

Self-Guided Tour of Lacombe's Murals



Page 3 – Tour Description
Page 4 – Mural Map
Page 5 – Meet the Muralists
Page 6 – (1) Lacombe Train Station
Page 7 – (2) Early Years on Nanton Street
Page 8 – (3) Campbell Block Fire
Page 9 – (4) John Fortune Residence
Page 10 – (5) Plows & Brands
Page 11 – (6) Leaving Lacombe
Page 12 – (7) Lacombe Panorama
Page 13 – (8) W.L. Elliott, Harness & Saddles Shop
Page 14 – (9) Doris Ballintine
Page 15 – (10) Ladder Team
Page 16 – (11) McLearn Pool Hall Interior
Page 17 – (12) City Hall
Page 18 – (13) Post Office
Page 19 – (14) H.A. Day General Merchant
Page 20 – (15) Field Day at the Research Station

Page 21 – (16) Mary & Samuel Frizzell
Page 22 – (17) Young Native Couple
Page 23 – (18) Mare with Twin Colts
Page 24 – (19) Ben Cameron's Photo Studio
Page 25 – (20) Train Leaving Lacombe Station
Page 26 – (21) Victoria Hotel
Page 27 – (22) Fraser-MacDonald Agency
Page 28 – (23) Flatiron Block From Railway Street
Page 29 – (24) Steam Trains at the Train Station
Page 30 – (25) Lacombe Creamery
Page 31 – (26) Nanton Street at Night
Page 32 – (27) Texaco
Page 33 – (28) W.F. Brett's Furniture Store
Page 34 – (29) Nanton Street Looking North
Page 35 – (30) Laird Motors LTD
Page 36 – (31) Michener House
Page 37 – (32) Cenotaph

Tour Description

Discover Lacombe: Alberta's Mural Capital!

Downtown Lacombe is full of history. Lacombe is home to the most intact concentration of Edwardian Buildings in Alberta as well as six Designated Provincial Historic Buildings. The City of Lacombe, along with the help of the Lacombe & District Historical Society began the Lacombe Mural Project in 2004 as a way to share even more of the city's rich history with residents and visitors. Local muralist Tim Giles began with Phase 1 of the project in 2004 on wall space in the alley between 51st Street and 50th Avenue. Phase 1 features nineteen murals of a variety of buildings and scenes from the 1890s to 1910s. In 2009, Phase 2 began in the alley between 49b Avenue and 49c Avenue. These eleven murals show local scenes from the 1930s to 1940s. Two additional murals were added outside of these alleys as well; one on the 52nd Street Mall and another on the north wall of the Yu-Turn building on 50th Street. As of summer 2015, the murals have been restored by other local muralists.

Mural Tour Map



Meet the Muralists

Tim Giles is the man behind all the murals. Tim moved to Lacombe in 2003 and was quickly noticed by the Town of Lacombe's "Communities in Bloom" committee. In 2004 he was hired by the "Lacombe Mural Project" committee to paint Lacombe's past. From 2004 to 2013, Tim created beautiful scenes on the walls of participating businesses. His murals are based on historic photographs provided by the Lacombe & District Historical Society, though as an artist, Tim has taken a few creative liberties to really bring the murals to life.



Tim Giles



Robert Murray

Starting in the summer of 2015, other Albertan muralists have been asked to do touch-ups and repairs to the murals.

John Elleberger



1. Lacombe Train Station Mural

52nd Street Mall (Tiny Tracks Daycare), North Wall

The Lacombe Train Station mural was the very first mural to be painted as part of the Lacombe Mural Project in 2004.

Prior to the train station being built in 1900, there was an old boxcar marking the location of the Siding 12 (Lacombe's first official name) train stop. In 1911, the original train station was destroyed when an explosion caused by photographer's flash powder occurred in the baggage room. The baggage man was the only casualty. The whole train station was torn down and rebuilt in 1912 and was used until 1968 when the CPR discontinued the passenger train service on the Lacombe lines. The station was always a busy place and greeted many of Lacombe's newest arrivals. It played an integral role in the community's development.



Lacombe CPR Depot, 1912

2. The Early Years on Nanton Street Mural

50th Street, Yu-Turn North Wall

The Early Years on Nanton Street mural shows historic 50th Street as it was in the 1920s and 1930s. This mural was based off multiple historic photographs in order to capture a complete view of both sides of the street. Located on Nanton Street itself, the mural provided a visual comparison of the historic buildings and the street as it looks presently. It has since been mostly covered by the new Main Street Medical building as of August 2016. It can be partially viewed in the parking lot on the east side of the building.



Two of the four photographs used to create the mural, circa. 1920s/1930s



3. Campbell Block Fire Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Campbell Block (now the Home Hardware Store) is one of Lacombe's finest examples of 1920s commercial architecture.. Originally built in 1896 as a small, wooden store, the Leading Store was resurfaced in brick in 1920 under the ownership of A.M. Campbell. The building housed the Leading Store on the main floor and had tenant housing on the second floor. In 1940, a fire started inside the building and gutted the whole interior. The original wooden structure was destroyed; however, as the building had been covered in brick, it survived the fire. The Burris Pumper Truck, one of Lacombe's first firetrucks, arrived on scene and the volunteer fire department was able to put out the flames.



Campbell Block Fire & Burris Pumper Truck, 1940

4. John Fortune Residence Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The John Fortune Residence gives a great view into Lacombe's early residences. This mural shows one of the early homesteads that would have populated Lacombe in the early 1900s until the Depression in the 1930s. At the time of its construction, the John Fortune Residence would have been located near where the Bank of Montreal is today.



John Fortune & family outside their homestead, 1900

5. Plows & Brands Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

In 1896, the first blacksmith shop was open in Lacombe. It was owned by John Fincham. In the years that followed, Hugo Gottschlich and John Betty also opened blacksmith shops in Lacombe.

The Blacksmith Shop Museum on 49th Street was built in 1902 and is the oldest remaining operational blacksmith shop in Alberta. It was last used for commercial purposes in 1987 and the Lacombe & District Historical Society purchased the shop in 1991 and turned it into a museum.



Gottschlich Family outside their Blacksmith Shop, circa. 1900

6. Leaving Lacombe Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Calgary-Edmonton Trail first began as a First Nations foot trail. When settlers moved West, the Trail became one of the main routes across the province. The Calgary-Edmonton Railway was built along the trail and the settlements it passed through became known as Sidings (Lacombe was Siding 12). This mural shows what the C&E Trail looked like as a wagon trail. The cart is heading north out of town towards the Canadian University College (now Burman University).



Calgary-Edmonton Trail, 1910s

7. Lacombe Panorama Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

This mural shows a view of Lacombe to the North. The large building visible on the hill is the Nelson School. This school was built in 1907 in the location of the current Father Lacombe Catholic School. The Nelson School was a three storey brick school and was in operation until 1957. The school closed because of lack of student enrolment. The building was torn down; however, the school bell was saved and is currently on display in the Lest We Forget memorial gardens of the Lacombe Memorial Centre along with a time capsule.

This is the photo used to create the mural. Tim Giles took some creative liberties, doing a close-up shot of the top of this photo. He also added the road and trees you see in the mural.

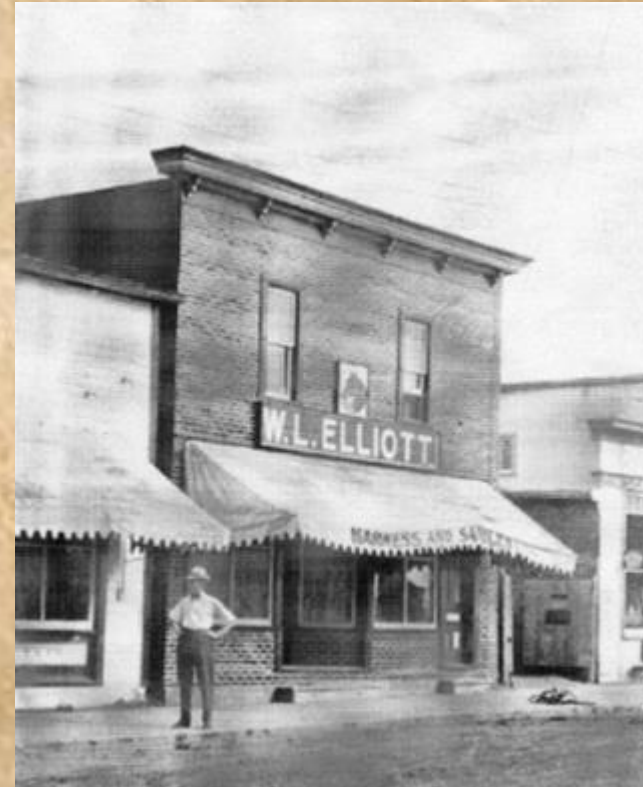


View of Lacombe to the North, 1909

8. W.L. Elliot, Harness and Saddles Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The W.L. Elliot, Harness and Saddles Shop was just one of many harness and tack shops in Lacombe. This particular store was located on Nanton Street (50th Street) around 1910, near where the Crafty Lady craft store is currently located. Harness and saddle stores were very popular in Lacombe since horses were the main form of transportation and did many tasks on the farm. When the advent of motor vehicles took over horses as the main form of transportation, harness and saddles shops decreased in popularity and necessity. Many of these stores in Lacombe closed their doors soon after.



W.L. Elliot, Harness & Saddles
Shop, Nanton Street 1910

9. Doris Ballintine Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

Doris Ballintine was a local resident in Lacombe. She is seen here at the Research Station and has tied her dogs to her wagon similarly to how one would tether horses to a cart.



Doris Ballintine, 1910

10. Ladder Team Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

This mural depicts the Lacombe Ladder Team practicing for competitions. The Ladder Team competed against various other teams in Central Alberta with the goal of having their climber reach the top of a freestanding ladder the quickest. This mural depicts members of the volunteer fire department, circa. 1908. Frank Montgomery is the climber. The ladder is being held by Lloyd Standish and Jim Frizzell in the back, and David Hay and E.V. McLeod in the front.



Lacombe Ladder Team practicing
outside City Hall, 1908

11. McLear Pool Hall Interior Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The McLear Pool Hall was located in the McLear Block along Barnett Avenue. Currently, the Red Hot Threads clothing store occupies this location. The pool hall was quite popular for the men in Lacombe as it was home to the only slot machines in town. The hall was also home to four pool tables. When the Great War broke out in 1914, billiards, pool, and the slots fell out of favor. Anyone who frequented such establishments during this time were said to have low moral standards and were living a shady lifestyle because they were not supporting the war efforts. Because of these local suspicions, the pool tables were forced into the basement of the building and the slot machines were removed entirely.



McLear Pool Hall Interior with players,
circa. 1912

12. City Hall Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Lacombe City Hall was built by T. Clarke King and was home of the city hall, the fire department, and the police service. The garage on the main floor was used to store the Burris Pumper, one of Lacombe's first firetrucks. The police department's single jail cell was located on the second floor along with some offices. The police force in Lacombe has been in service since 1900.



City Hall with garage doors
open, 1908

13. Post Office Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

Lacombe's very first post office was a small log shack that stood in the middle of Railway Street (now Highway 2A). It was built in 1894 and Mr. Dalmage was the first postmaster. A bear has been said to have been chained at the back of the post office and hibernated in a hole under the shack. In 1895, a new post office was built on Barnett Avenue and William Burris became the postmaster. The wooden building survived the Flatiron Block Fire of 1906 as well as the Victoria Hotel Fire in 1911. In 1920, Burris bought the building next door to the post office and built a new brick building that spanned both lots. Upon his retirement, Burris passed the position of postmaster down to his son, William Burris Jr. The post office operated out of this location until the 1950s. It is now home to Orchid Rain Salon & Spa. The mural features the original 1895 wooden structure.



Location of the Post Office, circa. 1904

14. H.A. Day, General Merchant Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

Herbert Alfred Day arrived in Lacombe in 1886 and was a very prominent businessman. His General Merchant Store sold all the necessities of a small town, from dry goods to clothing to tobacco. In 1903, Day rebuilt his store with brick. The Day Block was the very first masonry building in Lacombe. On the ground level, many different stores conducted business while the second level was home of the Day Opera House. The Day Block is currently home to the Lucky Palace Chinese Restaurant.



H.A. Day, General Merchant Store, 1902

15. Field Day at Research Station Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Federal Research Station was founded in Lacombe in 1907. Quite often, the public was invited up to the Station to see what kind of work the agricultural scientists were doing or for cattle auctions. This mural features a coffee tent at one such Field Day. Note the prices on the menu: tea, coffee, and ice cream 10¢, sandwiches 40¢, and lemonade 3¢.

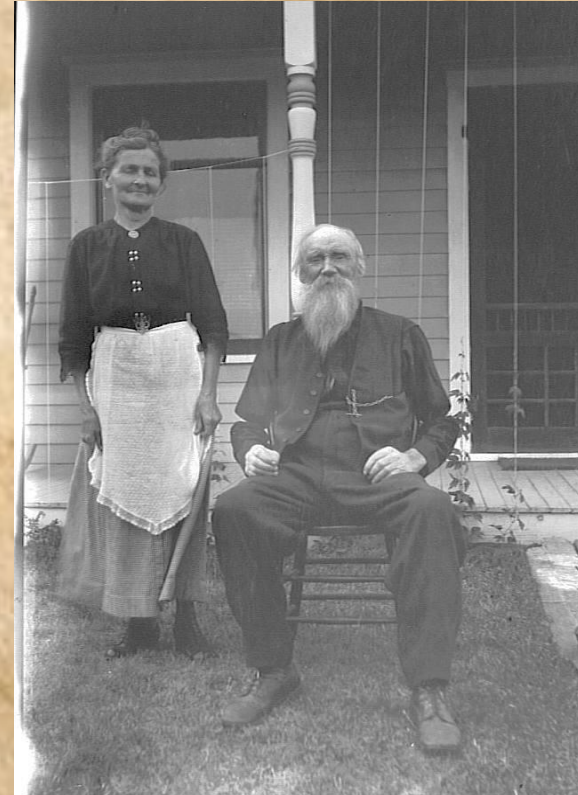


Coffee Tent at the Research Station, circa. 1908

16. Mary & Samuel Frizzell Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

This mural depicts Mary and Samuel Frizzell, who were homesteaders in the Iowalta District north-west of Lacombe. Iowalta gets its name from Iowa and Alberta, as many of the settlers there came from Iowa.



Mary & Samuel Frizzell outside their home in the Iowalta District, 1906

17. Young Native Couple Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

Ben Cameron, Lacombe's resident photographer, was well known for his portraits. This unknown Native couple was photographed inside Cameron's original studio.

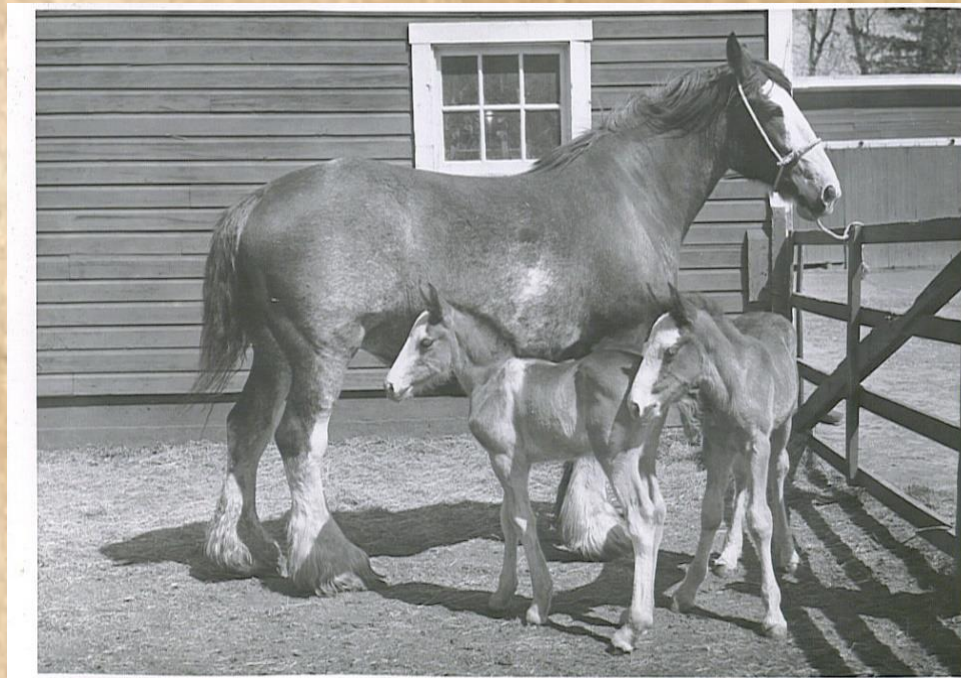


Young Native Couple, circa. 1910

18. Mare with Twin Colts Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

While the Research Station was mostly concentrated on wheat and crop production in the first few decades, research expanded to include beef and swine research as well. Many horses were living at the Station as well, including this mare. In the 1940s, this mare gave birth to the only set of twin colts the Research Station has had. The colts were quite popular and drew large crowds in their first few days.



Mare & twin colts, Lacombe Research Station, 1940s

19. Ben Cameron Photo Studio Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

Ben Cameron was a prominent local photographer in Lacombe. He was well known for taking portraits inside his studio as well as wedding photos and photographing the town itself. His photographs have been used in multiple restoration projects in downtown Lacombe and all the murals on this tour are based on his photographs. This mural features Cameron's first photo studio, which was located on 51st Street next to the Grace Methodist Church (in the approximate location of Kavaccinos).



Ben Cameron's studio on 51st Street, 1910



20. Lacombe Train Station Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Lacombe Train Station was always a busy place. Many horses and carts were used to bring luggage and other supplies, such as coal, to the train. This mural features the original train station, prior to the explosion in 1911. Trains coming into the Lacombe station traveled all over central Alberta. In 1905, a railway line linked Lacombe to Alix. A year later, the line extended to Stettler. Between 1917 and 1931 the Lacombe & Northwestern Railway also created a line from Lacombe to Bentley, then Rimbey, and eventually to Leduc. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company took over this independent line in 1928.



Horse and Cart near the Original Train Station, 1910

21. Victoria Hotel Mural

51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

In 1894, the Victoria Hotel was constructed on the corner of Barnett Avenue and Nanton Street. The railway had recently come through Lacombe and the hotel proved very useful. Quickly, the demand for a larger hotel grew and so the Victoria Hotel went through a series of renovations. In 1896 the third story was added. In 1901, the hotel was expanded down the street all the way to where the Denike Block (Lacombe Travel) stands today. In 1906, the hotel was resurfaced with brick to protect it from fires. Unfortunately, on New Year's Day 1911, the Victoria Hotel went up in flames, as well as some of the buildings to the north. Many of the firefighters claimed their equipment was unreliable and quit the service after putting out the fire. The Victoria Hotel was never rebuilt; instead the Royal Bank (now CIBC) was built on the original site in 1914.



Victoria Hotel Prior to Renovations, 1896

22. Fraser-MacDonald Agency Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

In 1920, Jessie Fraser and Allan MacDonald opened up their real estate and insurance company on Allan Street. Fraser and MacDonald were agents for the CPR and Hudson's Bay Company Lands. Large signage that was painted on the side of the building was visible from the busy Barnett Avenue. They had a booming business until the economy took a downturn following the Wall Street Crash on 24 October 1929.

The building is still located on 49C Avenue and is home to the Lacombe Medi-Spa and Laser Center. The original pressed tin ceilings and large, black wall safe are still features of the building today.



Fraser-MacDonald Agency with Original Signage, 1920

23. Flatiron Block from Railway St. Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The Adelphi Hotel was one of the most important buildings in early Lacombe. The original Albion Hotel was constructed in 1894 and also doubled as an immigration hall as it was conveniently located right across the street from the train station. Unfortunately it burnt down in the Flatiron Block fire in 1906. A.T. Inskip rebuilt the hotel with brick in 1907 and renamed it the Adelphi Hotel. The building has gone through many renovations since its reconstruction and is now home to the Lacombe Hotel and Bud's Bar.



Views of
the
Adelphi
Hotel
from
Railway
Street,
1907 &
1913

24. Steam Trains at Train Station Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

Once the majority of the railway lines were in place, passengers were able to take the train from Lacombe to various places around Central Alberta. An independent line called the Lacombe & Blindman Valley Electric Railway (later renamed Lacombe & Northwestern Railway) ran from Lacombe to Leduc and the Canadian Pacific Railway line ran through Lacombe to Edmonton & Calgary. A mix of passenger trains ran out of Lacombe three times per week. Steam engines, like the ones featured in the mural, were introduced to the Lacombe lines in the late 1930s—early 1940s. These passenger trains ran steadily until the early 1960s, when the new Highway 2 expressway threatened the popularity of the railway line. The Lacombe Train Station closed in 1968 and was torn down in 1978. In 2007, a replica station was built on the east side of the tracks.



Lacombe Train Station, circa. 1940s

25. Lacombe Creamery Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The creamery in Lacombe was established in 1904. The building in the mural was built in 1922 to house this important company. In 1935, Independent Creameries came to Lacombe and provided much needed income to local farmers. Unfortunately, the Creamery burnt down in 1959 but was quickly rebuilt. By 1964, the Creamery and the Creamery Ice Cream Parlour was established in the new building, located where the UFA Cardlock is today. The creamery remained to be one of three dairy distributors in Alberta. In 2004, the Creamery Ice Cream Parlour was sold to Reel to Reel Cinemas (now Lacombe City Cinemas) and the old Creamery building was torn down in 2005. The creamery was removed from the theater in 2012.



Lacombe Creamery, 1922

26. Nanton Street at Night Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

This mural offers a unique look of Nanton Street in the 1930s. It shows the street looking North, illuminated by the electric street lamps.



Nanton Street at Night, circa. 1930s

27. Texaco Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

In the early 1930s, architecture in Lacombe moved into the “Moderne” style. Many old buildings were resurfaced with stucco to achieve this look. Additionally, newer, more modern businesses, such as gas stations, were built in this style specifically. Mainline Motors was constructed in the early 1930s and was an example of this new form of architecture. Prior to 1937, Mainline Motors was renamed the Texaco. The garage featured four service bays as well as several gas pumps. The building was located at 5032-50th Street, near where the current Alberta Agriculture Building stands today. John Fincham, Lacombe’s first blacksmith, had his workshop and home at this location as early as 1895. He was also a skilled auto mechanic and even worked at Mainline Motors after the business bought his land.



Texaco with four bays, circa. 1940s

28. F.W. Brett's Furniture Store Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The first owner of the F.W. Brett's Furniture Store was E. Titsworth. Titsworth was a business partner of A.M. Campbell who owned the Campbell Block (Home Hardware) but left the partnership 1907—the same year he purchased the Furniture Store. F.W. Brett's also served as an early undertakers parlor for a number of years. Hitching posts were stationed outside the front doors. The store was later owned by Charles Raymond. In 1955, a fire gutted the building and it was torn down by Tom Ackerman, Bill Henderson, and Ernie Douglas. The Tom-Boy Store was then constructed on the site. This building would have been located on the corner of 50th Ave and 52nd Street, where the Mac Store in the 52nd Street Mall is currently located.

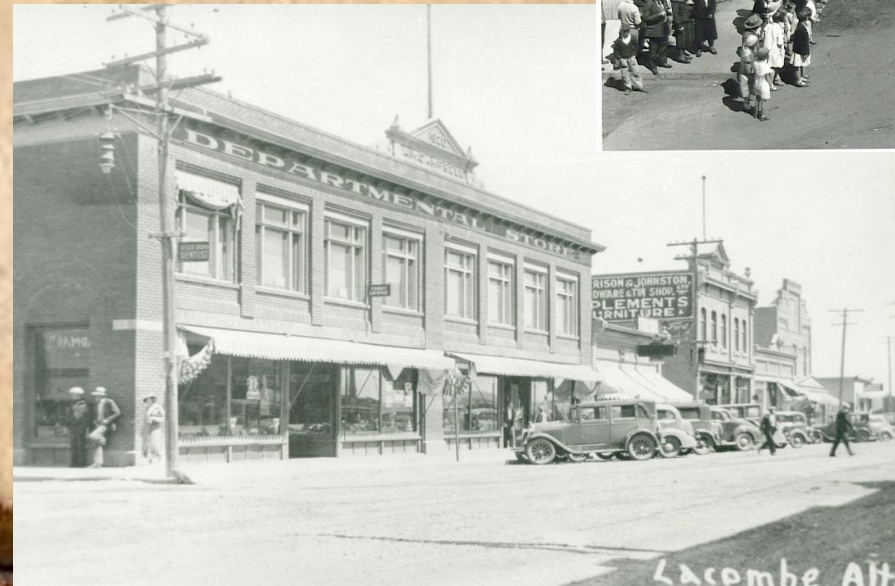


F.W. Brett's Furniture Store, 1930s

29. Nanton Street Looking North Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

Nanton Street was and remains to be a popular street for parades. This mural features a view of the street looking North. The crowds were painted into the mural, but unfortunately, the marching band was not included.

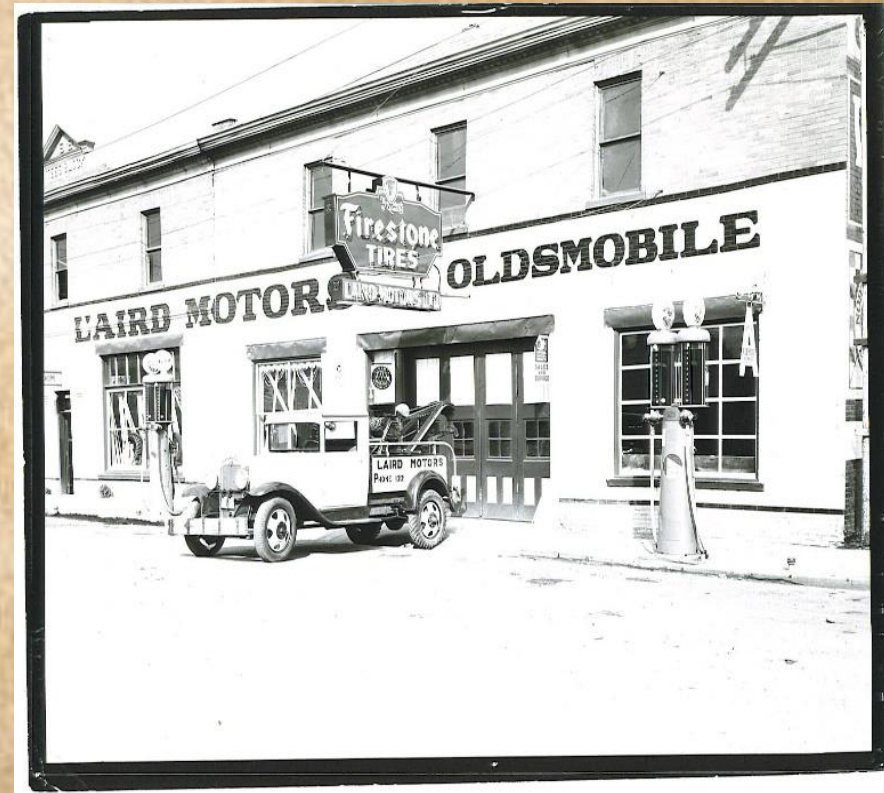


A Parade on
Nanton
Street &
Barnett
Avenue,
1930s

30. Laird Motors LTD. Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

In 1918, Bill Tees constructed the Tees Block to house his garage and sales service. He was in competition with Empire Garage and Morrison and Johnson Hardware, who had the official Ford service station for the Lacombe District. Tees eventually sold his garage to Hal Laird, who opened Laird Motors. The garage and sales service also featured gas pumps and a tow truck. There was a fire inside the garage and whole interior was destroyed. Thankfully, the brick exterior was undamaged. Later on, Laird Motors was sold and renamed McTaggart Motors. Today, it operates under the name Weidner Motors but the Tees Block has since been torn down.



Laird Motors, circa. 1930s

30. Michener House Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The Michener House was built in 1894 and served as a Manse for the Grace Methodist Church, which would have been located right next door. Many Methodist ministers lived in the house, but most famous was Edward Michener, the father of Canada's 20th Governor General, Roland Michener. The Michener family lived in the Manse for nearly a year, and during that time, Roland was born in the house. It is for Roland that the Michener House is named.

In 1977, the Michener House was declared a Provincial Historic Site and the Lacombe & District Historical Society turned the house into a museum in 1984.



Grace Methodist Church & Manse, 1907-1918

31. Cenotaph Mural

49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The Lest We Forget Club was formed 22 February 1922 and was composed of wives, widows, mothers, sisters, and daughters of World War I soldiers. The Club acquired land from the Lacombe School Board to be used as a Memorial Park. Trees and shrubbery was donated by Lacombe Nurseries and the community fundraised for memorial trees. The Iowalta Needlecraft Club hosted a quilt auction to fundraise for the cenotaph that still stands in the park today. Community members could have their names stitched onto the quilt for a cost of 10¢. The marble cenotaph was unveiled in Lest We Forget Memorial Park on 31 October 1924 by the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta R.G. Brett. In 1955, the Park was turned back over to the town and plans for the Memorial Center that now houses the park were designed in the same year.



Cenotaph in Memorial Park, 1926

LACOMBE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
5036-51 STREET, LACOMBE, AB, T4L 1W2
P.H. (403) 782-3933
mhma3.blogspot.ca

This document was made possible with resources and content contributed by the Lacombe & District Historical Society and the City of Lacombe's Mural Project.

All information to date as of July 2017