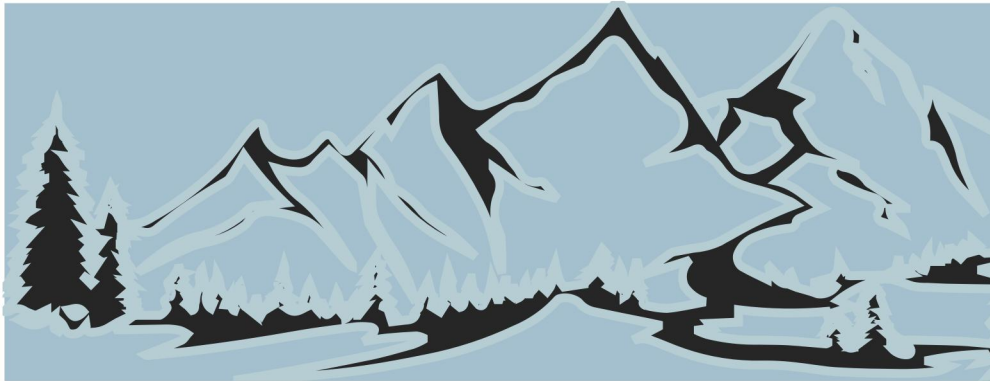


Millarville Historical Society Newsletter – Fall Edition

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2023

Welcome to our Fall Review of Millarville Historical Society's Happenings. Hosting various community events provided further opportunities for us to collect, document, and communicate the history of our community, both past and present and provide connections to future generations.

This Newsletter showcases: Priddis & Millarville Fair Displays, AGM highlights, BBQ and Program celebrating The Millarville Racetrack, Gene's article from Millarville Historical Society Facebook Group, and a Xmas story submitted by Marie Nylund.

Priddis & Millarville Fair – August 19 & 20

Millarville Historical Society and Southern Alberta Pioneers & Their Descendants hosted an incredible agricultural display in the Racetrack Hall for this annual two-day event.



A wonderful variety of ages and families really enjoyed exploring intriguing artifacts and asking questions. More than 1000 visitors visited our displays.



Special exhibits included photographs of John Ware & Family, early rural landscapes, artifacts from the Millarville Community School Archaeological Project.



Participants were very interested in the featured artifacts from Mildred and John Ware's time period. Particular attention was paid to the 1892 Singer Hand Crank Sewing Machine, the year that John Ware and Mildred Lewis were married.

With Louise Patterson Bruns' patient guidance, many tested out their sewing skills on Louise's incredibly quiet sewing machine.

Millarville Historical Society AGM Meeting - Sept. 13th

All Executive Board Members and Directors agreed to continue serving on the Millarville Historical Society Board for 2024. Our energetic Board motivates those around them.

President: Lorretta Stabler

Vice President: Eugene Blakley

Secretary: Cathie Scatterty

Treasurer: Christine Lederer

Directors: Blaine Clark, Evaline Prestie, Lorraine Clark, Louise Patterson Bruns,
Marie Nyland, Norma Dawson

MRAS Historical Liason: Barb Parker

Emails were sent to members inviting them to our AGM and to renew their Membership for 2024. Membership is very important to the society in supporting our goal of sharing our vibrant history with our members. To do this we need a solid membership of dedicated supporters. One of our society's long-term goals is to create a museum space where we can display artifacts, stories and photos. To have a place where young and mature researchers can discuss, ask questions, and learn more about how our great country was developed, so we can help continue building our incredible community.



Barb Parker, Judi Powell, Bill Jackson, Brent Foster, Sandra Bull, Don Ward, Cathie Scatterty, Pearl Laycraft, and Barb Godwin (unavailable that day).

Nine local residents, recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Medal were honored for their dedication to family, community and country. One key component of each recipient's story is their long-standing dedication volunteering for MRAS events, making sure that this venue continues to provide a variety of rural experiences.

Volunteering is the heart of a community and we are very fortunate to have so many volunteers who have dedicated their efforts to make this special country venue an exceptional agricultural place for well over a hundred years. The Millarville Racetrack is an extremely valued landmark, central to this community.

Tribute to the Racetrack Sept. 17th



BBQ Lunch



Ready for Tribute to the Racetrack Program

Lorretta MC



Louise sang O Canada





Foothills County Councillor Barb Castell greeted everyone and shared how important it is to celebrate the history of this very special area.



Sarah Elmeligi – MLA Banff-Kananaskis
“I had another amazing day at the Racetrack where I learned more about the amazing community, their incredible volunteerism, and the history of the area.

I’m not sure I’ve been anywhere where people talk about being “third generation volunteers” for an organization. Wow? It’s such a privilege and honour to connect with the good folks in Millarville and learn more about the diverse and incredible history of the southern end of our riding.”¹



Bill Jackson gave an incredible overview of how the Races and Fair began and have continued to thrive do to the volunteer involvement in various building construction & renos of The Racetrack Hall, concession, and grandstand. What an amazing historian!



Although Byron Birch was unable to come to our event, he shared via a report, how the technical supports for parimutuel betting at the Millarville Races have evolved over the years.

¹Sarah Elmeligi’s MLA Update November 2023 [Priddis News](#)



Brent Foster shared about the introduction of the VIP Experiences at the Millarville Races. This component has added another level of interest and visibility for this yearly event.



Patty Webb & Gillian Ross talked about how Millarville Player's created revenue for the Racetrack Hall in the 80's and entertained audiences with yearly sold-out Fractured Fairy Tale performances for a decade.



Donna Kendall shared Priddis and Millarville Fair "highs and lows" and how creative planning /problem solving created lucrative raffle draws with participants from all across Alberta. Her humor captivated the audience as she shared antidotes from exhibitors, volunteers, and guests!



Catherine Laycraft shared memorable stories of volunteering with her Grandparents and parents at the Racetrack, which was her second home when she was young. One example she gave of how times have changed - recording hundreds of Fair entries by hand to using computer technology. Catherine is a 3rd Generation MRAS Volunteer!



Melonie McKee shared the success story of the Millarville Farmer's Market and Xmas Market. These markets have helped to preserve the agricultural heritage of this area for more than 40 years.



Anna Depaoli, MRAS President, discussed about where the MRAS is today and how creative measures were taken to make this facility viable and cost effective, even in the pandemic. Incredible business planning and strong leadership!

2023 Millarville Historical Society Board



Thank you to all the speakers who shared historical perspectives about the uniqueness of our community. Treasured stories we can ponder over again and again.

Thank you to Carol Papworth and Blaine Clark for photographing this event.

Thank you to all the guests who chose to spend their Sunday afternoon listening and celebrating local history.

Reviewing the many historic photos for the Tribute to the Racetrack Powerpoint presentation made me wonder how our present-day digital world may unfortunately create huge obstacles for future historical documentation. Without hard copies of stories and photos preserved, it may become more difficult for historical evidence to safeguarded.

Please contact us with stories or photos you have to help document our history. History is like the “smoke from a campfire, as it is hard to capture and harder to keep.” That is the purpose of the Millarville Historical Society: to revive those memories, appreciate the people who have contributed to community successes, and document current happenings.

Millarville Historical Facebook Group Article - by Gene Blakley

Frequency Bias

Did you ever notice that you never saw a Volkswagen on the road until you bought one? Then, you see them everywhere. This is called the Baader Meinhoff phenomenon which is based on frequency bias or selective attention bias. The main reason is that, you have so much stimulus every day, it is hard to focus on one thing. But when you do focus on one thing, like the Volkswagen, then you continue to see them.

So, what does that have to do with history. Well, as you have seen over the last year and one half, we have put out a lot of articles featuring families and individuals that settled this part of Alberta. So, we see them as adventurous, fearless individuals that rode wonderful horses and had blessed lives. But as we read these articles, we start to see the individuals in a new light. In many ways we begin to see ourselves in a new way. Are we different than our ancestors? Are our lives that much different? Let us explore that.

Some of you commute to the city everyday to work. The journey takes about 30 to 45 minutes, and you never see that journey in any other light than that it is the length a cup of coffee lasts. Then you read an article on someone that made that trip, but it took 2 days in and 2 days out. Now, as we speed down the paved road we can reflect on his or her journey. Maybe then, we



see the trees for the forest. You start to think about the mud on the trail they had to follow. How they could see the country from a different pace? That trip to Calgary now becomes one of discovery. You see the hill that needed climbing, the creeks, and rivers that needed fording.

After reading an article in which we read of someone hand digging a water well and then realizing that to get that water to the house you had to go to the well, or possibly the creek, and carry what was needed in pails. Now, we start to realize how much work we do not have to do in today's world. The daily

shower, dish washing, laundry and other watery needs take on a new realization.

When we read of the community halls, churches, and schools that the settlers hand built, we start to see education in a new way. Most of us have only to send our children out the door to be picked up by a yellow school bus and then carry on with the rest of the day. We did not have to build the school, but now we start to see the school in a new light. If we ever go to the community hall, we now see it also in a new light. It then becomes a more integral part of our lives. The church is applied with the same thinking. So, by seeing these structures and institutions in a new light, we can then care for their existence as we see the dedication that makes them continue to be there for us.

I know that this is a departure from what we normally write about, but we now get to see our surroundings with a new vision. Certainly, we can appreciate the amount of work that the settlers had to do on a given day that we do not have to do. Also, we can appreciate that we live in a system that supplies money to have this work done for us. I know in my world, a new appreciation for my life here in Millarville becomes brighter by knowing about the trees rather than the forest. So, knowing about Baader-Meinhof phenomenon or frequency bias, we now can understand how we can believe in a high frequency of occurrence, and only noticing things that are important to us and disregarding the rest. Thus, the study and retention of history takes on a new relevance and we appreciate your continued reading and correcting our articles to make them more accurate.

Have a blessed day and keep history alive for the ones that are not here yet and so they can apply what we have explored today.

Louise Patterson Bruns' Comment after this article was posted:

I know that Millarville is a village, and Millarville is the Race Track and Fairgrounds, and that Millarville is the little log church. And I also know that the Millarville district on the homestead map extends as far NE as the Patterson homestead bordering the Cross Conservancy and SW to the WH King homestead at Millarville, and all the places in between. The spirit of the ancestors, the settlers, and the native people who lived here and built community, the huge soul of volunteerism that still thrives. But I'm also aware through my life that Millarville has always been not so much a place, as a state of mind. A state of mind that keeps us mindful and aware and proud. A sense of place.

MHS Facebook Group has grown exponentially as this interactive platform gives audiences thought provoking insights to ponder at their leisure, in their own home, and can be a communication tool to help ward off loneliness. The comments that members post add more layers to the posted article.

Memories of Christmas - A Special Time

By Joan Merryfield and Submitted by Marie Nylund (her daughter) – Millarville Historical Society

Christmas time holds vivid memories for me of visiting our neighbours, and of our neighbours coming to visit us. There was excitement in the air as we prepared for our family festivities. We had all pitched in to help clean our log home from top to bottom in the expectation of visitors arriving over the holidays.

It was great relief for my parents knowing that the Christmas concert was a success. The concert was held in the little one-room called Two Pine School. It was a two-mile trip by horse-drawn sleigh to the school for the concert so we bundled up well; our excitement masked any worry about the cold.

Every year, my Dad's older brother, Uncle Charles Burby, arrived a few days before Christmas, and if anyone could get into the spirit of things it was our Uncle Charles. The Christmas Tree had to be chosen from the forest and so with great excitement we accompanied Uncle Charles and our Father who cut the tree down and hauled it on the horse-drawn sleigh back to the house. The tree was put up on December 24th – this added greatly to our excitement. Decorations were simple, some were homemade and very few were store bought. It is amazing what you can hand craft with a bit of resourcefulness.

On Christmas Day there was the fragrance the turkey roasting in the oven of the wood cook stove. Mother had been up very early to prepare the dressing, stuff the turkey and start it roasting for our afternoon dinner. We kids had to ensure that the wood box was always full of chopped wood to fuel the stove.

Memories of Mother's Christmas cake still linger in my mind. This was one of the few Christmas preparations that had to be done well ahead of time. The cake was left to mellow in the crock for a few weeks before the decorations and frosting were put in place.

How delicious it was when it was sliced on that special day! A plum pudding was always prepared well ahead of time as well – not carrot puddings in those days!

Since this was the Great Depression years, we were always short of wrapping paper so very little paper or Christmas seals were purchased. We were experts at recycling last year's wrapping paper. We carefully wrapped our little hand-made Christmas gifts for our brothers and sisters. Christmas gifts consisted of knitted sox, mittens, sweaters, and vests. My brothers were talented at making toys out of wood and it was a surprise each year to see what they had fashioned.



Merry Christmas Everyone!

Stay tuned for our upcoming events we are currently planning for 2024!!

We'll keep you posted.