

# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

September 2021

Official Newsletter for Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

## '76 Ranch Beginnings With Sir Lister Kaye

Sir John Lister Kaye had a talent for unusual farm and ranch ventures. The Medicine Hat Times described him as "a tall, blonde, blue-eyed Englishman with a fine sandy moustache and a shapely head filled with schemes." He was supposedly a man of ceaseless chatter.

In 1887 (130 odd years ago) this 34-year-old aristocrat bought 7,000 acres at Balgonie in the then region of Assiniboia in North West Territories west of Regina (Regina was but a small town). Here he cultivated land and raised livestock on the open range, the success of which had Lister-Kaye making bigger plans. DJ (Joe) Wylie, an early settler in the Maple Creek district, helped Lister-Kaye convince British investors (CACC Co.) that Lister-Kaye's vision was workable. (Wylie became manager of Lister-Kaye's Kincorth site and later sat in the Saskatchewan legislature.)

In 1888 Lister-Kaye negotiated a bargain price to purchase 100,000 acres of frontier prairie land scattered from east of Regina to the Calgary area. Half was from the



76 Ranch House, Crane Lake, photos courtesy of Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre in Medicine Hat

Canadian government (his friend John A McDonald was the Prime Minister then). The other half was from the CPR. Ten 'homesteads' were to be distributed along the newly built rail line at Rush Lake, Swift Current, Gull Lake, Crane Lake (east of Piapot), Kincorth (northwest of Maple Creek), Dunmore, Stair (where Redcliff is now), Bantry (east of Brooks), Namaka and Langdon, each site 10,000 acres. The government and CPR wanted to bring settlement and commerce in the west. Sir Lister-Kaye would raise livestock and grow grain. He would provide the buildings and

*Continued on Page 4*

In this issue: 2021 MH Poetry Show, Piapot, the Hackney horse.

[www.MHCowboyLife.com](http://www.MHCowboyLife.com)



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## From My Perch on the Corral: President's Message

The extreme heat, the drought harvest and the Covid uncertainties have tried to make this a **lousy summer**. Perhaps one or all of these made this a year you'll always remember, or a year you'll want to forget. My main distraction this summer has been researching the beginnings and onward of the '76 Ranches as well as its various connections. It is one of Canada's oldest and the largest of ranches. It parallels the lures and the challenges of the other early ranches. I hope the rich folklore of the '76 Ranches stirs your imagination as it did mine.

I didn't realize that there were ten **'76 ranches** and that two of them were near Medicine Hat (at Dunmore & at Redcliff, the Stair Ranch) and there was one at Piapot (the Crane Lake Ranch). We can also claim the colourful **Sir Lister-Kaye**, its originator, as part of our local history.

The community focus in this newsletter is **Piapot (past and present)** where the '76 Crane Lake Ranch operated. There was a need to do a biography about **Chief Piapot** after which the area was named. He did his best to stop the CPR that would bring settlers to take up aboriginal hunting grounds. That led to **Jim Wilson's** baler story and his bio. The Jim Wilson family has the '76 brand and owns some of the original '76 property; they had to deal with the aging, lavish house that was on the property. **Hackney horses** and the English lifestyle are featured because they were brought to our area by the likes of Sir Lister-Kaye.

It has been an interesting journey finding and assembling pieces of information to document this. Information was gleaned from the local history book, library books, the Esplanade archives and the internet. Thanks also to contributions of folks from Piapot, Maple Creek, Gull Lake and Medicine Hat. What to do with **conflicting information and dates**? I tried to use the most reliable sources; I learned the need to note the sources from the beginning of the research.

Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry does more than publish a **newsletter** every three months. We post a new **Senior Story video** every month (except August, I insisted the team take a holiday). We continue to interview seniors, put their story into poetic form and video them for our website: [MHCowboyLife.com](http://MHCowboyLife.com). We have published all the 2020 **seniors' stories as poems**, their pictures and bios in booklet form. Purchasing them for \$15 is a way to support MHCP. (You can also get a membership for \$20 a year.)



Jen Zollner, President, Medicine Hat  
Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Find **other stories** on our website: barn stories, ranch histories, brand stories, and excerpts from Harry Forbes' books. These are the **communities 'Round Medicine Hat** that have been featured: Piapot this month, Dunmore, Chappice Lake and Hilda. It's good for us country folk to know more about each other, in the past and what's there now.

We're looking forward to seeing you at our third annual Cowboy Poetry and Western Music event. Weather permitting, the great outdoors will be our venue at the **Kin Coulee Bandstand** on Saturday at **1:00, September 11<sup>th</sup>**. Morley Thorpe is a Saskatchewan stand-up poet. In keeping with our mandate, we always include local talent as seen by our line-up (Reese Klaiber, Morgan and Mixed Company). It's exciting to have Holly Padfield as our 'youth' poet.

*continued on page 3*

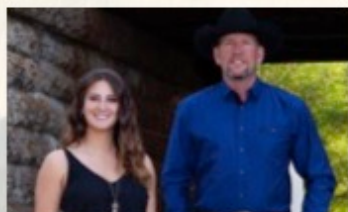


# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry and Western Music Show

Celebrating the traditions of the west through story, music and poetry

Featuring:



Reese and Morgan Klaiber



Morley Thorpe



Mixed Company



Holly Padfield

September 11, 2021

Kin Coulee,  
Medicine Hat, AB

1:00PM

Bad weather:  
MH Public Library

Bring a lawn  
chair and blanket

Food Trucks

Free event!  
Donations  
gratefully  
received.

For More Information, visit [www.MHCowboyLife.com](http://www.MHCowboyLife.com)

Jen: 403.529.6384 [jzollner10@gmail.com](mailto:jzollner10@gmail.com)

*Continued from page 2*

The MC is our vice-president, Shelley Goldbeck who always adds more colour and humour to the event. For the 11<sup>th</sup> be sure to keep nice weather in your prayers, otherwise we'll see you at the MH Library Theatre. See the highlights from 2020 event: <https://youtu.be/jicqFpRnRKE>.

Many **thanks** to the **Drowning Grazing Association** for their generous donation. We couldn't have had an event this year without it. Thanks too for the MHCP board, an incredible team, (Shelley Goldbeck, Cheryl Dust and Carol Eisenbarth). Yes, we depend entirely on sponsorship and on volunteers. **We need your support.** You can give feedback on our newsletter, you can become a member or you can offer to be the hands and feet for our foundation.

In closing, here's a bit of **western wisdom**: Just 'cause discouragement comes visiting doesn't mean you have to offer it a place to sit down.

*Medicine Hat Cowboy Life is the official newsletter of the Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation, (a registered Society in the Province of Alberta), published four times per year. Our mandate is to preserve, promote and celebrate cowboy traditions and country living. If you wish to submit articles or information of interest to our readers, please email [jzollner10@gmail.com](mailto:jzollner10@gmail.com) subject: Newsletter.*

[www.MHCowboyLife.com](http://www.MHCowboyLife.com)



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Page 4

## 76 Ranch

*Continued from page 1*

livestock for labourers and farmers who would settle on the developed half-section. He'd pay their expenses and wages for a year.

Each farm/ranch was furnished with a lavish house, multiple outbuildings, farm equipment and livestock. He imported high quality breeds (such as Merino ewes, Yorkshire boars, Hackney stallions, Galloway, Shorthorn and Angus bulls) in multiples of ten, likewise distributing them in deca-multiples among his ten farms and ranches. He brought 600 top quality Clydesdale horses from Ontario to bring the prairie sod under cultivation. In 1889 his 50,000 sheep from Oregon, Montana and Idaho came through Maple Creek, the largest number ever recorded. He bought the entire herd of cattle with the 76 brand from the Powder Creek Ranch in Wyoming when they dispersed. That's the brand the cattle crossed the border into Canada with, it's the brand he kept and ever after it was known as the '76 Ranch'. He opened up butcher shops and slaughter houses in Dunmore and Medicine Hat and a large packing plant in Calgary to sell the company's own beef, mutton and pork.

Some parts of the venture seemed to profit at first. But during his management there never was a crop at Dunmore site due to drought conditions. The losses were staggering when winter weather didn't cooperate to naturally freeze the meat going from the packing plant in Alberta to England. When severe winters made grazing impossible, stacks of stored feed were quickly used up and cattle losses were devastating; as well freak blizzards took their toll. There were prairie fires and hailstorms; coyotes preyed heavily on lambs and sheep. There was bad luck. But it didn't help that he wasn't aware of possible weather variations, had a complete lack of practical know-how and that it was too large an undertaking to manage properly. He returned to England when he was replaced in 1895.



Wm Rutherford took delivery of 10,000 sheep at Maple Creek for the 76 Ranch.  
Photo courtesy of Medicine Hat Esplanade

Sir Lister-Kaye's project may have been a failure in that very few of the settlers ever got title to their own land through his colonization plan. But his project helped shape the government's agricultural policies and it changed production practices for settlers that followed. Upgrading the stock resulted in quality product that was valuable when exporting to Britain. The quality of the stock from the 76 ranches got to be well recognized. The Clydesdale horses as well as Galloway and Shorthorn cattle often captured prizes at major fairs and exhibitions in Western Canada. If it wasn't the first, it certainly was the largest agricultural experiment in Western Canada.

Back in England Sir Lister-Kaye was appointed officer of the Order of the British Empire and served as Deputy Lieutenant in the Riding of Yorkshire. He was good friends with and served for a time as groom-in-waiting to King Edward VII. In his family he was named 3rd Baronet Lister-Kaye of Grange. He died in 1924 at age 71 in a nursing home.

*-info compiled by Jen Zollner from the Piapot history book, Dave Spencer's "Lands, Brands & Hands of the 76 Ranch" and internet sites*



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## The '76 Brand Lives On

The history of many SW Saskatchewan communities began with the ranch, the '76 Ranch. The '76 brand continues to mark cattle at the Wilson family ranch at Piapot, formerly Crane Lake and the historic Crane Lake ranch house stood in their yard until recent years.

The 'Old 76' dates back to 1887 when Sir Lister Kaye and the CACC company started his large scale and complex colonization program. Troubles were plaguing them on all fronts and continued in 1890 when they had heavy sheep losses with coyotes and a prairie fire that was started by sparks from the CPR engine. As well their crops were devastated by hailstorms and drought. That's the year D.H. Andrews took over as cattle manager.

In 1895 the CACC company retired Sir Lister Kaye and sold all of its holding and assets to the Canadian Land and Ranch Co. Ltd. making D.H. Andrews the general manager. Andrews sold off some of the holdings, reduced the number of employees and shifted livestock to make the best use of the resources. It was hard to make a profit with weather conditions and low prices, but the new company did make healthy profits through consolidations. The only tracts he kept were the Swift Current, Gull Lake, Stair (where Redcliff is now) and Crane Lake properties. Crane Lake is located near where Piapot is now.

Horses were soon brought in to be raised in the areas, as well as sheep numbering as many as 30,000 to be pastured in the Swift Current and Gull Lake areas. About 20,000 cattle were also brought in and raised in the Crane Lake and Stair areas. Andrews brought 15,000 Eastern steers but unfortunately an outbreak of mange killed most of the cattle. Crane Lake, at this time, served as the headquarters and Andrews stayed there as manager. Robert Needham was his farm foreman; he and his brother Dick still ranch in the area. Under Andrew's direction water was secured for the animals and crops by building a dam (built with

planks) to hold melt waters from Cypress Hills through Skull Creek.

In 1905 Andrews passed away and was replaced by Springett. During his management there were severe losses among the herds. A mortal blow came when they lost two-thirds of their cattle on the open range in the winter of 1906-07. The Namaka block and other lands were bought by George Lane, cattle and land baron and an originator of the Calgary Stampede. By this time homesteaders were coming in and taking up a lot of space.

In 1909 the British owners sold its remaining holdings to Gordon, Ironside and Fares of Winnipeg. The ranch would eventually have 12,000 head of cattle on a fenced range. By 1920 Ironside had died and Gordon was in poor health and gave up the Crane Lake ranch. Fred Speers stayed as the last manager at Crane Lake while he developed his own ranch alongside the '76. Some employees stayed on and rented or purchased part of the assets.

By 1926 the days of the 76 Ranch were over. Eventually the 76 ranch was split into various rural municipalities, pastures owned by individual farmers and ranchers, as well as into PFRA pastures by the provincial government.



Sir Lister Kaye



## The Jim Wilson Family:

In 1972 Jim bought 17 sections of the 76 Ranch at Piapot then called Crane Lake. "Some older guys were sure I'd be working for the bank, but that made me all the more determined." Jim Wilson's son Shay (and Sharmon) now have the deeded land, pastureland and an excellent hay flat that Skull Creek floods naturally every spring.

The Grazing Coop also has pasture that was part of the 76 Ranch. The 76 land is all around Piapot. It is one of the ten large farm/ranches Sir Lister Kaye started from east of Regina to west of Calgary in 1887. From 1890 the Crane Lake Farm was headquarters of the cattle operation. In keeping with Kaye's eccentric use of numbers, this 76 ranch was seven miles long and six miles wide when it was fenced. Shay and Sharmon and their daughter Tawny still carry the 76 brand, the whole left side.

The farmyard and the original house was along the old Trans Canada highway (and railroad) five miles east of Piapot, a half mile from the Old Crane Lake station. The legendary house (a mansion in its time) was still elegant with its hardwood floors, fireplaces and glass cabinets, but it grew to be old and by now needed major repairs. No one wanted it. The fir lumber was hardwood and too brittle to reuse so it was destroyed. The Wilsons have the original bell that was used as a call-in for dinner or a meeting. The renowned round table that could be turned at will is at the Maple Creek museum. Its unique design was to feed the 25 or so men employed on the original ranch.



Fred Walker with a stallion (maybe Hackney) at the Crane Lake 76 Ranch. Photo: Medicine Hat Esplanade.

## Cowboy Wisdom on the Trail

- The only way to drive cattle fast is slowly!
- Ain't never seen a wild critter feelin' sorry for itself.
- Dependin' on the circumstance, you can tolerate a certain amount of slick-eared calf poachin', but horse stealin' is a hangin' offence!
- You wanna be careful that a freshly branded calf ain't suckin' at the wrong cow.
- It's hard to keep a secret around the campfire after a hearty meal of whistle-berries.
- A week spent around a campfire will tell you more about a man than a decade livin' next door to him.
- A few sweet words and a bit of kindness can coax the hottest iron outta the fire.
- If you've got a voice like a burro with a bad cold, the kind that makes a coyote cringe, don't risk singin' to the herd.
- The best way to cook any part of a rangy ol' longhorn is to toss it in a pot with a horseshoe and when the horseshoe's soft and tender you can eat the beef.
- There are rules to horse ridin' but the horse won't necessarily know them.



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## Hackney Horses in England

The foundation of the Hackney horse began in England where trotting horses were the tradition. In fact, King Henry VIII required the wealthy to have a specified number of trotting horse stallions.

The Hackney was developed purely for aesthetic reasons; a refined body, arched neck with head held high and an interesting gait. They were bred to pull the fancy carriages of the rich.

The Hackney replaced the heavy coach horse when smooth well-maintained roads replaced rough trails. People wanted to get places quickly so the Hackney was perfect as a light carriage horse (easily capable of trotting 60 miles in one day).

Horses have long been the symbol of social status and the Hackneys were the prevailing standard of beauty in 1700's English society.

## Hackney Horses in Alberta

Wealthy English brought their lifestyles and their English standards with them when they came to Canada. They built Victorian styled houses, had hired servants and played polo. An example would be Christopher and Arthur Rawlinson when they acquired a large property 11 miles north of the town of Calgary on the Bow River.

The four Hackney horses they brought in 1882 may have been some of the first to arrive in southern Alberta. Imagine their rocking and sometimes turbulent experience of spending a few weeks crossing the Atlantic in the dark hold of a ship. From Montreal they had a rumbling five day train ride to Medicine Hat (the furthest point west offering rail service). Then they were herded along a wagon trail across the prairie to the Rawlinson property (followed by a stagecoach). The Rawlinson homestead was established with livestock barns and an elegant ranch house overlooking the property. They had an English butler, a housekeeper and a Chinese cook.

In 1887 ranches like the Stimson Ranch at High River and the Cochrane Ranch on the Bow river were established. Hackney's were among the Irish Hunters, the Clydesdales and the Thoroughbred horses they used and raised.

It was also in 1887 that Sir Lister Kaye imported Hackney stallions to southern western Saskatchewan and southeastern Alberta. He built a two-story ranch house at Crane Lake (near Piapot, SK) that had English fireplaces, glass cupboards and large dining rooms. It may have been the most elegant building found in Saskatchewan at the time. (Two-room sod shacks were the first homes of the many immigrant homesteaders that came then, and as many as 20 years later.)

## Hackney Facts:

The interest in driving horses began to decrease between WWI and WWII when automobile use was increasing. And Hackneys were no longer in style so they nearly went extinct in the 1950s and 60s.

The Hackney breed gradually transformed into prized show equines. They are known for their high-stepping gait and flashiness in the show ring.

The Hackney PONY (a different type of breed from the Hackney HORSE) is crossed with a Welsh pony. It's not just an undersized Hackney horse but an animal with distinct pony character.

At the 1915 New York horse show, a Hackney jumped 8 feet 2 inches.

Prior to the twentieth century the roles of horses were:

- a means of transportation
- instruments of war
- agricultural machinery
- even sources of food

Then the Hackney horses were developed as fashion trenders!

See Hackney horses prance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mmtb9Xrt0Aw>



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## 'Round Medicine Hat, *Featuring a Local Destination* Piapot

- I'm sure you've seen the Piapot sign on the Trans-Canada highway.
- Did you know there's a Old Western Saloon and an Old School Vintage Shop there?
- Did you know Chief Piapot tried to stop the building of the railroad here?
- Did you know the town site was bought from the '76 Ranch?
- Did you know that a headquarters for '76 Ranches was near Piapot?
- Did you know the '76 brand registered in 1886 is still used by a Piapot ranch?

Find out more about the history of this community by visiting our 'Round Medicine Hat feature on our web site. <https://mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/round-medicine-hat/piapot-and-area/>

## The Medicine Hat Public Library

**The Medicine Hat Public Library** serves as a community hub, providing equitable and convenient access to books, media, information, and programs that help to educate, enrich, entertain, and inform. Anyone can use the library and its resources. During library opening hours, you are welcome to read, listen to music, access your e-mail and search the library's online magazines and newspapers. If you become a library member, your library card allows you to take home books, e-books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and audio books. **Current Library Hours Monday to Friday: 10am-6pm.** <https://mhpl.shortgrass.ca>

### Resources at the Medicine Hat Public Library

Payepot And His People by Abel Watetch The author is nephew of Chief Payepot from recollections of his kin. Initially it was published serially by "The Western Producer".

Piapot Prairie Trails, local history, 971.244 PIA (non fiction)

Indian Fall, The Last Great Days of the Plains Cree and the Blackfoot Confederacy by D'Arcy Jenish

Chief Piapot, I Will Stop the Train by Vincent McKay MCK (fiction)

The Lands, Brands and Hands of the 76 Ranch by Dave Spencer



Piapot in studio pose circa 1885 –  
Saskatchewan Archives



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

## THIS AND THAT:

In the early 1900's, Saskatchewan ranked 4th in Canada as a sheep-producing province. Sheep ranchers were despised by cattlemen that proliferated the Maple Creek area around 1900. By 1901 the ratio of sheep to cattle was bigger than anywhere else in the then Territories. In 1934 their numbers peaked at 381,000. By 2016 there were still 110,000 sheep on 871 farms.

The most famous cowboy of the '76 was undoubtedly Will James, a line rider for the '76. He (and his beloved Smoky?) roamed over the hills just as the settlers were starting to arrive at the '76 ranch at Gull Lake.

A trail drive was coming through Crane Lake. A southerner went on-the-town at Crane Lake. It created quite a ruckus when he clipped off a restaurant owner's pigtail. He was put in jail which stopped the trail drive.

The quality bulls and rams early ranchers brought to the West from Eastern Canada and Europe greatly improved the quality of the livestock that came from the US. Canadian cattle finished better and withstood the trip overseas better. The markets much preferred Canadian cattle over Texas Longhorns.

The story is told of a Texas cowboy on one of the '76 round-ups. He went to Havre to buy cowboy boots and there he visited ladies-of-the-night. In the morning he came home with madam's slippers. (Many early cowboys came here from the US.)

A shy cowboy seemed to have no favour with the ladies. A group of cowboys made a bet that he couldn't find a lady in a month. In two weeks he had a bride.

Imagine the labour it took to build the houses and the numerous outbuildings on each of the ten '76 ranches. The main buildings on each of the ten sites had the same style and layout and used the same plans. The inside of the two-story houses measured 32 by 36 feet and were of hardwood pine lumber. The main barns measured 60 by 92 feet and were constructed from cedar lumber. Every board was sawed by hand and each square nail was hand-forged.

An Old Adage: Never a bronc never was rode,  
Never a rider never was throw'd.

## The '76 Ranch Houses:

The Gull Lake 76 ranch house was built in 1888 and it still stands in Gull Lake. The inside measurements, 32 feet by 36 feet. It served as the residence of a foreman and ranch hands until 1906 when it was sold. Conrad and Price bought the land that would become the town of Gull Lake. In 1906 it became a one-room school, then a hotel, then a scout house, then the office of the Gull Lake School Division. Now it is a private home that's been totally renovated. It has an entirely new look but has maintained the ranch-house style.

The Crane Lake (Piapot) 76 ranch house was built in the 1880's. Frank Speers, a ranch manager for Gordon, Ironsides and Fares was using it as a summer house in 1917. At that time the ranch was a busy, hiring about 25 hired men. In later years Mr. Speers himself leased and operated the ranch living in the old ranch house until he built a more modern home. When Mr. Speers retired in 1944, the ranch was sold to two Taber men, then shortly thereafter to Alex Walmark. He ran both cattle and sheep for quite a number of years but eventually went into straight cattle raising.

In 1960, nineteen residents of Piapot purchased 16,000 acres from Walmark and formed the '76 Grazing Co-op that is still operating. In 1972 Jim Wilson, a well-known auctioneer and area rancher, bought the balance of the old Crane Lake Ranch and the 76 brand from Mr. Walmark. His family has the deeded land, pastureland and the hay flat. Some water from Skull Creek still diverts to naturally flood 70 acres of crop land and 40 acres of meadow. Andrews Lake in the area was named after D.H. Andrews.

Jim Wilson retired from ranching in 2004, the year his son Shay and daughter-in-law Sharmon took over the ranch, now named S & S Ranch. Their Aberdeen Black Angus still carry the 76 brand. This 135-year-old brand was first registered to the Powder River Cattle Co in NWT, Canada in 1886. See Jim Wilson's bio on our web site: <https://mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/ranch-stories/76-ranch/>



## THE AGRICULTURE VENTURES OF SIR JOHN LISTER KAYE

You know you have to gamble when you're tending to the land,  
You know that agriculture touch-and-go are hand in hand,  
    There's expenses and there's risk,  
    Whether ranching or you disc  
And you're checking on the weather as you think how to expand.

Meet the biggest reckless gambler, it's the first that Canada's known,  
The ventures of Sir Lister Kaye are a questionable milestone,  
    He has royalty as friends  
    That have money free to spend,  
His ideas hit the West like a tornado or cyclone.

The stores in Britain, they need beef, they've sent out a campaign,  
The headlines read: the land is free, get rich out on the Plains,  
    Sir John's the smoothest talker  
    With persuasive schemes so cocky  
That for money and titanic plans he's given a free rein.

Sir John Kaye buys a big place on Regina's eastern rim,  
But acres seven-thousand is too small to contain him,  
    On a mega shopping spree  
    He bought land for the company,  
From here to Calg'ry a hundred thousand acres on a whim.

You'll see he loved his numbers big, in tens, it was bizarre,  
Half the land he bought was from the railroad, CPR,  
    The rest was from John A,  
    Dollar an acre he would pay,  
He had a scheme so it would seem, here's what he planned so far:

"Ten farms I'll start ten-thousand acres each," is what he said,  
"Bring people and supplies to build, prepare my every spread",  
    One farm was built by Dunmore,  
    At Piapot there's one more,  
He'd bring folks out to live here, he would set-up each homestead.

Each had a house two-stories high, a bunk house, a granary,  
A stable, windmills, blacksmith shop and sheds for machinery,  
    Made sure it all was rigged  
    For sheep and cows and pigs,  
To order his supplies was an outlandish spending spree.

*continued on page 11*

## In Case of Fire

*Dry hot summers on the prairie increase the risk of wildfire. Here are some useful tips:*

### **When Wild Fire Approaches:**

- report the fire immediately
- dress properly to reduce the risk of burn injuries (long pants and shirt of cotton or wool and sturdy footwear)
- have firefighting tools and ladders propped against the house in a visible place

### **Should a House be Threatened by Wildfire:**

- vacate if so advised or be ready to vacate
- contact a friend or relative and relay your plans
- make sure family members are aware of the prearranged meeting place
- advise your local authority that you have vacated and how you can be reached
- tune into a local radio station and listen for instructions
- place vehicles in the garage (have them pointing out) and roll up the windows
- place valuable papers and mementos in the car
- close the garage door, but leave it unlocked. If applicable, disconnect the electric garage door opener so that the door can be opened manually
- place combustible patio furniture in the house or garage
- shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the metre
- carry gloves, a handkerchief to cover face, water to drink and goggles

*Continued on Page 11*



# Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

His order for two-million feet of lumber was all set,  
Six-hundred Clydesdales from the East were the best you can get,  
Machinery for the farming,  
The arrival was alarming  
Of the 40,000 sheep and pure-bred pigs he would regret.

He came upon a cowboy camp, ranch dispersal was the word,  
From Wyoming Powder River Ranch he bought the whole darnn herd,  
7,000 was the order  
76 brand when they crossed the border,  
He kept the brand and then as 76 Ranch he's referred.

A brainwave that to Britain he would ship his own steer crop,  
So at Dunmore and at Med Hat built a slaughter house and shop,  
After butchering's performed  
Freezing weather turned to warm,  
Spoiled carcasses three-hundred, that's a smelly megaflop.\*

An English market for his dairy products he would seize,  
He'd milk the cows, make butter and he's sell the finest cheese,  
You can guess a hostile cow  
From the range, she won't allow  
For much product from the milking, even penning's not with ease.

When drought hit Dunmore wheat fields he knew how to irrigate,  
With horses, tanks and wagons he would rainfall recreate,  
Water tanks were made of pine,  
But there never was a sign  
Of hope that he could salvage crops on farming real estate.

If only guaranteed success would depend on lots of bucks,  
If only determination could but compensate bad luck,  
But Sir Lister Kaye retired  
'Cause his funding had expired  
After six years everything he tried had gone awry, amuck.

Now don't you feel too sorry for Sir John Lister Kaye,  
Was named lieutenant, officer and a baronet to my dismay,  
Groom-in-waiting for a king,  
What do you think of his farm-fling?  
I know it wouldn't work for me, they'd jail me straight away.

But maybe there's a lesson here if we would but observe,  
They say he talked incessantly, his brashness hit a nerve,  
They may have paid to see him gone,  
Expensive lesson to pass on,  
The greed that goes with gambling us'll give what they deserve.  
By Jen Zollner      \*(another source said it was 800)

Fire continued

-close all exterior vents  
-make sure all garden hoses are connected to faucets and attach a nozzle set on "spray"

## More Things You Can Do:

-soak rags, towels or small rugs with water to use in beating out embers or small fires  
-inside, fill bathtubs, sinks and other containers with water  
-outside, fill garbage cans and buckets with water.  
-close all exterior doors and windows  
-close all interior doors  
-open the fireplace damper, but place the screen over the hearth to prevent sparks and embers from entering the house  
-leave a light on in each room  
-remove lightweight and non-fire resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around the windows  
-if available, close fire resistant curtains, shutters or venetian blinds. Attach pre-cut plywood panels to the exterior side of windows and glass doors  
-move overstuffed furniture to centre of the room  
-keep wood shake or shingle roofs moist with spraying water. Do not waste water. Consider placing a lawn sprinkler on the roof  
-continually check the roof and attic for embers, smoke or fire  
FireSmart: Farm and Ranch Practices, Government of SK.  
(Burning grass, stubble, piles and windrows can be tricky. Click link for tips to ensure a safe burn.  
<https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/farm-and-ranch-magazine-aug-25-compressed.pdf>



## Stories from Seniors

The Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation posts a new Stories from Seniors video each month. Our September video is from our President, Jen Zollner, who had to be pressed to make a spectacle of herself! She tells the story of the emotion she felt when she was dismantling her father's barn than he had built by hand when she was a child. It ends with the song she wrote her dad, sung by Jen and her late husband, Harry Koch.

Do you have a rural story that you'd like to share? We are looking for former ranchers and farmers from the Bindloss area. Contact Jen Zollner at 403-529-6384. <https://mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/stories-from-seniors/>



## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

