



SELF-GUIDED TOURS:

Scottish History



Fort Edmonton Park is located in Treaty 6 territory, as well as the traditional lands of the Métis people.

How to use this guide: This guide offers some tidbits of information about the history and experience of Edmonton's Scottish peoples, as a starting point for you to learn at your own pace. It also provides suggestions of buildings to visit and questions to ask costumed staff.

1846 Fort-

A Fort Built for Furs

By 1846, the Hudson's Bay Company had a monopoly on the Fur Trade, reaching its peak under the ruthless efficiency of Scotsman Sir George Simpson. Change was inevitable, however, due to fashion trends in Europe among other things.

The Northwest Company: Rival to the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the Northwest Company (NWC) had been a fur-trading company based out of Montreal that hired many merchants from Scotland. One Scotsman, Angus Shaw, built the first trading post in this area called Fort Augustus for the NWC in 1795. When the companies merged in 1821 under the name of the HBC, there was still a large population of Orkadians from the northern Scottish isles, Scottish-descended Métis, and Scots in Edmonton. Why do you think an Orkadian or Scotsman would come to Canada to work?

York Boats and builders: Essential to the Fur Trade, York boats were used to transport goods.



Manned by 6-8 men, the boats could carry 4500-6300 pounds of cargo while only drawing about two feet of water. The river and lake

voyage to the bay was a long and difficult one that took a toll, requiring up to 10 new York Boats built per year at Fort Edmonton. Many boat builders came from the Orkney Islands of Scotland. Why do you think these men were so valued?

ASK AN INTERPRETER about the living conditions of the HBC employees and the languages they spoke. Ask why the children of Scots and indigenous women were usually not called *Métis*.

BE SURE TO VISIT the [York Boat](#) (#19) and the [Tradesmen's Quarters](#) (#16), which usually included Scottish boat builders, carpenters and blacksmiths as well as their Métis wives.

1885 Street-

A Blind Faith in the Future

By 1885, the fur trade was no longer the main reason for Edmonton's continued existence. Edmonton became a Canadian settlement of approximately 400 people with the majority living as homesteaders outside of the community. Many of the settlers who came to this area were of Scottish descent.

Scottish Settlers: The first fur trade families to settle outside the walls of Fort Edmonton in a non-indigenous manner were the McDonalds and the Rowlands. Kenneth McDonald was from the Isle of Lewis, and his Métis wife Emma and her brothers were the children of William Rowland of Birsay, Orkney and his indigenous wife. What would be the reasons for families to move outside of the Fort?

An Important Edmontonian: One of the first non-indigenous settlers on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River was HBC boat builder and Orkadian John Walter. Walter was a successful entrepreneur who became one of Edmonton's first millionaires and whose three houses are preserved in their own museum in Walterdale. Why do you think that Walter's houses are not located in Fort Edmonton Park?



ASK AN INTERPRETER at the original Kenneth McDonald House (#44) from 1886 about daily life on the homestead and the use of Gaelic in the family.

BE SURE TO VISIT the [McDougall Methodist Church](#) (#28) founded by George McDougall, who was born in Upper Canada, of Scottish parents. Also visit [James McDonald's Carpentry Shop](#) (#25), another Scottish immigrant and one of our first school teachers.



The thistle, Scotland's floral emblem

1905 Street- Thrill Ride

By 1905, Edmonton was a booming city. There was great prosperity and the Province of Alberta was formed with Edmonton as its capital.

Alexander Cameron Rutherford: The new province's first Premier, A.C. Rutherford was a proud Ontarian of Scottish descent. In 1895, he moved his family from Ontario to Edmonton to participate in politics. He named his 1909 house "Achnacarry" after his ancestral home. Rutherford participated in sports clubs, school boards, literary groups, Freemasons, and liberal political associations. Do you know of any other prominent Scottish politicians in Canada's history?

The "Thistles": Edmontonians felt such an important connection to its Scottish heritage they named the local hockey team the *Thistles* and their arena the Thistle Rink. Their rivals on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River were called the *Shamrocks*. What do the names of Edmonton's modern sports teams suggest about our identity?

ASK AN INTERPRETER

about the founding of the University of Alberta in 1908 by Premier A.C. Rutherford and how he stayed involved with the student body. Ask what other peoples were making Edmonton their home at this time.



BE SURE TO VISIT Rutherford House (#54), the original turn of the century home of the Rutherfords and their domestic servant. Also visit the Telephone Exchange (upstairs in the Post Office Block, #59) to see where 14-year old Jennie (Janet) Lauder, daughter of Glasgow-born baker James Lauder, was hired as the first woman in Edmonton to operate the switchboard system.

*Thank you for visiting
Fort Edmonton Park!*

1920 Street- Tough Times, Modern Times

From 1919 to 1929, Canada experienced a time of rapid changes and fully moved into the modern age. After the First World War, Edmonton and the entire nation experienced an economic depression and dealt with conflicts over labor issues and women's and indigenous rights.

The Hotel Selkirk: During one of the greatest boom periods in Edmonton's history, the Windsor/Selkirk Hotel was built in 1903. The hotel changed owners several times until 1913 when it was purchased by Robert McDonald. Born in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia in 1871, McDonald was of Scottish descent. He and his family managed the Selkirk until 1950, renovating it into a modern and elegant hotel. What else in the prairies bears the name of "Selkirk"?



A Presence in the Prairies: Scottish people have been and continue to be an important component of multicultural western Canada. In 1921, people of Scottish origin made up 15.6 percent of the total population in the prairie provinces. Canadians who declare themselves to be of Scottish origin are proud of their distinctive culture and heritage, and of their contributions to the development of places like Edmonton. Can you think of other ways that the Scottish community has contributed to the city?

ASK AN INTERPRETER about the history of the Capitol Theatre (#70). Several employees, specifically musicians and ushers, were of Scottish descent.

BE SURE TO VISIT the Hotel Selkirk (#69) and perhaps enjoy a bite to eat at Johnson's Café, located inside the hotel.