

Self-Guided Tour of Lacombe's Murals



Lacombe & District Historical Society – Updated 2019

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Tour Description

Lacombe is home to the most intact concentration of Edwardian buildings in Alberta, as well as eight Designated Provincial Historic Buildings/Monuments.

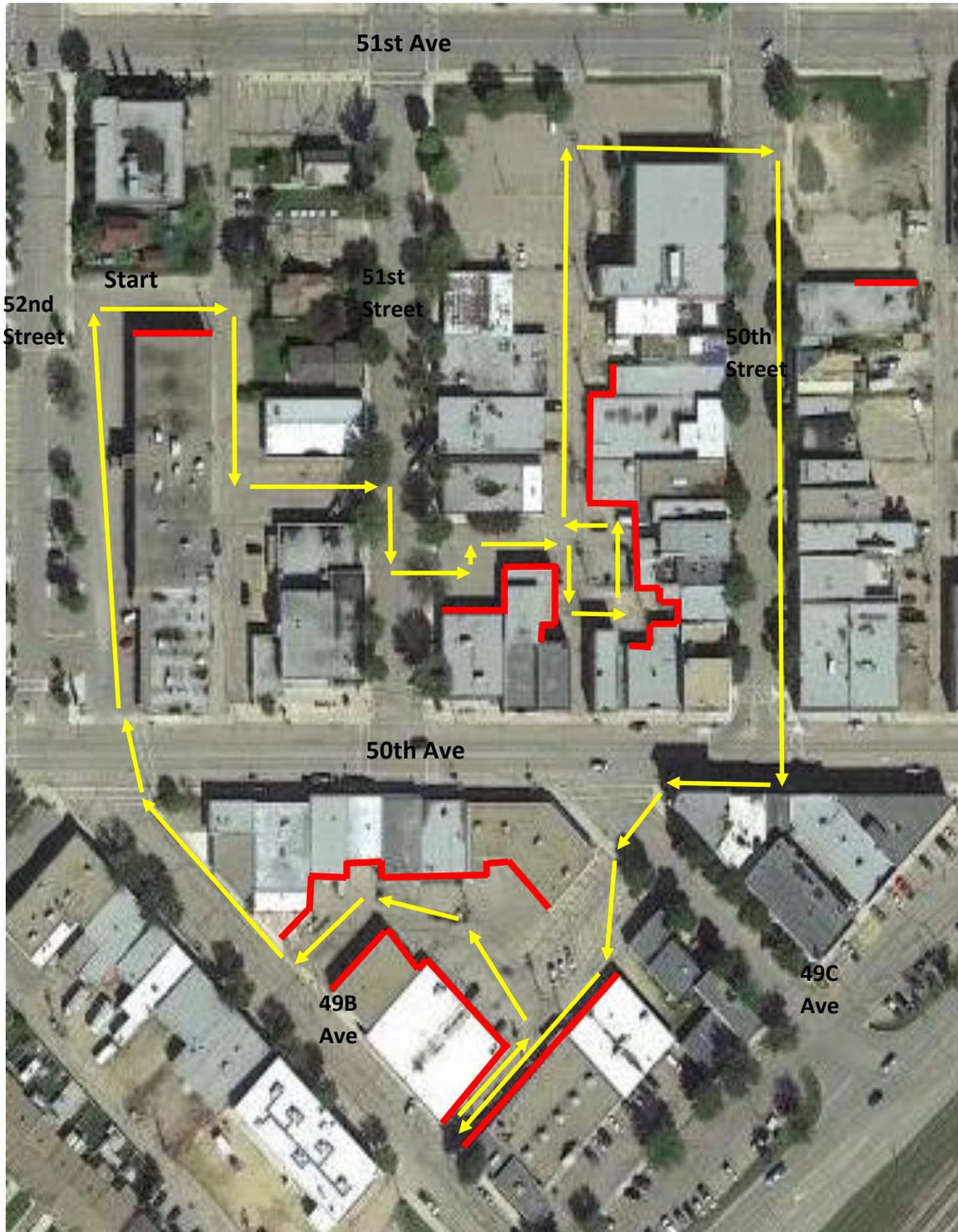
The Town of Lacombe, along with the help of the Lacombe & District Historical Society began the Lacombe Mural Project in 2004 as a way to share even more of the community's rich history with residents and visitors.

Phase 1 began in 2004 and features 21 murals of a variety of buildings and scenes primarily from the 1890s to the mid-1910s. These murals are concentrated in the alley between 51st Street and 50th Avenue. Two additional murals, one on the 52nd Street Mall and the other on the North wall of the Yu-Turn building on 50th Street were also painted during this time.

Phase 2 began in 2009 and features 13 murals of Lacombe's industrial development in the 1930s and 1940s. These murals are located on wall space in the alley between 49b Avenue and 49c Avenue.

In 2018, the City of Lacombe had two additional murals installed. One covered a Phase 1 mural that had already been partially covered by new construction downtown. The second is located on the Dollarama building on 54th Avenue.

Tour Map



*Hey Doreen Mural not featured on this map

Meet the Muralists

Tim Giles is the man behind 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, Time has taken a few creative liberties to really bring the murals to life.

In 2015, Robert Murray and John Elleberger were hired by the City to do touch-ups and repairs to the murals. In 2016, John Elleberger and Larry Hunter were commissioned to paint two new murals on aluminum panels that were installed in 2018.



Tim Giles, 2004



Robert Murray & John Elleberger, 2016

#1 Lacombe Train Station Mural 52nd Street Mall, 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 Siding 12 (Lacombe's first official name) train stop. On October 12, 1911, the original train station was destroyed when an explosion caused by photographer's magnesium flash powder occurred in the baggage room. The baggage man, Everett G. MacLeod, was killed and his assistant, G. Bickford, was serious injured. The whole train station was torn down and rebuilt in 1912 and 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 Clydesdales Parade Mural
51st Avenue, Yu-Turn North Wall

The Lacombe Research Station was founded in 1907 as an initiative of the Lacombe Board of Trade. Clydesdales, like the ones pictured here, were extremely important at the Research Station. Originally four Clydesdales were purchased in 1907 but later the herd expanded to 27 and included Clydesdales, Percherons, and Hackney mares. These horses were used to work in the fields and as transportation into town. Each draft horse worked between 3200-3300 hours per year, according to 1909-1910 records.



Field Day Parade, 1937

#3 Early Years on Nanton Street Mural 51st Avenue, Yu-Turn North Wall

The Early Years on Nanton Street Mural showed historic 50th Street as it was in the 1910s and 1920s. This mural was painted 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. In August 2016 the new Main Street Medical building covered most of the mural. In October 2018, the Clydesdales Parade Mural was installed over the remaining portion of the mural.



Top: The Early Years on Nanton Street Mural

Middle Left: Nanton Street in 1912

Middle Right: Nanton Street in 1920

Bottom Left: Nanton Street in 1913

#4 Campbell Block Fire Mural 51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Campbell Block (Nowco Home Hardware) 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 Burriss Pumper truck, Lacombe's first firetruck, arrived on scene and the volunteer fire department was able to put out the flames.



Campbell Block Fire & Burriss Pumper Truck, 1940

**#5 John Fortune Residence Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley**

The John Fortune residence gives a great view into Lacombe's early residences. The 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 home would have been located near where Head Hunters Day Spa & Salon is currently located on 50th Avenue. The livery stable John Fortune owned was immediately east of this property.



John Fortune & Family outside their Homestead, 1900

#6 Plows & Brands Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The Gottschlich blacksmith shop was located on Railway Street (Highway 2A). It was the third shop to open in Lacombe, in 1901. Hugo Gottschlich was the first smith there and worked for 16 years. He retired in 1917 but didn't sell the shop until 1928. Emma Hunt purchased the shop then and proceeded to rent it to Fred Doberstein. Doberstein bought the shop outright in 1928 and owned it until 1943. Jacob Tetz was the fourth owner of the shop and only owned it for two years. He sold it in 1945 to Berenice Treanor.

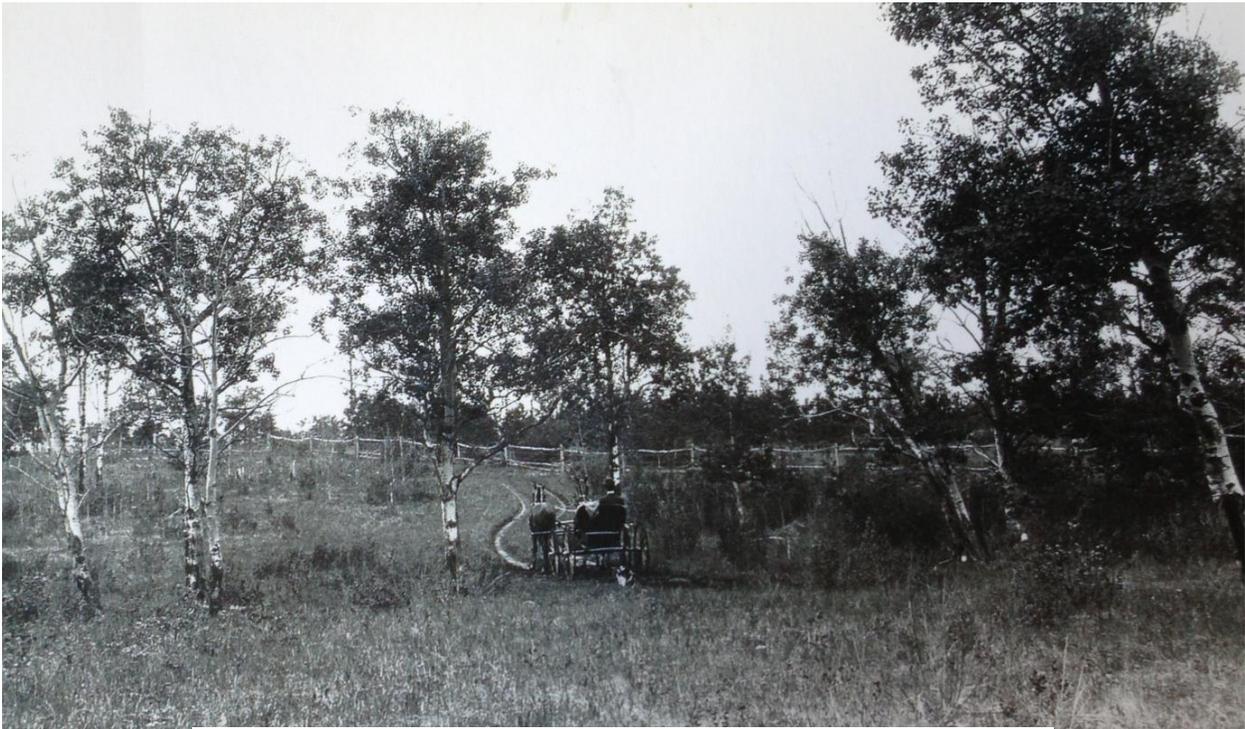
Hugo Gottschlich was also a very prominent musician and taught local children to play the piano, the clarinet, and any/all wind instruments.



Gottschlich Family outside their Blacksmith Shop, circa. 1900

#7 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 looked like as a wagon trail. The cart is heading north out of town towards the Canadian Union College (Burman University).



Calgary-Edmonton Trail, circa. 1910

#8 Lacombe Panorama Mural 51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

This mural shows a view of the 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-story brick school and was in operation until 1957. The school closed because of a 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.

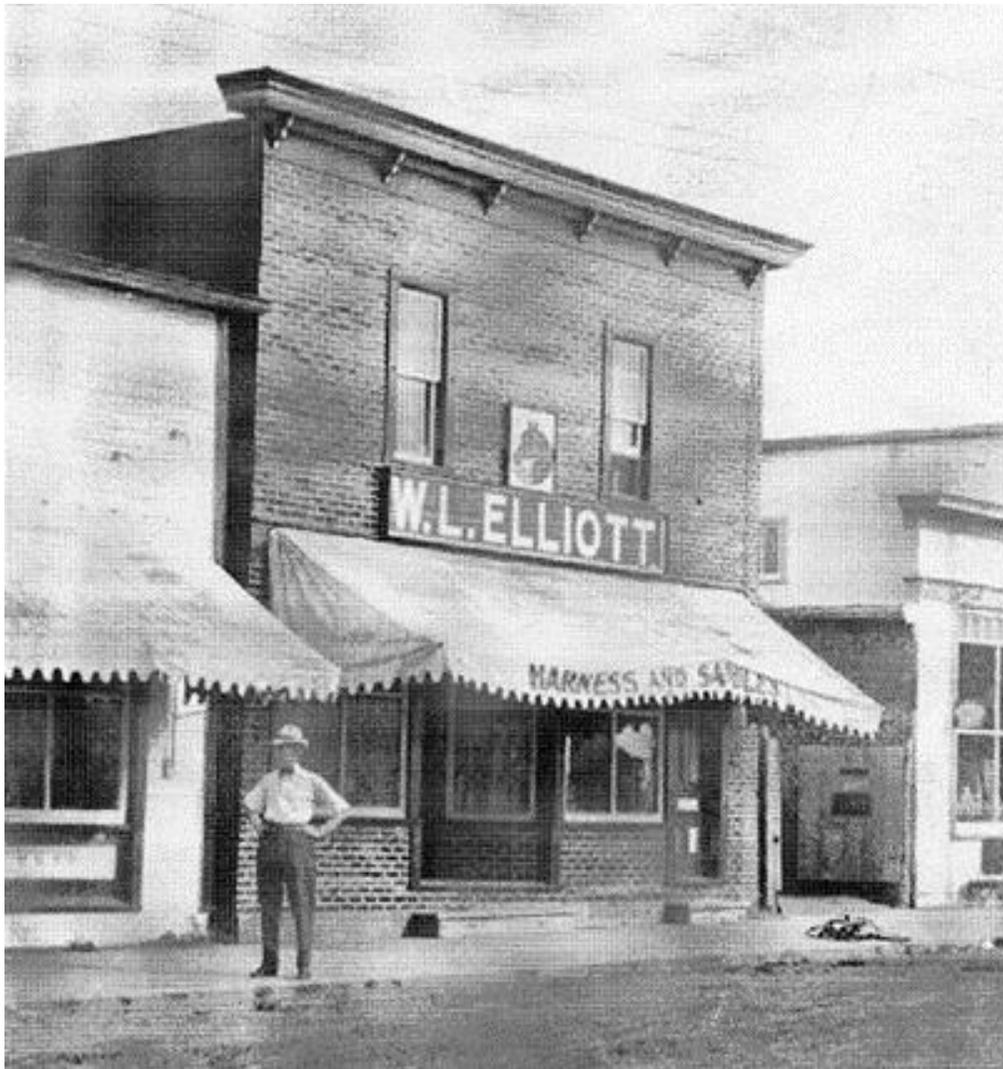
The photo below was used to create the mural. Tim Giles took some creative liberties, doing a close-up shot of the top of this photo. He also added in the road and trees you see in the mural.



View of Downtown Lacombe, 1909

#9 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 was formerly 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, usually becoming gas stations instead.



W. L. Elliott, Harness and Saddles Shop, Nanton Street, 1910

#10 Doris Ballintine Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

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



Doris Ballintine at the Research Station, 1910

#11 Ladder Team Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

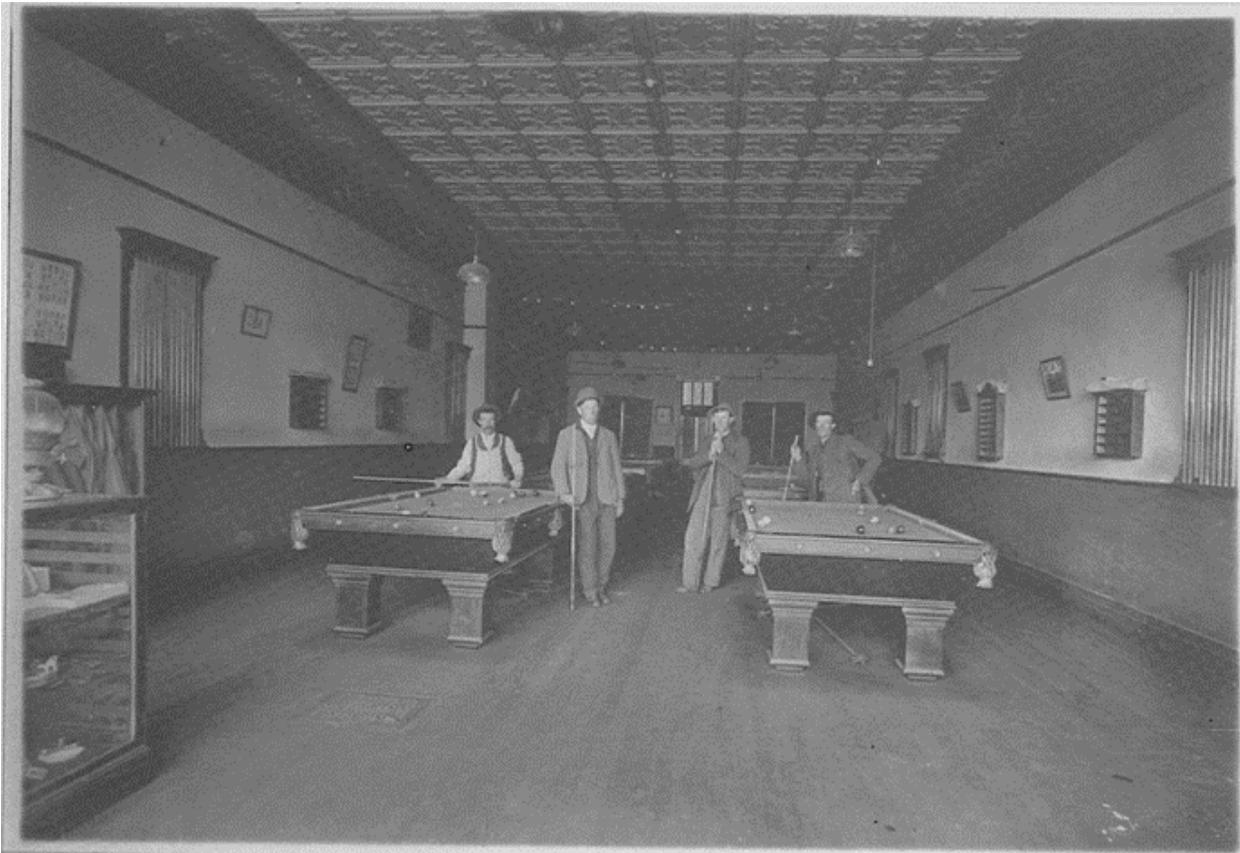
This mural depicts the Lacombe Ladder Team practicing for competitions. The Ladder Team competed against various other teams in Central Alberta in firemen's games, with the goal of having their climber reach the top of a freestanding ladder the quickest. This mural depicts members of the volunteer fire department, circa 1908. Frank Montgomery is the climber. The ladder is been 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

#12 McLear Pool Hall Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

The McLear Pool Hall was located in the McLear Block along Barnett Avenue (50th Avenue). Currently, Red Hot Threads occupies this location. This pool hall was popular for 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 favour. 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 and the slot machines were removed entirely. Watt & Hay Gent Furnishings moved in on the main floor and remained in operation until the mid-1990s.



McLear Pool Hall interior with players, circa. 1912

#13 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. It was promptly named "City Hall" rather than "Town Hall" despite the fact that Lacombe had only just become a town in 1902 and would not become a city until 2010. The garage on the main floor was used to store the Burriss Pumper, one of Lacombe's first firetrucks. The police department's single jail cell was located on the second floor and long with some offices. The police force in Lacombe has been in service since 1900.



City Hall with garage doors open, 1908

#14 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 (Highway 2A). It was built in 1893 and Mr. Dolmage 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 (50th 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 down to his son, William Burris Jr. The post office operated out of this location until the 1950s. It is now home to Copper Lane Hair Studio. The mural features the 1895 structure.



Renovations near the Post Office, 1908

**#15 H. A. Day, General Merchant Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley**

Herbert Alfred Day arrived in Lacombe in 1896 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 to the Day Opera House. The Day Block is currently home to the Lucky Palace Chinese restaurant.



Original H. A. Day, General Merchant Store, 1902

**#16 Field Day at the Research Station Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley**

The Lacombe Research Station was founded in 1907 as an initiative of the Lacombe Board of Trade. At the time, scientific research focused primarily on crops and livestock. This research was shared to the public through bulletins, letters, annual reports, farmers' meetings, and talks at field days.

This coffee tent was located on the grounds of the research station for the benefit of guests and workers alike. Take note of the price list; the entire menu could be purchased for 78¢.

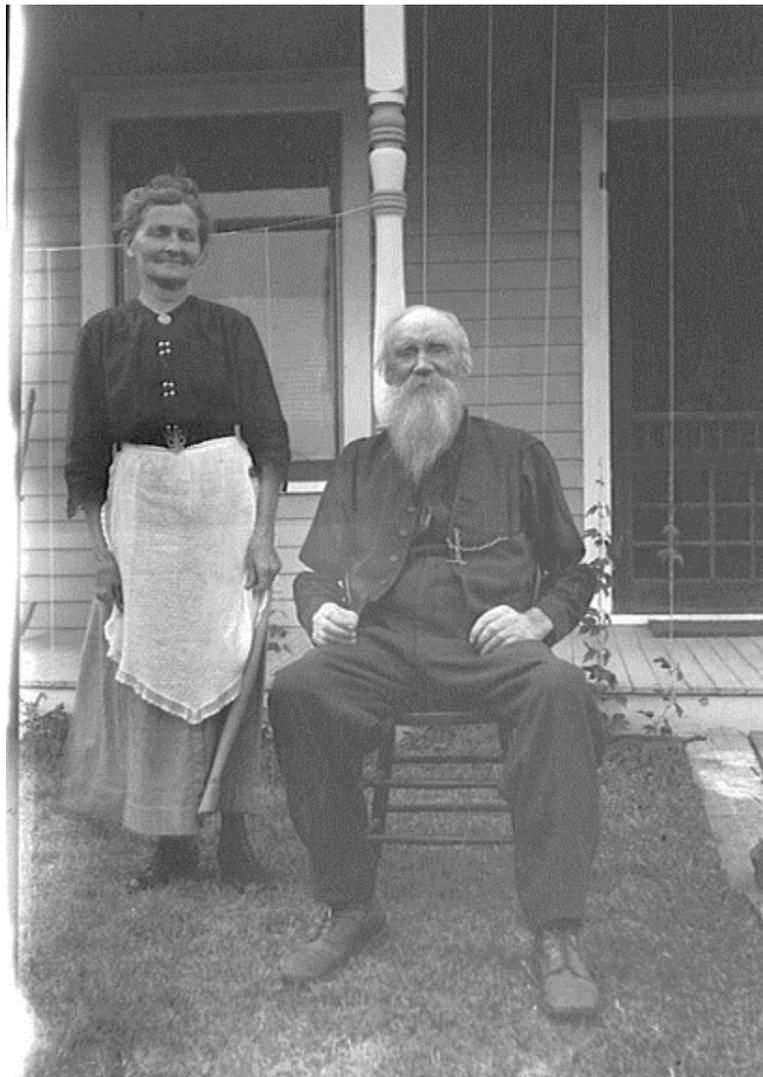


Coffee Tent at the Research Station, 1910s

#17 Mary Jane and Samuel Frizzell Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley

This mural depicts Mary Jane and Samuel Frizzell, who were homesteaders in the lowalta District north-east of Lacombe. The Frizzells came to Lacombe from Prince Edward Island in 1901. Samuel farmed their land until 1907. He then took a position at Charlie Zielie's Wood and Coal Business. The couple had seven children whose descendants still live in the area.

The lowalta District gets its name from Iowa and Alberta as many of the families who settled there came from Iowa.



Mary Jane & Samuel Frizzell outside their home, 1906

**#18 Young Indigenous Couple Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley**

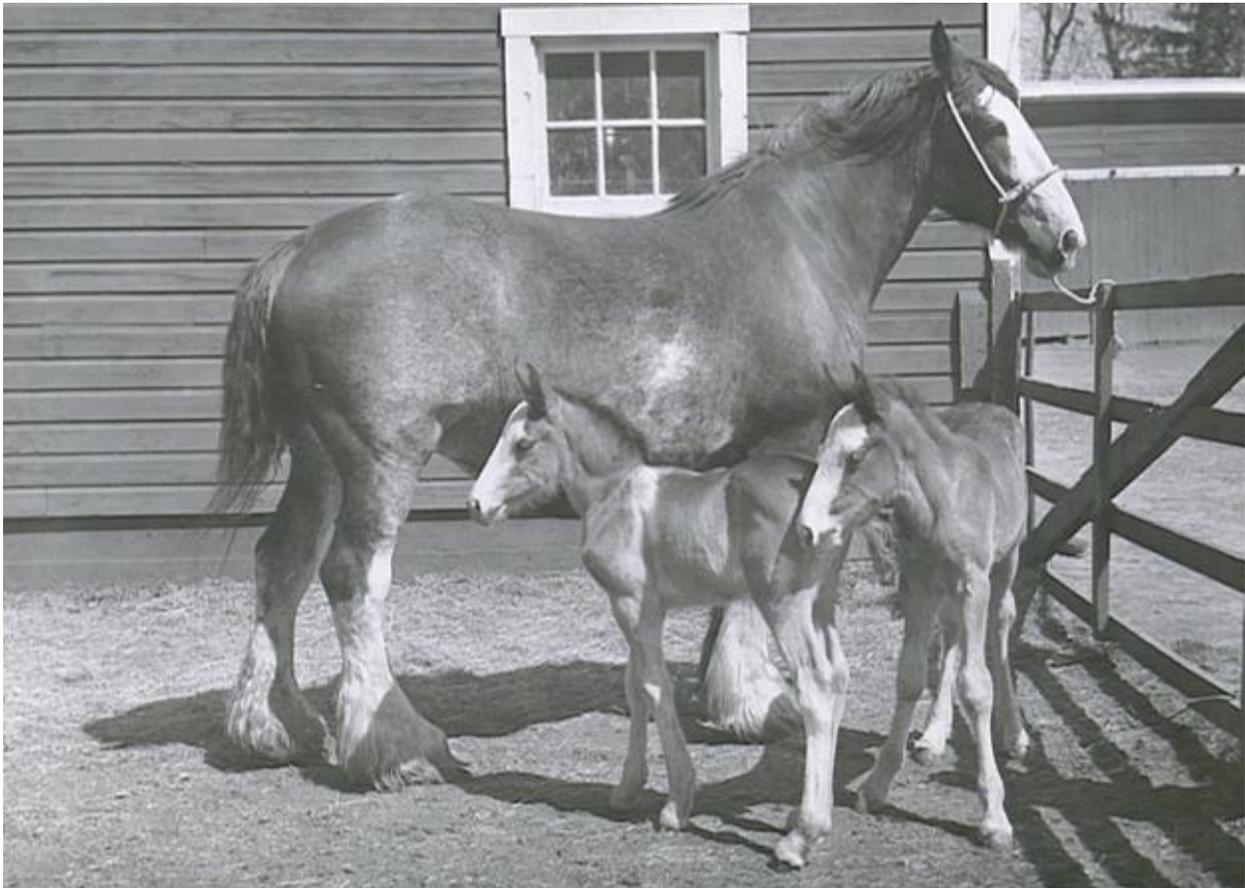
Ben Cameron, Lacombe's resident photographer, was well known for his portraits. This unidentified couple was photographed inside Cameron's original studio.



Young Indigenous Couple, date unknown

**#19 Mare with Twin Colts Mural
51st Street & 50th Avenue Back Alley**

Clydesdale work horses were extremely important in the early days at the Research Station. In the 1940s, this mare gave birth to the only set of twin colts the Station has had. As this is such a rare event, the colts were quite popular and drew large crowds in their first few days.



Mare & Twin Colts, Lacombe Research Station, 1940s

#20 Ben Cameron's 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 the majority of the murals on this tour are based on his photographs as well. Cameron took over the photo business from John Scales in 1910 and was the resident photographer until 1965.

This mural features Cameron's first studio, which was located on 51st Street right next to the Grace Methodist Church (in the approximate location of Kavaccino's).



Ben Cameron's Original Studio on 51st Street, 1910



#21 Train Leaving Lacombe 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 to Bentley, then Rimbey, and eventually to Leduc. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company took over this independent line in 1928.



Horse and Cart near Original Train Station, 1910

#22 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 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 (Downton & Co.) 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 that 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, 1896

#23 Fraser-MacDonald Agency Mural 49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

In 1920, Jessie Fraser and Allan MacDonald opened their real estate and insurance company on Allan Avenue. Fraser and MacDonald were agents for the Canadian Pacific Railway and Hudson's Bay Company lands. Large signage that was painted on the side of the building was visible from busy Barnett Avenue. They had a booming business until the economy took a downturn in the 1930s.

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 wall safe are still features of the building today.



Fraser-MacDonald Agency with Original Signage, 1920

**#24 Flatiron Block from Railway Street 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 was conveniently located across the street from both the train station and the immigration hall. 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 construction and is now home to the Lacombe Hotel and Bud's Bar.



Views of the Adelphi Hotel & Flatiron Block, 1907 & 1913



#25 Steam Engines at the 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 and 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 in the late 1930s or 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. 1940

#26 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 Creamery Ice Cream Parlor was established in a 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 Parlor 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

**#27 Nanton Street at Night Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

This mural offers a unique look at Nanton Street in the 1930s. It shows the street looking north, illuminated by the electric street lamps. Street lamps began to gain popularity in Lacombe when motor vehicles became popular and a few were installed on important roads in town, such as Barnett Avenue. Between 1930 and 1955, Calgary Power improved and extended electric power and more street lamps could be installed. By 1955 there were 275 street lamps in Lacombe.



Nanton Street at Night, circa. 1930

#28 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 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. Joh Fincham, Lacombe’s second blacksmith, has his home at this location as early as 1895. He was also a skilled auto mechanic and even worked at Mailing Motors after the business bought his land.



Texaco, circa. 1940

**#29 F. W. Brett's Furniture Store Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

The first owner of F. W. Brett's Furniture Store was E. Titsworth. Titsworth was a former business partner of A. M. Campbell who owned the Campbell Block (Home Hardware) but left the partnership in 1907 – the first year he purchased the Furniture Store. F. W. Brett's also served as an early undertaker's 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 Avenue and 52nd Street, where Circle K in the 52nd Street Mall is currently located.



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

**#30 P. Swanston Auto Body Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

Peter Swanston's garage was located on Alberta Street (51st Street) in the approximate location of the Cruickshank & Hemmingson Law Office. Peter Swanston opened his repair shop in the early 1930s. The building also served as an auction house.



P. Swanston Auto Body, circa. 1930

**#31 Nanton Street Looking North Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

Nanton Street was 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, circa. 1930



Barnett Avenue, circa. 1930

**#32 Laird Motors LTD Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

In 1919, Bill Tees constructed the Tees Block to house his garage and sales service. He was in competition with Empire Garage and Morrison & 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 the 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. 1930

**#33 Empire Garage Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley**

Around 1917, Empire Garage was started by Archie Maconachie. A former mechanic at a neighboring garage, the Central Garage, Maconachie struck out on his own to begin his own automotive repair shop. Empire Garage was located in the north half of the Tees Block, right beside Bill Tee's garage. Painted brick signage, like what is shown in the mural, was a popular form of early advertisement in Lacombe. Newspaper advertisements in the Western Globe stated that the Empire Garage was open day and night to repair automobiles. Empire Garage was eventually bought out by Weider Motors.



Empire Garage, 1920

#34 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 was 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 just over 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.



Methodist Church & Manse, 1907-1918

#35 Cenotaph Mural
49b Avenue & 49c Avenue Back Alley

The Lest We Forget Club was formed 22 February 1911 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 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. The cenotaph was designated in September 2017.



Cenotaph in Memorial Park, 1926

#36 Hey Doreen! Mural
54th Avenue, Dollarama Building

This mural shows the hustle and bustle of Lacombe's downtown in 1949. The mural, affectionately named "Hey Doreen!" illustrates Nanton Street facing south and features an interaction between two friends. The mural was digitally created by Larry Hunter based off historic photographs of Nanton Street. The finished design was printed onto vinyl sheets that were then placed onto aluminum panels. The photo below was the primary inspiration for the mural, though several other photos were used to create a full view of both sides of the street. "Hey Doreen!" was installed in October 2018.



Nanton Street, 1920

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

Thank you for choosing an e-version of this booklet. Print versions are available at:

Michener House Museum
5036 51st Street, Lacombe

Blacksmith Shop Museum
5020 49th Street, Lacombe

Lacombe Regional Tourism
#100 5005 50th Avenue, Lacombe