



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

December 2021

Official Newsletter for Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Cowboy Lingo for Little People

ankle biter
chap
frying size
feller
gal-boy/tomboy
lil' cowpoke
little filly
munchkin
mutton buster
nipper/baby
pie-eater
pretty as a speckled pup
purely purdy
rug rat
shaver/child
tot
trat/pretty girl
tyke
young 'un

Merry Christmas from Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry



In this Issue: Shetland Ponies, Town of Redcliff, The Stair Ranch

www.MHCowboyLife.com



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

From My Perch on the Corral: President's Message



Jen Zollner, President,
Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Have you seen Recent Stories From Seniors and Country Stories Videos on our website?

Harold Fieldberg,
"The Lone Wolf of Bindloss"

Meet Harry Forbes (and three of his
stories)

Vi Rieger's Christmas Story

Amy Brusky's To Ginger with Love

Have you read the latest stories?

Harry Forbes Remembers:
Family Life & The Sheep Business

I-Alice's YesterYears:
Silver Sandals & The Useless Gift

What topics will end up in the newsletter? It starts with curiosity that leads to exploration and discovery. Finding something exciting is not unlike the joy experienced by children learning about the world around them.

For this newsletter it all started with the realization that one of the ten famous '76 ranches, the Stair Ranch was right where the town of Redcliff is located now. Thus I knew which town's past and present I'd be researching and that I'd be interviewing some of its residents.

While reading "Bricks, Bottles & Babies", I came upon Raymond Dubeau, his legendary Shetland ponies and his clever method of taming them. Not only did that lead to the study of Shetlands, it led to interviews with the Dubeau family and ultimately to writing a poem and adding it to our series of Country Story Videos (a new one posted each month). From those contacts came biographies and more. That's how the basic content of this newsletter was stumbled upon. Many thanks to the various Redcliff folks who gave suggestions and corrections.

My gratitude is always with the dedicated board of MHCP. Together we got over the disappointment of having to cancel our outdoor event on September 11th, the only day it rained all summer. Due to Covid, our backup venue at the library wasn't available either.

Sharing my enthusiastic discoveries wouldn't be possible without the skills that the MHCP board contribute, things like formatting, posting, videoing, and most importantly, their encouragement. We are delighted to welcome Donna Moore to our board. We seem to be coming up with new ideas all the time; mid-month we are now posting one of Alice Kanewischer's stories (I-Alice) as well as excerpts from Harry Forbes' books.

We are encouraged by your visits to our website, to our blog and for sharing us on Facebook. You can support us by submitting comments, by becoming a member (\$20), by purchasing a book "2020 Senior Stories" (\$15), and by telling your friends what you enjoy about our website: MHCowboyLife.com.

Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Board sends wishes for a Merry Christmas to each of you and your ponies too!



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

'Round Medicine Hat,
Featuring a Local Destination

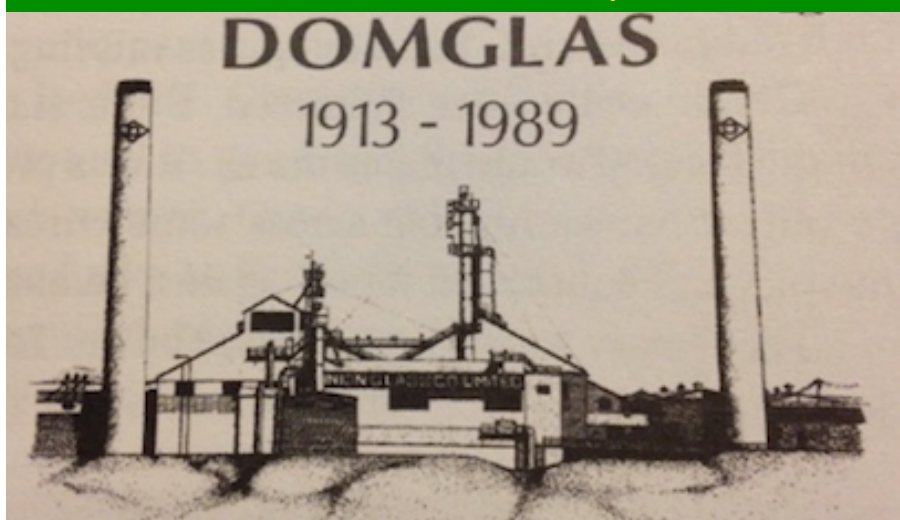
Redcliff

Redcliff has a rich history; it thrived during its booms and survived the busts. It's a flourishing town that folks have every reason to be proud of. It 'grew up' fast going from bald prairie to being the biggest and busiest in its first 30 years. The unfortunate timing of various events cut short Redcliff's span of five years as the manufacturing centre of Western Canada: World War I, a destructive cyclone, the Spanish flu and then the Depression. But Redcliff is resilient, as witnessed by its present-day success. Their extensive history books go well beyond what would be expected. They have an entire book about one industry, the Glass Factory. They have succeeded in making their 100th Anniversary volume an interesting read and a window that allows us to peer into times past. Also this rich history prompts us to feel the pride they have of their community with anecdotes, legends and the honest recollections that folks submitted. It's fascinating to learn about Redcliff piece by piece; it's even more impressive when you compile all the interesting little details into one place. The segments are as follows:

- Highlights of Redcliff (it's history through the years)
- Accomplishments of Some Former Notable Redcliff Citizens
- Growing Up in Redcliff Before TV (anecdotes summarized from "Bricks, Bottles & Babies")

Check out 'Round Medicine Hat on our website for more of what Redcliff was and still is.

The Glass Factory



The town of Redcliff pulsed with the sound of the compressor at the 'Glass Factory'. Work shifts scheduled a good many of its residents. Even if you weren't an employee, the factory whistle was the timer informing everyone it's 8 in the morning,

or it's noon, it's 4 in the afternoon or it's midnight. They all used it to gauge every day, of every week, for 76 years.

All things glass was their pride: from canning jars to beer bottles, from honey jars to baby food jars. Milk bottles, lantern globes and soft drink bottles were glass until times changed and glass was replaced with lighter, unbreakable plastic and paper.

Whatever the reasons, when the plant shut down it was a drastic change for all the employees who had worked there countless years, many of whom lived in 'The Glass Town'.

It was also a big change of identity for the entire town.



The Stair Ranch

In 1883, the Stair Ranch was one of the ten huge 76 Ranches located 1/2 mile west of present day Redcliff. It was built around it and included all of what is now Redcliff, 1,000 acres in all. It was built near the CPR Rail Station so named for the Earl of Stair, a rich Scottish nobleman. John Ellis was hired in Scotland by the infamous Sir Lister Kaye to come to Canada manage the '76 ranch at Balgonie, then in 1887 to manage the Stair Ranch..

In the beginning these ten parcels of land were intended to be farms growing grain. The agreement was that each acre the company tilled would be free. By the year 1900 several hundred acres had been ploughed up on the south side of the CPR including what is now the site of the town of Redcliff. John Ellis was induced to try an irrigation system unique to farming in almost any country. They watered with wagons carrying pine tanks which were filled at the river and pulled through the coulees up the steep grade to the grain fields by six and eight horse teams. Dry land farming proved to be a megaflop.

In 1889, when D. H. Andrews was appointed manager of the stock operations, the '76 Stair Ranch became primarily a ranching operation. Unfortunately the railroad cut the land in half, blocking some livestock from getting to the river for water. Therefore the Stair Dam was built two miles north of Redcliff which served as a skating and hockey rink for the Redcliff community for many years.



From 1889 to 1909 this big house on the '76 Stair Ranch was famous for the hospitality of Mrs. John Ellis.

Sir John Lister Kaye's grand land development scheme was a failure. All of the ranch buildings were sold to some of the employees who moved them to locations where they had purchased land to begin a new life. The Dixons, the Walkers and the Ellises were a few of those pioneers. In 1906 the Stoner Land Company purchased the part of the ranch that is now the Redcliff town site. Thus Redcliff was almost named Stonerville!

Descendants of the original employees of the 76 Ranch are still ranching in the area. John Ellis settled in the Box Springs district on the ranch that is now occupied by his great grandson, Doug Ellis. *Researched and compiled by Jen Zollner*



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 subject: Newsletter.



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Feature Horse: Shetland Pony

The Shetland Pony is hardy

- originated in the Shetland Islands north of Scotland
- survived the barren landscape and harsh winters for 2500 or more years
- grows very thick, double-layer, soft winter coat; loses it in spring

The Shetland Pony is strong

- Is able to pull twice its weight (large horses can pull half their weight)
- were used in coal mines and in forested areas for logging

The Shetland Pony is easy to overfeed

- rarely needs alfalfa, clovers, grain or concentrates, just pasture or good hay
- apples and carrots are treats
- sugar mints etc. may choke them

The Shetland Pony has a short stature

- may stand up to 42" at the withers (weighs 400-450 pounds)
- size ideal for children's riding (age 2-12, 80-90 pounds)

The Shetland Pony is intelligent

- needs to be well-trained or it can be spoiled
- may take advantage of timid beginner riders (uncooperative, headstrong)

- gentle disposition

The Shetland pony has a long lifespan

Shetland ponies are known for their longevity, easily living into their 30's. Sugar Puff was the oldest living pony (the oldest horse) before he died in the UK in 2007 at the age of 56. A pony named Twiglet died in 2017 at age 50. This is 46 year-old Twiglet.

The story of Teddy, a Shetland Pony that becomes a celebrity:
<https://heelsdownmag.com/teddy-the-shetland-bonafide>



Shetland vs Miniature Ponies

Shetland Ponies

outdoor workers
prominent, rough manes & tails
rough, thick hide
shorter neck

Miniature Ponies

indoor pets
smooth manes and tails
smooth coat
longer neck



This is the story of how Raymond Dubeau's pony ranch near Redcliff started. The name 'Gillette' was invented to be the name of the very first Shetland he bought. True facts were gathered from family and history books and have been woven into the story.

Mistakes Can Turn to Blessings

By Jen Zollner

Sometimes a mistake can be a blessing in disguise,
For Raymond, it was when he got Gillette,
His judgement's always wise, but this Shetland's a surprise,
He's sure that this exchange he will regret.

He was a shrewd horse-trader, always got the best of deals,
To one man sold the same horse twice for more.
He raised horses for the field, or for pulling things four-wheeled,
What could a little pony be good for?

One day he hired a Congram boy to help with loading hay,
Eric fell in love with that cute mare,
Raymond saw a deal that day, to Redcliff he would haul the bay
For brothers three to loan while tethered there.

Eric and Bill the older boys got bucked off many-a-time,
That mare kicked younger Harold and he bit,
One day he came home crying, he's covered with dirt and grime,
Gillett had run away lickety-split.

In a panic it was Eric who would race to track Gillette,
Ein'lly it's back to the ranch that they had come,
He is covered with stinky sweat and he's worried you can bet,
But Raymond gave him cookies, scolding's none.

When the summer ended, Gillette was plumb tame,
The agreement was that she goes back to Ray,
He traded her for honey, he hadn't got much money,
But the mem'ries of his childhood came to play.

He'd been a lad of eight when his dad gave him a colt,
He loved that Shetland more than words can say,
Jenny'd follow everywhere, how he lost her wasn't fair,
His head was hatching plans that very day.

continued





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Shetlands he would raise, a stallion he would get
From Toronto at their annual Winter Fair,
The taming of the yearlings in the summer would be met
By the town kids who'd be caring for them there.

His pony ranch it flourished, he's known far and wide,
Prices rose, and there's a market now
For the chuck racing side, and for children to ride,
It's a win situation, to Gillette give a bow.

The kids couldn't wait for the holidays to come,
They'd ride and they'd race, so much fun,
Free board and training great, it's a deal first rate,
A blessing in disguise for everyone.

*Read "The Dubeau Shetland Pony Legacy,
pages 215-6 (Bricks, Bottles & Babies)*

Ten-year-old Raymond Dubeau Writes
to his Dad in the later Fall of 1925:

Dear Daddy,
Why don't you write to us?
Don't you know we are lonesome?
We are all well.
Grandpa has his garden in.
I don't go to school.
I could not get in Redcliff.
Just think Daddy our
barn burned and my poor pony burnt.
Jenny is dead, not Mamma though.
From your dear boy Raymond



Eight-year-old Raymond Dubeau with his dog named Bounce
and his first Shetland pony, Jennie.

Due to the drought, Adam (Raymond's dad) was away working on a grading contract for the CPR to supplement their income. Grandpa Max (and grandma) had homesteaded across the road from where Raymond lived. How heart-breaking for him to have lost his dear Jennie in the fire! (His mother's name was also Jenny.) Devastating was the loss of their barn and six horses as well as 14 sets of harnesses, saddles, feed, wagons, buggies and equipment. It was a total loss because the insurance company had gone out of business a few months prior to the fire.



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Royalty is fond of ponies. Queen Elizabeth was four when she got a Shetland pony for her birthday. When she moves to Balmoral Castle for the summer, the Royal Regiment of Scotland greets her and brings their mascot, a mischievous Shetland pony, Cruachan IV.

Two years ago he ate the Queen's flowers and last year he did a poo in front of her. He doesn't know she's the longest reigning monarch and one of the most famous people in the world. You can't say he disrespects her; after all, he's just a horse. But still he's not exactly on his best behaviour!



The Nose Knows

The horse's sense of smell contributes more to its well-being than we realize. The scent goes first to the part of the brain where emotions are processed, and then to the learning and memory part of the brain. This knowledge can help us understand a horse and can also be of practical use. For instance, certain essential oils can be used to calm a horse or used for 'good' associations. Click on the link below for the article.



<https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/livestock/the-nose-knows-the-sense-of-smell-in-horses-2/>



Stories from Seniors, Country Stories

The Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation posts one or two new videos each month. They can be accessed from our Home page or go to Stories and click on your choice from there.

Copies of our 2020 book of biographies and poem, Stories from Seniors are still available for \$15 each.

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.

www.mhcowboylife.com/stories/stories-from-seniors/



Pony Wisdom

- Every pony deserves to be loved by a little kid.
- The size of a horse has nothing to do with the size of his heart.
- Gallop -the customary gait a pony chooses when returning to the stable
- Please don't feed fingers to your pony.
- The pony already knows how to be a pony; the rider has to learn how to become a rider.

The Medicine Hat Public Library

The Medicine Hat Public Library serves as a community hub, providing 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. As a library member, your library card allows you to take home books, e-books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and audio books. **Our President's choices:**

Bricks, Bottles and Babies, 971.234 BRI,

- Centennial History Book for Redcliff, Alberta
- an extensive look at Redcliff's past industries, people & activities
- interesting to read the anecdotes and growing up memories

Redcliff's 50 Golden Years (The Early History of Redcliff),

- by Cecil T. Hall 971.234 HAL,
- a reference book written by a Redcliff resident from that era

Little Prince by Annie Wedekind, 121 pages

- a fictional story about a pampered pony whose comfortable life in a city stable turns upside down

I Love Ponies, 117 pages

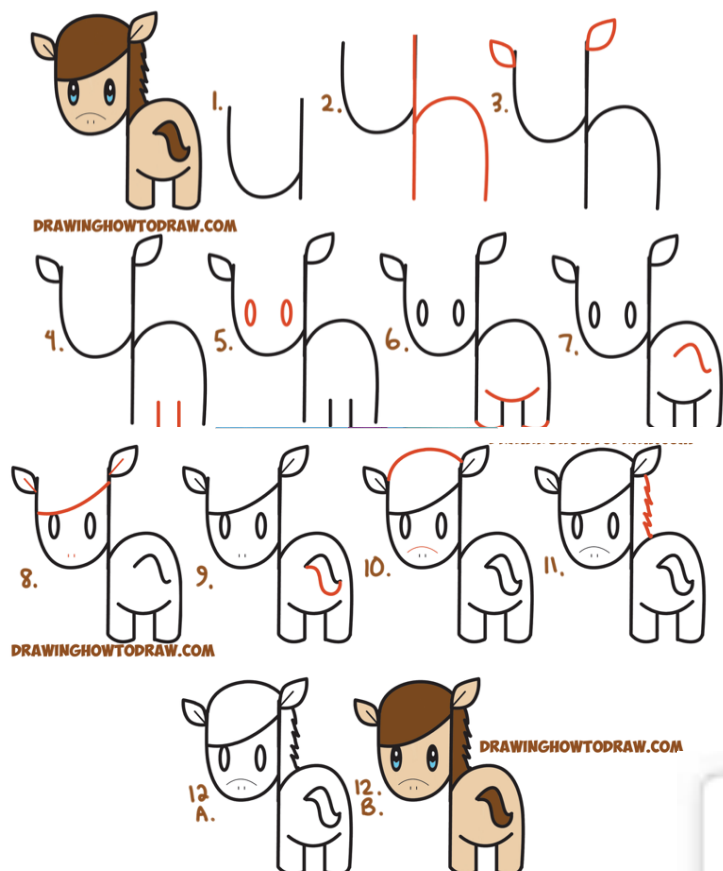
- a practical guide to all aspects of riding and owning a pony
- colourful pictures and facts in a scrapbooking format





Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

How to draw a pony



Pretend this is your very own pony. What will you name him? You decide what colour you want him to be. Shetlands can be any colour: black, white, grey or cream. They can be bay (brown with a black mane and tail) or pinto with patches of white, black or brown. They can have a variety of face and leg markings. But pure Shetlands are not leopard spotted (like an appaloosa).

Make Your Pony's Christmas Special:

- make name plate for his/her stable
- hang a stocking filled with horse treats
- decorate the mane with red ribbon tied or braided
- put glitter on hooves, brow band or stirrups
- make an advent calendar, give a treat as you mark off each day
- shine up the silver on your bridle (Crest toothpaste works)
- make dressage markers by filling gallon-size milk jugs
- pop fruit or veggies on top of your pony's breakfast Christmas morning
- make homemade treats: see recipe in December 2020 newsletter (on our site)
- see December 2020 newsletter for foods a pony can or cannot eat



Shetland Pony