowboys as the official starter of rodeo events at the Calgary Stampede from its beginning in 1912 until his death in 1944.

Flemming had this English country-cottage built in 1907. It is a low one-and-one-half storey wood-frame structure with intersecting gable roof and open side verandah. The lattice supports on the porch and the multi-light window panes add to the house's rustic charm.



'SHORTY' MCLAUGHLIN RESIDENCE
Town Farm Site

11



'Shorty' McLaughlin Residence, rear view

John Wesley 'Shorty' McLaughlin came west in 1885 to help construct the Canadian Pacific Railway between Winnipeg and Calgary. In the same year, he freighted supplies for the army during the Riel Rebellion. In 1886, he was operating a stopping house near Pine Creek on the Calgary to Fort Macleod Trail and shortly after, with his wife and two children, he left Pincher Creek and settled near High River. Before the turn of the century, he purchased the Smith and French Stopping House and the quarter section of land on which it sat.

The present site is therefore part of the property originally settled by O.H. Smith and Lafayette French who had been traders at Blackfoot Crossing until the signing of Treaty Number 7 in 1877. By 1879, Smith and French had moved to High River and built the first stopping house. About the same time, 'Buck' Smith, who had also been a trader at Blackfoot Crossing, moved to High River and built a log cabin close to French and Smith. In 1884 he expanded and constructed a large, one-and-one-half storey log stopping house, which he operated until 1891.

When 'Shorty' McLaughlin arrived, he purchased the Smith and French quarter plus the buildings. As well, for some time he ran the 'Buck' Smith Stopping House. McLaughlin then broadened his holdings and became a stock trader dealing in horses and cattle. Later, race horses were his main



business, and on this site, which has been named McLaughlin Meadows in his honour, he used to have a race track on which many of his horses ran.

The log buildings have recently been demolished but the stone house Shorty built in 1896 is still standing. It is a simple, one-and-one-half storey dwelling constructed of locally quarried sandstone. Some of the walls have since been surfaced in stucco and a rear enclosed porch has been added. The steep gable roof is covered by wooden shingles and the open front verandah with a half-hip roof is supported by posts. The house is the only surviving sandstone residence in High River.



CHARLES CLARK RESIDENCE 725 Macleod Trail

12



Charles Clark Residence

Charles Clark Sr. worked on an Ontario newspaper known as *The Kincardine Review* before moving west at the turn of the century. Although he initially sold horses in Calgary, his love of journalism and the newspaper business never left him. In 1901 he purchased *The Okotoks Review*. Clark was not without competition as Bob Edwards, another Ontario newspaperman, had already established *The Eye Opener* in High River. When Edwards moved his operation to Calgary in 1904, Charles Clark transferred his business to High River and became the first publisher of *The High River Times*.

This house was built for Charles Clark and his new bride soon after their marriage in 1907. Their son, Charles Clark Jr., was born here in 1910 and succeeded his father as editor and publisher of *The Times* in 1930. Charles' son, Joseph Clark, did not continue in the newspaper business but entered politics and served as Prime Minister of Canada in 1979-80.

Like many of the houses built across the prairies, the Clark house defies any easy stylistic categorization. It is a one-and-one-half storey residence with an asymmetrical plan shape. Adding character to the house are the wrap-around verandah and large dormer windows. The over-all impression is that of a solid and comfortable middle-class dwelling, reflective of the prosperity of the High River community in the early twentieth century.



HIGH RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1912 13
309 Macleod Trail



High River Public School, 1912

When School District #144 was formed in 1889, the first classes were held in Buck Smith's original sod-roofed cabin. All thirteen pupils were the children of three pioneer families, the Findlays, the Sexsmiths, and the Shorts. A second school was built in 1891 on the north side of the Highwood River with R.A. Wallace as the teacher. In 1894, a frame school was constructed closer to the hamlet of High River in order that the Heslip, Limoges, and Holmes children could attend classes. When it was destroyed by fire in 1897, classes were held in various locations until the present building was completed in 1912.

This solid and impressive brick schoolhouse was built by Bud Weiss at a cost of \$25,000.00. The design incorporates elements of the Classical Revival Style much favoured in the construction of public buildings before World War I. The High River school displays the typical order, balance and symmetry of the Classical Revival Style including the centrally placed two-storey projecting bay (or frontispiece) on the front facade. The bay contains the main doors which are capped by an attractive semi-circular transom and a frieze band with name-plate. The whole bay is surmounted by a classical pediment displaying the date-stone. Sandstone belts delineate the floor levels and the truncated hip roof rises from a bracketed cornice and displays iron cresting at the apex.

The school, together with its later additions, is now part of the Spitzee Elementary School complex.



ST. BENEDICT'S ANGLICAN CHURCH 14
213 Macleod Trail



St. Benedict's Anglican Church

The first Anglican clergyman in the High River area was Reverend J.W. Timms, who established a mission among the Blackfoot near Gleichen in 1883. Timm's replacement, Rev. E. Paske-Smith, held his first services in a mud-roofed shack on a farm near "The Crossing" on July 26, 1885. When an Anglican parish was created in October, 1902, bimonthly services were held by Archdeacon Webb in the Methodist Church. Two years later St. Benedict's Anglican Church was constructed on land donated by William Iken. The first vestry included many of High River's prominent residents. W.E.G. Holmes and Harry Robertson served as the first church wardens.

This picturesque church, built in a Gothic Revival Style, is distinguished by its high-pitched gable roof, covered belfry, and narrow, gothic-inspired lancet windows.

Gothic Revival was a style employed in much church architecture throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century. In large metropolitan areas with wealthy congregations, elaborate brick and stone Gothic Revival churches were common. In smaller communities such as High River far more modest wood-frame buildings were the rule. St. Benedict's remains a fine example of this small town Gothic Revival Style.



CHARLES C. SHORT RESIDENCE

15

702 - 2 Street West



Charles C. Short Residence

Joseph Short and his family left Manitoba in 1883 to settle in High River. During the North West Rebellion of 1885, his eldest son, Charles, became the youngest member of the Home Guard. After his service with the Home Guard, Charles homesteaded west of "The Crossing". Finding the lonely life of a bachelor homesteader not to his liking, he moved to High River in 1901 where he established a successful real estate business. Short was also active in civic affairs. He served as Secretary of the local school board, as a town councillor in 1909, and in 1915 was elected to the mayor's chair.

Soon after his marriage in 1904, Charles Short engaged Mr. Doty to build this substantial two-storey wood-frame home. Of particular note are the refinements of detail, including the diamond-shape window and wood shingling in the front gable end.



WILLIAM TODD RESIDENCE

16

405 - 7 Avenue East



William Todd Residence

William Todd, a cowboy from Idaho, drifted into High River in 1891. Well known for his ability to handle broncos, he was soon employed by Fult Thompson breaking horses on the High River Horse Ranch. After working briefly as a foreman at the Flying E Ranch, Todd returned to High River in 1899 to open a butcher shop.

In 1901, Mr. Iken, a wealthy English remittance man who had arrived at "The Crossing" in 1884, reportedly lost most of his fortune to William Todd in a game of blackjack. The game had been in progress for twenty-four hours before Sam Heslip intervened and declared the game void. Iken, however, felt compelled to honour his \$21,600.00 debt to Todd and subsequently gave him a pair of Clydesdale horses, a home in High River and thirty acres of town property. Ironically, Iken had initially staked Todd \$50.00 to enable him to sit in on the game.

This substantial two-storey home was built in 1900. Similar to the Lem Sexsmith residence in design, much attention has been paid to detail. The gable dormers are decorated with exposed arch brackets resting on a projecting bracketed cornice. A small balcony sits above the main-floor bay window. The corbelled brick chimney, the gothic tracery in the windows, the wooden shingles surfacing the house,



and the refined proportions all give the residence interest and a rustic appearance. Although Todd sold the house in 1909 when he moved to British Columbia, it stands today as a reminder of his colourful life.



LEMUEL SEXSMITH RESIDENCE

17

707 - 3 Street East



Lemuel Sexsmith Residence

The John Sexsmith family came west from Quebec and in 1883 was part of the small group of pioneer settlers to stake homesteads near High River.

Lemuel, the eldest son of John, was involved in a wide variety of enterprises before he settled on the career of hotelier. He was a ranch hand, operated a butcher business, managed the Flying E Ranch for his brother-in-law George Lane, was a real estate agent and a successful cattle buyer before he built the Oxford, now Gateway, Hotel in 1905. He capped his colourful career in 1906 when he was elected for a two-year term on High River's first town council.

Percy Taylor, a well-known local contractor, built this large two-storey wood-frame residence for Lem Sexsmith. It is almost identical in style to the William Todd residence and displays a similar attention to architectural detail. Notice the fine decorative brackets in the gable ends, the large bay window and the interesting combination of narrow clapboard siding, shingles and multi-paned windows.



FULTON THOMPSON RESIDENCE

18

618 - 3 Street Southeast



Fulton Thompson Residence

'Fult' Thompson arrived at High River Crossing from Prince Edward Island around 1889. He operated Buck Smith's ferry across the Highwood River for several years. Seeking greener pastures, he moved farther west and worked on the High River Horse Ranch and the Bar U Ranch. In 1902, along with his future brother-in-law Dan Riley, he opened the Riley and Thompson Livery Stable. The two also had other commercial interests which included the C.P.R. land agency, a machine shop, and a ranch. This prosperous business partnership lasted until the First World War when it broke up and Fult moved back into High River.

Fult had this generously proportioned structure built as the family residence in 1915. The design of the house is a variant of the California Bungalow Style popular across North America between 1910 and 1920. The house features large window openings, surface textures of brick and wood shingles, as well as a long pier-supported overhanging roof which forms the open front verandah. In contrast to the generally heavy exterior texturing is the fine, light detail of the roof brackets and the stick work in the gable end of the large front dormer. This was a thoroughly modern home for its time and examples of this style can still be found today in older neighbourhoods in towns and cities throughout Canada.



RAYMOND CLIFFORD RESIDENCE

19

314 - 4 Avenue East



Raymond Clifford Residence

In 1886, Bert Wilder, a cowboy from Chicago, was contracted by the Powder River Cattle Company to trail a herd of cattle to "The Crossing". He stayed on in the area and later worked at the Bar U Ranch as wagon boss eventually becoming a foreman at the Eden Valley Ranch. At the turn of the century, he left ranching to homestead four miles north of High River. He began construction of this house in town in 1914.

The present owner of the house, Mr. Raymond Clifford, has also had close association with the ranching industry and, in particular, with the Bar U, one of Alberta's largest and most famous ranches. His father worked for the Bar U for a number of years while Raymond himself also served there as Ranch Manager for Pat Burns. This house is a reminder of High River's dependency, both past and present, on the livestock industry.

This large and imposing brick home was built in the Georgian Revival Style popular across Canada in the early twentieth century. The truncated hipped roof, symmetrical front facade, square plan shape with few projections, and the large dormer are common in this style. The open front verandah resting on turned supports and the brick surfacing both serve to emphasize the solidity and grandeur of this beautiful home.



DANIEL RILEY RESIDENCE
127 - 4 Avenue East

20



Daniel Riley Residence

Daniel Riley came to "The Crossing" from Prince Edward Island in 1883. Two years later, during the North West Rebellion, he served as a dispatch rider between Edmonton and Fort Ethier, near Wetaskiwin.

After his marriage in 1891, Riley homesteaded west of "The Crossing". Nine years later he went into partnership with his brother-in-law Fult Thompson, and opened the Riley and Thompson livery, real estate, and machine shop businesses. In 1906, Riley was elected the first mayor of the newly incorporated town of High River. In 1925, he was further honoured with an appointment to the Canadian Senate.

Riley and his family moved into this modest one-and-one-half storey cottage in 1900. Its hip roof, shed dormer, and exposed rafters are design features found in many turn-of-the-century dwellings.



THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
117 - 4 Avenue East

21



The Church of the Nazarene

In 1875, George McDougall established a Methodist Mission among the Stoney Indians at Morley, west of Calgary, and another at Fort Macleod. By 1884, an itinerant Methodist preacher held services every alternate Friday in one of the local residences at "The Crossing". A Methodist congregation was officially formed in 1886, although it was not until 1902 that this octagonally shaped church was constructed by local contractor Percy Taylor for \$1,395.00. This figure did not include \$60.00 which was needed to purchase the bell for the tower.

At one point in the Church's history, the Minister considered substituting a gramophone for the church choir. The gramophone salesman, excited over his possible sale, talked it up with the local boys in the bar. Unknown to the salesman, the cowboys switched his gramophone records. On Sunday, when the Minister placed a record on the new apparatus, the congregation was treated to "Just Because She Made Them Goo-Goo Eyes" rather than "Nearer My God To Thee". The gramophone sale was never completed.

After the 1925 union between the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, and the Methodists, this structure was moved to the corner of Third Avenue and Centre Street, where it was used for Sunday School classes and meetings of various youth groups



in the United Church. Following the Second World War it was purchased by the Nazarene Community and moved to its present location beside the Dan Riley home.

Architecturally, this picturesque octagonal church features a front gabled porch, decorative trusses and fish scale shingles in the gable end and herringbone siding on either side of the main door. The body of the church is covered with a narrow bevelled wood siding and the segments of the octagon are outlined with vertical end boards. A conical steeple replaces the original bell tower.



JOSEPH LIMOGES RESIDENCE
125 - 2 Avenue East

22



Joseph Limoges Residence

Joseph Limoges first came to Cochrane from Montreal but moved to "The Crossing" in 1886. He lived at Buck Smith's stopping house for a while. In 1887 he opened the first general store in the area. Two years later, Joseph and his partner T.W. Robertson, built the High River Trading Company building, an impressive sandstone structure which served as the district's principal retail outlet for years. Mr. Limoges was a well-known and respected citizen as well as a prominent businessman. He was appointed Postmaster of High River in 1899 and held the position for 45 years.

The Limoges home, built in 1895, was originally located on the corner of 1st Street and 4th Avenue West. After the turn of the century, it was moved to its present location. For many years it served as a boarding house, called the Ritz Carleton, and catered to gentlemen bachelors. Today, the building is a multi-family dwelling.

The house is a complex, two-storey wood-frame structure. While the centre ground-floor gable mirrors the roofline above, the asymmetrical placement of windows and doors give the building a decidedly irregular and unbalanced appearance.



ARNOLD AND ARNOLD LAW OFFICE 23
16 - 2 Avenue East



Arnold and Arnold Law Office

Built in 1891, this building is one of the oldest wood-frame structures in High River. Originally, the building was the home of the Chalmers Presbyterian Church until the congregation moved in 1907. For the next fourteen years it served first as the meeting hall for the Foresters Lodge, and then for the Orange Lodge. Somewhere in this time period it was moved from its original site to a site immediately across the Macleod Trail. In 1912 the brick high school was erected on its former site. In 1921 the old church building was converted for use as a school. In the early 1940s it was moved to its present location and used as a church, this time by the Full Time Gospel Tabernacle congregation. Forty years later, the structure changed hands again and became the office of Arnold & Arnold, a law firm which has served High River since 1910. For a short while before becoming a law office, the building was used for a full-time kindergarten.

The Arnold and Arnold Law office is a modest one-storey wood-frame structure with stucco covering. Although the building has been modified greatly over the years, the high-pitched gable roof and narrow windows clearly reflect its religious origins.



GATEWAY HOTEL 24
407 Centre Street East



The Gateway (Oxford) Hotel

High River's strategic location on the Highwood River was a determining factor in the town's early growth. The stopping houses of Buck Smith and O.H. Smith and Lafayette French quickly proved unable to handle the large number of travellers, visitors and newcomers to "The Crossing". As a result, the High River (later the Astoria), the Alberta, the St. George, and the Oxford (later the Gateway) Hotels were built to accommodate this overflow. The Oxford (Gateway) Hotel is now the only survivor of this once flourishing business.

Built by Lemuel Sexsmith in 1906, the Oxford (Gateway) Hotel was typical of many early Alberta hostelrys. A substantial three-storey brick and stucco building, it has a bracketed cornice at the roofline with date-plate beneath, and an angular corner entrance. In 1906, meals at the hotel cost \$.25 and a room \$1.25.



GLOSSARY

BELLCAST: Any roof shaped with eaves that flare out along two or more sides.

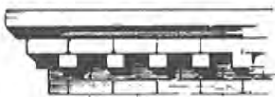


BELT COURSE: A projecting embellishment of brick or wood running horizontally across or around a building.

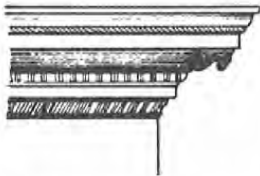
BOOMTOWN FRONT: A false facade that rises well above and masks the real roofline behind.

CLAPBOARD: The overlapping and wedge-shaped horizontal boards which cover a wood-frame wall.

CORBELLING: A projection or series of stepped projections in masonry and especially in brick built out from a wall to support the eaves of a roof or some other feature.



CORNICE: Any projecting decorative moulding along the top of a building, wall or arch.



CRESTING: Ornamental finish along the top of ridge of a roof.



DORMER: A window placed vertically in a sloping roof with a roof of its own.



FRIEZE: A plain or ornamental band below a cornice.

GABLE: The vertical triangular portion of the end of a building having a double sloping roof. A gable roof has a gable at one or both ends.



HIPPED ROOF: A roof sloped on all four sides; the sides meet at a centre ridge.





MANSARD ROOF: A roof having a double slope on all four sides. The lower slope is the steeper of the two.



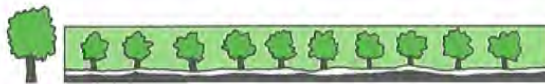
PALLADIAN WINDOW: A three-sectioned window; the centre section is round arched, and the slightly shorter and narrower side windows are flat arched.

PEDIMENT: The triangular gable end extending from the floor above the cornice. It is often highly decorated. This element may also be found over a window or door.

STICKWORK: The carved or lathed wooden decorative work found underneath verandah eaves or in the pinnacle of a gable end.

TRACERY: The ornamental work in the upper part of a window or panel.

TRANSOM WINDOW: The upper part of a window divided by a transom, or horizontal bar of wood or stone.



CREDITS

This brochure was jointly prepared by Alberta Culture and the Town of High River.

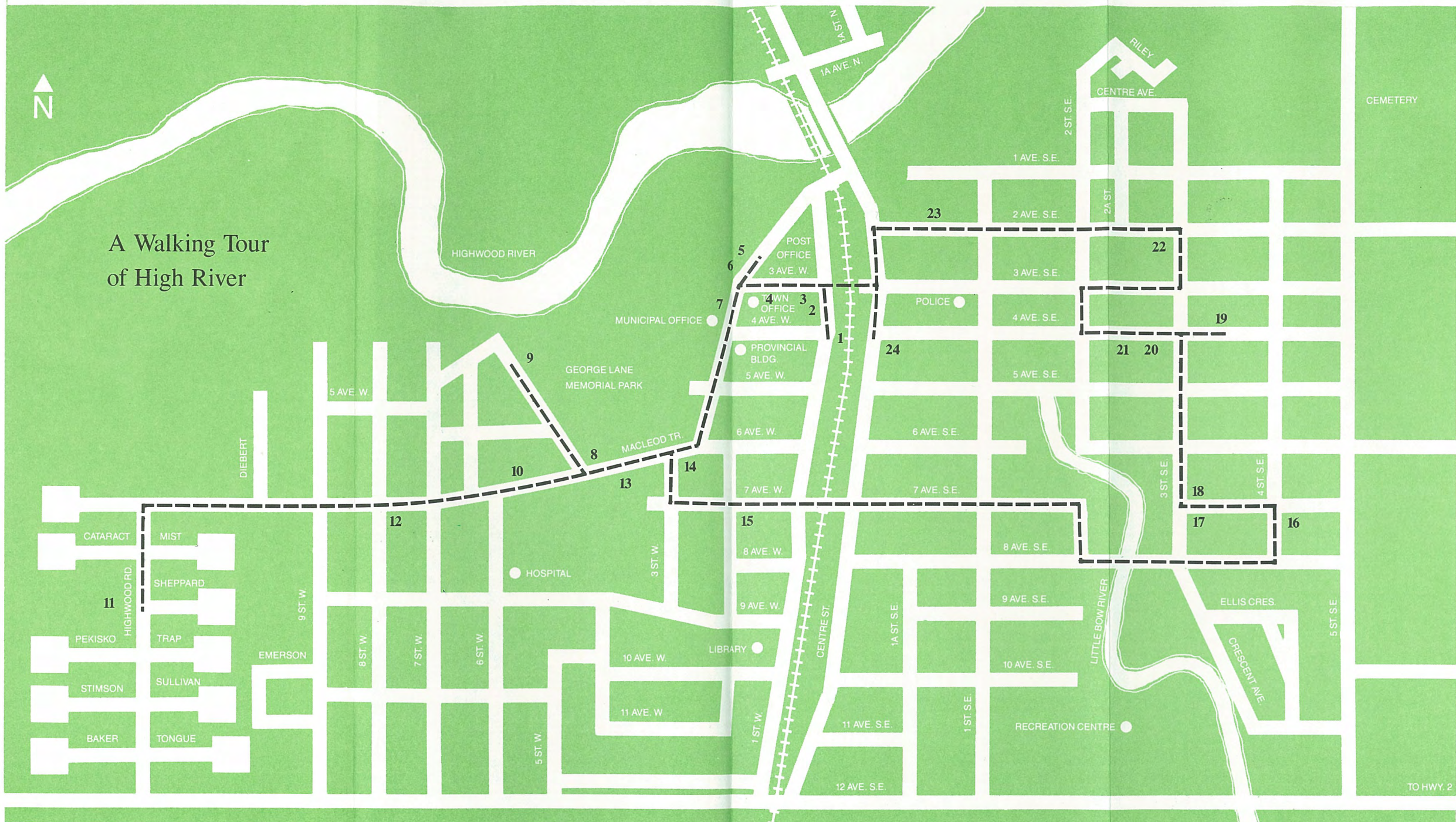
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Glenbow-Alberta Institute

Museum of the Highwood



A Walking Tour of High River



CEMETERY

TO HWY. 2