



McDougall Stoney Mission Society Newsletter Summer 2013

Andrew Sibbald

(A presentation by **Ralphine Locke** given at the McDougall Church Memorial Service June 9th, 2013).

Ralphine, a tireless worker in the cause of preserving and publicising the history of Southern Alberta, has served on the McDougall Stoney Mission Society's Board of Directors for twenty years. She has written many articles for other non-profit organizations including the Lougheed Mansion Restoration, Fort Calgary, the Whyte Museum in Banff, and the Eleanor Luxton Historical Foundation, where she is also currently an active board member. Her work is entirely voluntary.

“Today, I’ll be telling the story of one of earliest pioneers who came to Morley to help with the Mission. His name was Andrew Sibbald, to my mind one of the most courageous and resourceful of those who settled here. But first a few words about the history of the Mission.

The Morley mission was begun at the request of the Stoney people, in 1873, at a location about 2 miles northwest of where we are today. There a rudimentary stockade and cabins were erected for Rev. John and his wife (Lizzie Boyd); she became the first non-native woman to settle in southern Alberta. A few weeks later, David and his wife Annie, with small child Georgina, joined them. When Treaty #7 was signed in 1874, ending the warlike activities of the Blackfoot people it was felt that it would be safe to build at this location. Rev. George, recognizing the necessity of attracting more people to the Mission, made a successful recruiting trip to Ontario in 1875. Among those who were persuaded to come to the growing village of Morleyville was Andrew Sibbald, who agreed to serve as the first school teacher and to take a leading role in the building of this church.

Few people have achieved so much under adversity as this small man with a big heart. Andrew Sibbald was an integral part of the success of the McDougall Methodist Mission. He, with the help of the McDougall men and their friends, the Stoneys, built the building we are meeting in today.—(continued on page 2)

Your Country Wedding can be at the Historic McDougall Church!

A highly significant place to celebrate the most memorable event of your life! Beautiful surroundings in a church of great historical significance for Western Canada. For more information, or to book your wedding date at this unique location, call **Ann at 403 282 3044**

The McDougall Memorial Church Site is open May through September

Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Check our Website:
www.mcdougallstoneymissionsociety.com
 Or contact us by E-mail:
mcdougallmemorialchurch@gmail.com

Our Mailing Address:
 3707 Utah Drive NW
 Calgary, Alberta T2N 4A6

A Member of the Alberta Museum Association & Tourism Calgary

Forthcoming events:

We will participate in Chinook Country Historical Society's Calgary Historical Week hosting an event

Sunday, August 4th , 1:30-3:30pm.

More information on the whole week can be found on the Chinook Country Historical Society's website;
www.chinookcountry.org

Our Fall Memorial Service 3 p.m.:

Sunday September 8th



Mission Wild Flowers -Photo by Laura Jauch

Andrew Sibbald *(continued from page 1)*

That was 138 years ago; the present condition of the church, standing alone on this windswept hill, buffered by winds and snow, attests to the quality of the workmanship which went into the building.

The Sibbald story, to my mind, is one of the most remarkable of Southern Alberta's remarkable past. Since I was a little child, I have been inspired by this exceptional person. I consider it a great privilege to have known him.. My child's mind was fascinated by the black glove on his left hand, which I was told covered a carved wooden hand. I wanted to know more, and questioned my mother who had known this distinguished man all her life.

This is the story. Andrew Sibbald was born at Barrie, Ontario in 1833. He received a good general education, and also became a skilled lumber worker. An accident at a lumber mill cost him his left hand. There being no prosthetic techniques at that time, he determined to replace the hand with a hand he carved from wood; it was a perfect match for the right hand, and was covered with a black leather glove. Through what must have been an incredibly painful process, the hand became a useful tool, and someone at the time remarked, Andrew would do more with one hand than most people with two.

No longer able to make a living in lumbering, Andrew, who was a devout Methodist, met the Rev. George McDougall on one of his recruiting trips for the fledgling Morley Mission. Andrew saw an opportunity to be useful in spite of *(page 3)*

Treasurer's Report (Laura Jauch)

The Society has received a grant from the Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Program for \$4581.57. The grant will be used to cover cost of insurance, the cost of promoting our programs and the cost of routine maintenance and repairs to buildings and fences. The fund provides organizations with a proportional grant based on the amount of eligible cash donations received in 2012. Unfortunately, with the Alberta Government Budget for 2013-2014, the donation grant will not be continued.

The Cairn

The cairn fronting the Mission off Highway 1-A with its three plaques was erected by the Southern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers Association through public subscription and was dedicated on the 2nd of July 1927.

McDougall Stoney Mission Society

Board Members 2013

(President - Position Vacant)

Past President— Gerald McDougall

Vice-President—Leonard McDougall

Treasurer—Laura Jauch

Secretary—Sarah Harvey

Directors:

Ann McDougall, Kathy Epp, Audrey Epp, Wayne Holst, Ralphine Locke, Robert MacDonald, Thomas Melvin, John McDougall, Ronald Moore,. Jason Villeneuve, Andrew Stiles,

Newsletter editor: Harold Jepson



his physical limitation. He signed up to be Southern Alberta's first school teacher as well as a competent builder. His beautiful young wife and three small children, ages 9, 6 and 3, were part of the group of sixteen people heading west. Andrew left a detailed and stirring account of the trip west, written in his own hand when he was in his early 80s and that was my major source for this talk.

The party of 16 left Collingwood, Ontario for the 1,000 mile voyage across the Great Lakes by steamer, then travelled on to Winnipeg where they were to meet David McDougall who was there buying supplies for the Mission. There they purchased provisions, horses, oxen, buckboards and Red River carts, to haul the families and freight. Included in Andrew's supplies were the basic elements required for lumbering operations. Carrying up to 900 lbs of freight, the carts could make only 10 to 12 miles a day. Mrs. Sibbald drove their wagon most of the way, while Andrew joined David McDougall in hunting for food for the group. In all, Andrew estimated the two hunters walked more than two thirds of the distance from Winnipeg to Morley.

This is a vignette written in Andrew's own hand which I think you will find interesting.:

"On the third of October, we were camped about 60 miles east of Buffalo Lake. A fine morning turned into a heavy snow storm. It snowed so thick and fast that we had to seek shelter and camp. We were far from wood but we managed to gather enough dry buffalo chips (manure) to cook our dinner and supper; after that they became so wet they would not burn. So we had to go to bed and stay there all the next day, and eat pemmican, dried buffalo meat and bannock. By next morning the storm had passed over, leaving nearly 2 ½ ft. of snow. David McDougall broke up an ox cart box to cook our breakfast.

As we came farther west the snow began to disappear, and in a few days we were on bare ground again. Throughout all this storm there was no complaint or murmur among the women and children."

After 105 days of travel they arrived at Morleyville and the construction of this church began soon after. It was

a slow process as all the lumber was felled in the Bow Valley area., sawed by hand with a whip-saw, planed, dressed and manufactured by hand. If you look around the church interior, you can appreciate the fine work it took, and the amount of individual effort that was expended.

Soon, with the enthusiastic recruiting of Rev. George McDougall, the village of Morleyville began to grow. More McDougall family members arrived to support the work of the Mission. Andrew Sibbald and his workers built a school house, David McDougall's Trading Post opened, a blacksmith shop was soon in full swing, and mail arrived on an irregular basis. Soon, as settlers moved into the area, the number of mail boxes at the Morley Trading Post exceeded the number at the newly built Fort Calgary.

Fort Calgary was established in 1874. Within a year, the McDougalls, with Andrew Sibbald built the first Protestant church in what became Calgary. It was a log building with a shingle roof. All the lumber was floated down the Bow River from the Kananaskis area. This became Central United Church in downtown Calgary.

Before the arrival of the railway in 1883, life at Morleyville was a challenge. Shipments of supplies provided by the Mission Society reached its destination only on a sporadic basis, and often the Mission families joined the Stoneys on buffalo hunts, to secure food for their families. Basics such as flour, sugar, tea and lard were often in short supply. Pemmican, which was dried buffalo meat into which was pounded wild berries was often the only food available, especially in the winter. With no doctor within a 100 miles, the families relied heavily on native medicines and one of Rev. John's duties was to pull teeth when necessary. Winter cold, and the loneliness and worry of the women left alone with their children when the men were visiting the scattered tribes to do their missionary work, made life a serious challenge for the women. It took stout hearts and unquenchable faith to survive.

Another serious set-back struck the Sibbald family in 1882. Andrew's beautiful young wife Elizabeth was stricken with typhoid fever, a common problem in the early West. Soon it became obvious that she was not responding to the simple treatments available. With the closest doctor 140 miles away at Ft. McLeod, this was a serious problem. A young man, Albert Boyd, who had come to Morley with his family in 1880 offered to ride

Non-stop to Fort MacLeod to bring the the doctor to Morley. By changing horses frequently at outposts along the trail, Albert reached the fort in 18 hours of steady riding. The doctor agreed to come to Morley but felt he was not up to the long ride, so he and Albert drove back to Morley in a horse-drawn buggy. Unfortunately, when theygot to Morley it was too late. Elizabeth Sibbald had passed on, leaving four children, including the young baby who was mborn at Morley. Albert’s valiant action has become one of the great stories of the area. Fortunately, Andrew had the support of the whole small community, who rallied around him to raise his family

Andrew continued building and at the same time teaching school to the Stoneys and the children of the Mission families. Long before the era of the “residential school, which legislation was passed in 1918, the children of the Morley community were lovingly treated. I personally witnessed the close and affectionate relationship between the Mission families and the Stoneys as I often visited my aunt Lizzey, the Reverend John McDougall’s widow, in Calgary and saw the warm friendships expressed by the frequent Stoney visitors to her home.

In the last years of the 19th Century, a new church was built by the river, in the heart of the Stoney Reserve, and the Mission buildings were abandoned. Rev. John McDougall was appointed to oversee the work of the Methodist Church in the Prairie provinces and British Columbia. He travelled widely in this capacity, from a new base in Calgary. He passed away in 1917. His wife lived to 87 years of age, doing much charitable work in Calgary.

And what of Andrew Sibbald? Ever active, he and his grown sons developed a large cattle ranch in the Little Jumping Pound area, which his descendants still operate. He also continued to build a number of homes and farm buildings in the area. A cabin built by Andrew on the home property in the Jumping Pound area is still habitable. After his retirement he lived in Banff where he had two granddaughters, one of whom was the wife of James I. Brewster, well known pioneer businessman, and

the other the wife of George Hunter, an early Park superintendent. His eldest son, Howard Sibbald, served as the first Game Warden in Banff National Park, and was highly respected by all who knew him.

When I was 8 years old, in 1933. it was my great pleasure to attend Andrew’s 100th birthday. My sister and I proudly manned the visitor’s book on that occasion, which was very memorable. He died a year later, still sound in mind and body. His remarkable courage and inner strength will be long remembered. In his memory, Sibbald Flats and Sibbald Lake, in the Kananaskis, and schools in Calgary and Cochrane are named for him.

What it is that leads a man such as Andrew through human adversity and personal tragedy, as well as the everyday struggle to live under conditions we can scarcely imagine – to give of himself for the good of community, based on the Christian precepts of love and brotherhood? It must have been a deep faith in God that sustained him, as it was for all those early Morley pioneers, that gave them the strength and courage to plant the seeds of civilization in this area and to work to prepare the First People for the great changes that would come to their lives. When the Northwest Mounted Police rode West in 1874, the McDougalls, as did other missionaries working in Alberta, received letters from Ottawa asking their cooperation in advising the native people of their eminent arrival, and the Crown’s good intent to free the natives from the destructive influences of the whisky traders moving into the country. This action was of major importance in the peaceful transition to a lawful society, in comparison with the tragic battles that occurred south of the 49th parallel during the settlement years.

We are the inheritors of this great heritage. Let us remember and deeply respect the accomplishment of our early pioneers, so evident in this special place called Morleyville on this special day of commemoration. Thank you”.

Ralphine Locke - June 9, 2013

Volunteers are needed to help to maintain our wonderful Alberta historical site: Please call:

- **Church Maintenance:** (Weed control, painting, repairs,) I Len McDougall: **403-226-1353**
- **Docents** (opening church in summer ,providing historical context) Laura Jauch: **403-875-5978**
- **Weddings:** Ann McDougall **403-282-3044** **Newsletter:** Harold Jepson **403 289 3412**
- **Event Planning:** Help with bi-annual services or special events! Laura Jauch **403-875-5978**



Become a member of the McDougall Stoney Mission Society

C/O Laura Jauch, PO Box 15 13 Walsh Ave , Acme, AB, T0M 0A0

Name(s): _____ Phone : _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Individual Membership \$20 _____ Family Membership \$25 _____

Donations of \$25 or more will be sent a tax receipt \$ _____ Date: _____