



Red Deer's Old Court House

Richard McDonell

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The need for a purpose-designed court house in Red Deer was obvious long before construction began in 1930 on the northeast corner of 49 Avenue and Ross Street. Since 1916, court proceedings had been held one block north of that location in a converted coverall factory that remains standing to this day. That building, while hardly the striking edifice one expects of a hall of justice, served the community well, and in 1922 made history when it housed the first trial in Canada in which women sat on the jury. Women comprised half of the six-member jury, which found for the female plaintiff in a civil trial involving “breach of promise and seduction.”

Throughout the 1920s successive provincial governments had been pressed to provide Red Deer with a suitable building. Local boosters pointed to similar communities such as Medicine Hat and Wetaskiwin which had acquired handsome court houses well before World War 1. In 1928, their argument gained strength when the Province announced that Grande Prairie was to soon have its court house. One factor that had no doubt delayed final decision in Red Deer was the bickering amongst various factions within the city as to where the new court house should be located. Finally, the Provincial Superintendent of Government Buildings, Daniel E. McDonald came to Red Deer with Premier Brownlee, and together they declared that the new building would be set on Lots 1-4, Block 28.

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## Old Court House

Provincial Government draughtsmen headed by Frederick H. McDonald immediately began work on the design, and by February 1930 had completed drawings for a rather plain brick building. Very quickly though the decision was made to add a front portico with twin columns made of Manitoba Tyndall limestone. The formal reason for the change, which cost roughly \$15,000, has never been clear, but in light of an expected election in the summer of 1930, one does not have to be terribly cynical to sense that political pressures were involved.

The general contract was awarded to J.P. Desrochers of Edmonton, and construction began almost immediately. The two-storey steel superstructure was set on a 15-inch thick concrete foundation. The walls were built steel columns with hollow tile with eight inch brick. Window sills and highlight horizontal bands were Tyndall limestone. The roof structure consists of rafters made of hot-riveted iron beams supporting wooden decks and clay tile. Building area was an L-shaped 3,642 square feet.

Blueprints called for interior floors, doors, and trim to be made of maple, but in the end birch was used. Hallway and stairwell floors were terrazzo, while the front foyer staircase was marble. Exterior stairs at both the south (front) and east entrances were Tyndall limestone. All windows and interior doors had six-inch wooden casings.

Heat to the building was by a coal-fired boiler and steam radiators. Today, in an age when it seems common for any government project to go wildly over budget, we can only wistfully imagine the negotiations that led to the purchase of the boiler. Perhaps it was from a sense of foreboding that the financial calamity of the previous year might have long-lasting effects, but for whatever reason, rather than do as most developers would do and simply purchase a new boiler, the government of the day shopped used. A coal-fired Safford boiler, first certified in 1912 for marine purposes, was installed. We don't know what the price was, but in the end it proved to be a wise choice as the unit served the building from 1931 to 2001.

The court house opened for business on March 6, 1931. It was to be the last Alberta court house of the classical design. Depression, followed by war interrupted the construction of major public buildings for almost two decades.

By the mid 1950s, Red Deer was rapidly outgrowing its court house. In 1958 a flat-roofed addition of 1,270 square feet was constructed on the building's northeast corner. Aside from exterior walls of red brick, the new wing bore little resemblance to its parent structure. Rather than limestone, the window sills were made of plain concrete. In minimalist 1950s fashion, door and window casings were eliminated. Hanging light fixtures disappeared in favour of four-foot fluorescents. The birch-framed bulletin board was replaced by an aluminum-framed directory. The addition was serviceable and utilitarian, but added nothing to the appearance of the Red Deer Court House.

The court house became the centre of provincial, and to some degree national, attention in 1959. A 21 year-old small-time criminal from Stettler named Robert Raymond Cook was arrested and charged with the murder of his father, step-mother, and five young step-siblings. After his arrest Cook was sent to the Ponoka Hospital for a 30-day psychiatric evaluation. While there, he managed to escape, and for over a week created fear throughout the province as police tried to locate him. . Once recaptured, he was ordered to be tried in Red Deer; a fair trial with an impartial jury being considered unlikely in his smaller home town.

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## Old Court House

In the end, he was found guilty on all counts, and was sentenced to death by Judge Peter Greschuk . Cook was the last person to be executed in Alberta.

By the mid 1960s the demands on the court house were outstripping the available space. In 1968, central air-conditioning was installed, enhancing comfort but doing nothing to alleviate crowding. The construction of a new court house was not an immediate possibility, so the building immediately to the east on Ross Street was purchased, to be used as a provincial court room and ancillary offices. At best though, that was a temporary fix, and discussions towards replacement of the by now almost half-century old court house continued through the 1970s. Finally, with impetus from Red Deer MLA and Provincial Attorney General James Foster, a new two-storey building on the southwest corner of Ross Street and 48 Avenue, the site of the former Charles Snell residence, was approved. Construction began in 1981, with completion in late 1983.

What to do with the old court house now became an issue. Certainly there were those who felt that given its high visibility and prime location, it should be demolished to make room for new development. Many others opposed that idea and sought to have it preserved as a historical site. The Province sold it to the City of Red Deer for \$1, and in July 1986 declared it to be an *Provincial Historic Resource*, the highest designation for such a site. That label means that no repairs, demolition, modifications, or removal may be done without prior ministerial approval. There was no longer any risk of the building being torn down.

But what to do with it? The City found a willing tenant in the Allied Arts Council which proposed to use the building for studios and galleries. A deal was struck and the premises quickly filled up, but financially the project soon proved a financial burden to both parties.

By the late '90s the City realized it had to take a different path. The building was expensive to operate, and would become even more so as the necessity of upgrades in windows, heating, and air conditioning was becoming increasingly apparent. In January 2000 the City took over management and actively sought purchase and / or redevelopment proposals. To the surprise and disappointment of officials, only two were received. Further canvassing of the market brought no further offers. In September 2000, Council accepted the purchase offer of lawyer James L. Dixon and this writer.

While we were able to finance the purchase, neither of the partners immediately had the time to organize and supervise the restoration of the building. All proposed work would have to be pre-approved by the provincial government, and it would be months before we would be able bring new tenants into the building. By mutual agreement, possession was postponed to April 2001. Work carried on through the summer and autumn, and a grand-opening gala was held October 18.

Almost 13 years later, the building is fully occupied by an eclectic group that includes two law firms, two psychologists, a mediator, three musical groups, an art studio, two engineers, an art school, a home-care service, an investment broker, a day spa, a reserve fund planner, and a security service.

Spring 2014

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This has been and continues to be the winter of renewal for the CAHS Board. Our primary focus from late fall through early February was to get our financial management on a sound footing. This has now been accomplished. We have a new treasurer, Paul Pettypiece, who is also a new member of our board. In addition we have hired Valerie Marina to act as our book keeper. In the era of computer software for managing finances we need to have a system which is consistent over a long time frame both with regard to the software used and the categories and accounts used within the software. This has now been accomplished. We will be reducing the number of bank accounts that the CAHS manages from seven to two. We would have reduced the number to one but we have to have a separate bank account for the money generated by casinos.

Other areas in which we are moving to include recruiting new members to help with the operation of our society. Our Society is Central Alberta from Olds to Ponoka and east and west to the provincial boundaries. We especially encourage new members from outside the City of Red Deer to join. The CAHS undertakes a number of activities related to the history of Central Alberta from spearheading the celebration of Red Deer's Centennial to the production of regular newsletters to organizing programs, activities such as dinners in September and December as well as publications of historical material, organizing tours and more. The work required to accomplish all of these tasks is done by individual society members either singly or working as a small group of two or three people. Our present committees include: Programs, Events, Membership, Newsletter, Publications, Tours, and Website. The chair of each committee is usually a member of the CAHS Board but other committee members do not attend Board meetings.

The Programs Committee consists of two or three people who organize the seven (October, November, January, February, March, April and May) programs annually.

**Continued on page 5—President**

**President:**

Usually these programs consist of a speaker who talks about some topic relevant to the history of Central Alberta following year.

Usually we solicit suggestions from Board members and others in late winter then the committee contacts prospective presenters and organizes the final schedule in spring for the

Someone from the committee is responsible for hosting and introducing each presenter. We also need people to help set up and put away chairs at each meeting as well as someone to sell the publications of the society at each meeting.

The Events Committee, again usually consisting of two or three people organize events such as the Dinner and Entertainment at the September Annual General Meeting and December Christmas Party. They arrange the venue and the catering. At the time of the event volunteers are also required to help set up and clean up the venue.

The Membership Committee, which has been headed by Faye Hughes for as long as anyone can remember, consists of Faye and several others who make members aware of our regular meetings and events. This committee is also responsible for recruiting new members.

The Newsletter Committee consists of Shirley Dye and the folks she recruits to help with the production and distribution of *Aspen Country* which is produced quarterly.

The Publications Committee consists of a chair, a role I currently occupy, and a relatively large number of people who are interested in the publication of historical material related to Central Alberta. The role of the Publications Committee is to publish historical works relevant to Central Alberta. We have published many full length books. Last spring we digitized *Homesteads that Nurtured a City*, the definitive history of Red Deer to 1905. Last year we also initiated a number of projects to publish shorter works focussed on particular aspects of Central Alberta's history. This is the only committee that has a secretary and a relatively large number of members. Currently I have about a dozen members on the Publications Committee.

The Tours Committee usually consists of two or three members who organize tours to historically interesting locations either one day local tours or tours of several days to more distant locations. The key member of this committee for the past 20 years has been Don Hepburn. I have helped for the last several years. We are not having a tour this year because neither of us has enough time to organize it. We need volunteers to help with tours if we are going to continue to have tours, either local or to more distant locations.

The Website Committee is relatively new and consists of two or three members whose role it is to maintain a digital presence both through our website and through our Facebook page.

The Board of the CAHS is made up of the Executive (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) the past president and a number of directors. The chairs of the various committees are usually members of the Board or at least report to the Board. The Board's role is oversight of the overall operation of the society and its constituent committees.

The focus of the Board this spring is membership recruitment and establishing of an interesting program schedule for 2014-15. We would appreciate any suggestions members may have for program topics and presenters in the coming year.

Bill Mackay,  
President, CAHS

## The Court of Queen's Bench is 100

September 16, 1907 the Northwest Territories Supreme Court became Alberta Supreme Court. In 1979 the District Court of Alberta and the Supreme Court of Alberta were amalgamated and became the Court of Queen's Bench. The court has evolved from dispensing frontier justice into a nation leading innovator. Its became more open, providing more information to lawyers, the accused and the public. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms pushed more fairness into trials, requiring Crown prosecutors to share evidence with defense lawyers.

### Landmark Alberta Charter

William Stinchcombe was a lawyer who was charged with theft and fraud. One of the Crown's witnesses was a former secretary of Stinchcombe's who had given evidence at the preliminary inquiry that supported the defense's position. Later a statement was taken from her by an RCMP officer, however, at trial the defence was denied access to the contents of the statement. When the Crown decided not to use the statement the defence made a request for it to the judge who refused to provide it. The accused was eventually convicted

### Charter Rights applied

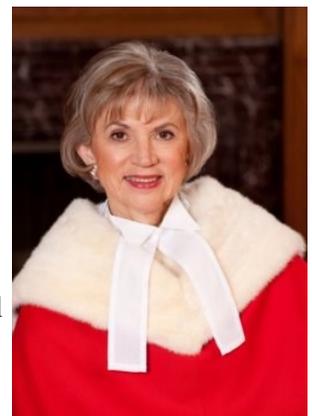
Justice Sopinka, writing for a unanimous Court, held that the judge was wrong in refusing the application by the defense, as the Crown was under a duty to disclose all evidence.

*"The Crown has a legal duty to disclose all relevant information to the defence. The fruits of the investigation which are in its possession are not the property of the Crown for use in securing a conviction but the property of the public to be used to ensure that justice is done."*

The duty, wrote Sopinka, is derived from the right of an accused to make full answer and defence which has been entrenched under section 7 of the Charter. This duty, however, is still subject to rules of privilege. Because this 1991 Alberta challenge to the Supreme Court of Canada set a precedence and Winnipeggers David Milgaard and Thomas Sophonow's court cases might have been avoided.

### Alberta Women on the Bench

Justice Elizabeth McFadyen was the first federally appointed woman named in 1976 to the District Court, for the next 10 years she was often the only woman in the court room, then it became common for the clerk, the reporter, both lawyers, the investigating officer to be women. Today nearly half of the judges are female and over half law school students are women. When McFadyen was appointed there was two women on the provincial appointed provincial court, judges Marjorie Bowker and Darlene Wong. In 1978 Mary Hetherington was appointed to the District Court, she became the first woman appointed to the Alberta Court of Appeal in 1985. Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, born in Pincher Creek Alberta, was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.



## **Buggies and Canoes brought Justice North**

**written by Tom Barrett for the Edmonton Journal in August, 2007**

Nothing symbolizes the differences between then and now in the Court of Queen's Bench as much as the improvement in travel over the past century.

As the province's top trial court celebrates its 100 anniversary, it's time for reflection on the good old days of frontier justice.

The court was created in 1907 to replace the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories after Alberta (NWT) became a province. At the time it was mostly a name change, as the justices of the NWT court simply became the Alberta bench.

In those days, the week-long journey up to Peace River was certainly a major adventure. The first railroad didn't even open up until 1916, says Court of Queens Bench supernumerary Justice Ernest Marshall. Supernumerary judges are those eligible for retirement but prefer to continue hearing cases.

Imagine those distinguished jurists travelling in horse drawn wagons and having to portage impassable portions of river to deliver some justice to the 200 folk who lived in the area, Marshall says.

They went up to Athabasca with the team and wagon, then they travelled up the Athabasca River a little ways and then up the Slave River to Lesser Slave Lake" says Marshall, who practiced law in Peace River for 19 years and has written the book, Justice on the Peace; Law and Lawyers in Alberta's Northwest.

"The Slave River wasn't very good for longer boats. It had some poor sections and they had a 12-mile portage at one point. They reached the end of Lesser Slave Lake, which was about 80 miles long, then they were back to horse and wagon."

It's still a tough trip. The horse and wagon is long gone, but with air service to Peace River shut down, judges drive all the way from Edmonton or fly to Grande Prairie, rent a car and drive to Peace River to deliver justice.

There's a photograph in the Peace River Archives of the first court of Queen's Bench sitting in that northern outpost. In those days it was called the Alberta Supreme Court.

There's another picture of an early magistrate going to court with a team and wagon, with a young RCMP constable handling the reins.

Marshall says the Alberta Supreme Court started out sitting only twice a year in places such as Peace River. "Ninety-nine years ago the first judge went up there and held court in Grouard and Peace River.

Unfortunately for the judge, he arrived in Peace River to find there were no cases for him to hear, so he turned around and went back all the way to Grouard to oversee his first trial in the area.

One of the early cases in Grouard was of a man charged with damaging public property by cutting the telegraph line. It seems he was trying to make sure nobody beat him at registering his homestead claim. He was convicted and fined \$500.00 an astronomical \$11,000.00 in today's dollars.

"To go down to Fort Vermilion, which the Supreme Court always went in the early days, you would travel down the Peace River about 180 to 200 miles straight north," says Marshall.

Fort Vermilion is a very old community" he adds. "There was a Hudson's Bay post there, from 1792 I believe. So it always had 300 to 400 people and drew from a big area of trappers and lumber workers and such, and there was farming going on there too. They went down there for sittings and they had to go down by steamboat for years, until the Mackenzie Highway went in."

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## **Buggies and canoes:**

The judges and lawyers were all gowned, just like they are today. “Basic language in court probably didn’t differ a great deal” Marshall adds.

The business of dispensing justice was very similar, although the style has changed more than a little. The first chief justice is reported to have run his court with his feet on his desk and a lit cigar in his mouth.

In the early days. There were few courthouses, and even Edmonton didn’t have one for the first five years.

They were using a general storefront office, a real store area on Jasper Avenue as the place where the Supreme Court sat,” Marshall explains. You could go shopping downtown and pick up a little justice along with your groceries.

Trials were significantly shorter then, not extended by expert witnesses touting opposite opinions, for example.

“In 1938 up in Peace River, in the middle of winter, a judge went up there and heard two jury trials and a judge-alone trial in one week. The jury trials were murder cases and the third trial was a manslaughter case, as I recall. He got them all done that week and threw a big party at the end and invited all the police and court staff and the lawyers” Marshall says.

Marshall found only one early example of an expert witness being used, a psychiatrist called to testify in a murder trial.

They also didn’t have traffic court for injury lawsuits or impaired driving charges, given that there were only 39 cars in the province when the Supreme Court got started.

They weren’t running into each other and giving whiplash 100 years ago, Marshall observes. “They had a top speed of about 25 miles an hour.

Nor were there court fights over minerals, common occurrences today, because there was no oil and gas industry.

### **The following poem was written by a judge who was presiding in a case of a tree/car crash**

We thought that we would never see  
A suit to compensate a tree.  
A suit whose claim in tort is prest  
Upon a mangled tree's behest;  
A tree whose battered trunk was prest  
Against a Chevy's crumpled crest;  
A tree that faces each new day  
With bark and limb in disarray;  
A tree that may forever bear  
A lasting need for tender care.  
Flora lovers though we three,  
We must uphold the court's decree.  
  
Affirmed

## Justice in Alberta pre-1905

Justice in the west began with the 1670 Land Grant made to the Hudson's Bay Company. It made no sense to remove felons and debtors from the wilderness, the company in the Land Grant deal, had been given the power to judge. It was in no-one's interest to have war with the natives, war was incompatible with profit.

The Northwest Company "The Canadians" from Montreal had moved into Native territory and HBC needed to follow with their own trading posts farther west. Justice and its execution still lay in the hands of the traders and the Court of Eastern Canada's authority over them.

By 1821 this rudimentary justice had broken down. Many judges, doubting their jurisdiction to try cases 2000 miles away declined on constitutional grounds to convict, so justice was just in the hands of the traders. In 1816 a group of Nor'westerners killed the HBC governor and 18 others in Sellkirk, known as the Seven Oaks Massacre, They were rounded up and sent to York where they were acquitted. Only two cases in Alberta played a role, in 1834 Francois Gardpuy of Fort Assinibonia was charged with several misdemeanors and was held in Fort Edmonton until spring, then shipped to Toronto in irons. In 1835 James Calder was charged with murder. Both men were acquitted.

In 1858 the vanguard of U.S. gold miners was entering Alberta. The 1860s witnessed debauchery by wolfers, rustlers, and bootleggers coming north from Montana into Alberta. For a few years now ladies fashion in Europe did not include fur coats and HBC suffered. All this signaled the demise of the fur trade. The Canadian Government was becoming concerned. In 1873 the Act, Respecting the Administration of Justice was established and the North-West Mounted Police was formed. The Act also provided for the appointment of salaried Stipendiary Magistrates, initially there was four of them, all lawyers.

These were judges and they would try cases where the offence occurred, jury trials were not necessary as it was difficult to assemble even six men.

The Act established a body of Justices of the Peace, frequently senior HBC employees. The NWMP had sweeping power to enforce the law and any challenge to its processes. The law imposed legal duty on the police to assist judges. The NWMP had the power to try the offender they had arrested earlier, bootleggers, wolfers, rustlers and poachers could be arrested, prosecuted, convicted, sentenced and detained with the speed needed for the reality of the harsh new land.

Successive changes were made to the Act of 1873 by way of Territorial Ordinance. It obliged Stipendiary Magistrates to travel to populated areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta to sit when there was a full docket awaiting them. The overlapping of statutory functions of police and judicial officers was continued with the appointment of Col. MacLeod as a Stipendiary Magistrate concurrent with his duty as Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, he only sat at Fort Walsh. Stipendiary Magistrates were appointed in Regina and paid the sum of \$3,000 annually. The background of these men was useful to the government in defining the ordinances to police the land.

Continued on page 10... See Justice

## Justice:

The life of a magistrate was taxing in all aspects. Presiding in court in small communities was a challenge, few lawyers were available to help them, only police. Rarely did they have prosecutors interpreted evidence and no court reporter. Before the railroad, Fort Calgary was five days hard travel from Edmonton, six from Fort Saskatchewan, Medicine Hat was no closer.

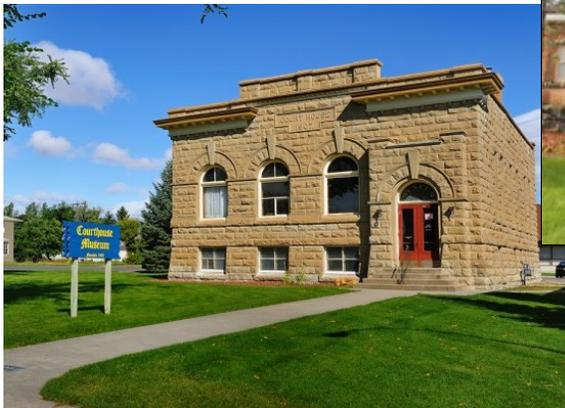
Travel from Battleford was by paddle wheeler when the ice was off. Much travel was by buckboard, stage coach or wagon. Sleigh in the winter. MacLeod spoke of conducting trials on the bald prairie, from the back of a wagon as well as community halls, stores or cafes.

The Reil trial was particularly hard as it was steeped in politics, religion and race.

After the myriad of difficulties with the Reil case, Sir John A. MacDonald approved a new system. It separated the NWMP from the judges. There would be new courts, one equal to the Supreme Court. The new courts would sit in specified districts, on specified dates, Calgary and Edmonton were in the Northern Alberta district, Col. MacLeod would sit in the Southern district. The new system complete with appeal court that would be heard twice yearly in Regina and later in Calgary.

In same situation as the American authorities, our west was quiet, largely through exemplary treatment of the Plains Indians by the police and prosecuting the whiskey merchants by the magistrate. Both had done their job — and the 40th parallel held.

A Torrens land registry was instituted in 1886, it was followed by a registry for personal property. Lawyers had become regulated. School boards, hospital boards, health units and irrigation districts sprung up. They and the recovery of hydrocarbons, logging disputes and farming challenges—all represented expanded litigation before the court. There was huge advances in transportation, communication and immigration as well as commerce; all demanding judicial services.



**Cardston  
Court House**



**Territorial Court House  
Fort MacLeod 1902**



**Wetaskwin  
Court House**

## North-West Mounted Police

In 1873, the government of Canada established the North-West Mounted police. They were to ensure peace and order in the wilderness, in what is now Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, and the North-west Territories. The white U.S, Whiskey peddlers were controlling most of what is now southern Alberta. They were trading furs for whiskey and destroying the natives with booze and guns. The NWMP objective was to protect the aboriginals from the whites, not the other way around as commonly believed.

A force of 275 young men was recruited, and left Toronto by train June 6, 1874, via Chicago. They then departed Fort Dufferin Manitoba on July 8 too march to Alberta with 310 horses, 67 wagons, 114 ox-carts, 18 yoke of oxen, 50 cows and 40 calves. They crossed miles of endless of prairie grass, wooded coulees, rolling hills, and flatland. In 14 days, horses and men were exhausted. They had endured terrible hardships; lack of water, insect plagues, lack of fire wood and the equipment soon proved to be inadequate. The tents blew away in the prairie winds and the pillbox hats were of little use.

On September 18, after failing to find Fort Whoop, their luck changed when they met up with Jerry Potts. An extraordinary guide, who lead them to the hub of the illegal whiskey trade. American Whiskey Traders from Fort Benton, Montana had established the well armed Fort Whoop-up, now were no where to be seen. Upon learning of the NWMP's coming, they abandoned the Fort without a shot fired. The Mounties reputation was made through the epic march west and successful expulsion of the Whiskey traders.

Fort MacLeod was established, then Fort Saskatchewan, Fort Calgary and Fort Walsh. The railway brought more and more settlers west, the Mounties duties included containing the whiskey trade and enforcing agreements with the First Nations people, delivering the mail, keeping records of births and deaths, as well as the weather, they even gave farming advice, the commanding officer arranged to be sworn in as a justice of the peace which allowed for magisterial authority.

In 1885 the NWMP assisted the militia quelling the North West Rebellion.

In 1896, 20 men were sent to the Yukon to enforce Canadian sovereignty, enforce the law and collect customs duties. The NWMP were so successful , making it one of the most peaceful and orderly such affair in history, cementing their world-wide reputation.

The prefix "Royal" was conferred on the NWMP by King Edward VII in 1905

In 1920, the NWMP was merged with the Dominion Police and renamed the "Royal Canadian Mounted Police"

Historians have theorized that failure of the 1874 march would not have ended the settling of the west but would have delayed it for years, it could also have encouraged the CPR to seek a more northerly route through a partially settled valley on the North Saskatchewan River.

There is no more recognizable and meaningful symbol for a nation than the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They played a leading role in Canada's history and remain an integral part of our society. In what other country will you find a policeman as a symbol of their country.

These stories only give an overview, noting the landmarks of the birth and growth of the justice system in Alberta.  
The internet has a lot more information. All very interesting.

# OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE

## North-West Mounted Police Uniforms

Sir John A MacDonalld believed the North-West Mounted Police unit should reflect its purpose, no fancy lace or feathers. The first uniforms were simple.

A red Norfolk jacket, a roll collar, large skirt with pockets, worn over steel grey breeches. Dark blue trousers with double white stripes for dismount duties. White cork helmet with a pugree hanging behind. The round blue pillbox had a white stripe for the men and gold for officers. Black boots with spurs were worn in full dress and brown riding boots for service wear. White gauntlets, a haversack and brown pistol belt.

For winter, NWMP were given a short buffalo coat, fur cap, mittens, moccasins and long woolen stockings. This sensible winter dress was practical and remained unchanged as long as the Force was mounted.

The Norfolk jacket was practical but unpopular, a new design was approved in 1878, a scarlet tunic with gold braid trim and dark blue collar and cuffs, dark blue trousers with a gold strip. The cork helmet was cumbersome and inconvenient.

A soft western hat, though unofficial was commonly worn. It was light, comfortable and provided good cover from the elements. The Stetson did not become formally recognized until the turn of the century.

The original weapons were the .577 Snider-Enfield carbine and a .450 Adams revolver. The single shot carbine was fine for a few years, until the Indians started carrying repeating rifles. They finally adopted the .45-.75 Winchester repeatin rifle in 1878.

The dress and equipment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has changed over time, meeting changing roles and conditions. However, the scarlet jacket that immediately identifies a “Mountie” still remains a symbol of the Force more than a century later.

