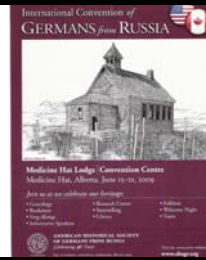


International Convention of Germans from Russia at Medicine Hat, Alberta



Thursday, June 18, 2009

Welcome to Medicine Hat...

Attendees for the International Convention of Germans from Russia arrived over the past three days and more arrive every day. Thank goodness everyone got through the border crossings! The registration, library, bookstore and computer rooms are up and running! Many volunteers made the setup of the convention possible. And, many more continue to help to keep our convention on track. Be sure to express your thanks to all who have the Volunteer banner on their name tags.

Special thanks to Vern Kembal for helping put up the banners in the front lobby. Don't they look great?





Medicine Hat is much, much more than Tepees...

Medicine Hat is known as the Gas City yet there is so much more to the city than meets the eye. A number of tour groups have already explored the area.

Local historian **Madeline Fischer** led a group of convention attendees on a tour of the city Tuesday. Madeline, a former teacher, shared her expert knowledge of Medicine Hat as she



guided the group through highlights of the city.

****First drive by was the Historic Clay District...beautiful brick and kilns which built the clay based**

industry began at the turn of the century with the discovery of the clay in the cliffs. By 1888, bricks were manufactured in the Pural Brick Company. From Alberta Clay to Medalta Potteries, the clay industry was crucial to the development of business in Medicine Hat. Today The Friends of Medalta Society offers tours seven days a week including holidays. More details to come tomorrow about the afternoon tour.

****South Saskatchewan River and the CPR...in 1883 the railroad reached the river and a tent town sprang up in this area after a wooden trestle was built. In 1894 a steel trestle was built. The present brick CPR train station was built in 1905. The River and Finlay Bridge were major trade routes to Western Canada.**



****St. Patrick's Church** began construction in 1912, replacing a wood building. The church stands as one of the finest examples of the Gothic architecture inspired by those of medieval Europe in plan, composition, and use of pointed openings, window tracery, buttresses, paired towers and rose windows.



****Stations of the Cross** near St. John's Senior home are a wonderful example of the creative talent of Jim Marshall whose artwork appears on the cover of our Convention program. Jim's work covers many churches and sites around Medicine Hat. Jim continues to work throughout the city.



****Hillside Cemetery** has been in existence since 1886 and been under municipal operation since 1909. It comprises eight acres of sloping and level land of which fifty-seven acres are in active use. Located on Highway 3 and 10 Avenue SW, it is two blocks west of the Trans Canada Highway. Over 1600 trees of varying species make the cemetery appear to be a well-arranged forest. Many Germans from Russia are buried here.





****Esplanade** is a large multi-purpose cultural centre which houses many archival records of Germans from Russia. Archivist Phil Pype led the group behind the scenes to area inaccessible to the public to share the multitude of records including:

- Photographic images with over 300,000 prints, negatives and slides
- Manuscript records from the public and private sector
- Municipal, county, district, provincial and national maps
- Audio/visual recordings, maps and drawings and along with an extensive library are stored there.



If the Esplanade does not have the information you seek, they will gladly direct you to someone who might. Visit them online at <http://www.esplanade.ca/> or email Phil directly at phipp@medicinehat.ca.

And, last but certainly not least, **the Saamis Teepee**, just south of the Trans Canada Highway overlooking the Blackfoot buffalo jump, is the world's tallest teepee. It was originally constructed for the Calgary 1988 Winter Olympics as a tribute to Canada's native heritage. It was moved to Medicine Hat in 1991 and reassembled on the crest of the hill overlooking the Seven Persons Coulee. At over twenty stories high, it is designed to withstand extreme temperatures and winds up to 240 km/h (150 mph). The tepee is ringed with ten large circular storyboards depicting aspects of native culture and history. Do you know the legend of the word "Saamis?" Watch for details tomorrow.

Thanks again to Madeline Fischer, Medicine Hat historian, for sharing her extensive knowledge with us.





Wednesday evening was filled with stories and songs to welcome us to Alberta with warm spirited Canadian hospitality. **Faye Reineberg Holt** and **Barry Luft** alternated story and song to help us understand why our ancestors chose Canada and what life was like for those settlers. We also learned a bit about hockey rivalry. Everyone joined in song, as Barry led us with these words:

"It's forty below in the winter, it's twenty below in the fall, it rises to zero in springtime and we don't have a summer at all."

The song reflects the cold, but the bids are heating up as Ann Stang reports there are fifty-seven items on the auction table. Check and double check your status as the numbers continue to climb to raise funds to support our heritage.

Be sure to check for copies of this newsletter at the information desk or view the updates with full color photos online at <http://medicinehatconvention2009.blogspot.com/>.