



Heritage News

CENTRAL OKANAGAN HERITAGE SOCIETY
FALL 2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

- The Cameron Family
- FRAHCAS
- Advance with Courage
The Aberdeens'
- Heritage Grants
Program
- 2020 COHS Heritage
Award Nominations
- Kelowna Tree
Protectors
- Upcoming Events
- COHS News in Brief
- Heritage News



Heritage in Limbo; Boarded up since early 2013 Cameron House is still waiting to be back in community use

The Cameron Family

Many of Kelowna's streets and avenues are named after pioneer families. Cameron Avenue, Cameron house and Cameron Park (on Richter Street) all are named after the William Cameron family.

William Cameron moved to Kelowna from Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan with his wife and three young sons. They had recently purchased the Guisachan Ranch. An account of their arrival was written by eldest son Alister. "We landed in Kelowna from the Prairies in September 1903 – some of the first Prairie people to come and settle here. We came down the lake on the old stern wheeler S.S. Aberdeen and unloaded our horses, cattle and household effects on the wharf at the end of Bernard Avenue. In those days, when the boat would arrive, everyone in town would come down to greet the new settlers. When we arrived our cattle were turned loose off the boat and there was quite a scattering of people."

Alister goes on to recount an early experience in Kelowna. "As it was September and apples were still on the trees, my two small brothers and I saw these apples growing on trees, a thing we had never seen before, we nearly went crazy." And "In the fall of that year there were big herds of cattle running loose all around here and one day when I was going to Kelowna on my small pony to get the mail they all took after me; I had to get out of there in a hurry."

All three of William Cameron sons took part in WW1. Alister enlisted with the Canadian Engineers. While encamped with the Engineers in the south of England a bout of flu followed by pneumonia, put an end to Alister's hope of further Military Service.

His brother Ian died during the war at Vimy Ridge. Brother Paddy Cameron came home. Following their father's death, the two brothers Alister and Paddy eventually divided up the Guisachan Ranch. Paddy and his wife Elaine stayed in Guisachan house. In 1928 Alister built a new home in the south west corner of the Guisachan ranch. This building is known today as the "Cameron house." Alister and his new bride Sophie moved into the house and lived there for most of their days. They raised two daughters. Their farm was operated as a mixed farm. It consisted of livestock, horses and sheep.

In addition to farming, Alister Cameron went on to have a productive career as a Land Surveyor. At various points in time he was employed by the B.C. Government as Assistant Engineer engaged in phases of Water Resources work in the Okanagan. In 1941 Alister was in charge of a Hydrographical Survey of the Okanagan Watershed.

For over thirty years Alister took his own cattle and sheep and that of his neighbors across to the Bald Range and Burnt Basin on the Westside of the lake, for which he had a Government grazing permit. In March he and several young friends would drive the livestock down Bernard Avenue to the Ferry wharf, in time to load for the first ferry ride.



Kelowna Public Archives: KPA #3108

Cameron Family Continued

The sheep eventually found a new home to graze upon and were taken the opposite direction eastward, up to the high mountains. The area was called the Greyback Mountains some fifty miles east of Kelowna and on the divide between Mission Creek and the Kettle River. Mr. Cameron secured a grazing permit and he and his business partner John Anderson pioneered the opening of a new range. The sheep were always in excellent condition when they came off.

Lorraine McLarty, long time COHS member, Distinguished Service Award Recipient, and volunteer extraordinaire, had these recollections of her connection to the Cameron family.

The Alister Cameron family had two daughters, Lexy and Mary. Lexy went to school with me, graduating from high school in June 1947. The Camerons had sheep of course, and also Lexy had a horse. We often would be at the farm after school or on weekends.

I remember going across on the ferry one time very early in the morning with the Camerons and a full ferry load of sheep and driving them (walking with them) up the Westside road to their summer pasture. Mr. Cameron brought us down in the evening to catch the ferry home. The shepherds would be there most of the summer with the sheep.

Growing up, I was invited to dinner at the house on a number of occasions, and must admit to not always enjoying it. Dinner seemed to include mutton of some sort. It definitely was not my favourite, and Mr. Cameron insisted that I needed second helpings!

Mr. Cameron exhibited regularly at the Interior Exhibition in Armstrong. "Competing in a field of more than 100 entries from the Interior, the Suffolk sheep exhibited by Alister Cameron swept the board in all classes." The high standard for which his sheep were known was the result of the constant care and thoroughness of his operation. Whether shearing, lambing, dipping or ear-marking meticulous records were kept.

An acquaintance of Alister wrote to him in 1952 "Times must be good in the sheep business".....to which Alister replied, "You must be out of touch with the sheep business. If I break even this year I will be tickled to death. All we have on wool is 10 cents this year and no one wants it. Lambs i.e. the ones that are fed are 21 cents and last year they were 35 cents and expenses still going up."



*Alister & Paddy Cameron
Kelowna Public Archives: KPA #3341*

Cameron Family Continued

One of Alister's special interest was that of Scouting. Every summer for close to thirty years Alister would take the scouts on a two-day hike with pack-horses up to the high mountains. In his many years of surveying he had gained an immense knowledge of the mountains and of the hardy life of camping in all types of weather. After all the years of leading the scout trips to the mountains Alister reluctantly gave it up. "I can't keep one jump ahead of the boys like I used to. They keep getting younger all the time and I keep getting older."

Alister had a strong Christian faith and was a member of St. Michaels and All Angels Anglican church for 68 years. The last time he attended a service was on Sunday June 14th, 1970. Mr. Cameron was a patient at KGH and persuaded them to give him a two-hour pass so he could hear his daughter Lexy speak of her Missionary work in India during the morning service. That brought him great joy.

Alister found time to be intimately involved with the Anglican Church camp in the days of tents at Okanagan Centre and then at the permanent site at Wilson Landing. Mr. Cameron was in charge of property and his enthusiasm and energy were contagious. Aided by his gift of leadership and ability to organize, the camp was made ready each year to accept its campers. "From 1948 on, it was work parties both big and small every year, and the trips over that road were many, but somehow we got things done. At times I was a little ruthless at driving people on, earning me the nick name of "Mr. Sledge Hammer."

The large field to the south of Cameron House was donated to the City of Kelowna to be used as a children's playground and park. For years the Cameron's had allowed children to play in the field and with development increasing, he wanted to ensure they always had green open spaces to play. Thus Cameron Park.

Whatever the years offered, Alister Cameron took them without grumbling. "We've never died a winter yet." Was one refrain he would use.

He was a friend to all and never held a grudge. His home life was a very happy one. He and his wife Sophie were devoted to each other and their two daughters. The daughters have written their own accounts of a safe and happy home.

Alister Cameron service to those around him came to an end in the Autumn of 1970.

Next time you drive by Cameron Park, or see Cameron house in its sorry state, think about Alister Cameron, a wonderful man who gave so generously of his time, talents and property to this community. A wonderful example of civic spirit.

Written by Janice Henry with excerpts taken from an article written by Mrs. Sophie Cameron and published in the 35th Annual Okanagan Historical Society Report.

FRAHCAS

In the winter of 1997 under the direction of Valerie Hallford a number of area residents started to meet to oppose a 63-unit apartment building on the west side of Pandosy between Park & Cadder Avenues. One of the neighbours, Miss Dunn of 2024 Pandosy Street refused to sell to the developer.

This was the beginnings of FRAHCAS - Friends and Residents of the Abbott Street Heritage Conservation Area Society. The society was incorporated provincially as a non - profit in August of 1998. During that same year the City of Kelowna pursuant to the Local Government Act wisely proclaimed the Abbott street and Marshall street areas as designated heritage and conservation districts of a residential and historical character.

The society currently has the following four key objectives.

- To encourage the preservation of structural and natural heritage within the Abbott Street Heritage Conservation Area and to maintain its existing single and two-family residential character.
- To advocate the preservation, conservation and restoration of heritage and to work toward more public awareness and understanding of heritage in our area and its importance to the City.
- To advocate for the Heritage Register and further research properties beyond what the City has done.
- To list and research natural landscapes or landscape features considered to be of particular historical, horticultural or design interest in our area and to conserve, maintain and expand our active natural and structural archives.

Through the years FRAHCAS has worked tirelessly to preserve the districts unique character. They have been the gate keepers.

At the present time, they are opposing the application for rezoning of three properties at 416, 426 & 430 Royal ave to HD2 in order to build a 39 unit three storey apt building.

As of September 2019 the current board consists of; Walley Lightbody, Diane Geddes, Jeannette Mergens, Shirlee Ross, Barb Craig, Barry Jessup, Eileen Cordingly, Jackie Bear, Wayne Ross and Ian Critchton.

FRAHCAS meets monthly, typically the second Tuesday of each month @ 4:00 pm. For more information contact Wayne Ross at 250.470.9111 if you wish to attend or visit the website www.frahcas.org for more information.



On September 19, 2019 new signage was unveiled at the Abbott Street entrance off Harvey Avenue. R-L ; Tanya Sletten, Community Development Coordinator for the City of Kelowna; Walley Lightbody resident and Past President FRAHCAS and Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran.

Advance With Courage - The Aberdeens

The beautiful, prosperous and agriculturally diverse Okanagan Valley, had humble beginnings. In the late nineteenth century the valley was mainly used to graze cattle.

In 1890 an industrious and aristocratic couple from Britain, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, discovered the valley, when they reconnected with an old family friend, G.G. Mackay, while visiting in Vancouver. Looking for ways to invest in Canada and provide an alternative for Lady Aberdeen's brother Coutts, living in North Dakota, G.G. Mackay brokered a sale, sight unseen of the 480 acre McDougall Ranch in the Okanagan Valley. In reference to Mr. Mackay, Lady Aberdeen noted in her diary that "He has proved himself so safe and wise a man that we are safe in his hands."

Converting the McDougall Ranch to a fruit farm would not only be a good investment but would also be the perfect opportunity for Coutts. The Aberdeen's plans were ambitious in part as they had little to no farming experience. McDougall Ranch, named after its first owners, was changed to Guisachan Ranch in honor of Lady Aberdeens childhood home in Scotland. As Guisachan means 'The Place of the Firs', "baby fir trees" were brought from the Scottish Guisachan to be planted at the new Guisachan.

The Aberdeens made plans for their new fruit farm. With 200 acres planted with apple trees, pears, plums and cherries, the Aberdeen's felt sure that the farm would soon pay for itself! Planting strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, currants, and gooseberries in between the rows of trees would help to generate income. The demand for fruit "will doubtless cause the valley to become ere long a great fruit-producing centre." The Aberdeens' had many challenges and trials as they tried to make a success of their fruit farming adventures not only at Guisachan Farm but the Coldstream Ranch which they also acquired in 1891.

The Central Okanagan Heritage Society (COHS), long associated with Guisachan Ranch, was looking for creative ways to bring the documents, photos and archival material that were either in-house, or with various institutions and individuals, to a place and format where it could be publicly accessible. The "Advance with Courage" exhibit is the result of this desire.

The exhibit was created with help and financial support from the Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC) Community Stories Investment Program. The VMC managed by the Canadian Museum of History with financial support from the Government of Canada, is the largest digital source of stories and experiences shared by Canada's museums and heritage organizations. This exhibit is the third one created for the VMC by the Central Okanagan Heritage Society.

Much has been written about the Aberdeens and their impact in the U.K. and Ottawa, as well as Lord Aberdeen's time as Canada's 7th Governor General. "Advance with Courage" tells a lesser known part of their story: their time spent and profound impact on the Okanagan. The story is told through the eyes of British aristocrat settlers. The land in the Okanagan Valley belonged to the Syilx people. Often little regard was held for First Nations people and their territory. Instead the focus was on bringing new settlers to the Valley to develop and farm the land for their own personal benefit. The Aberdeen's perspective was the popular viewpoint of European colonization across the globe at the time.



Advance With Courage—Continued

The exhibit is a rare visual and written account of their time in the Kelowna and Vernon areas by using Lady Aberdeen's Kodak photos, her journals and additional archival materials. The Community Story exhibit Advance with Courage took two years to develop with the support of many volunteers under the direction of COHS staff Lorri Dauncey. Lorri, with help from Shannon Jorgenson, created the exhibit. Special thanks to the volunteers that helped make this exhibit happen: Carolyn MacHardy, Bob Hayes, Tara Hurley, Madelaine Albert, Alexandra Dauncey -Elwood, Jim Elwood, Ursula Surtees, Wayne Wilson, Sandra Harwood, Riley Grandel, and Alicia van der Sluijs.

This on-line resource will be used by middle, high school as well as university students, and those with an interest in local history. The "Advance with Courage" exhibit can be accessed on the VMC website virtualmuseum.ca/community-stories_histoires-de-chez-nous/advance-with-courage_avancer-avec-courage/ or by visiting the COHS website at okheritagesociety.com

Kelowna Heritage Grants Program



This is the twelfth year that COHS has managed the City of Kelowna Heritage Grants Program (CoKHGP). The program, created to recognize the value of heritage in the community, provides financial support to buildings on the Kelowna Heritage Register. Changes to the program this year include: all roof projects must include a certified roof inspection; paint projects must

use the *Historical Colours for Western Canada* palette; new priority for grant applications including first priority to heritage designated buildings. Grants assist with a portion of the costs in maintaining and conserving the building's exterior, including foundations.

All granting decisions are made by a committee of community volunteers with heritage expertise. The Kelowna Heritage Register can be accessed at: www.kelowna.ca/our-community/arts-culture-heritage/heritage/heritage-register

For more information on the program contact ~ Lorri Dauncey at ldauncey.cohs@telus.net

The Gurr House, 815 Lawrence Avenue: built in 1920, is an example of the many different styles and sizes of heritage houses on Lawrence Avenue. One of Kelowna's oldest neighbourhoods. This modest house is valued for its close association with Charles James Gurr, a member of the British Columbia Provincial Police (BCPP). He retired in the late 1950s after 40 years as a police officer. James and his wife Mary Ellen came to Kelowna in 1935 and lived in the house until their deaths in 1972.

The Gurr House is a vernacular craftsman-style bungalow with simple elements including the covered front porch, shingle cladding, exposed rafter tails and soffits, and large brackets under the eaves. This house is a good example of the straight-forward approach by builders at the time - the use of a few simple design elements to give the house character. In 2018, the house underwent conservation work including repairs of the shingle siding, the front and back porches, and a new heritage colour scheme using the Benjamin Moore True Colours palette. The homeowner received a heritage grant towards the project.



COHS Heritage Award Nominations

The Central Okanagan Heritage Society is again inviting nominations for our **Annual Heritage Awards** to be presented during Heritage Week, February 17–23, 2020. We are interested in receiving nominations for projects within the geographic boundaries of the Central Okanagan region in the following categories:

Distinguished Community Service: *Awarded to a person or persons in recognition of their service to the community in the heritage field.* To nominate in this category please provide the person's name and contact information, and a brief write-up outlining their service and accomplishments in heritage conservation.

Conservation project on a heritage building currently in non-residential use: *Awarded to a non-residential building that has recently undergone an exterior restoration and/or rehabilitation. The high standards, innovation and commitment to heritage conservation are recognized.* To nominate a building, please give the address, the current owner's name, and a little history about the building and the conservation project. Please include photographs.

Conservation project on a heritage building currently in residential use: *Awarded to a residential building that has recently undergone an exterior restoration and/or rehabilitation. The high standards, innovation and commitment to heritage conservation are recognized.* To nominate a building, please give the address, the current owner's name, and a little history about the building and the conservation project. Please include photographs.

Continued conservation of a heritage building: *Awarded to a building to recognize the high quality of its exterior preservation and maintenance over the years, in keeping with its original design and structure.* To nominate a building, please give the address, the current owner, and a little history about the building. Please include photographs.

Preservation or restoration of a neighborhood or area: *Awarded to a neighbourhood or area that has largely remained unchanged over time or has been revitalized through the restoration and/or rehabilitation of its buildings and streetscape.* To nominate a neighbourhood or area, please give us the addresses, a contact person, and a little history about the neighbourhood or area. Please include contact information and photographs.

Special Heritage Project: *To recognize and honour special projects and accomplishments in the Central Okanagan. This may include advocacy, awareness and planning heritage and historical projects.* To nominate a project, please give us the addresses, a contact person, and a little history about the project. Please include contact information and photographs.

Construction of a new building compatible with its heritage surroundings: *Awarded to a new building or structure that is in keeping with the heritage character of the surrounding area or neighbourhood.* To nominate a building, please give the address, the current owner, and information about the building including when it was built and its function. Please include photographs of the building, including the streetscape.

Please submit your nominations by December 13, 2019

to the Central Okanagan Heritage Society:

Mailing address: P.O. Box 25025, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Y7

Telephone: 250-861-7188

Email: kathyh.cohs@telus.net

Kelowna Tree Protectors'

In the fall of 2018, several concerned citizens met to form a new group focused on the importance of Kelowna's trees. The name chosen was *Kelowna Tree Protectors*.

Some of their main goals include educating Kelowna's residents on the importance of trees within our city. What trees live best here in our Okanagan climate and how they assist with climate change. How to properly care for trees on our private properties and how and where to plant new trees. What is the size of the tree canopy in Kelowna and is it big enough? And of importance to our COHS members, what trees have historical significance?

The group was aware that in 1992 the City of Kelowna created an inventory of more than 100 trees, mostly in the downtown area. This list had never been updated. In December of 2018 several members visited the trees on this list to photograph the ones that still exist, and to note the ones that are no longer. As a result, they estimate that 20% of those trees are gone and 80% still stand.

With the increasing population and resulting development to provide housing for us all, these magnificent and massive old trees are under threat due to construction pressures. Kelowna does not have a tree protection bylaw for trees on private property, although there is a bylaw for those that live on city property. The group would like the City of Kelowna to seriously look into creating a bylaw to preserve and protect our trees and our tree canopy.



Their next activity was held on Mothers' Day 2019, a spring season bike ride along the Ethel Street bike corridor to visit 13 of the trees from that 1992 Tree Inventory that exist on that street. Arborist Jeanette Merrick talked about each tree. She provided information about how living in the city, beside sidewalks, road and new construction impacts a tree's ability to thrive and survive.

For more information about the Kelowna Tree Protectors contact Bev Kalmakoff at beejaykaytelus.net or Pat Munro at p2muncha@gmail.com

Cameron House Expression of Interest:

On April 25, 2019 the City of Kelowna issued a "Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)" to create a conservation and Adaptive Reuse Plan for the Cameron House.

COHS has long had an interest in the house and had less than a month to view the property and create the EOI, with a closing date of May 23, 2019. We sprang into action gathered the team together and created the EOI which was submitted prior to the May deadline.

As of this newsletter publication at the end of October 2019 we have heard nothing from the City of Kelowna, thus the future of the Cameron house remains in limbo.

Upcoming Events

PLEASE Join US FOR AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS At BenVOULIN!

Sunday, December 1st, 2019 at 2pm

Admission by donation

*Festive Christmas Music by "8 Misbehavin", seasonal goodies,
at the Beautiful Historic Benvoulin Heritage Church.*

For more information, please call the COHS office at 250.861.7188
or email at kathyh.cohs@telus.net

SEATING IS LIMITED

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future

From 2010 to 2015, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* listened to and documented the experiences of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the Indian Residential School Experience. In June 2015 they published their final report, which outlined 94 Calls to Actions for Canadians. Okanagan Regional Library will be hosting an opportunity for folks to continue the climb up Reconciliation Mountain.

Over a five-month period the community is invited to a reading circle where they will read together the Executive Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: ***Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future***. Debbie Hubbard will facilitate the Circle.

Sessions run on the **first Thursday of each month from 12pm-1:30pm** at the Okanagan Regional Library Downtown Branch:

November 7th December 5th February 6th March 5th May 7th

Register* by November 4th at <https://areconciliationreadingcircle.eventbrite.ca>

*Your free registration includes a hard-copy of the report and lunch at each session.

If you have any questions about the reading circle, please contact Debbie Hubbard at 250-469-4468 or sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com.

COHS News in Brief

Kelowna Fire Department Station # 2

A current masonry assessment done by Vancouver based engineering consultants Reid Jones Christopherson, puts the cost of preserving the brickwork on Kelowna's oldest fire hall at \$530,000.

"The brick work is in generally good condition" according to the documents provided to city staff, however the mortar has failed in places and brick veneer added in the 1990 addition are weathering rapidly.

The fire hall first built in 1921 is on the City of Kelowna's Heritage Register. It has seen several expansions over the years including 1945, '52, '71 as well as 1990. Each time efforts were made to match the buildings original brick.

It is interesting to note that while the original brick which is 100 years old requires some maintenance, it is the latest work done in 1990 that requires the most extensive repairs and the biggest expense.



Benvoulin Tours and Teas: have been popular with senior's residences and service groups. For more information or to reserve a tour & tea, please contact COHS at 250-861-7188 or email at cohs@telu.net . Suggested donation \$5 per person.

Pioneer & Places: Local Historian Bob Hayes and COHS staff have created a slide show and talk entitled *Pioneers & Places*. This lively and informative three-part presentation focuses on the region's early days of settlement from 1859 to the 1870s. The talk and slide show presentation is given at Reid Hall, followed by a guided tour of the Pandosy Mission site. and Kelowna Cemetery.



HERITAGE NEWS

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HERITAGE NEWS

Canada Historic Places Day

Canada Historic Places Day is a great opportunity for sites of all types and sizes to share their story, and for Canadians to get out and enjoy. In 2019, millions of people across Canada heard about the event and thousands experienced history on this day across 550 historic places, including sites at or near all 9 cultural UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Canada, there's even more to discover!

Do you own or operate a historic site?

Mark your calendar for **Canada Historic Places Day, Saturday, July 4, 2020** and register at www.historicplacesday.ca.

This project is made possible in part with support from Parks Canada Agency.

Heritage Week

In 2020, Heritage Day is February 17, 2020, and Heritage Week runs from February 17 to 23, 2020 with the theme **2020 Vision: Bringing the Past Into the Future.**

Why celebrate Heritage Day? Because Canada's collective story is told through our special places, whether they are historic light-houses or schools, places of faith, industrial complexes, or cultural landscapes. Our shared heritage in all its forms has the power to bring people together and create a sense of belonging. Gathering places like town squares, and pow wow grounds, and cultural objects such as artifacts, regalia and family memorabilia are tangible touchstones with the past that can root us in place and nourish the spirit. Intangible heritage – languages, traditional rituals, music, dance, storytelling and more – is at the heart of family and community.



Central Okanagan Heritage Society wishes to thank The View Winery and Vineyard for their continued support.



COHS thanks the **City of Kelowna** for its support through an Arts, Culture and Heritage Operating Grant for 2019



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