

# The Echoes

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The St. Albert Historical Society

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## *A Bridge Over Time*

*The Continuing Story of St. Albert*

The release of *A Bridge Over Time* has been delayed until the spring of 2017. This delay was necessitated by the considerable amount of editing which still needs to be completed. Over 100 submissions have been received from schools, service clubs, cultural organizations, churches, businesses and government officials. In addition, committee members and others have researched developments in areas such as health, economic development, education and recreation. All in all, *A Bridge Over Time* promises to be the reference of choice for information on all things St. Albert for a long time to come – so it is well worth the wait.

If you have reasonable computer skills and a working knowledge of Publisher and would like to assist, please let our editor, Lynne Duigou, know at [lynnduigou@shaw.ca](mailto:lynnduigou@shaw.ca) or phone 780-458-6640. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

## **A Scare at the Old Town Office**

By Teresa Gagnon

I was nineteen years old working for the Town of St. Albert in the town office, which was a small one-room building on the corner of Perron and St. Michael streets. I remember the very large safe which almost filled the back wall. A photo of the room and safe currently hang on the third floor at City Hall. The RCMP at the time would sometimes bring lost articles to the office for safekeeping until someone might claim them.

One day, while I was alone at work, I could hear a “tick, tick, tick” coming from inside the safe. As I sat there, I was sure it must have been a bomb. At last, the Secretary Treasurer came back and I told him my concerns. He opened the safe and there, low and behold, was a large railroad watch – just ticking away as loud as could be. What a relief! My boss had a good laugh and I had a very red face.

## **From the Files of the Edmonton Journal**

December 9, 1935

By Chris Zdeb, Day in History, Edmonton Journal, December 9, 2015

## **Child with disability wins puppy contest**

A 10-year-old St. Albert boy was the winner of the Journal’s puppy contest.

Paul Meloche was among more than 500 kids who sent in a letter giving the best reasons for wanting one. The cocker spaniel puppy, named Sandy, was delivered to Paul and the two quickly went off to play, the Journal reported.

“Thanks, mister,” Paul, whose back was hurt when he was a small boy, said as he grinned widely for a Journal representative. “I’ll sure take good care of him.”

M.B. McColl, who supplied the pup, went along on the trip and told the boy what to feed his new pet. J.W. Meloche, Paul’s father, kept him out of school for the morning when notified the puppy was being delivered, but didn’t tell the boy he had won until the puppy was on the doorstep.

The judges had a hard time choosing the winning entry, the story said, and wished they had “a whole lot of dogs to give away.”

This was Paul’s wining letter:

“Dear Sir:

“I am writing now to tell you why I really would like to have a real live pup.

“We do not live on a farm and we have no dog or cat; no chickens, no cows, no pigs or horses and I’m crippled for life. I cannot play with other little boys at their games. So, if I win this pup it will make one friend that I could play with. My father will be glad to go and get it for me. Thank you.”

As a consolation prize for contest entrants who did not win, the Journal treated 500 boys and girls to a free show at the Empress Theatre. Over three hours they watched two short comedies plus two regular-length feature pictures: *Two Fisted*, starring Lee Tracy, and *The Eagles Brood*, starring William Boyd.

Paul and his puppy, Sandy, were also on hand.

“Dear little friends, it is an honour for me to be with all my friends today,” the boy said from the stage. “I want to thank the judges for their trouble and fairness in the competition. Just one look at me and I think you will agree that I need a true friend. I sure would like to show my little dog to all the world. Anyway, thanks a million,” he concluded.

Editor’s note: A photograph of a smiling Paul and his puppy accompanied the original story.

## Law and Order in the Early Settlement

When the Mission of St. Albert was founded in 1861, the entire area was under the control of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Any law and order imposed on the population by the Company was undoubtedly intended to benefit the activities of the Company. The residents of the Mission, however, were dissatisfied with this arrangement and, somewhat contrary to the views of Company officials, imposed upon themselves a comprehensive code of laws and a system of enforcement suited to the needs of their community. Below is a sampling of these By Laws. The complete By Laws and a summary of the events leading to their enactment can be found on pages 38 – 41 of *The Black Robe’s Vision*.

*Bye Laws enacted by a Committee selected at a Public meeting of the Citizens of the Village of St. Albert said Bye Laws to be administered by the magistrates who will be appointed by the Citizens or Governor of said Village.*

*Act 1st: Any Person guilty of murder shall be arrested and detained until provision is made for his transport to Red River for Trial.*

*Act 2nd: To pay the expense of transporting any criminal guilty of murder to Red River for trial, each citizen of the Village shall be obliged to pay the sum of three shillings.*

*Act 3rd: Any person threatening to use deadly weapons of any kind against another shall pay a fine of Four pounds ten shillings and costs.*

*Act 6th: Any person having a family who owes a debt and refuses payment thereof, the magistrate upon proper complaint and proof, shall levy upon and sell said debtor’s property to the extent of two thirds, if necessary for the satisfaction of said claims and costs, the remaining one third being exempt, and left for the support of said debtor’s Family.*

*Act 8th: Any person who makes engagement with another for certain work at a certain time and fails to fulfil said engagement without sufficient cause shall be liable to a fine of One pound ten shillings and costs.*

*Act 11th: Any person who shall ride, drive, or use the Horse of another without permission of the owner, he shall be fined the sum of Four pounds ten shillings and Costs, besides the payment of any damage that may result to the Horse from said use.*

*Act 12th: Any person guilty of stealing a Horse shall be liable to a fine of Four pounds ten shillings and Cost, besides restitution of the Horse or payments of its value to the Owner.*

*Act 24th: Any person having made a bargain of sale or purchase, and refusing thereafter to fulfil it shall be liable to a fine of One pound ten shillings.*

*Act 26th: Any person claiming a hay reserve shall set a stake at each corner thereof, said stakes to be five feet long, and four inches square, set in the ground twelve inches, any person cutting hay on said reserve without permission the owner, shall forfeit said Hay Cut to the owner of the reserve.*

*Act 27th: Any person guilty of pulling up or destroying stakes set to define a hay reserve shall be fined the sum of One pound ten shillings and costs.*

*Act 28th: Any person not having mares of his own will not be allowed to let his Stallion run at Large after the first of June next, any person letting his Stallion run at Large after said time will be liable to pay the amount of damage done by it.*

*Act 29th: Any person who drives a sleigh of any kind without Bells, on the Public road shall be fined the sum of three shillings.*

*Act 30th: Any person guilty of destroying or pulling down any fence or portion of fence without permission of the owner, shall be fined the sum of Five pounds and damages.*

*Act 32rd: In case of the death of both parents, and leaving orphans, whoever takes charge of the Orphans shall have the use of any property left by the Parents until the children are come of age when the Guardians shall deliver to them their shares in equal parts.*

*Act 33rd: Any persons wishing to burn over his Hay Reserve or land must before doing so notify the magistrate who will in the proper time give notice publickly{sic} at the Church door, but any person who contrary to this Bye Law set fire to any bush, grass or wood, or any private or public land shall be fined the sum of Five pounds.*

*Act 34th: In case of Cattle or Horses being destroyed by wolves a magistrate may give permission for the use of Strychnine to destroy them, but under no other shall it be used.*

*Act 35th: Any person guilty of inciting and party or parties to resist the Law, or in any way disturbe{sic} the public peace, or commit depredations of any Kind shall be fined the sum of Five pounds, and damages, for the first case, and double the second.*

*Act 38th: Any person refusing to assist a constable when called upon by him shall be fined the sum of Five shillings.*

## **Remembering Members**

**Claudette Vague** (nee Flynn) passed away March 21, 2016. As a descendant of a St. Albert pioneer family, Claudette possessed a keen interest in the history of the region and was an active supporter of Society activities and of her husband's, Gerald, involvement on the Board. Claudette was enthusiastically involved in contributing to the success of Society and Board undertakings.

**Ruth Horne** by Arlene Borgstede

Sometime ago - perhaps a couple of years ago - I got a phone call from Ruth Horne. She was going through early copies of the Society's newsletter, *The Echoes*, which I had edited many years

before. She wanted to thank me for writing them. I thought this was very kind of her but was not surprised. This was the kind of thing that Ruth did.

Four months ago I learned with great sadness that Ruth had passed away. I nodded and smiled as I read through the first paragraph of her obituary, “Champion of the underdog” (always), “a loving wife and mother” (I have no doubt), “a terrifying driver” (yes, I had heard that) , “a nature lover” (I can believe that), “a mediocre housekeeper” (a women after my own heart), “philanthropic, thoughtful, humble, giving, had a sense of humour’ (I go along with all of that), ‘an independent nature who knew what was important in life” (no doubt whatsoever).

Reading through the second paragraph took me totally by surprise. “She graduated from Bernard College in NYC with a master’s degree in Journalism....” and my first thought was “Ruth, you should have been writing those newsletters!”

No doubt, if Ruth had been asked, she would have taken on the job. I can’t remember a single time when Ruth didn’t take on a task that was asked of her.

Although a charter member of the Historical Society which was formed in 1972, Ruth’s involvement with St. Albert’s small museum began even earlier. I don’t remember if she was part of the group which spent some very cold January evenings taking the artifacts out the little chapel but she was part of the one (mostly the same people) who cleaned and catalogued those artifacts in preparation for the new displays planned for the summer opening.

Her work with the Historical Society included sitting on the executive for many years, first as member-at-large, then a term as secretary, later as vice president and then as president for five years. Her work continued with both the Society and Friends of the Museum.

Her husband Don shared a lot of her devotion to the Historical Society. He and Ruth helped with every move we had to make. Ruth also was Manager of many of our Casinos and Don worked them all. Together they worked on most, if not all, Society projects: *The Black Robe’s Vision*, *A Week in the Life of St. Albert*, Homecoming, our annual banquets and other special functions.

Ruth, and Don, did not limit their volunteer time to the Historical Society and the Museum. Both were interested in and worked with the local Girl Guides and I know that Ruth strongly supported Amnesty International. She also gave her time to visit and help friends and neighbours needing assistance.

Anne Marie Venne and I attended the Celebration of Life for Ruth, held by her family on June 10th, where we listened while others, family and friends, related their own memories of Ruth. They all echoed and illustrated all those qualities and virtues which were in her obituary.

My favorite was told by a lady with whom Ruth attended swimming sessions at Fountain Park Pool. The group regularly had coffee at the pool following their class and regularly invited Ruth to join them. She eventually agreed, saying that she would come tomorrow when she would bring the \$1.00 to cover the cost of the outing. She became part of that coffee group but one Friday had to decline because she had forgotten to bring her dollar. Many of the group offered to treat her but she declined. When the friend who was telling the story offered to “lend” her the dollar, she agreed to join them. The following Monday morning Ruth was there early - to repay the dollar!

Both Ruth and Don’s names are inscribed in stone in the *Community Recognition Garden* at the corner of Perron Street and Sir Winston Churchill Ave. Their acknowledgement in this singular place of honour is a tribute to a wise, caring and the most unassuming woman I have ever known and the husband who shared her values.