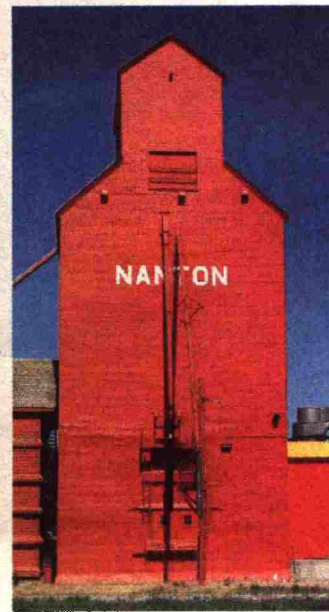
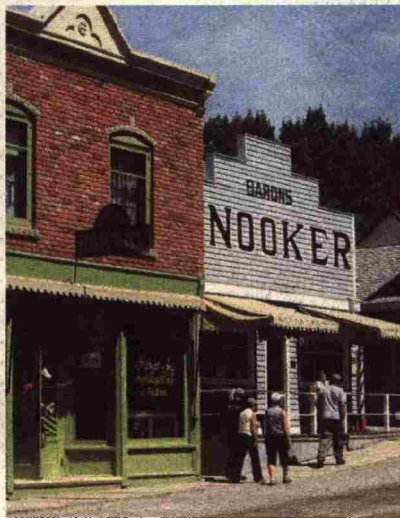


A Canadian Getaway

Alberta, Canada – a cultural paradise / 18



An Alberta Adventure

by Michelle Newman

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. The real Rockies are definitely in Alberta, Canada. That's right, they ain't in Colorado. Still, there's a lot more than just the Canadian Rockies in this big province. This is "God's Country," full of magnificent landscapes and spectacular scenery.

With 10 provinces and three territories, each distinct, I can't figure out why more Americans don't travel to Canada. They speak our language, are clean, have great roads, deal in dollars, the food and water are good and they like Americans.

History buff? Outdoor nut? Fanatic fisherman, picky gourmet, or serious shopper? There's something in Alberta that is certain to entice.

Antiquing in Alberta

Nanton is as western as you can get, an old pioneer town from the mid-1800s and well deserving of its town slogan: "Where history lives."

Nanton has retained its cultural roots and is, unquestionably, the antique spot in Alberta. The whole town features one antique shop after another. Located only about a 40-minute drive south from Calgary, Nanton is a popular antiquing area for day-trippers.

Nanton's other big attraction is the Lancaster Museum, continued on **Page 20**

drawing folks from all over the world. Time your visit to make the Saturday night rodeo throughout the summer.

The folks around here are proud of their historic grain elevators and there's an active movement to preserve them.

"They're a symbol of the Old West, a bygone era, and our pioneer roots with Nanton's name emblazoned on the side," says Kevin Praud, second-generation owner of Lost Ark Antiques, located in the oldest commercial building in town from 1902. Kevin is also an avid historian and specializes in antiquities that have a historical Canadian connection such as NWMP regalia including bayonets, flags, caps, and holsters along with 1912 Alberta license plates, early Calgary Brewery items.

The Candy Store, on Main Street in Nanton, is a candy shop with a twist; the whole back part of the store is stuffed with antiques.

"We're known for our collection of the ugliest lamps," says owner Lisa Rees. "In our store, we sell memories and our things are usually affordable and something you can carry out." Some of the more unusual items include a World War II propeller, airplane seats, dynamite boxes, a pair of old buffalo chaps – "they're the real McCoy," adds

Lisa – and a beautiful wolf rug (\$3,500) that was just shipped to a buyer in Tasmania

Willow Creek Forge has some lovely Quebec primitive pieces along with hand-smithed decorative items and wonderful light fixtures.

Michelle Greysen, owner of Inktiques has created an interesting antique niche and may feature the largest collection of antique paperweights and inkwells in Canada.

You can spend a whole day in Sentimental Journey and still not see everything. The Sentimental Journey's specialty is furniture, primarily from Western Canada, and lots of high-end china, glass vintage lighting, and clocks.

Shoulder to Shoulder, located smack in the middle of Inglewood on 9th Avenue S.E., is more like a mini-museum than a shop. Owner Reid Moseley is quite proud of his extensive collection of militaria, old trains, antique toys from the "Golden Age." You'll find Civil War swords, military art including signed Taylor prints, Marx and Lionel old trains, military badges, uniforms, and British recruiting posters from World War I.

The Greatest Show on Earth

The world-famous Calgary Stampede, billed as "The Greatest Show on Earth" takes place for 10 days every July in Calgary (July 4-13). The Stampede is the best entertainment value in North America and it's a great place for people watching.

Guy Weadick, a working cowboy and vaudeville performer who appeared in the traveling Wild West shows, founded this mega event in 1912. The Stampede's goal and mission is "Dedicated to the preserving and promoting of western heritage and values."

All of Calgary closes down for the glitzy Stampede Parade, which meanders through downtown Calgary and features bands, stagecoaches, Clydesdales, cowboys, natives, pipers and pioneer families. The cowboy pancake breakfast, with live fiddle music, bales of hay, and Western attire, is a big event held in the ballroom of the historic Palliser Hotel the morning of the parade.

The 2007 Stampede alone attracted 1.2 million visitors, with one of the principle draws being the old-fashioned rodeo where the best cowboys in the world compete for big stakes and serious prize money in a variety of events, including the most dangerous of all ... the chuck wagon races.

"We literally have visitors from all over the world," said Doug Fraser, media relations manager for the Stampede.

Be sure not to be late for the rodeo; you won't want to miss the flamboyant Grand Entry and opening ceremony, showmanship at its best. Ski divers make their grand entrance from above and fireworks give you a hint of what's to come.

Then there's the Stampede food ... You can literally eat your way around the grounds with your typical carnival

cuisine. If you head down to the Indian Village, you can continued on **Page 22**

sample delicious Indian tacos – a high calorie concoction of fried bread topped with pinto beans, ground beef, sour cream, chopped lettuce and tomato.

Once you enter the Indian Village, plan to spend an afternoon here to become familiar with one of the oldest and richest cultures in the world. The Blackfoot Confederacy, composed of the Blackfoot, Sarcee, Peigan, Blood, and Stoney, are well-represented in the village, and are happy to share their culture.

Dancers in full regalia dance to drums and traditional chants. The beat of the drums can be heard far away on the Stampede grounds. Native dancers of all types take turns entertaining the large crowds.

For more information, go online to www.dagarystampede.com.

Cruising around Calgary

Former Premier Ralph Klein is given the majority of credit for putting Calgary on the map. His persistence and determination brought the 1988 Olympics here, and you can still tour Calgary Olympic Park located on the Trans-Canada Highway en route to Banff and Lake Louise.

Alberta is the richest province in Canada with its abundant oil and gas resources. It is an oil and gas town with big money, a macho attitude, cowboys, and cattle.

For those harsh Canadian winters, Plus 15 is an above ground covered walkway system in downtown Calgary. Fifty-seven bridges, accented with artwork, connect buildings, shops, and services extending for 16 kilometers.

If you're into historic properties, stay at the exclusive Fairmont Palliser Hotel – if it's good enough for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, then it's good enough for you. If you prefer a sleek contemporary boutique hotel, then the Hotel Arts is *the* scene for trendy hipsters.

You can spend time browsing in the Art Centre, a three-story conglomeration of art galleries, studio spaces, boutiques, shops and cafes.

The world-class Glenbow Museum has one of the finest collections of native artifacts. The Blackfoot community was actively engaged with the creation of the Blackfoot gallery, where it tells their story the way the community felt it should be told.

“The Glenbow has an extensive archive and is known for its native collection,” said Adrian Stimson, Jr., artist and associate curator at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. “It has a big ethnographic collection of plains tribes material, as well as a contemporary art collection and a good Western art collection too.”

Located just a few blocks away from the Glenbow, the 8th Avenue Mall is a hub of activity with more galleries, shops, boutiques and cafes. Lammlé's, with a full line of Western wear, is where all the cowboys shop during the Stampede. If you're into cowgirl couture, then the \$1,000 Swarovski

crystal encrusted Western belt at Lammle's is a must.

Nearby, Micah Gallery, one of the most comprehensive native art galleries in North America, features an excellent selection of native arts and crafts. Historic Inglewood, just a few miles away, is the area for serious, seasoned shoppers. It's a fun place to buy and to people watch.

History and heritage

Once you've rested from the Stampede, take the kids over to Heritage Park, Canada's largest living history village – a hands-on history lesson they can experience for themselves while having fun and getting a good sampling of the pioneer spirit.

The park authentically depicts what life was like during three time periods of Alberta's history: settlement era, pre-railroad, and post-railroad. You can experience what life was like during each period and even climb aboard one of the three vintage steam locomotives for a ride around the grounds, then hop on the 1898 replica paddle wheeler, the S.S. Moyie, for a 20-minute cruise on the Glenmore Reservoir.

For Old West ambiance, stroll over to the replica of the 1906 Wainwright Hotel on Main Street and dine in their charming dining room with lace curtains and an antique oak player piano.

Gasoline Alley, housed in the old 1927 Burns' Barn, features 750 items of automobile memorabilia most dating before World War II. A new 40,000-square-foot Gasoline Alley is currently under construction and will be open in fall 2008.

Beyond Calgary

Take a slight detour and head east to visit the impressive new Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, then head to Drumheller, the dinosaur capital of Canada. The Royal Tyrrell Museum here is world famous. Plan on spending an entire day in Drumheller, where just about everything has a dinosaur theme.

The new Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park is a spectacular architectural statement resembling a huge flying saucer hovering over the plains.

Chief Adrian Stimson, who comes from a long line of chiefs, explains that Blackfoot Crossing is a significant historical and cultural site where Treaty 7 was signed by Chief Crowfoot in 1877 uniting all of the native nations into a confederacy. Chief Crowfoot is buried on the grounds overlooking a breathtaking vista of the endless prairie.

Continue heading west to Cochrane on the Trans-Canada Highway. Cochrane is cowboy and ranching country, and one of the last Western towns in Alberta. You'll

then head through the scenic Bow Valley, following the Bow River, home to some of the best brown and rainbow trout fishing in the world. Before long you'll be surrounded by the majestic rugged Rockies.

The landscape at Lake Louise is drop dead gorgeous with its pistachio green glistening water. For a spectacular view, book a window table at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. After lunch ride the Lake Louise Sightseeing Gondola from continued on **Page 24**

the Lodge of the Ten Peaks up 6,850 feet to the interpretive center. You'll have another panoramic view and, if you're lucky, and you may even spot a grizzly bear.

The Post Hotel, a Relais & Chateaux designated property is a historic log lodge sitting on the bank of a running stream in the midst of Banff National Park. Another excellent lodging option near Lake Louise and a bit more contemporary is the Juniper Lodge. This intimate setting provides a quiet Zen-like retreat with great views.

Banff is a bustling town, sort of the Aspen of Alberta, with upscale shops, restaurants and jewelry stores. The best ammolite is mined in southern Alberta and natives believe that this opal-like, fossilized gemstone possesses magical and spiritual powers.

As you enter town, one of the first things you'll see is the Banff Indian Trading Post. This wonderful 1909 old stone building, set on a stream with a pine tree backdrop could easily be a movie set. It's the real thing, a throwback to pioneer days, and as authentic as you can get. The trading post is one of the oldest retail businesses in Banff.

Banff National Park is Canada's first national park. "Taking the waters" at Banff Upper Hot Springs is a long-time tradition. Surround yourself with Alpine beauty, soak in the springs and luxuriate in the luscious landscape. Nearby, the Fairmont Banff Springs is as majestic as the Rockies encompassing this 1888 landmark. The Scottish baronial castle is a Canadian Rockies icon. Close by, Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum is a special treat. The museum showcases the heritage of the Indians of the northern plains. The gift shop is well stocked with native Canadian arts and crafts, beadwork, moccasins, and other gift items.

Southern Exposure

Southern Alberta provides a comprehensive glimpse of Canada's pioneer history and the days of the Wild West.

Begin your adventure at Head Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The spectacular multi-level museum, an architectural wonder, is cleverly designed to blend into the surrounding barren limestone cliffs and landscape. Visit the spot where buffalo were herded off a high cliff, to fall to their death. Your native guide will provide a thorough explanation of the importance of buffalo in their culture. During the summer season catch one of the daily dance and drum performances, take a free guided tour with a native guide and learn about the Blackfoot culture and lifestyle.

For an unforgettable experience make advance arrangements to camp in a tipi under an indigo night sky. You may even see a shooting star or hear a howling coyote in the far distance while gathered at the campfire for native storytelling. From there, head east to Fort McLeod, a throwback to another era. Take a stroll on Main Street in the well-preserved downtown district.

Plan to spend a few hours at the Fort Museum of the Northwest Mounted Police smack on Highway 2. The museum, a replica of the 1874 fort built to bring law and order to the chaotic frontier and protect the natives from the whiskey traders, has a good display of original uniforms, weaponry, and provides insight into the harsh, lonely lifestyle of the Mounties.

Just further east, large deposits of ammolite are found and mined near Lethbridge on the Blood Reserve. This gemstone is available in local shops for a fraction of the price compared to shops in Banff.

Fort Whoop Up, near the outskirts of Lethbridge is a replica of an American trading post and whiskey fort built on Canadian soil in 1869. The fort stands on the grounds of Indian Battle Park.

“Basically Fort Whoop Up was the last blast and the last big grab for cash,” explains Doran Degenstien, executive director, curator, and Western historian.

Continue driving south towards Montana on Hwy. 2 to Writing on Stone Provincial Park, a sacred site of the Blackfoot Confederacy. The natives literally left their mark here. With more than 50 rock art sites and thousands of images, this 4,400-acre site is the greatest concentration of rock art on the Great Plains of North America. Take a guided tour and hike with Bonnie Moffat, the executive director, and learn about this rich, ancient culture as she points out highlights.

With so much to do and see in and around Alberta, you will need to allow at least a week, which is just an introduction to this vibrant Canadian province. All it takes is one trip to get hooked, then you’ll be coming back every year for an Alberta Adventure.

If You Go

Contact Info:

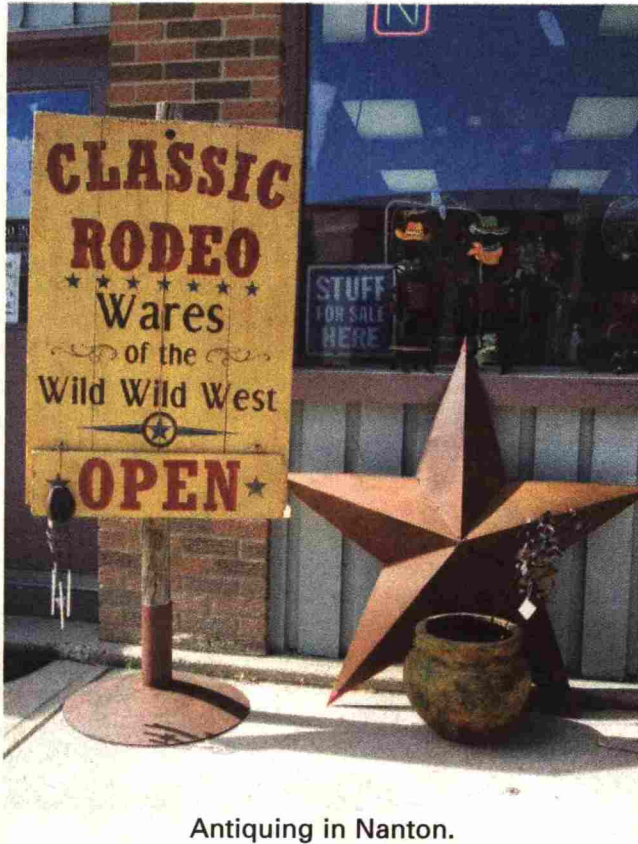
Travel Alberta:
www.travelalberta.com 1-800-ALBERTA
 Calgary: www.tourismcalgary.com 1-800-661-1678

Calgary Stampede:
www.calgarystampede.com 1-800-661-1260

Banff Lake Louise Tourism:
www.banfflakelouisetourism.com 1-403-762-8421

How To Get There:

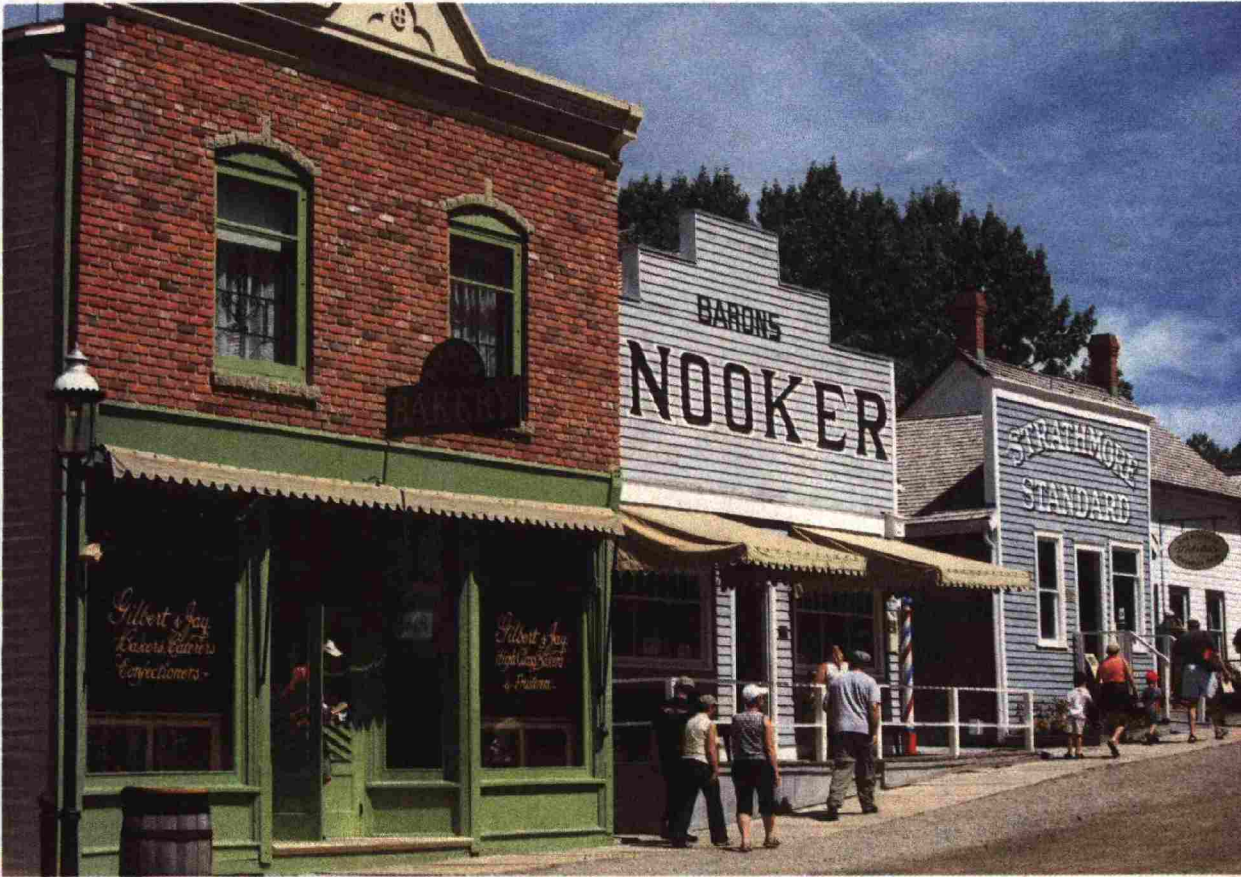
Continental Airlines www.continental.com
 Travel Documents: U.S. Passport



Antiquing in Nanton.



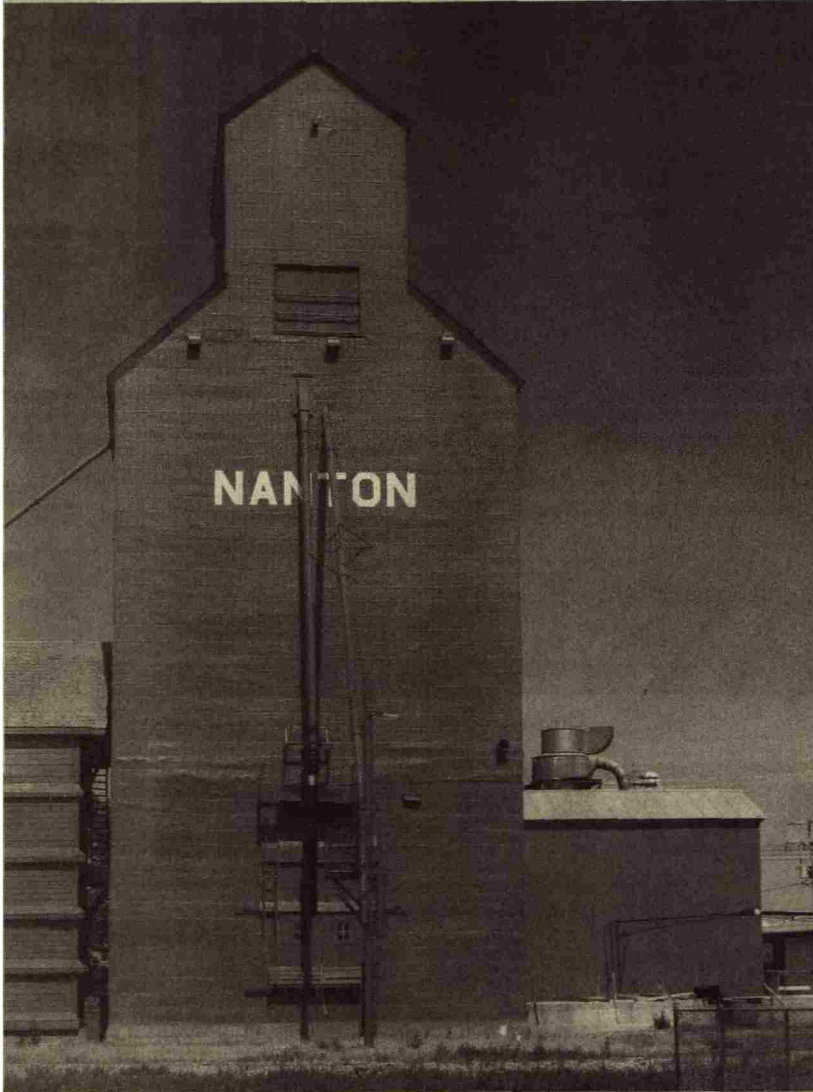
The Calgary Stampede parade kicks off! The grand parade meanders through downtown Calgary.



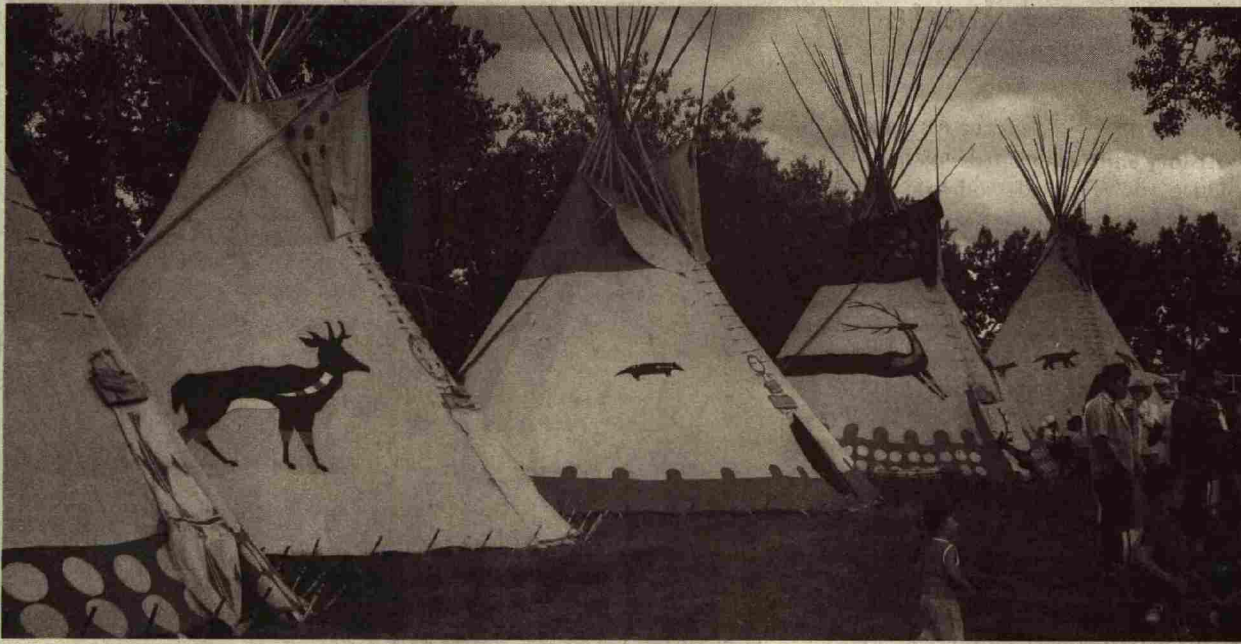
Step back into pioneer days at Heritage Park and see what life was like on the frontier.



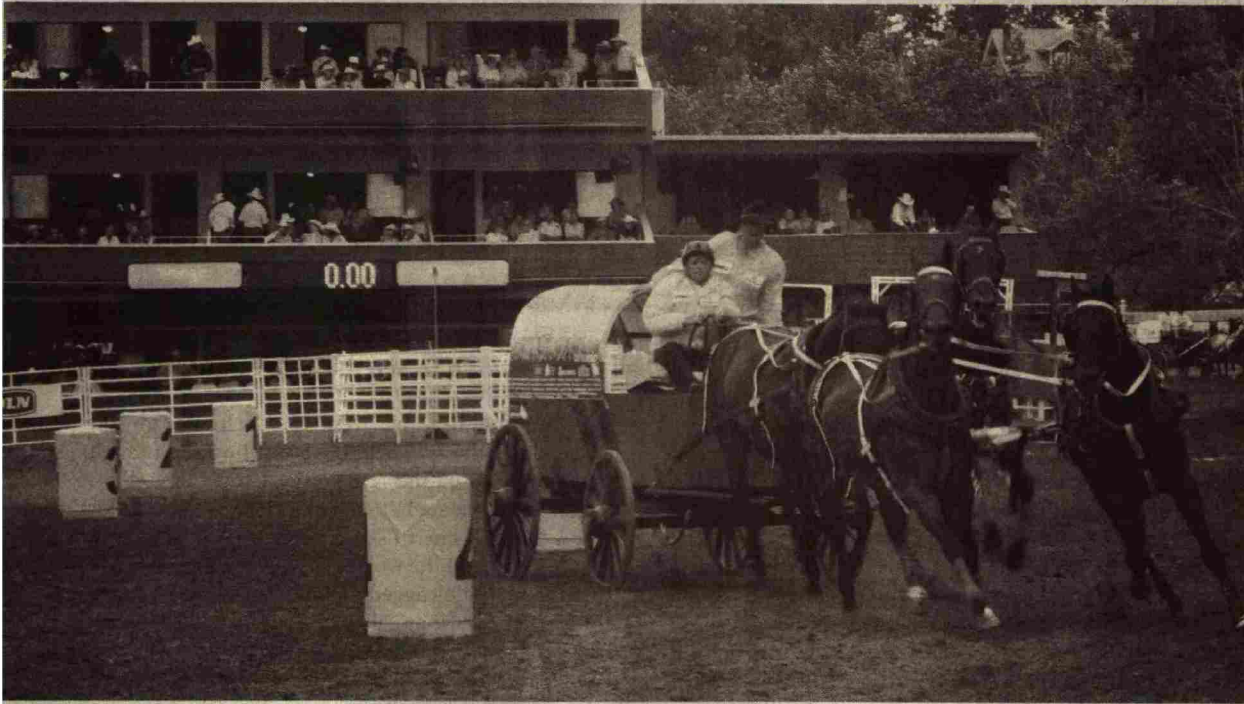
A gussied up caddy is just part of the stampede fun.



Nanton's historic grain elevators are world famous. Folks come from all over to world to see these famous landmarks.



Colorful tipis set up camp in indian village at the stampede grounds.



The chuckwagon races are exciting, dangerous and fast, and the prize money is big!