

Trails to Poplar Grove

...Beginnings

In October of 1754, Anthony Henday, the first European to visit the Blackfoot natives, camped near the present site of Innisfail. Henday had traveled to the prairies seeking trade with the Blackfoot.



Anthony Henday



A native camp photographed in the Innisfail area by W. Playle



W. Playle portraits
taken in 1890's



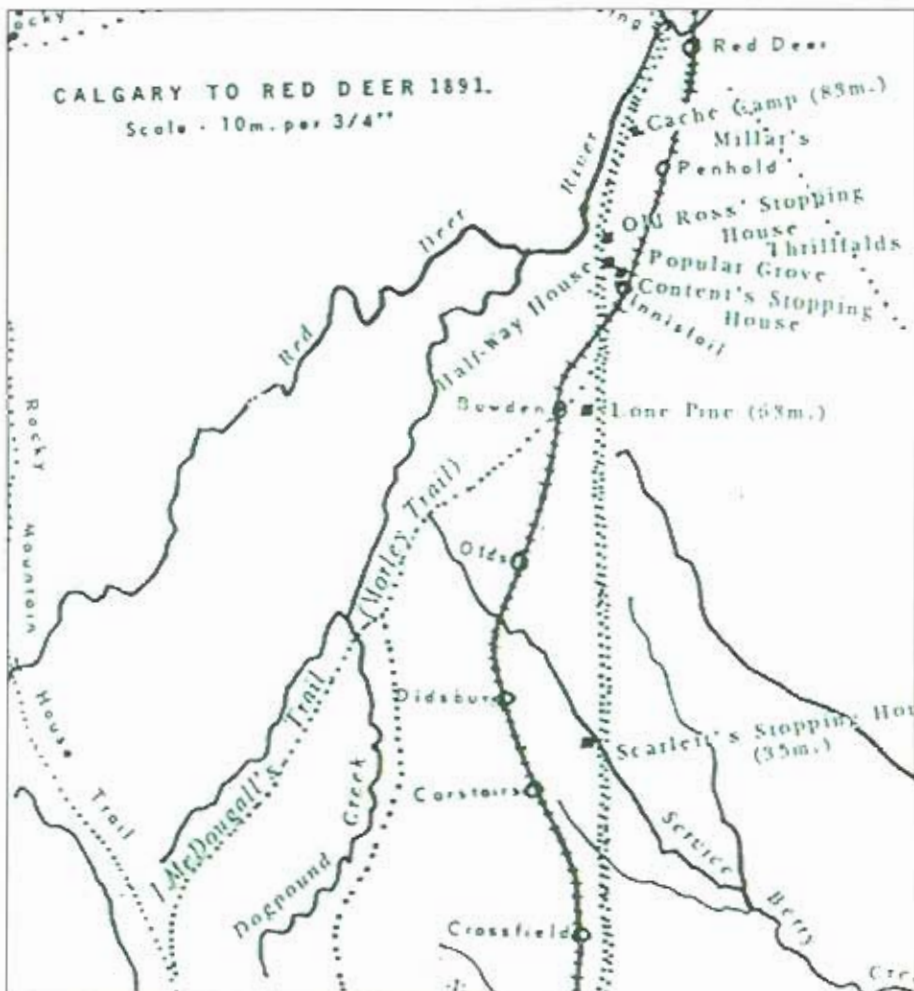
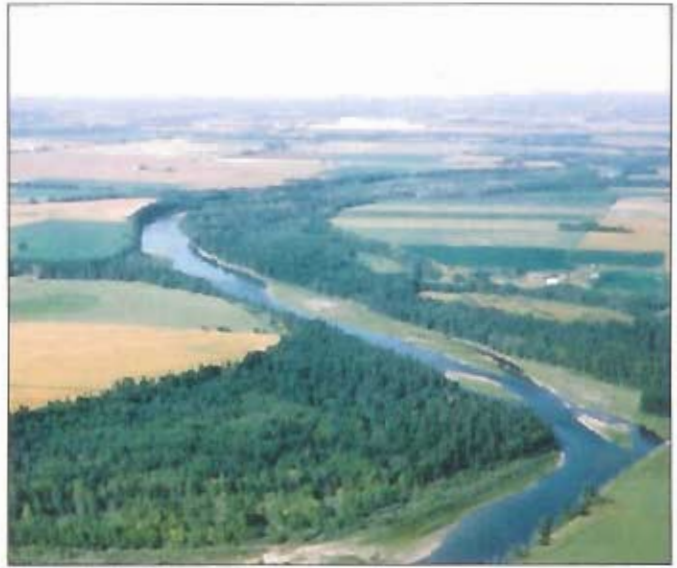


Native portrait taken in the studio of W. Playle

The trade that Henday wished for failed to materialize but Anthony Henday was the first to record viewing the majestic Rocky Mountains. This viewing is believed to have taken place from what is now known as Antler Hill, a location north of Innisfail and the highest point between Calgary and Edmonton.



Rocky Mountains as seen from Antler Hill



Rev. McDougall's Morley Trail

Another early visitor to our area was Reverend John McDougall. McDougall developed a trail from Fort Edmonton to his mission church at Morley. This 1870s path wound through what is now the Innisfail district.



An 1880's Palliser land survey crew

Other early visitors were the men of the Palliser Survey Expedition. These Palliser crews measured Western Canada's systems of land sections and road grids. In their journals, the Palliser men observed that the Innisfail area was one of the top agricultural sites in Western Canada.



The Red Deer River northwest of Innisfail and the land as surveyed in the 1880's