



MAMMOTH TRACKS

NEWSLETTER

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Spotlight on...the Museum's Government History Program with Maurice Doll, Curator of Government History

Queen's War Hounds.

This picture, hanging in the lobby of the Provincial Museum of Alberta, was painted in 1914 by Charles Marion Russell, who is considered one of the top American artists who painted in the "Old West" style.



Director's Message

Have you heard our news? On April 11, Minister of Community Development Gene Zwozdesky announced a plan for a new and renewed Provincial Museum of Alberta. Financial details have not been finalized but the goal of the project is to create one of the finest museums in Canada.

Part of the announcement included the key decision that the site for the renewed Museum is our current home. This is great news because it eliminates many of the troubling issues that surround site selection and allows us to proceed with planning. We can literally build on the legacy of this site.

The tentative schedule for renewal includes about two years of planning. This means the public face of the Museum will not change noticeably until construction begins, perhaps in 2005. Planning includes many talks but an important component is finding out what our visitors and Friends want to see changed (or left unchanged) in a renewal project. There will be opportunities for you to have

input into this process soon. For now, if you would like to send me your thoughts on renewal, feel free to e-mail me at bruce.mcgillivray@gov.ab.ca.

What do we imagine the renewed Museum will look like? First, we will be seeking a signature architectural statement that houses a functional museum. Second, the focus of the renewed museum will be Alberta. You can count on galleries that bring the Ice Age to life, tell the stories of the immigrants who shaped the character of Alberta, and showcase the stories of everyday Albertans, leaders, heroes and artists. The galleries will appeal to all ages and will be interactive and dynamic. The visitor experiences will combine the best we can glean from around the world. It is an exciting project! In time, we hope to dedicate a space in the Museum to keep you updated on the progress of the renewal.

Dr Bruce McGillivray
Director

Spotlight on... The Museum's Government History Program

Curator Profile - Maurice Doll

Maurice Doll began his relationship with the Museum with a summer job in 1969. In 1972, he joined the full-time staff as assistant to the Curator of Archaeology. During the subsequent 15 years, he conducted archaeological research in both prehistoric and historic archaeology and completed a master's degree at the University of Alberta. In 1987, he became curator of the newly created Government History Program. He built this curatorial program from scratch and has been responsible for collecting, documenting and preserving tens of thousands of heritage objects. The preservation of provincial military heritage, including artifacts, photos, taped interviews and diaries has been of special interest to Mr. Doll. Mr. Doll curated the ***Forged in Fire*** exhibition that will be featured in the Museum's ***Spotlight Gallery*** from **August 14, 2003 to January 10, 2004**.

What will we learn in the *Forged in Fire* exhibition?

Firearms are a fascinating and compelling part of our history. This exhibition is about 19th century firearms used in western Canada and looks at two selected collections from the holdings of the Provincial Museum of Alberta that have never before been on exhibit. These include the **Halmrast collection of American Civil War carbines** and the **Canadian gunsmith's muzzleloader collection**. Although the two collections are very different, the exhibition tells the story of the history, acquisition and the remarkable relationship between them. In addition, ***Forged in Fire*** also exhibits the **Kucer collection**—an excellent display of 1/3 scale hand-made miniature firearms.

Tell us about the collections in the *Forged in Fire* exhibition.

The Halmrast collection focuses on American Civil War carbines used to equip the Union Cavalry between 1861 and 1865. The collection reflects the inventive minds at work during the early part of the industrial revolution in America. In contrast, the Canadian gunsmith's muzzleloader collection showcases the fruits of craftsmen, the product of independent Canadian gunsmiths who practised their trade around the same period of time. Ironically, it was the introduction of surplus American arms to western Canada after the American Civil War that led to the demise of our Canadian gunsmiths. However, to show that the craft of building muzzleloaders still survives, we are exhibiting two firearms made by one of Canada's leading 21st-century craftsmen, Peter Alexander.

The Kucer collection features complex miniature firearms made by David Kucer of Montreal. Kucer is a miniaturist whose work is collected and admired all over the world, and this is the first exhibition of his work in western Canada.

Could you tell us a little bit about your family's history in Canada?

On my mother's side, we can trace family in Canada back to 1665 when our ancestor Pierre Hudon arrived in Quebec from France as a member of the Regiment de Carrignan-Saliers (The Good Regiment), sent by Louis XIV to protect the settlers of New France from Iroquois attack. My father's family arrived more recently (1906) from Finisterre, Brittany, France.

How did your interest in military history develop?

I grew up in Battleford, Saskatchewan across the street from Fred Light, one-time owner of the largest firearms collection in western Canada. He encouraged me to develop an interest in history. Since age eight, I have collected coins and have had an interest in history. At age 13, I took a personal interest in the North West Rebellion after witnessing the 75th-anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Cutknife Hill between

Poundmaker's Cree Band and the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. I was personally acquainted with several survivors of the battle—Cree, Métis, and Euro-Canadian – and this really "whetted my appetite for history". Later I discovered I had a relative who fought at the battles of Fish Creek and Batoche.

Throughout my adult life, I have retained my interests in firearms, coins and Canadian history by both formal education and avocation. My interest has led me to participate in historical re-enactments focusing on the Fur Trade period.



On Tuesday May 6, 2003, Maurice Doll, Curator of Government History, along with 28 other Albertans was honoured in a special ceremony at Government House with the award of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal. The medal is awarded to Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community, or Canada. The medal and a special certificate from the Governor General were presented to Maurice for outstanding work in heritage preservation by the Honourable Lois E. Hole, C.M. AOE, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

Exploring Our Collections... with Maurice Doll, Curator of Government History

Mr. Halmrast, born in Raymond, Alberta in 1925, developed a lifelong passion for history as embodied in the firearms, photographs, fossils, rocks and archaeological material that he collected. He built his gun collection by spending many weekends attending gun shows and meeting collectors. By 1964, his collection had grown to 300 pieces! The strengths of the Halmrast collection are twofold: firearms from the American Civil War period, and the cultural and natural history of the Milk River region of southern Alberta.

Mr. Halmrast received many honours, the most notable of which came in 1991 when the University of Lethbridge bestowed upon him an Honorary Doctorate of Laws for his contributions to the preservation of the history of southern Alberta.

As with all pioneers, Mr. Halmrast recognized the importance of his firearms collection and knew that he was just the keeper of a collection that actually belonged to everyone. He realized it was time to pass the collection on to another keeper who would continue to nurture it. Mr. Halmrast, who passed away in 1992, left us all a legacy. The Provincial Museum of Alberta was greatly honoured when he chose us as the next keeper of the Halmrast Collection.



This image shows a selection of 19th-century percussion revolvers from the Lawrence D. Halmrast collection that will be displayed in the ***Forged in Fire*** exhibition.



Mr. Halmrast 's Den

On the go... interactive computers and *Wild Alberta*

Fusing scientific accuracy and fun into engaging multimedia presentations is the challenge faced by Critical Fusion Inc. in the *Wild Alberta* gallery. Tom Dodd and his talented staff of animators, programmers and interpretive writers are creating at least eight interactive computer displays for *Wild Alberta*. These include a unique introduction to the gallery, a fish identification game, interactive panoramic vistas of the Athabasca Glacier, Bull Springs Coulee, and the Chisholm forest fire, the story of avalanches, a rare glimpse into the world of a Kangaroo Rat at night, and a virtual challenge to all visitors to be better stewards of our environment.

Terry Thormin, a long-time Museum staff member and curator of the Bug Room, is the host of these presentations. His amazing transformation into creatures that inhabit different environments not only provides a light-hearted introduction to the displays but also encourages visitors to see the world with different eyes.



Terry, as a Long-horned Beetle, hosts the Chisholm fire display.



Terry, as a Columbian Ground Squirrel, discusses the importance of avalanches in creating diversity.

Go Wild this Summer...at the Museum

Go Fish!

April 24 to July 20
A new exhibition, presented in partnership with the Alberta Conservation Association, features the research and collections of the Museum's Ichthyology program (Ichthyology is the study of fishes). The *Spotlight Gallery* series of exhibitions interprets the story of Alberta through the work of our curators and their collections, connecting visitors with important pieces of our rich history.



Big Things 2

May 6, 2003 to April 30, 2004
Back by popular demand, the *North Edmonton Sculpture Workshop* returns with another huge exhibition of metal sculpture. This group of artists focuses on the production and exhibition of ambitious contemporary sculpture. Look for *Big Things 2* on our front terrace.



Wildlife Photographer of the Year

June 5 to September 28
The *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* is the largest and most prestigious wildlife photography competition in the world. The Provincial Museum of Alberta presents the Canadian première, the only Canadian stop on its world tour. The competition is a showcase for the very best international

photography of natural history subjects. The competition is organized by *BBC Wildlife Magazine* and The Natural History Museum, London, England and sponsored by *BG Group*.



Forged in Fire in the Spotlight Gallery

Aug. 14, 2003 to Jan. 10, 2004
The Provincial Museum of Alberta is pleased to announce *Forged in Fire*, a new exhibition that features two collections of firearms that have never before been displayed to the public at a museum! In addition, we will showcase a collection of miniature, handmade firearms made by David

Kucer of Montreal. Kucer's miniatures are collected worldwide and this is the first exhibition of his work in western Canada.



In partnership with the Federation of Alberta Naturalists.

The new Wild Alberta gallery

Opens September 20, 2003
Wild Alberta is like no other museum experience in Canada. It is a journey through Alberta's landscape. Seeing beneath the prairies surface, inside a mountain stream, or deep below the snow pack makes for a meaningful, educational experience. While the original *Habitat Gallery* was conceived to show pristine nature, the new *Wild Alberta* gallery brings a human presence to the story. It recognizes that human activities play an important role in shaping modern wilderness.



Summer Days at the Museum

Need a place to beat the summer heat, or the nagging “nothing-to-do” syndrome?

Public Programs that will continue throughout the summer months include: *A-Z for Families*, *Treasured Time for Tots*, *Self-led Tours and Activity Sheets* and our spontaneous *Interpreter-led Programs* in the galleries.

A-Z for Families. Dr. Seuss has nothing on us! We have been through the alphabet several times over now – everything from Archaeology to Zoology! This Saturday morning program will be presented in a drop-in format, and every week is different. Some mornings include arts and craft projects; other days there will be interactive curatorial visits.

- Half-price admission is in effect
- Program runs 9 – 11 am every Saturday morning.

Treasured Time for Tots. This 20-minute program is intended for young visitors who enjoy a quiet story time in the galleries. Our leader will facilitate an age-appropriate discussion and include a “show and share” time with an interpretive artifact.

- Tuesday mornings 9 am – 11 am
- Caregivers must attend with their youngster



Self-led Tours and Activity Sheets. Ask at the Admission Desk for your copy of our Curator’s Choice handout, or enquire at the Volunteer Desk for a children’s activity sheet. There is a variety of activity sheets—try a new one every visit!

Interpreter-led Programs. Our summer program staff will be highlighting a variety of gallery features throughout the summer months. You never know what demonstration or activity you might stumble across! These activities are free with admission and family-friendly!

Janet Waldon, Public Program Coordinator

What is this?



It is a large-scale model—magnified 200 times!—depicting a droplet of pond water that contains 26 organisms. This display—you can see it in our new *Wild Alberta* gallery—emphasizes the importance of maintaining broad biodiversity. Looking into the drop, you will see a potpourri of seemingly alien lifeforms, so bizarre that you cannot tell if they are plant or animal, predator or prey. The model is approximately 1.5 m in diameter and 75 cm high.



Support Your Museum

Support Your Museum... *Sneak-a-Peek* weekend was a Success!

The Provincial Museum of Alberta and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists would like to thank the media and the community for their support of the Museum's *Wild Alberta Sneak-a-Peek* weekend, which happened on May 17, 18 and 19, 2003.

The response was incredible! During the three days, the Museum received 9612 visitors and raised \$9500 in donations towards the completion of the *Wild Alberta* gallery. We have now raised \$1.7 million towards our \$2.3-million target.

A remarkable milestone was also set this weekend as we reached people who had never before experienced the Museum. *Sneak-a-Peek* weekend generated excitement and anticipation for the opening of *Wild Alberta*, which is set for September 20, 2003.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Alberta Pacific Forest Industries who signed on as the Boreal Eco-zone sponsor and to Grand Trunk Recreation Area Council One Society for their generous donation.

Thank you for helping us build *Wild Alberta*. The legacy is yours.

If you would still like to make a donation, please call 453-9100 or go online to www.pma.edmonton.ab.ca and follow the *Wild Alberta* links.

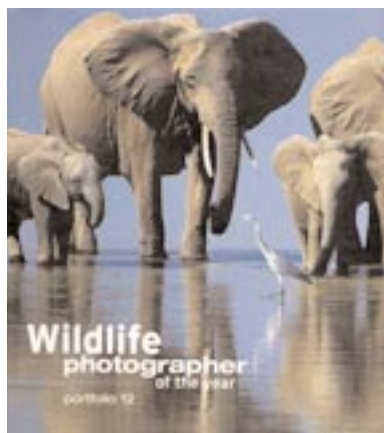


Glen Semenchuk, Director, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, accepting a donation from Area Council 1 Members for *Wild Alberta*.



Steve Hull, Director, Alberta Conservation Association, talks with Dr. Bert Finnermore, Assistant Director, Curatorial & Collections Preservation, Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Shopping... at the Museum



Just arrived! BG *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* book will be a beautiful addition to any library and a great gift. It contains more than 100 colour photographs consisting of the winning and commended

entries in the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition for 2002.

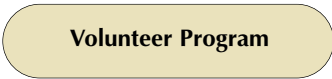
We also have posters, mouse pads and art cards featuring your favorite photographs.

See the world with different eyes. Come check out our great *Wild Alberta* merchandise:

- shirts
- caps
- nature and environment books

Don't forget that your Mammoth Pass will get you 10% off in ***The Museum Shop!***

Shopping



Volunteer Program... Bug Room Interpreters needed!

Since its inception in 1992, the *Bug Room* has been a “must see” gallery. Consistently strong visitor interest has made it one of the Museum’s most popular and engaging features.

Maintaining and interpreting the wide array of exotic insects in the *Bug Room* requires attention to detail and thorough preparation. We have always relied on knowledgeable, enthusiastic volunteers to assist us with the care and maintenance of our live insects. Volunteer interpreters in the gallery also ensure that visitors have the opportunity to experience these exotic creatures in a safe and engaging way.

If you have studied or are curious about insects, consider volunteering as a Bug Room Interpreter. For more information about volunteering in the *Bug Room* or about other volunteer opportunities at the Museum, please call the Volunteer Coordinator at 453-9138.



Our very own Jay “Spider-man” Staples.
Photo courtesy of Bryan Kulba.

Feature Exhibitions... Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition



The 2002 *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition will be featured at the Provincial Museum of Alberta from June 5 to September 28, 2003.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the largest and most prestigious wildlife photography competition in the world. Each year the competition’s selected images are displayed in a travelling exhibition, and the Provincial Museum of Alberta is the only Canadian stop on this year’s world tour.

Celebrating 19 years of competition this exhibition is a showcase for the very best international photography of natural subjects. The competition is organized by *BBC*

Wildlife magazine and the Natural History Museum, London, England, and it is sponsored by BG Group.

The exhibited photographs have been chosen from over 18,500 entries. These memorable images were created by amateur and professional photographers from 62 countries. The competition aims to find the best wildlife pictures taken by photographers of all ages from around the world. It celebrates the splendour, drama and variety of life on Earth and hopes to inspire new generations of photographic artists to produce visionary and expressive interpretations of nature.

“This exhibition is an opportunity for visitors to enjoy some of the finest photos of nature from around the globe, which is in keeping with the quality of excellence visitors have come to expect from the Provincial Museum of Alberta,” said Gene Zwodzdesky, Minister of Community Development. “It also offers a perfect prelude to the new *Wild Alberta* gallery opening at the Museum in the fall, which will be a showcase destination connecting Albertans and visitors to Alberta’s natural world.”

The *BG Photographer of the Year* is organized by *BBC Wildlife Magazine* and the Natural History Museum and is sponsored by BG Group.