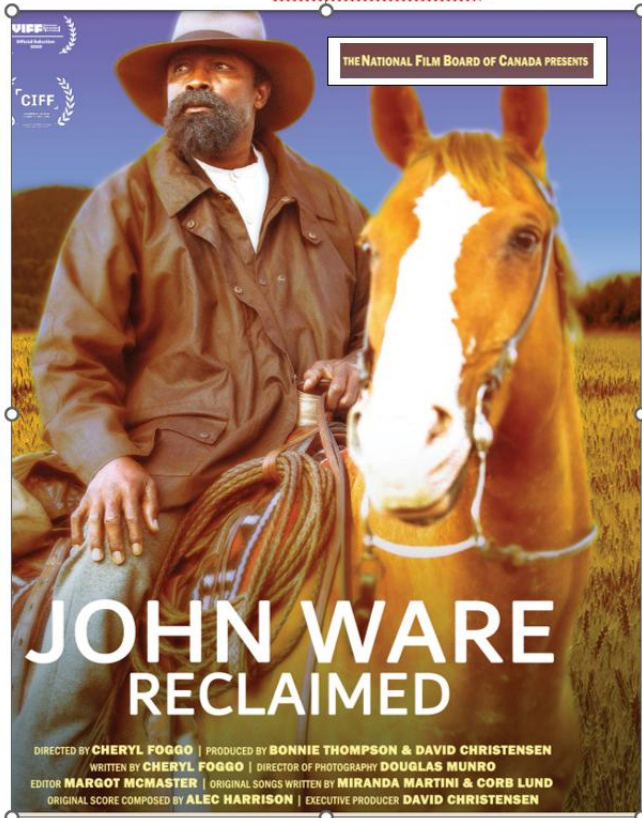




President's Message:

Our unique Foothills area is comprised of heavily treed slopes and coulees, drainage of the North Sheep Creek (Three Point Creek) & Fish Creek, the Elbow and Bragg Creek, and open range. This created a perfect landscape for settlers, cowboys, and ranchers who utilized the open range and abundant water sources to raise herds of cattle and horses. You're invited to:

Millarville Historical Society Presents



An Evening Celebrating John Ware

April 29th, 2023 at 7:00pm

Millarville Community School Gym

Adult Admission - \$5.00/person

Children admitted Free

(Film has some strong language)

70-minute film screening followed by an interesting panel discussion.

Please RVSP via email by April 26th

to secure your popcorn order.

millarvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

We're delighted that Cheryl Foggo and the Fisher Family will attend this historical evening. Cheryl Foggo narrated and directed this NFB documentary, John Ware Reclaimed, and will share her perspectives. The Fisher family, who own the land that John Ware homesteaded, plan to attend also. Steve Fisher will speak about his participation in this film and share background info on John Ware and early ranching stories the Millarville area.

This newsletter highlights articles written by three board members (Gene Blakley, Louise Patterson Bruns, and Lorretta Stabler) focusing on John Ware's experiences in the Millarville area.

As well, we are pleased to share an excellent article demonstrating the importance of collaborating with other historians written by Christine Robinson and Dr. Peter Dawson explaining how information has been captured and preserved about the Moose Hill Ranch residence in the Springbank area. This clearly demonstrates the importance of networking and collaborating with various historical committees/societies preserving history.

We look forward to your feedback. Please let us know if you have any suggestions, comments, or questions. Email us at: millarvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com or browse our Website:

<http://millarvillehistoricalsociety.weebly.com/>

Sincerely,

Lorretta Stabler

Further On John Ware by Gene Blakley

While perusing articles that Eunice Park's gave to the Millarville Historical Society, I came upon some information that extends my knowledge of John Ware and his history. I found this information originally published by Ken Liddell on November 16, 1953. Bob's main witness was Bob Ware, John Ware's son.

In 1882 Fred Stimson, first manager of the North-West Cattle Company sent Tom Lynch down to Idaho to arrange for a drive of cattle and some horses to Northwest Territories.

Ware as a boy hung around racing stables exercising horses and had gotten to like animals and the outdoors. He followed the cattle drives over the Chisholm and Oregon Trails and that is how he was in Idaho when Lynch arrived. Lynch was looking for some helpers and this big young man said he would like to go along.

Black cowboys were about as common as blue moons. Lynch did not know what to make of this fellow. He gave him a weary nag to lope at the drag end. Ware became tired of eating dust, so he asked Lynch to give him "a better saddle but a worse horse".

So it was that Ware rode into what was to become Alberta as one of the boys and stayed to become one of the neighbors.

There was a story that John Ware drifted out of Texas – he was born at Fort Worth – to escape slavery. But Bob Ware doubts this because Texas was not a state that practiced slavery to any great extent and anyway his father was too young.

Bob never knew his father to receive a letter from the United States. Bob's duty was to ride 18 miles into Tilly every Monday for the mail. His mother got the usual family mail and his father a few letters and two papers, Bob Edward Eye Opener, a magazine, and a cattleman's paper which his mother read to John.

Bob stated that his father, a man six feet and 3 inches tall and a couple of hundred pounds was a very nimble dancer and loved horse play. He was not afraid of anything other than snakes and he always carried a revolver to shoot coyotes and snakes.

John loved the natives and could talk with the Sarcee's and Stoney's in their native tongues. He once bet a native that he could beat him across the Red Deer River when it was in full flood. Ware made it but the native tired. He floated down to an island and Ware rescued him.



with Uncle Spencer Lewis.

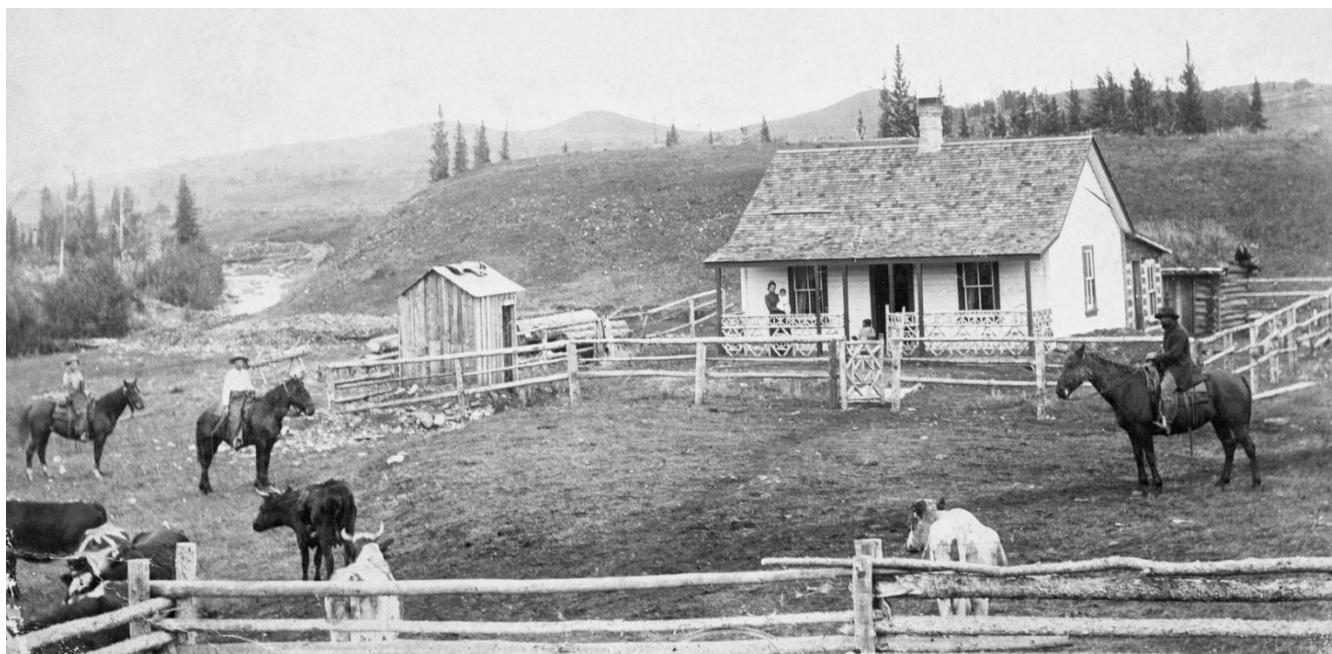
Ware broke hundred of broncs but in 1905 he and son Bob were culling cattle and Bob saw his father's horse stumble in a badger hole, turning a complete somersault. John Ware was crushed and dying when Bob got to him. Bob, who was 11 years old went for help but the only person on the place was an old man who did the cooking. They returned with a wagon. They could not move the big man, so they got the help of John Eide a neighbour. During all this, John's two hound dogs and a collie stood guard.

John was buried in Calgary. His wife, Mildred had predeceased him and died of typhoid and pneumonia in 1904. The children were separated, and some went to live with the grandparents, some

John Ware would be remembered as a man because of what he was and not who he was. That something makes another say of him 50 years later that "He was a great man. We used to neighbor".

John Ware to the Rescue by Louise Patterson Bruns

It was the Spring Branding at the Bar U in 1890, and the community had gathered for the festivities. By 1890, there were many hundreds of calves to be branded and the procedure would take several days. My grandfather, Frank Patterson had come out from England the year before to live and work with his cousins Agnes Bedingfeld and her son Frank at their ranch adjoining the Bar U. Dozens of cowboys were there, including Harry Longabaugh, famous later as the Sundance Kid. Also, teamsters, farmers, carpenters, labourers, livestock breeders, hay contractors, stockmen and horse trainers converged on the Bar U. Agnes Bedingfeld was in the cookhouse helping the Chinese Cook make huge pots of beef stew and mashed potatoes for the hungry crew.



John Ware had come down from his homestead at Millarville. John had quickly become a legend in the years since 1882 when he joined Fred Stimson and crew to bring a herd of 3000 cattle up from the US to stock the newly established Bar U Ranch in the foothills of Alberta. John Ware proved himself over and over to be a savvy horseman with great physical strength and uncanny intuition. They said there wasn't a horse that John couldn't ride.

Even though Frank Patterson and Frank Bedingfeld were young greenhorns, they saddled up from the Bedingfeld Ranch and rode over to help with the branding. It was the job of a few handlers to bring the calves one by one into the branding pen. And as these calves were wild and bawling for their mothers, the cowboys had their job cut out for them.

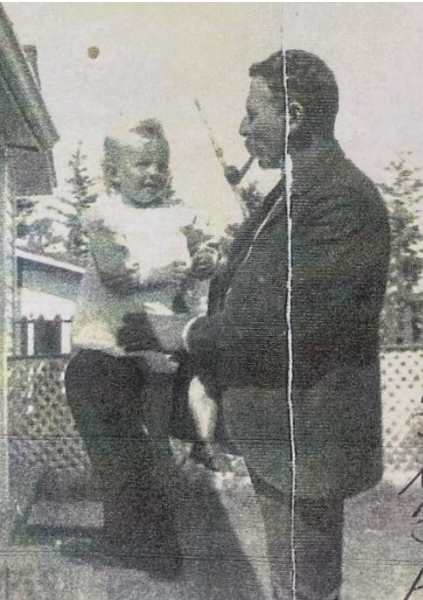
Now young Frank Bedingfeld wasn't the best roper in the world, but he was in there with the best of them. He was riding a 4-year-old black gelding called Lightning, whose name should have given him pause. Frank was doing okay for a while. But all of a sudden, Lightning decided to bolt, and then to buck pretty hard, and threw young Frank up over his shoulders where Frank's leather chaps got stuck on the horn. And there he was, dangling upside down on Lightning's neck and being tossed up and down. This was a most uncomfortable, dangerous and inconvenient posture for man and horse!

Well, as luck would have it, John Ware was observing from his horse on the other side of the branding pen. Now John, having broke many broncs in his day, and seeing the predicament of Frank, quickly came to the rescue. John was a man of enormous strength and agility, with a great sense of the temperament of horses and cows, and a keen intuition for what to do next.

So, from the sidelines, John Ware ran his horse right into the head of Lightning, no doubt surprising the young bronc quite a bit. Then John leaped onto Lightning's neck, leaving his own horse to scramble back and away. John then grabbed Frank by the seat of his britches, and

lifted him back into his saddle. By this time, Lightning was tired out and quit bucking, and allowed Frank to dismount with a portion of his dignity intact.

After Frank inspected his body from head to foot, and finding no broken bones, he allowed his cousin Frank and a couple cowboys to escort him up to the cookhouse for a much-needed



meal and maybe a bit of sympathy. So, they brought the shaken and bruised, but not broken Frank into the dining room where his mother Agnes was dishing up the plates. One of the cowboys said to her, 'Miz Bedingfeld, I reckon John Ware just saved your boy's life.' So of course, Agnes Bedingfeld had a soft spot in her heart for John Ware after that day.

When John came in for dinner, Agnes went up to him and took his big hand in hers, and looked up into his face, whereupon John took off his hat.

"Thank you, John Ware, for saving Frank today. I want you to know that there's always a warm welcome and a hot meal for you at the Bedingfeld Ranch, anytime you care to stop by."

A Legendary Cowboy and Rancher

by Lorretta Stabler



John Ware was a legendary figure, helping to establish the ranching history in the Foothills. He was an outstanding and well respected bronc rider and cattleman who had a reputation for "fairness and built-in fearlessness". His strength, steer-wrestling and roping abilities, and kindhearted disposition were known by all who knew him.

One hot July day when John was riding for the Bar U, John's horse was very hot and thirsty so he rode into a slough so his horse could have a drink. The horse refused and pawed at the water. Puzzled, John noticed a scum showing on the surface of the water.

John Ware and Family, c. 1896

Riding back to shore, John looked closer at the oily scum which smelled like kerosene. John struck a match and the surface of the pond burst into flames. John and his horse had found light crude oil that had seeped up into the slough from underground. Many years later, in 1914, a well drilled not far from this pond became a real “gusher”, the first big oilfield in Alberta.

Interested in starting a ranch of his own, Ware registered his brand 9999 in 1887 and began to acquire cattle. Later, in 1898, John reregistered the brand as 999. In 1891, he bought his own place on the North Fork of the Sheep Creek near Kew. A year later, he married Mildred Lewis and they had six children: Nettie, Robert, Arthur, Daniel, and the twins William and Mildred.

With the assistance of John Quirk, who had helped him build his first home, Ware irrigated his hayland in 1892, by diverting water from the North Fork of Sheep Creek. In 1895, he filed for a homestead. After seven more years of hard work, he was able to sell his Kew Holdings (8.4 km southwest of Millarville). He took up a new ranch at Bantry, some 20 km southeast of Brooks where he died on 10 September 1905, as a result of a riding accident.

A cairn honoring John Ware was erected on land that John Ware homesteaded at the confluence of the Ware and Three Point Creeks near Kew, May 30, 1970.

This next interesting article demonstrates the power of collaborating with other historical societies and research projects providing more info for historical questions. Moose Hill Ranch residence, built in 1885, was located in the area of the Springback Off-stream Reservoir Project. The historical research team completed an archaeological excavation and heritage survey of the site and connected with our historical society for more information. Marie Nyland recognized this cabin and contacted former owners of this dovetailed log cabin for further details .

Our hope is that on-going collaborations and networking will foster more heritage stories in the future.

The Role of Historical Societies in Capturing the Histories of the Everyman with the Digitally Preserving Alberta's Diverse Cultural Heritage Project.

By Christina Robinson and Dr Peter Dawson.

The [Digitally Preserving Alberta's Diverse Cultural Heritage](#) project began in 2016 using reality capture technologies, such as terrestrial laser scanning (TSL) and aerial photogrammetry, to digitally capture and preserve Alberta's heritage resources. The digital archive receives requests to record heritage sites from government bodies, contracting heritage companies and concerned members of the public. The archive is a repository for these digital data sets to ensure they remain accessible to future generations. In 2022, Stantec's historical resources team approached us to help digitally capture and preserve the [Moose Hill Ranch residence](#) (Figures 1 & 2). As part of the process of making the archive page for the Moose Hill Ranch, a brief background into its history was required. This discussion focuses on how we acquired historical information about the ranch through contacts from historical societies.

The journey to discover the history of Moose Hill Ranch started with the Foothills Historical Society, which covered the area west of Calgary (Figure 3). Their Chaps and Chinooks publication (1976 vol. 1 & 2.) contained the only historical image of the residence (Figure 4). To obtain permission to publish the image online, we started the task of trying to find the society. This was done by approaching all the historical societies that covered the region, starting with the Historical Society of Alberta, which pointed us toward the Bragg Creek and Millarville Historical Societies. The Millarville Historical Society also suggested the Cochrane Historical & Archival Preservation Society. All societies approached believed the Foothills Historical Society had been disbanded once the Chaps and Chinooks book had been published, a common occurrence with many historical societies (Belinda Crowson 2023 Pers Comm). I want to point out that these publications by early historical societies are a gold mine of information and have provided so much information for other projects that the digital archive has covered.

In the search for the Foothills Historical Society, the president of the Millarville Historical Society reached out to local members of the community in a bid to find out more information. While there were no leads on the Foothills Historical Society, curiosity grew about which building we were recording as we had only provided a rough location. When we shared that we were recording the Moose Hill Ranch residence, one contact recognised that a lifelong friend's family had been one of the previous owners of the Moose Hill Ranch. The project details were forwarded to the previous owners, who contacted us, offering to assist with the site's history. The Robinson Family, who had owned the Moose Hill Ranch since 1906, provided us with details about the property and some spectacular historical photographs (Figures 5 & 6) that were previously unknown. Without the great connections and contacts through the historical society, these details and historical images would have likely never seen the light of day. We hope these connections will become an integral aspect of the archive as we continue to grow and more unknown histories get a spotlight.

References:

Foothills Historical Society, 1976, Chaps and Chinooks: A History West of Calgary Vol. 1 & Vol. 2. Foothills Historical Society.

Photos on pages 7-10



Figure 1: A panoramic image from the laser scanner (Z+F 5010X) used to digitally capture the exterior of the Moose Hill Ranch Residence with the Capature2Preseve team to the right of the house. Source: Capture2Preserve.



Figure 2: The 3D point cloud model of the Moose Hill Ranch Residence from laser scanning data collected by the Capture 2 Preserve Team. Source: Capture 2 Preserve.

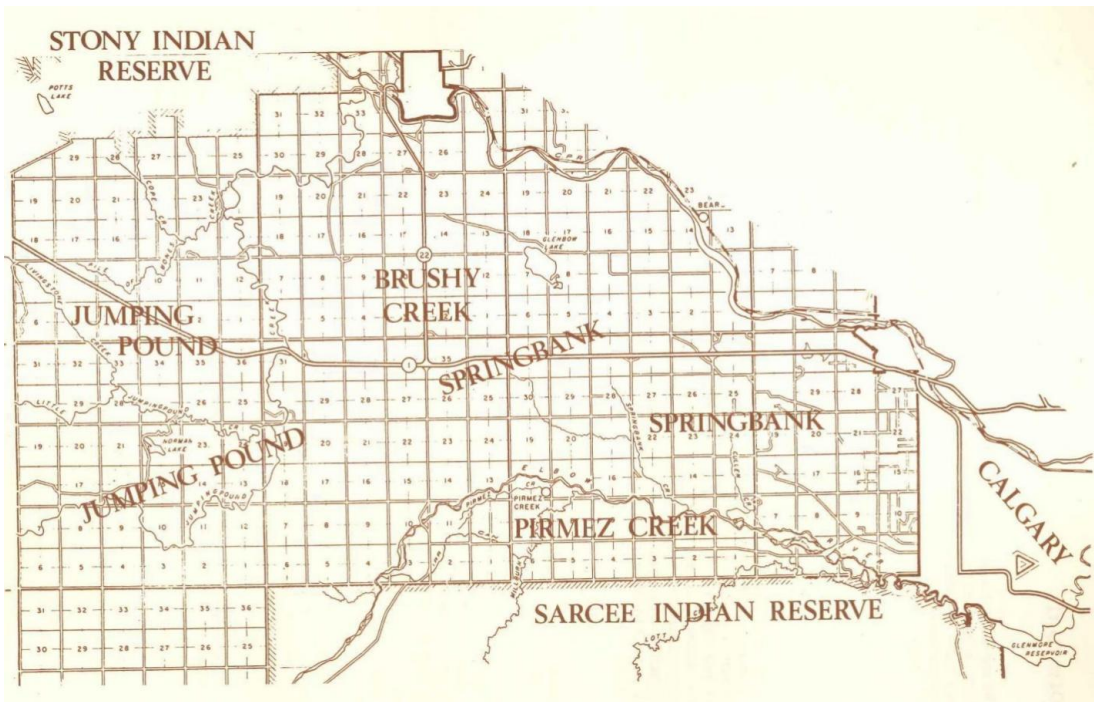


Figure 3: Map of the area covered by the Foothills Historical



Figure 4: Vaudin House, Moose Hill Ranch, by R. Treacy March 1976, (Foothills Historical Society 1976: 210).

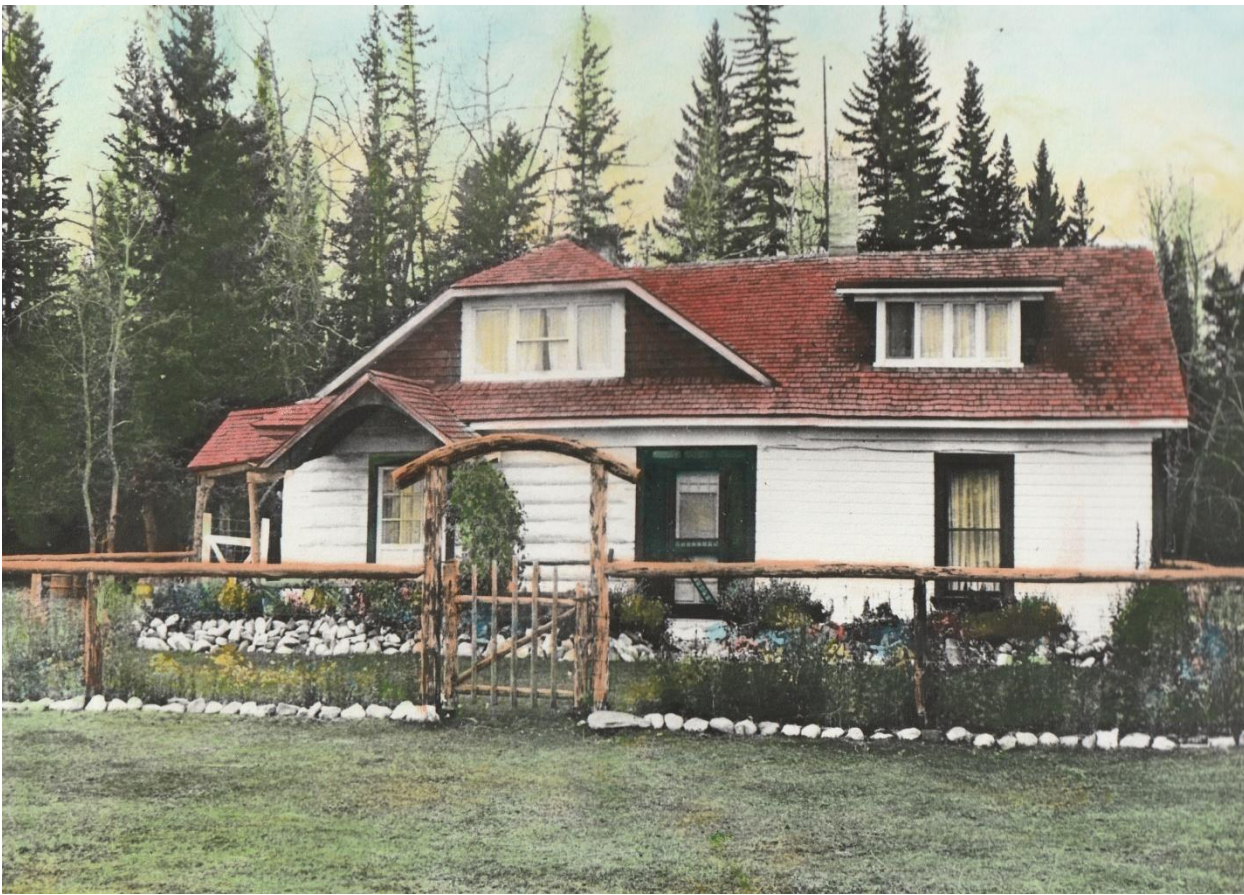


Figure 5: The Moose Hill Ranch Residence during Joe and Hester's occupation, unknown date. Source: Janet Hawes (nee Robinson).



Figure 6: The living room of Moose Hill Ranch residence with Hester (left) and Kathleen (right) Robinson sitting on the sofa, unknown date. Source: Janet Hawes (nee Robinson).