



## Millarville Historical Society 2024 Summer Newsletter

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### In this newsletter:

- Millarville Talk and Walk
- August 17 & 18 P & M Fair visit our displays in the Racetrack Hall
- See our revised Website Design
- MHS AGM – Sept. 4
- Renew MHS Membership
- Macklin Ranch Visit- Sept. 15
- 1<sup>st</sup> Member's Only Dinner Oct. 5th

### Millarville Hamlet Talk and Walk Event by Christine Lederer

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our Hamlet Talk and Walk on Sunday, June 23. The weather cooperated nicely and we enjoyed an afternoon of sharing the unique history of our hamlet and surrounding area. The lively audience laughed and chatted as our cadre of speakers shared stories.

The artifact displays were a lovely, hands-on reminder of what life in the hamlet used to be like. During the walk, participants added to the day by sharing special memories of going to school from making grass forts to making totem poles that became lasting artifacts for many years. |

The MHS team would like to especially thank our Foothills County Reeve Delilah Miller and local Councillor Barb Castell for bringing warm greetings and support from the Council. Thank you to the speakers and especially thank you to the kind audience for spending the afternoon with us.

Please look for us at the [Priddis Millarville Fair](#) that will be held at the Millarville Racing and Agricultural Society on August 17 and 18, 2024. Come by and say hello, get a membership or renew for 2024-2025.

### Why has the Hamlet of Millarville been so resilient?





In our area, there were many settlements to accommodate the oil workers during the 1930's. When the oil workers left for other oil producing areas, each settlement disappeared. On the south side of the North Fork of Sheep Creek (now called Three Point Creek) were settlements: Evansberg, Home Oil Camp, and Kew Store and Post Office. On the north side of the North Fork of Sheep Creek (now called Three Point Creek) there were settlements: Majorville, Bullview, and Millarville.

Millarville is the only hamlet that has survived.

Eveline Prestie sharing special memories: Major Oil Company had drilled some successful wells in this area, so the settlement was called Majorville. The Waugh girls had a store here and later a coffee shop was added. When the dirt roads were nearly impassable the drilling crews unloaded and loaded buses at the little coffee shop and they were very happy to get a hot cup of coffee after a hard day at the rigs. As the drilling ceased, families left. Hans and Merle Backs and family (Eveline, Bob, Phyllis, Gwen), lived here too and then moved to Millarville. Hans started Millarville Motors in 1945.

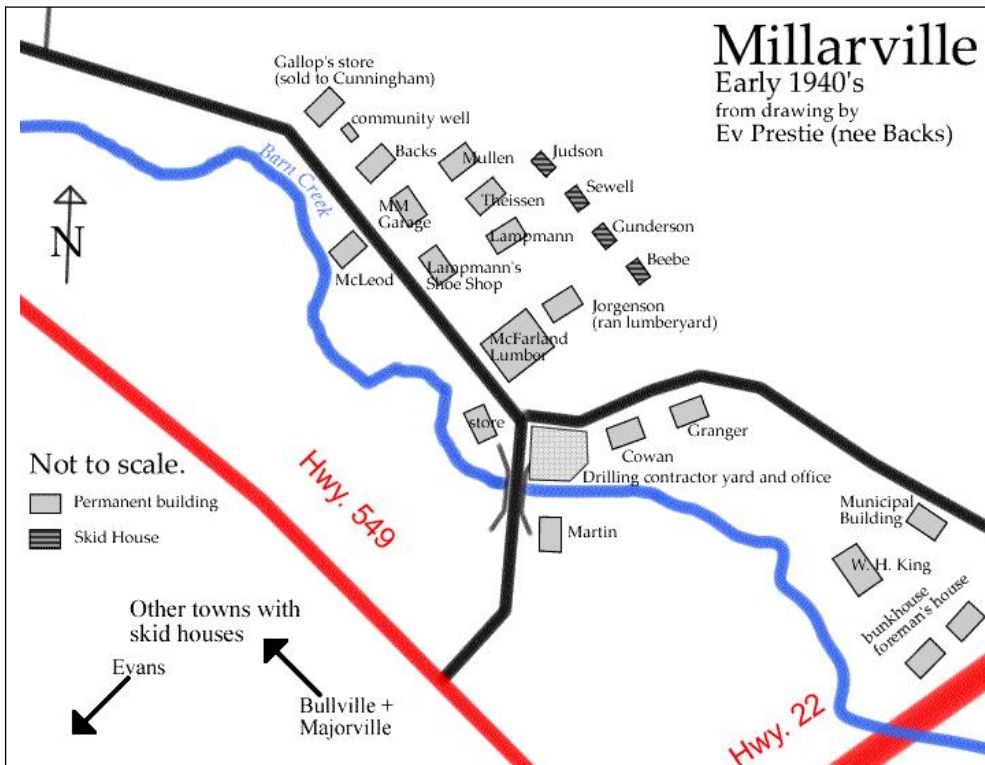
Ev remembers in June 1950 when Jappy and Marth Douglass owned the Millarville General Store & Post Office. In 1949-50, Calgary

Power came into the area so the store purchased deep freezes and sold ice cream treats and popsicles. In June 1950, there was a huge snow storm which knocked out the power lines. So Jappy stood out in front of the store and handed out free ice cream treats as they would melt otherwise.

Robert Turner (Turner Valley is named after him) in the 1880's homesteaded the area which we now know as Millarville. Mr. Rawlinson bought the land in 1922 and plowed up the flat area, uncovering many polo balls as it was a very popular polo field. He also rented lots for skid shacks for \$7 a month (see the map below).

In 1950, the Sheep Creek School was moved right where they played polo many years ago, two more classrooms were added, and it became the Millarville Community School.





The community well was hand dug by Hugh Rawlinson, Hugh Wilford, and Johnny Pegler. It was about 8 ft. deep, the plank cribbing was about 42 inches square with a top frame, a pulley, and a bucket. Everyone in the community got their water there. As kids, we would go with our little red wagon and 2 five-gallon pails and haul water, especially on wash day.

Many of these dwellings were skid shacks- no permanent foundations so were easily moved from one place to another for work. They had hand dug cellars for cool storage as well as coal/wood.



### **Millarville Hamlet 1987**

Since this aerial view in 1987, the hamlet of Millarville has continued to grow. More lots soon became available to the south and west of the school. New residents quickly purchased and built their homes.

New developments of Millarville Ridge in 1990's as well as Millarville Crossing in the early 2000's have helped our community continue to thrive.

## Millarville Archaeology by Patti Thorne

This project began with pottery shards found in Lorretta and Clarence Stabler's vegetable garden. When shared with our Grade 4 & 5 & 6 students, many questions came forward - Where did the shards come from? Who lived there? Where did the people go? Why?

As curiosity grew, some residents whose families had passed down stories from previous generations, were interviewed. Ev Prestie and Mary White told us that there had been a temporary settlement of oilfield workers and their families in the area beyond the Stablers' garden. The houses the families lived in were locally called "skid shacks". The workers were employed in the North End of the Turner Valley oilfield during the boom times from about 1939 with the discovery of oil with Home Oil #2 to about 1947 when the "skid shacks" were loaded and moved to

Leduc when oil was discovered there.

Lorretta and I envisioned an archaeological dig for the children as a hands-on way to learn about history and in fact, to incorporate many other parts of the school curriculum. After some ups and downs, we were able to engage an archaeologist, Andrea Richardson, through the University of Calgary. She became the permit holder for the actual digs which took place in the springs of 2003, 2004 and 2005. From her, the teachers, students and many parents learned the important archaeology skills and proper procedures required to develop and do the work on an actual archaeological site.

The students were so excited when an object was unearthed in a quadrant and would rush to see what was discovered, later making key observations and connections as to the use and the user. Their reflective writings noted such things as amazement that ashes were still present in an artefact that was part of a stove or that a fragment of a small glass tea cup was evidence of children living there. Some wrote of being sorry the dig was over at the end of the school year. Another example of student pride occurred at one of the numerous presentations - this one at the U of C,

I think- when a Grade 5 student told the former AB premier, Ralph Klein, not to touch the pocket watch as it was an important artifact!

Of the many learnings and values imparted to students during this project, it is hoped that respect for those who came before us is one that is enduring.



Figure 4. Small glass teacup from the north end of the excavation area. Photo by Andrea Richardson, 2003.



### **Ted Thorne's speech for Hamlet Talk and Walk June 23, 2024**

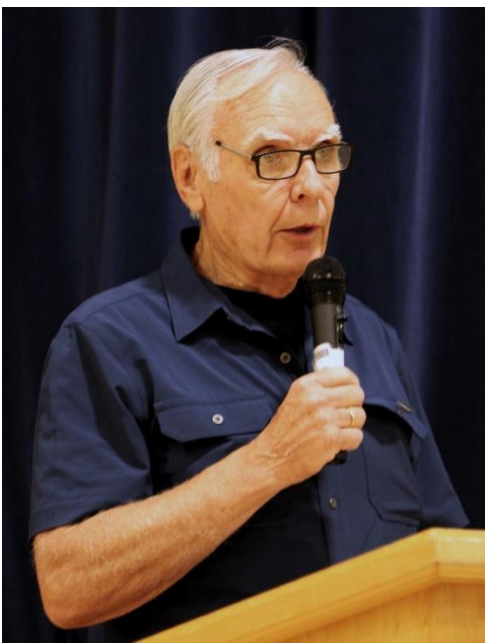
The learning experience is not often a straight-line path. For example, how does the Stabler's garden finds lead to the Governor General of Canada? That experience is many faceted and the more relevant and meaningfully it is designed, it can engage students in a lasting manner.

The archaeological dig was such and for that, Mrs. Stabler's and Mrs. Thorne's engaging project was put forward and accepted as truly worthy to be distinguished, with each receiving the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. This honourable event took place in November 2005 at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

Upon their return to Millarville, following lots of talk in the classrooms, the students proposed that "since the Governor General had invited their teachers to her house, couldn't we invite her here to our school house?" The excitement and enthusiasm for following through with such an unlikely prospect resulted in another project. The Gr. 4 & 5 students began composing and writing their invitations which were then sent to Ottawa, with hopes filling the envelope containing the invitations.

Fall came and winter settled in. In February I was in my office at the usual 6 AM when the phone rang- unusual for my quiet organizational time of the day. It was an aide in the office of the Governor General- wanting to know if the invitation from the students was still open. - You know the reply to that! I said nothing to the staff or community as there was to be a lot involved through further communication and detailed scheduling, as well as a visit from security personnel. This was to be the first visit to Alberta by the Governor General and she would begin that visit spending half a day at our school.

We had a stagecoach with a six-horse hitch and outriders meet her at the far end of Millarville Crossing pond. There was potentially one hitch- when I greeted the Governor General, Michael Jean, at that point, she was so excited with the idea of riding in the stagecoach, she thought the ideal placement would be up on top with the driver. Her security vetoed that, and she and her daughter rode with me in the coach.





It was a memorable and historic day as she and her daughter, Marie-Eden, visited classrooms and the dig site. Marie engaged with the students of her age and class.

So many interesting people and events come down this trail to and from the Millarville area. The Stony Nakoda from Morley were certainly here before the development of this area - before cattle ranching and the resource industry.

Morley was the winter camp and come spring, the Stony people would pack up their tipis, using some of the poles to make travois for their trek to their summer camp at Eden Valley. It is reported that some of the older women would ride on the travois and mostly the men rode the horses.

An old friend and former neighbor South of us, Buddy Carey, who was born and brought up there, just passing away a few years ago in his late eighties, had many stories of the Stony people camping across the road from his place, as they made their way down and back.



On learning of the connection with the Stony people, the tipi we have here at Millarville School was generously donated by one of our families. Tipi means dwelling and it is representative of the physical life as well as the spiritual.

Due to the exposure to heavy winds, the original poles were replaced a couple of years ago with a substantial steel structure but retain the original cover and art. The original-colored ribbons that trailed from the tips of the poles were not replaced. The door cover was also lost

prior to reconstruction.

There is a lot of significance in what makes up the elements of a tipi. Traditionally each of the poles was named with a value, such as obedience, respect, humility, etc. The point at which the poles came together inside the tipi at the top was considered a vortex where the ancestral spirits would meet and pass through. The pins that secure the cover above the door represent the security and safety of family within. The painted decorations on the exterior of the tipi are unique to the family and often inspired by dreams or visions and may also reflect the outside environment. A tipi would have used 10-15 buffalo hides with a larger one up to 18 hides. Today it is usually canvas or cowhides that are used.

On September 26, 2008, we had a celebration Pow Wow and dedication of the completed tipi. First Nations drummers and dancers were an important part, concluding with a BBQ. The tipi has become a class meeting place, enhanced by the addition of the firepit.

In conclusion, there are many more trails and paths to follow as we continue learning about the past.

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**Millarville Historical Society's annual AGM Meeting will be held Sept.4 7:00pm at the Millarville Racetrack Hall**

Celebrate with us about our year's progress, renew your membership for 2024-25, and share input for next year. Coffee/tea and snack will be provided. Our society invites members to volunteer on committees.



**We are very grateful for your annual membership supporting our society.**  
**Donations are greatly appreciated.**  
**Please share our contact information with others who might be interested in becoming a member.**

**Check out our renovated website.**

**[www.millarvillehistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.millarvillehistoricalsociety.ca)**

**You can renew your MHS membership online for 24-25!**

**Our membership year is Sept.1<sup>st</sup>-August 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**Dues can be paid by E-transfer to**

**[millarvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:millarvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or by cheque to**

**Millarville Historical Society**

**Box 41**

**Millarville, AB T0L 1K0**

**Individual Membership \$20    Family  
Membership \$30**



### **Millarville Historical Society's 3rd Event – Visit to the Macklin Ranch**

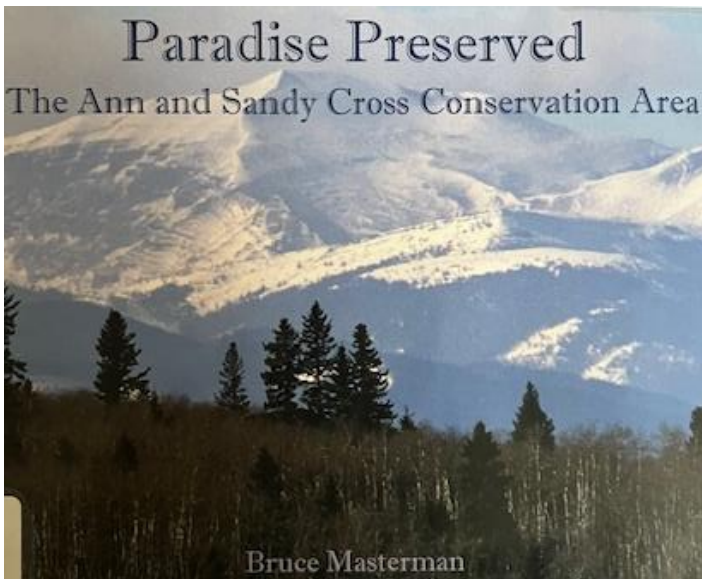
On Sunday September 15, the Millarville Historical Society and the Dierkens family invite members to visit the historic buildings. We will start with a PowerPoint presentation and talk at the Church House at 1:00 pm, then proceed to the farm for a tour of the barns and the Edwardian house.

The old Macklin Place holds many historic memories, from the mid 1890s to the present day. Recently purchased by Steve and Julie Dierkens, the historic barns are being restored, and new fences and roads now grace the property. Beautifully set into the big hills with natural springs, this farm has many stories to tell.

It was originally homesteaded in 1893 by Frederick Hova Wolley Dod, the avid entomologist who cataloged hundreds of species of moths and butterflies of the area and sent mounted specimens to the great museums of the world between 1895 and 1917. He published the definitive 'Lepidoptera of Alberta' in 1910. He was the foremost entomologist in Western Canada for over 20 years.

In 1912, he built the beautiful 2 storey Edwardian house with all modern conveniences, with file cupboards and collecting rooms for his beloved butterflies. He also built several barns and outbuildings that still stand today. Sadly, Mr Dod went off to WWI in 1917 and did not return, dying in Mesopotamia in 1919.

Dr. Thomas Macklin and his son Hugh took up the property in 1921, and it was the Macklin Place for almost 50 years. Hugh and Dessa were stalwart members of the Millarville community their whole lives. In 1951, their sons Jack and Alec built the big dairy barn that we still see today.



**October 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Member's Only Dinner with guest speaker, Bruce Masterman**

**Author of Paradise Preserved**

**Bruce** is an acclaimed naturalist and photographer, who has been featured in international magazines.

**We will send out more info to MHS Members closer to the date!**

**Enjoy your summer and let's make this Summer and Fall unforgettable!**