

ANNUAL REPORT



April, 2020

EDMONTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 23, 2019

Prior to the business part of the meeting, in recognition of her years of service to EDHS, Linda Collier presented a gift to Wanda Bornn. Unfortunately Wanda was unable to attend the meeting.

1. Call to order: 8:52 p.m.

2. Approval of agenda

John Dolphin moved and Kathy Reith seconded approval of the agenda. PASSED

3. Approval of Minutes of April 17, 2018

Ceres Yurkiw moved and Bob Snyder seconded approval of the April 17, 2018 minutes. PASSED

4. Annual Reports: presented by Sean Moir

After providing highlights from his President's report, Sean Moir updated members with respect to two changes to the Society's Bylaws Alberta Registries Services required. As the changes were for clarification and were not considered to be substantive, no further action was needed. The Bylaws have now been accepted.

Tim O'Grady moved and Cadence Bergman seconded a motion to accept the annual reports. PASSED

5. Treasurer's Report: presented by Cadence Bergman

a) Cadence Bergman moved and Kathy Reith seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. PASSED

b) Cadence Bergman moved and Linda Collier seconded a motion to use SVS Group as auditors of the financial statement. PASSED

c) Cadence also presented a draft 2019 budget for information.

6. New Business:

Sean Moir noted the imminent move of the EDHS Office to the Old Timers Cabin at 9930 – 99 Street, effective May 1, 2019.

7. Elections: presented by Sean Moir

- a) Motion to acclaim election of Tim O'Grady as President for a two-year term ending at the annual general meeting in April 2021: Moved by Sean Moir, seconded by Steven Yakimets. PASSED
- b) Tom Long was elected by acclamation as a director for a one-year term ending at the annual general meeting in April 2020.
- c) Christine Prokop, Lee Smith, Stephen Yakimets and Joe Hartfeil were elected by acclamation as directors for two-year terms ending at the annual general meeting in April 2021.

John Dolphin will be Secretary for one year and Sean Moir will move to Past President for two years.

8. Adjournment:
 - a. Motion to adjourn: Sean Moir
 - b. AGM adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

President's Annual Report

Over the course of 2019 EDHS has been a leader in Edmonton's heritage scene, and continued offering high quality programs, publications, and events for our members and the general public. Many of the ways in which we do this are outlined throughout this report. However, one thing that might not be made clear elsewhere in this report is the reach of our organization. We have fielded emails and calls from across Canada, and as far away as the UK, China, and Norway, from people interested in engaging with our local history.

We've seen an uptick in new faces at our events, particularly among young people, new Canadians, and families who want to know the story of this place and better understand how they are part of the fabric of our community. Not only are we broadening our audience, an increasing number of people are reaching out to see how they can help. Members of the community have joined committees, and we recently had four strong applications to serve as our newsletter editor, any one of whom would have done a great job.

Recent cuts at the Provincial level make our work more challenging. Cuts to grants and less money going to the Historical Society of Alberta have impacts on our bottom line. At the same time, our work is even more valuable. When educators have fewer resources, the benefits we offer through our educational programming are that much more important. For people with less disposable income, having free and accessible programming is a gift we give to the community. And when organizations in the cultural sector are facing the same challenges as us, it is wonderful that we can help support and promote them to the public.

This work is made possible by the tireless efforts of volunteers and board members, through generous donors, and through our members. Your contributions, through your time, money, and support, are what make the activities of EDHS possible, and I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you for helping EDHS have another successful year of promoting, preserving, and celebrating the history of Edmonton and area.

Respectfully submitted by

Tim O'Grady
President

Annual Report of Educational Programs 2019

History in the Classroom, History in the Community, the Edmonton Regional School Heritage Fair and History Centre Rebates are educational programs funded by the Phyllis Arnold Learning Fund through the Edmonton Community Foundation.

The **Edmonton Regional School Heritage Fair** is held in early May each year and features historical displays and presentations from students in grades 4 to 7. EDHS helps sponsor the **Fair**, which is free and open to the public at no charge at the Prince of Wales Amouries Heritage Centre. It's a refreshing indication that the younger generation is enthusiastic about our history.

The school rebates for the **History Centre** assist schools to pay bussing costs to visit the Fort Precinct programs. The **History Centre** originated as an EDHS program at Queen Alexandra school in 2006 and later moved to Fort Saskatchewan where it continues to thrive.

The **History in the Classroom** program was designed to coincide with the fall 2016 distribution of the EDHS student resource, ***The Fur Trade in the West***, written by Phyllis Arnold. Since then, this program has offered free classroom visits by Jim Higgs, our teacher/historian, to students from grades 4 to 7. These free presentations focused on three topics: the Fur Trade, the Metis Nation and the North West Mounted Police.

In 2019, Jim presented to 197 classes, which translates to over 5000 students! Every available day was booked, as we had a registration of 100% and a waiting list of other schools hoping for cancellations! The calendar for the 2020/2021 school year will be on the website by the end of May. With present feedback, we expect registrations will be filled by June 30, two months before the next school year starts! We are currently working to hire a second instructor to work with Jim and ensure the sustainability of the program for the coming years.

History in the Community began in 2016 when Shirley Lowe, Edmonton's second Historian Laureate, began free presentations to school or community groups on the topic of the 100 Year Celebration of Alberta Women's Right to Vote. Shirley has also presented on other topics and our future plan is to increase the variety of topics and thus the number of presentations offered.

If you know of teachers or community groups that would benefit from either of these free presentations on one (or all) of the topics, please contact EDHS at 780.439.2797 or info@historicedmonton.ca.

Our deepest gratitude is extended to Phyllis Arnold for her continued generous support in promoting history in the schools and the community.

Respectfully submitted by

Linda Collier
Director

Historic Festival and Doors Open Edmonton, 2019
July 1-7, 2019
Theme: Leisure

The 2019 version of the Society's Historic Festival and Doors Open, our organization's signature annual event, was held from July 1-7 with the theme of *Leisure*. The launch was held at the Old Timers Cabin in South Edmonton. President Tim O'Grady served as emcee and read the City's proclamation to kick off historic week in Edmonton.

The Festival saw a wide variety of architecturally significant heritage buildings and landmarks open their doors to the public encouraging people to explore and engage in their local history and appreciate the aesthetic contributions heritage plays in our communities. Many local businesses and community organizations hosted interactive events and gatherings celebrating unique aspects of the area while providing an education into their historical importance. New partners included Elk Island Park, German Town YEG, U of A Archives, Edmonton Community Foundation and returning EPL Strathcona Branch.

2019 Statistics

Visitors to partnering sites and activities: 73,577

Volunteers and paid staff at partnering sites and activities: 227

Volunteer and paid staff hours at partnering sites and activities: 2017.5

2019 Promotion:

- A marketing campaign with CTV incorporated televised commercials, a live remote at Union Bank Inn, a customized contest package and social media
- Closed captioning with CBC, Global and Bell Media
- Digital billboards placed in 3 locations throughout the city
- Bridge banners placed at 3 locations throughout the city
- 8500 guidebooks were distributed to partner sites, hotels and information and tourist centers
- A Post Media campaign that included banner and digital ads with the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun and Edmonton Examiner

Respectfully submitted by

Tim O'Grady
President

Sue Lacombe
Festival Coordinator

Annual Report of the Marketing Committee

Over the past year, the board has worked hard to communicate on several platforms to meet the needs of our membership and prospective members. The website has now been operational for over a full year and we are pleased to report increased traffic from the previous year. Online ticketing for events is proving to be popular, as is our “News” section, which features information about our activities. Our newsletter continues to be a well-utilized platform for communicating upcoming events and historical information to our membership. The board has continued to work to strengthen EDHS’s social media presence by providing frequent posts that include historical content and information about historical events around Edmonton. Facebook and Twitter have provided us with engaging ways to connect with people interested in Edmonton’s history. Our social media “followers” continue to grow. Facebook saw a 22.5% increase in followers from 2018 to 2019, while Twitter saw a 7.4% increase.

Respectfully submitted by

Matt Ostapchuk
Director

Newsletter Committee

It has been a pleasure to serve as the newsletter liaison for EDHS since I joined the Board of Directors at the AGM in 2019. For the first few months of my tenure, Natalie Zacharewski continued her fine work as editor before resigning from the position. A few months later, my colleague Sean Moir and I acted as an ad hoc Selection Committee for Natalie's successor. We have welcomed Liz Hill as the new editor as of early March, 2020; Liz brings a background in research, curation, encyclopaedia and didactic materials as well as other strengths, which will be excellent assets as we work to make the newsletter as satisfying a publication as we can.

On behalf of the committee, I look forward to presenting diverse, informative and accessible content through a greater degree of strategic thought and integration with EDHS's overall communications plan. One of our plans will be to better track our historical, future and current content to the end of identifying what stories deserve to be told and may not have been covered enough to date.

Carrie Myers has continued her outstanding work as designer, and Minuteman Press is our new printer for the print newsletters, doing the work efficiently and professionally at a fair price, representing a modest savings for the Board. Thank you to departing Board member Linda Collier (along with Tom Long) for many things, not least of which being Linda's willingness to help with essential newsletter-related tasks. I'm sure many of my colleagues would echo my thanks to Linda for her decades of service; she has indicated a willingness to continue volunteering as a community member, but we won't work you too hard, Linda.

All of my Board colleagues have been helpful in showing me the ropes, helping out as needed and making me feel at home as a newcomer to the society, the Board and the sector. Thank you as well to everyone who has welcomed me into the EDHS community and contributed to or enjoyed our newsletter over the past year. As always, please contact the Board with any thoughts and feedback, including newsletter contributions, through info@historicedmonton.ca.

Respectfully submitted by

Joe Hartfeil
Director

Advocacy Report

Over the course of 2019 the Advocacy Committee was supported by members of the EDHS Board (Tom Long and Stephen Yakimets), as well as four members of the community (Mark Pyzyk, Ryan Poot, Brett Bilyk, and Benjamin Vazquez). As the year went by, some community members had to drop out for personal reasons, but the core group of Tom, Stephen, Mark and Tim continued to meet monthly to discuss emerging and ongoing threats to Edmonton's built heritage.

Some of the issues discussed included the expected future demolition of the El Mirador Apartment building, the proposed changes in street layout on Ada Boulevard, highrise developments in Strathcona, the former Northlands site, Scona Garage, and Frank Oliver Park, among others.

Multiple letters were sent to the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta expressing concern over a number of issues. Open houses were attended on different projects and we met with a developer to discuss our concerns with the fate of El Mirador. We also coordinated with the Highlands Historical Society and the Edmonton Historical Board over certain areas of shared concern.

The activities of the Advocacy Committee did result in some positive outcomes. It helped us build relationships with other organizations, and made us more visible to government administration and City Councilors. However, when all was said and done, our efforts did not ultimately preserve any of the City's historic fabric. In light of the amount of work required, the limited success of the activities, the capacity of the committee members, and the other people and organizations in Edmonton involved in advocating for Edmonton's built heritage, at the end of 2019 it was decided to suspend the activities of the Advocacy Committee. In its place, EDHS will work to support other organizations better situated (financially, administratively, and with full time professional staff) to impact Edmonton's built heritage, such as the Edmonton Historical Board, the Edmonton Heritage Council, the City of Edmonton Heritage Planners, and the Historic Management Branch of the Government of Alberta.

Respectfully submitted by

Tim O'Grady
President

Historic Edmonton Week Bus Trip

A Window into the Past

July 7, 2019

During the Historic Edmonton Week Festival the EDHS organized a day long bus tour down Highway 14. The bus was loaded to capacity with 56 excited participants. Everyone arrived bright and early to check in at the Old Timers Cabin and the bus drove off at 8:15AM on a beautiful sunny Alberta morning.

The first stop was the **Cooking Lake Airport**, Canada's oldest operating public airport, which has an incredibly rich history of the aviation pioneers who made it happen. This remarkable little airport connects us to some of the most important events in our history and it's right here in our back yard. We heard interesting stories about lost gold mines, the Red Baron, Arctic airmail contracts, World War II and legends such as Wop May, Will Rogers and Max Ward.

The second stop was to the **Frontiersmen War Memorial**, the only one of its kind in Canada commemorating the Legion of Frontiersmen war veterans. The Frontiersman group welcomed us with open arms. They had hot coffee and snacks waiting for us. They also had a few golf carts to shuttle people to and from the lakeshore for anyone that had difficulty walking. We had the opportunity to view their museum and hall, and learn the history of the monument.

A real highlight was our stop for lunch at the **Moonshine Café** in Toefield, Alberta. The decadent meal was hot and ready for us upon our arrival. There was seating inside this historic building and outside on their new deck. We enjoyed the spinach and cheese stuffed chicken breast with new potatoes, veggies and salads. For dessert Bernard Callebaut chocolate brownies with ice cream or lemon custard tarts. Wish we could have stayed longer.

The afternoon was spent at **Maggie's Hill Heritage Loghouse**. This is the oldest property in Strathcona County (built in 1890) and was settled by one of the first Metis settlers in the area. When his daughter Maggie, married a Scottish railway man, he gifted the loghouse to them as a wedding gift. Together Maggie and John raised 9 children in a 600 sq. foot log house. Sitting on a hill overlooking Hastings Lake, the property soon became known as Maggie's Hill. We also had an opportunity to walk the ancient forest and trails in the area. Walking through mud and a short rainfall did not stop this group from experiencing this amazing place.

After a full day of adventuring out to these hidden gems in the country side we returned home to the Old Timers Cabin by 5:15 PM. It was a magical day.

Respectfully submitted by

Christine Prokop
Acting Vice President

EDHS Speaker Series

The 2019 – 2020 speaker series started off in September 2019 at our new home, the Old Timers Cabin on Scona Road. The Cabin is historic in a different manner than Queen Alexandra School and is a great improvement for our presentations over the school gym. We now have lots of free parking, comfortable chairs, and best of all, a beautiful room with a built-in sound system.

The season started in September with Roy Bird and Dorinda Emery. Roy is President of the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Descendants Association (NAPDA), which owns and operates the Old Timers Cabin. Roy's family goes back to the days of Fort Edmonton, where his great grandfather became Chief Factor. Dorinda manages the Cabin and apprised the EDHS on the history of NAPDA and the Cabin.

October featured Melanie Moore, Robyn Fowler and Bill Pick from the Highlands Historical Society on James Bond Steele, an early schoolteacher in the Highlands / Beverly area. They did a dramatic reading and interpretation of Steele's diaries, which were published by the Highlands Historical Society for its 30th anniversary.

Our keynote speaker for the November annual Christmas dinner was Dr. Linda Many Guns on **Precontact Indigenous Specialization in the Americas**. Dr. Many Guns covered agriculture, resource development, communications, mining, and the development of large cities in her fascinating and wide ranging presentation.

For the new year, we started January with some more recent history, the development of West Edmonton Mall. The EDHS board felt that the recent history of the Mall was a good topic, as history is ever evolving. Matthew Dutczak's presentation, **Best Edmonton Mall**, was very well received and introduced the EDHS to new audiences.

In February we learned about the long history of Alberta Film Censorship from Dave Clarke. **Banned in Alberta!** covered the various films over the years that the Alberta Government deemed objectionable.

With the advent of the COVID-19 virus, the March presentation by board member Christine Prokop has been postponed until the fall. Local historian and school presenter, Jim Higgs, was scheduled to speak at our John Rowand night in April, which is also postponed. We are rescheduling Jim for our Christmas dinner in November.

Ideas and suggestions are always welcome. I aim to have a variety of topics from indigenous history, fur trade, early settlement, and now branching out to more recent history, before it becomes forgotten in our digital internet age.

Respectfully submitted by

Stephen Yakimets
Director

Annual Report of Membership

Membership numbers provided by the HSA

2019 – 210 members

2018 - 173 members

Increase: 21.4%

Facebook followers

2019 – 1501 followers

2018 – 1225 followers

Increase: 22.5%

Twitter followers

2019 – 1920 followers

2018 – 1788 followers

Increase: 7.4%

Respectfully submitted by

Linda Collier and Matt Ostapchuk
Directors

Edmonton and District Historical Society
Publications Committee Report for Annual General Meeting
April 29, 2020

The Publications committee is developing the next in our series of occasional papers. **Death Stalked the Trails: The Klondike Gold Rush Through Edmonton 1897-98** tells the stories of men and women who embarked on an overland journey to the Klondike gold fields with Edmonton as their starting point. The author is Dr. R. Gordon Moyles, a professor emeritus at the University of Alberta, with a distinguished career in English and Canadian Literature.

In the paper, Moyles draws his complex story together through a diversity of sources, from contemporary newspaper coverage of the gold rush to works of current historians. He reveals the everyday details of unimaginably difficult journeys, the frequently harrowing obstacles and setbacks (natural, and occasionally human), the single-minded determination to get rich that drove so many of these remarkable adventurers from an unknown point-A to an equally mysterious point-B – and the disaster that all too often resulted.

Our goal is to see **Death Stalked the Trails: The Klondike Gold Rush Through Edmonton 1897-98** published in the fall of 2020.

Death Stalked the Trails follows our previous occasional paper, **Rivers and Rails: Central Alberta's Transcontinental Railways**, by Alan Vanterpool, published in 2014. Rivers and Rails is available to borrow at the Edmonton Public Library and for sale at Audrey's Books.

Respectfully submitted by

John Dolphin
Director

EDHS 2019: By the Numbers

Who are we?

210 members
11 board members
5 committee members from the community
4 contractors

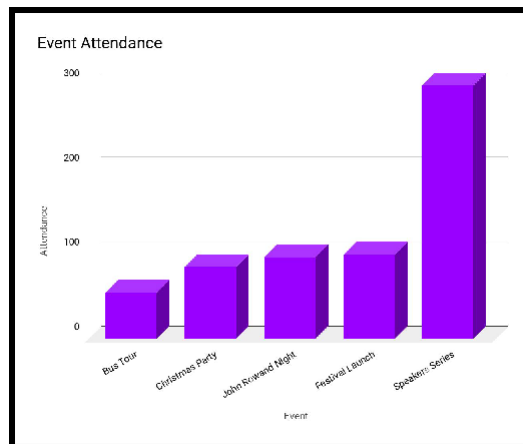
+1500 volunteer hours

Social Media

1,501 Facebook likes
1,920 Twitter followers
12,076 Website visitors

Events

10 events
637 attendees



Festival

7 days
48 partners
131 events
+73,000 attendees

Educational Programs

2 different programs
206 classroom/community history sessions
5,071 students

Communications

4 newsletters
7 original articles
18 blog posts

