



PRESIDENT'S DECEMBER DELIBERATIONS

December 28, 2020

Weather: Cloudy with patches of sunlight

Temperature: -7C

Winds: Calm

As I complete chores, stumbling through the snow drifts left from the recent winter storm, I got to thinking about our heritage – the wonderful history that our great, great grandparents (and in some cases 4 greats) have left us – ours to pass along to the next generation. The note for December is dedicated to our forward-thinking pioneer families.

Who would have thought that 100 years ago today we would be in a similar situation as our Pioneer forefathers --- they were nearing the end of the 1918 “Spanish” flu and we are in the middle of a similar pandemic. Who says that history doesn’t repeat itself?

What historical event took place on December 28, 1920?

December 28, 1920

Weather: Unknown

Temperature: -17C*

Snowfall: 1.3 cm*

Environment Canada

(excerpt from Pioneer Families of Southern Alberta 1993, pg. 220)

Calgary Herald Tuesday, December 28, 1920 OLD TIMERS’ CELEBRATION ONE OF BIGGEST AFFAIRS EVER HELD IN PROVINCE

“Pioneer residents from all parts of Alberta gathered at the Palliser Hotel Tuesday afternoon as guests of the Rotary Club to join the Old Timer’s reunion and celebration. From a modest inception the reunion grew into on the biggest public affairs of any kind in the Province and about 4000 members of the Rotary Club and “Old Timers” as their guests took part in the jollification.

Anecdotes of the early days of Alberta were exchanged, and wit abounded at the after luncheon function.

One of the features of the big gathering was the passing around of record cards for the Rotary Club on which each of the Old Timers were asked to give his name, address, present occupation, date of arrival in Alberta, place where they came from, how they came... and kindred other questions. The reading of these questions evoked storms of applause, laughter and cheers.”

The Provincial Librarian was present at the meeting. He requested the information gathered be sent to him and he would file it in the Provincial Archives.

Calgary Herald, Wednesday, December 29, 1920 continued with its coverage of the event. The report also said that the **organization was being made permanent by incorporation.**

Our Society's minutes indicated that:

1. The Committee, formed at the Rotary Club Luncheon, met at the Board of Trade rooms on **January 13, 1921.** The following officers were elected

President: Lt. Col. James Walker, Vice President: Dr. M.C. Costello, 2nd Vice Pres: Malcolm McInnes, 3rd Vice Pres: David McDougall, Sr. Secy-Tres: Harold W. Riley, Executive Committee: Wm. Pearce. Dr. F.H. Mayhood, A.D. Fidler, Col. G.E. Sanders, A.M. Pinkham, Geo. Hope Johnston, Alfred S. McKay, E.J. Riley and Stanley G. Freeze.

2. Meeting held on **February 25, 1921** a resolution was passed adopting the name "Southern Alberta Old Timers' Association". The meeting also "decided to adopt a buffalo head as the Association's Crest."

The meeting instructed Harold Riley "to proceed with the enrolment of members who had completed 30 years residence on December 31, 1920 and their male descendants upon reaching the age of 21 years."

This is the very beginning of what we now call "Southern Alberta Pioneers' and Their Descendants" – how we were formed, the pioneers involved, the thread held with the Rotary Club that assisted in our organization and the sheer determination to ensure that this idea succeed.

I have also attached the Rotary Club's outline of their luncheon on December 28, 1920. The information provided gives you another perspective as to how we were formed. I want to thank Past President Kathleen Rogers for providing this information.

100 Hundred Years Rotary Luncheon for the Old Timers, December 28, 1920

The Calgary Rotary Club was chartered in 1914 to become the seventh chartered Rotary Club in Canada. With the exception of the first few organizational meetings in the Elizabethan Room of the Hudson's Bay Store and at Cronn's Restaurant, the club chose the Palliser Hotel for its regular Tuesday noon luncheon meetings and has continued a long-standing relationship with it ever since.

On Tuesday, December 28, 1920 the Rotary Club turned its weekly luncheon into a special occasion, with every member bringing as a guest of honor an old timer resident who had been here for more than 30 years. The luncheon had been in the planning for some time, with efforts being made to get the name of every man who fulfilled the necessary residence qualifications. It was seen as a reunion of veterans; a chance to renew old friendships and an opportunity to perpetuate and revive the Old Timer organization that had been established before the war. It was impressed upon members and guests that the residence qualifications must be rigidly adhered to. Only those who had lived in Calgary or the district for thirty years or more would be

received. "were a rigid line not drawn at some point no building in Calgary would begin to accommodate the guests. "In anticipation of an exceptional event, the usual hour and a half luncheon format was extended into an informal reception and afternoon concert.

The luncheon itself was one of the best served by the Palliser. Tables were arranged in long rows in the ball room, while just outside in the hallway other tables were set up to accommodate the overflow. The assembly of the guests was to be complete by 12 o'clock and the luncheon was to start sharp at 12:30.

Arrangements were made with the Palliser to take over the Sun Room of the hotel immediately after the lunch and the whole party, Rotarians and Old Timers, would repaire there following lunch. Short talks and songs by the Rotarian choir was followed by the guests furnishing the entertainment. One of the features of the gathering was the passing of cards for the Rotary Club on which each of the Old Timers was asked his name, address, present occupation, date of arrival in Alberta, occupation followed, place where they came from, how they came, "were you ever broke," "and how often", what was the coldest weather in their experience, if their faith in Alberta was as great as ever, and other kindred questions. "The reading of the answers to these questions evoked storms of applause, laughter and cheers."

The modest reception grew into one of the biggest public affairs of any kind ever held in the province, with about 400 members and guests taking part. There was a request from the Provincial Librarian, John Blue, that the names and ages of all the pioneers be forwarded to him for incorporation in the archives of the province.

The Herald reporter interviewed several pioneers about the proposal that an old timers organization be formed. It was pointed out to him that an organization of a similar nature had already existed and was called the Old Timers' Association, but had dropped shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914.

During the meeting, Malcom MacInnes brought things to a head during the afternoon when he made a motion that a committee be appointed to discuss the matter and formulate plans for such an organization. The Rotarians, through their president, Bill Marshall, promised to cooperate in every way possible in forming the Old Timers association. A committee composed of five old-timers was appointed to form plans for the formation of an Old Timers organization. H.W. Riley (Chairman), Colonel James Walker, Dave McDougall, Malcom MacInnes, E. H. Maunsell, and Dr. M.C. Costello.

In follow up to this event, E B Curlette embarked on a project to make a composite group photograph of all of the old-timers, and invited all old timers to call M2345 to make an appointment in his to his studio at 111 8th Ave West, opposite Ashdown's, to have their photo taken.

On January 13, the appointed committee met in the board of trade rooms, deciding that as far as possible they would give every old timer the opportunity to have a say in the organization. It was decided at this meeting that an association should be formed, and pro term officers were appointed:

President: James T Walker
first Vice President: Dr, Costello
2nd Vice President: Malcom MacInnes
3rd, Vice President: David McDougall

Secretary: Harold Riley
Executive committee:
William Pearce
George Hope Johnston
Col. G E Sanders
Alfred Fidler
A M Pinkham
Dr. F H Mahood
F H Maunsell (Macleod)
Alfred L McKay
S G Freeze
E J Riley

It was decided that the questions asked of the Old timers would be:

- 1 what area shall the association cover?
- 2 what shall be the name of the association?
- 3 what shall be the scope of the organization?
- 4 where shall the headquarters be?
- 5 what shall be the amount of the annual membership?
6. Do you approve of the formation of a central organization with affiliated district locals?

The committee met throughout 1921, deciding in February to redraft the 1911 constitution of the Old Timers Association with a view of adapting it to the new association. The name of the proposed society was changed to The Southern Alberta Old Timers' and Pioneers Association, the Pioneers being those who arrived in the early days with the Old Timers following. The final Constitution and bylaws were submitted. The Buffalo Head crest was adopted at this time as the Societies crest. In January 9, 1922, the "The Southern Alberta Pioneers' and Old Timers' Association" was registered as Society 162 of the Province of Alberta with Colonel James Walker being named President. The first round up was held January 18 1922.

Not to be out done by the Rotarians, The Calgary Kiwanis club arranged a party for the Lady Old Timers for Valentines Day evening to be held in the Elizabethan room at the Hudson's Bay. Miss Fawdry, photographer, arranged to take photographs for a composite group photograph of all Lady Old Timers who had arrived in Alberta previous to February 14, 1891.

Shortly after this event, the ladies got together to form their own organization, doing so in March 24 with Lady Lougheed being chosen the first president.

Thank you for indulging my "historical moment" and I hope that you enjoyed the refresher as to our long lineage. Should there be more information to share, please feel free to send me your comments. Until the January newsletter, please take care and enjoy the moment life has given you. Ending with:

A toast to December 28, 1920!

Lynn Hoosier
President 2020-2021
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