

## Jul 9-14 Stettler to Hinton, AB (via Edmonton)

On the way from Stettler to Edmonton, we stopped in Millet for coffee.



### Alberta's History

#### Calgary and Edmonton Railway

In 1879, it was assumed by many that the Canadian Pacific Railway would be built north-west across the prairies and pass Fort Edmonton on its way through the Yellowhead Pass. A small land rush took place about the fort, and the Edmonton Settlement was surveyed in 1881. By this time however, the CPR had decided to use the Kicking Horse Pass instead, skirting Fort Calgary rather than Edmonton. When the railway arrived at Calgary in 1883, the community quickly expanded while Edmonton's growth tailed off. Calgary soon became the largest centre in Canada between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

However there was enough population and business north of Calgary to attract interest from railway developers, and the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company was incorporated in 1890. Soon work began on a rail line connecting the two centres. On 10 August 1891, the first train reached the community of South Edmonton. Here, a townsite was subdivided on land which the C & E had acquired. In 1899, the community was incorporated as the Town of Strathcona. In 1907, with a population of over 3,500, Strathcona became Alberta's sixth incorporated city.

The C & E also helped to open up the fertile farmland of north-central Alberta for settlement. As settlers poured in to take up land, communities such as Olds, Red Deer and Lacombe developed. Many of these new centres had their origins as sidings. One such community, known as Siding 16 in 1891, was incorporated as the Village of Wetaskiwin eight years later. Soon after it had grown enough to be declared a city. Between these larger centres, smaller communities such as Millet also grew up along the rail line. These communities provided valuable services including stores, grain elevators, and other businesses for the local farm population.

*The Calgary and Edmonton Railway proceeding north of Calgary in 1891.*

*Photo: Archives of Alberta, 1912.*

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Well, there is not really much to say about the large metropolis called Edmonton; it is a big city. I visited our college clients over the 3 days we stayed at an RV park on the west side of the city.

We also visited the West Edmonton Mall. This was my second visit; Jen's first. I rode the roller coaster twice in 1996 when I installed computer systems for Federated Co-op.





I must say we will be glad to get back into BC. The roads in Alberta are in very poor shape. If one of the many potholes doesn't grab you, then the frequent side-to-side cracks in the surface will.

## ON TO THE PACIFIC

*"Thus I have fully completed the survey of this part of North America from sea to sea, and by almost innumerable astronomical Observations have determined the positions of the Mountains, Lakes and Rivers... being now the work of twenty seven years."*

David Thompson's journal (1811)

There are no known portraits of David Thompson, but here is a drawing of his doggy hat, reported to have been made and used by a servant to identify the survey explorer.

The famed fur trader, surveyor, and explorer David Thompson (1770-1857) camped with his brigade in the Hinton region in 1810 as they made preparations for their treacherous winter journey across the Rocky Mountains to the great Columbia River.

Appointed to the Hudson's Bay Company at fourteen, Thompson left London, England, for a new life in the Canadian fur trade. There he learned to survey using astronomy, inspiring a drive to fill in the vast blank areas on maps of the Northwest. This passion drove him for the remainder of his life.

As trading companies struggled for dominance, Thompson left for the rival North West Company and was taken by his new employer with establishing a trade route across the Rockies to the Pacific. This would give his new company a distinct advantage over its rival.

Without the benefit of GPS or motorized transportation, Thompson traveled over 100,000 km by foot, horseback, canoe, snowshoes and dog sled.

In December 1810, Thompson and his brigade were guided by Thomas, an Inuit, within about a kilometre of here. They traveled along the Athabasca River up through Hinton to the vicinity of Brale Lake. There they camped for twenty-five days to prepare for their journey into the mountains. In frigid temperatures, they hunted and made snowshoes and sleds to use on their crossing. At the end of December, they departed on their historic journey over Athabasca Pass, pioneering what later became a major route for trade and transportation.

So accurate were the geographic records David Thompson produced during his many journeys that they remained the basis of maps made for the next century. Although poor and forgotten at his death, his achievements were later recognized and earned him appreciation as one of the world's premier land geographers.

Thompson used a sextant to measure the angle between the horizon and the sun.

Thompson sketched this scene in his journal on November 2.

EXPERIENCE  
**Alberta's History**

I can see mountains!



We left Edmonton Thursday morning and headed west towards Edson. Along the way we saw a couple of Provincial Recreation sites, but it was too early in the day and too far away from our destination to stop. After 177 miles we pulled into the Hinton Centre campground.



Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> was cloudy and grey. We visited the library to get caught up. We leave for Jasper and points south along the Icefields Parkway. It won't be too long before we are back in BC.

See you in a few days.