



FACT SHEET

History of the Okotoks Museum and Archives

The century-old home that houses the Okotoks Museum and Archives represents a fine example of early 1900s architecture. Built in 1905, the house has been home to several families, its stairs have felt a myriad of children's feet while the ground floor kitchen produced countless meals. If only the walls could talk!

The house was originally located at 126 Elizabeth Street on the corner of Elizabeth Street and Northridge Drive. The first title shows that the owners consisted of five entrepreneurs: William Livingston, John Lineham, Josiah Pugh, and Alex and Hugh Patterson. Although five individuals are listed on the title, William Livingston was the one who lived in the house. In 1909 the property was sold to Fanny Spencer. She stayed briefly and then rented the house to Corporal Angermann and his wife in 1915, when it served as headquarters for the Royal North West Mounted Police in Okotoks.

The home is often referred to as the Welch House as George and Sara Welch owned the home the longest, from 1919 to 1942. George was the mayor of Okotoks for two terms and also managed two grain elevators in town. The Welches moved to Ontario in 1926, however they retained ownership of the house and rented it to several families including O. C. Smith, manager of the Bank of Montreal, 1923-1933, and to the Frank Blunderfield family. Alice-Marie and Joe Miller owned the house next from 1942 to 1950. Alice-Marie was well known for her formal Easter teas, as the house was one of the few that could accommodate large gatherings.

Since the 1950s, the house has been owned and/or occupied by the families of a druggist, a labourer, a livestock dealer, a salesman and a geologist. It has been used as a day care centre and an antique emporium. From 1989 until the summer of 2000, the house contained the law offices of Charles Dixon, and the offices of two Members of Parliament, Ken Hughes and Grant Hill, and Member of the Alberta Legislature, Don Tannas.

The house faced the possibility of destruction in 2000 due to the impending widening of the provincial highway located next to the house. The Okotoks community rallied to raise the necessary funds to have it moved to its present location. On July 14, 2000, the house made the move down Elizabeth and McRae Street to its new home on North Railway Street. It was the perfect summer day and hundreds of people lined the street as the house was lifted, put on a flatbed truck and slowly driven down the street to its new location where it continues to make and preserve history.

Over the years, owners had replaced and modernized some aspects of the house, however, it still has the beautiful window casings and original hardwood floors can be found underneath newer hardwood. A functional restoration was undertaken in the fall of 2009 to return some of the original character and charm to the house. The house has now become a beautiful landmark on North Railway Street. Surrounded by trees and flowerbeds, it is difficult to believe that the house had once existed elsewhere.

OKOTOKS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES
49 North Railway Street

Monday to Friday | 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday | Noon to 5:00 pm

Phone: 403.938.8969

Operated by

