



Alberta

AT THE SMITHSONIAN

Al Chapman and Nancy Groce

This year marks the 40th annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival. It is also the first year of the second century for the province of Alberta, which celebrated its centennial in 2005. Named after Queen Victoria's fourth daughter, Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, but familiarly called "Wild Rose Country" by its 3.26 million residents, Alberta is a land of contrasts. Its landscape is among the most diverse in North America, with badlands, prairies, boreal forests, rolling foothills, enormous freshwater lakes such as the Athabasca, and mighty rivers including the Peace and the North Saskatchewan. Its western border is defined by the spectacular ranges of the Rocky Mountains; its eastern border by the Great Plains. Alberta is enormous: it stretches

764 miles from the U.S. border (where it meets the state of Montana) to the Northwest Territories, and 412 miles east to west from Saskatchewan to British Columbia. With a total area of 255,213 square miles, Alberta is exceeded in size by only two of the United States, Texas and Alaska.

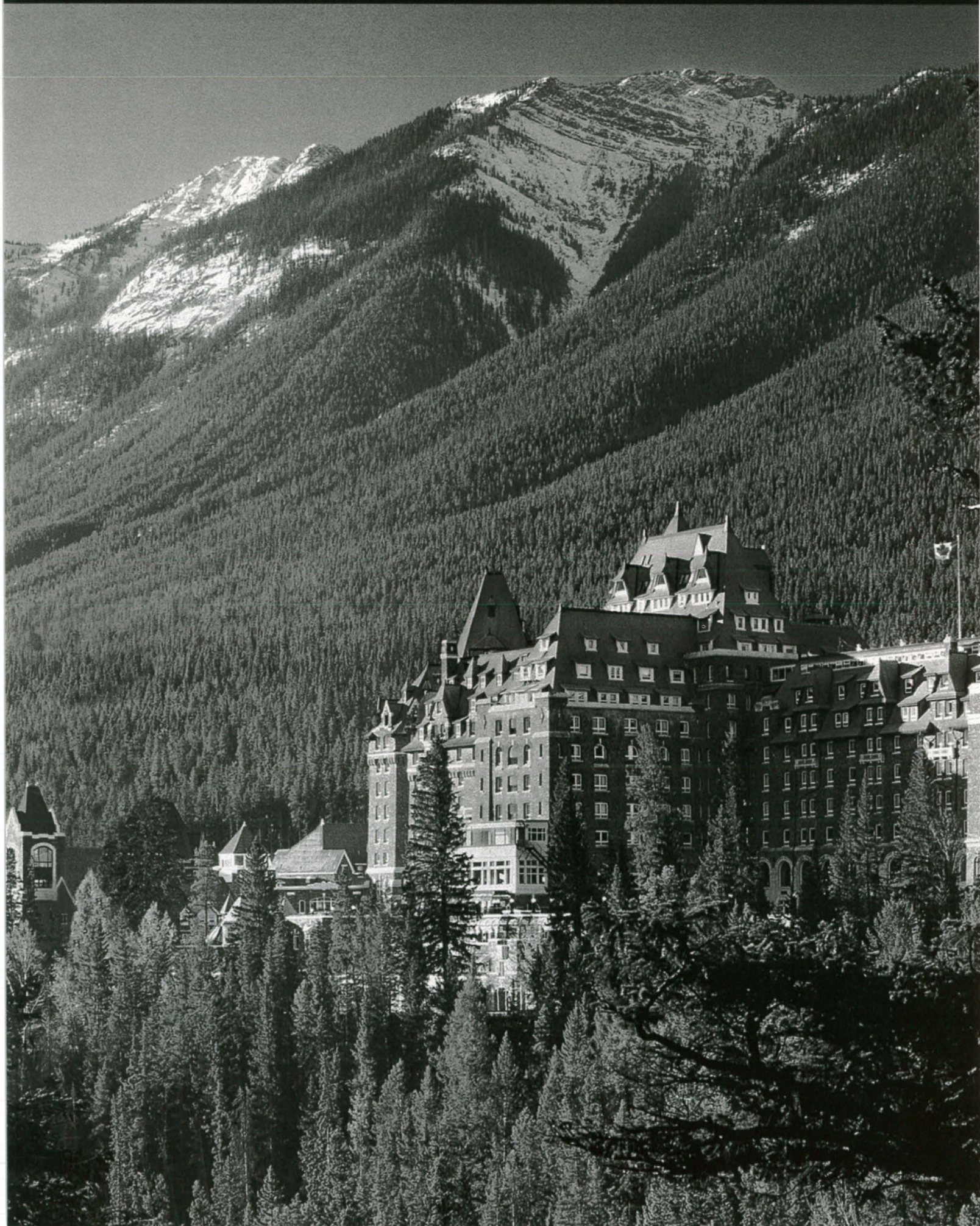
Alberta has the fastest growing economy in Canada, but its wealth extends beyond oil sands and gas fields, beyond majestic Rocky Mountains and rich agricultural plains, and beyond its legendary ranches and thriving cosmopolitan, multicultural cities. Alberta's true wealth is its people—a diverse, hard-working, innovative population whose "can-do spirit" has transformed a frontier territory into a prosperous province with a vibrant cultural landscape. Its people are tremendously proud of Alberta's past and increasingly confident of its future. Because of this rich and dynamic culture, it is most appropriate that Alberta is the first Canadian province to be featured at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.



(Top) Calgary's impressive skyline with the famous Calgary Tower. When built in 1968, the Tower dominated the skyline, but now it is only the fourth tallest building in town. Photo courtesy Travel Alberta

(Left) Calgary's and Edmonton's identical Jubilee Auditoriums—the "Jubes"—are the province's premier arts centers. Photo by Ellis Brothers Photographers, courtesy Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium

(Right) The Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel was established in 1888 by the Canadian Pacific Railway to attract tourists to Banff National Park. Photo courtesy Travel Alberta



At first glance, Alberta might not impress Americans as being as exotic as some of the international programs that have educated and entertained visitors to previous Folklife Festivals, but make no mistake: Alberta is very much its own unique place. The people of Alberta pride themselves on being America's good neighbors—and they certainly are—but they might take exception to stereotypes some Americans may hold about their province. So, for the record, let's begin by dispensing with a few misconceptions:

While it is true that Alberta's climate can occasionally dip to a frigid -40°F and snow is not unknown, it is equally true that serious winter is balanced by three seasons of enjoyably temperate weather. In southern Alberta, winter cold is often mediated by the chinook winds—a front of warm air blowing in from the Pacific that can raise temperatures by fifty degrees Fahrenheit in just a few hours. Throughout the province, giant expanses of cloudless blue skies and bright sunshine are the norm year-round.

Not all Albertans live on farms or ranches.

Despite enormous areas of wilderness, vast national and provincial parks, and seemingly endless prairies, open ranges, and agricultural land, four of five Albertans are urbanites. Alberta's two largest cities are Calgary (population 1.06 million) and Edmonton (population 1.01 million), the province's capital located 400 miles north of the U.S. border. Both are corporate and cultural centers with impressive skylines, lively cultural scenes, sophisticated restaurants and shops, and world-class universities. Alberta's smaller cities include Fort Macleod, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and

the celebrated Rocky Mountain resorts of Banff and Jasper. Alberta is unique among Canadian provinces in that the bulk of its population does not live immediately along the U.S.-Canadian border. Many Americans would be surprised by how many towns and cities dot Alberta's landscape.

Not all Albertans are cowboys. There are still a lot of ranchers in Alberta, but a contemporary Albertan is more likely to work in a corporate office or retail store, be involved in the energy sector, or be employed by one of the province's many high-tech research centers than to work with cattle.

The region's vibrant growth and development have led Alberta's population to become increasingly multicultural and multinational. The first Albertans were Aboriginal peoples. (In Alberta and throughout Canada, American Indians or First Nations peoples often refer to themselves as Aboriginals.) Tribes settled on the Albertan plains at least 12,000 years ago and were sustained by the natural resources and activities such as buffalo hunting. Evidence of their activities can still be seen at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, now a World Heritage Site in southern Alberta. Later, their descendants—who included the Blackfoot, Blood, and Peigan—tamed horses and adapted European weapons and technology, continuing their traditional culture well into the nineteenth century.

Other First Nations, including the Woodland Cree, Plains Cree, and Dene tribes, settled the woodland areas of central Alberta, where they hunted caribou, moose, and deer, and fished the lakes and rivers. During the eighteenth century, Métis (descendants of French and Scottish traders and Cree, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine women) settled



in Alberta, drawn by the fur trade. The Métis were employed as interpreters, cartographers, and guides. Their descendants still play a prominent role in contemporary Alberta.

Today, Alberta has 44 First Nations in 3 treaty areas and 123 Reserves. The most commonly spoken Aboriginal languages include Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Sarcee, and Stoney (Nakoda Sioux). Members of Alberta's First Nations and Métis live in Reserves and Settlements as well as in urban and suburban areas.

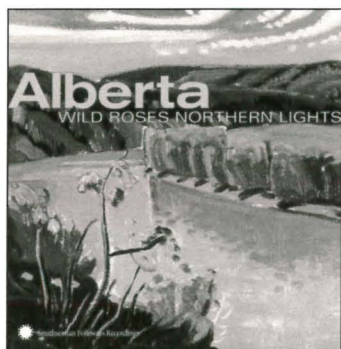
Early European settlers included immigrants from the British Isles and Germany as well as Ukrainians, Poles, and other Eastern Europeans who were all drawn by the promise of inexpensive land and newfound freedoms. The need for specific skills attracted specific immigrant groups: for example, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway attracted Chinese and Irish immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century. Many Sikhs immigrated to the Crowsnest Pass region of the Rocky Mountains to work in coal mines. Slightly later, Japanese settlers came from British Columbia to farm the rich lands around Lethbridge in southern Alberta. Unrest in Europe

in the early twentieth century brought pacifist groups such as the Hutterites, Mennonites, and Dukhabors, whose descendants maintain their unique cultures and independent lifestyles on the Alberta plains.

Immigrants also arrived from the United States. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many American ranchers and farmers moved to Alberta. Two groups of U.S. immigrants merit special mention: some American Indians—most notably Sitting Bull and his band of Lakota Sioux—found that many of the conflicts they encountered in the United States diminished as soon as they crossed the “Peace Line” and entered Canada. There were also several communities of African American homesteaders and ranchers who moved to Alberta in the nineteenth century seeking opportunities not available to them in a segregated United States.

In recent years, Alberta's energy sector, universities, high-tech laboratories, and booming economy have attracted people from around the world. From small towns to its largest cities, Alberta is now home to a sizable number of people from Asia, Africa, South America, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Young dancers compete at the 2005 Stoney/Cree Powwow in Duffield in central Alberta. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution



FESTIVAL CD

Alberta: Wild Roses, Northern Lights

In conjunction with the Alberta at the Smithsonian program, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is releasing two CDs. The first, *Alberta: Wild Roses, Northern Lights* (SFW CD 40538), a collaborative effort with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, features contemporary music by Albertan musicians celebrating their home province. The second, *Classic Canadian Songs from Smithsonian Folkways* (SFW CD 40539), produced in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta, contains historically important Canadian recordings from the Folkways archives.

Alberta at the Smithsonian: Festival Program

Performing Arts

This summer's program showcases the music and dance of Alberta's folk, country, and ethnic traditions, but it should be noted that Alberta also supports equally vibrant jazz, blues, rock, world, and classical music scenes. Identical Jubilee Auditoriums in Calgary and Edmonton, the Banff Centre for the Arts, Francis Winspear Centre for Music (Edmonton), and the Jack Singer Concert Hall (Calgary) are among Alberta's many outstanding performing arts venues. Internationally acclaimed events such as the Edmonton Folk Festival, the Calgary Folk Festival, and the Canmore Folk Music Festival have drawn prominent performers and large crowds to outdoor venues each summer for decades.

The one thing shared by all this year's Festival performers is their focus on Alberta. The lyrics of singer-songwriters Ian Tyson, Corb Lund, Maria Dunn, John Wort Hannam, Tim Hus, and Sid Marty celebrate Alberta's history, people, and landscape. The bands Cowboy Celtic and The McDades draw from both Celtic and Western traditions to create their distinctive sounds. Traditional music also forms the basis of the Aboriginal a cappella trio Asani; the music and dance of Ukrainian-Albertan supergroup Zabava; the Francophone-Albertan ensemble Allez Ouest and dance troupe Zéphyr; and the Aboriginal dance ensemble, Blackfoot Medicine Speaks. Master fiddler Calvin Vollrath from St. Paul in the northeast part of the province begins with a thoroughly Albertan mixture of Métis, Irish, Scottish, and American country music, then adds a dash of jazz to create a style all his own. Cowboy poets Doris Daley, Terri Mason, and Don Wudel, along with Tsuu T'ina storyteller Hal Eagletail, use words and rhymes to paint their visions of Alberta.

Oral History and Theater

Cultural life in Alberta is also enriched by a vibrant theater scene. In fact, Alberta prides itself as being the birthplace of "Theatresports." Theatresports pits two teams of improvisers against one another on a given topic. Judges then award points to the funniest team. During the Festival, members of two of Alberta's leading Theatresports companies—Calgary's Loose Moose Theatre and Edmonton's Rapid Fire Theatre—will explain the unique cultures of their home cities (known to harbor a bit of rivalry between them), draw attention to the distinctions between American and Canadian culture, and enlighten audience members on any number of other topics. The only assurance we can offer in advance is that their performances will be funny and unpredictable.

Oral history has long been an important part of the Folklife Festival. We are fortunate to have the 2005 Grant MacEwan Author's Award winner, oral historian Linda Goyette, at this year's Festival to introduce

several community members who have come to Washington to share their family stories and personal reminiscences. These speakers include Junetta Jamerson, a descendant of African American homesteaders and ranchers who migrated from a segregated post-Civil War Oklahoma to follow their dreams in Alberta's Amber Valley; William Chee Kay, the child of a Chinese father and Ukrainian mother, who grew up in Edmonton during the 1930s and '40s; and Lethbridge native Rochelle Yamagashi, whose Japanese-Canadian farming family settled in southern Alberta in the early twentieth century.

Ranching

Many of Alberta's earliest European settlers were cattle ranchers, attracted by the province's fertile prairies and vast grasslands. Today, ranching remains a major factor in Alberta's economy, and for many Albertans ranching and cowboy culture are the symbols of what it means to be an Albertan.

Most ranching in Alberta takes place in southern and central parts of the province and along the beautiful "Cowboy Trail" (Highway 22) that skirts the eastern foothills of the Canadian Rockies. Cattle are the most plentiful livestock, but bison (commonly called "buffalo") and elk ranches are increasing in number. The quality of Alberta beef is legendary, and although the U.S. remains a major market, beef raised on the plains of Alberta is also in demand by fine restaurants and serious gourmets across Europe and Asia.

Organic and low-stress methods of raising livestock, as well as the preservation and stewardship of Alberta's fertile but fragile rough fescue grasslands, are of increasing concern in Alberta, especially among family ranches like those featured at this year's Festival. Challenges

faced by these multi-generational ranching families include drought, land management issues, and the fluctuation of beef prices—an issue exacerbated by the 2003-05 U.S. ban of Alberta beef after the discovery of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) in one Alberta cow. The U.S. ban, while perhaps



merited in the interest of public safety, had a devastating economic impact on ranches and small ranching towns throughout Alberta. For tens of thousands of Albertans, ranching is more than an industry—it is a way of life central to their culture and identities. The Biggs family from the TK Ranch in Hanna, southern Alberta, Terri Mason from Eckville, Don Wudel from Meeting Creek, and D.C. Lund from Tabor will be at the Festival to speak about the realities of ranching in contemporary Alberta.

Alberta ranchers rely on traditional skills to manage livestock.

Photo courtesy
Travel Alberta



Chuckwagon racing is a popular sport throughout Alberta. Photo courtesy Travel Alberta

STAMPEDES, RODEOS, AND CHUCKWAGONS

Each summer, the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede—a two-week long celebration of ranching and rodeo skills—draws over a million visitors to Stampede Park in downtown Calgary. Founded in 1912, the Calgary Stampede remains an important icon of Alberta culture, but many smaller stampedes (the local term for rodeos) featuring competitive ranching skills take place in cities and towns throughout Alberta. In addition to riding and roping events, stampedes often feature livestock judging, competitive cooking, canning, and homemaking competitions, as well as that most Albertan of sports—chuckwagon racing.

Chuckwagon racing grew out of the work skills of early cowboys. Today, specially-built racing chuckwagons pulled by a four-horse team race for glory and cash prizes at stampedes and rodeos throughout

Alberta. Each wagon or “chucky” has a team of four “outriders,” each on their own horse. At the starting gun, each team loads several props into the back of their wagon. (The props, although fake, are stoves and other equipment that were historically used by working chuckwagon cooks.) The wagon driver then takes off at top speed and, after completing a figure-8 starting maneuver around several barrels, races the other wagons and teams around a track. It is an exciting and dangerous sport. Many of the contestants come from multi-generation racing families and follow the circuit around Alberta from late spring to early fall. Although our Festival takes place at the height of the chuckwagon racing season, we are delighted to have retired champion racer Dr. Doyle Mullaney here from Okatoks to explain this very Albertan sport.

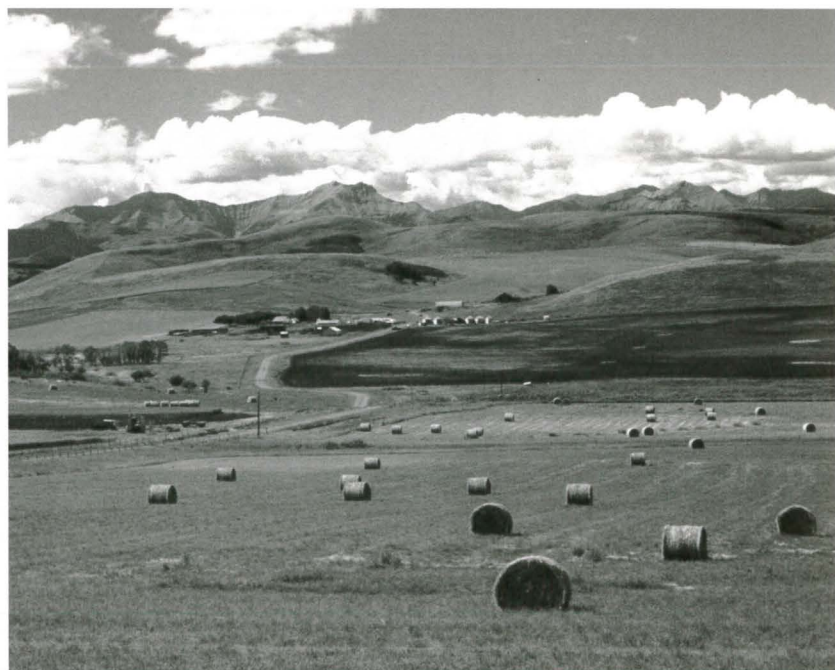
Agriculture

The Great Plains of the western United States do not stop at the 49th Parallel but continue northward into Canada's western provinces. Early settlers to Alberta were quick to see the possibilities for grain farming in the fertile, treeless plains of southern and central Alberta. Despite cold winters, the rich soil and dry, sunny summers proved ideal for crops such as wheat, barley, flax, oats, and oilseeds (now called canola). Much of this land was developed through the coordination of government policies and the economic interests of the Canadian Pacific Railway. European homesteaders were attracted to inexpensive western land, issued with a \$10 filing fee. Settlers came in great numbers, especially from Central and Eastern Europe. Small towns grew up along the railroad lines, many around the strategically spaced track-side grain elevators, where harvests from the surrounding countryside would be collected and stored to await shipment. Political and cooperative movements evolved as Alberta farmers fought for rights and protections against what they perceived as the railroads' and eastern government's interests. These conflicting interests became a formative theme in Alberta's early history.

Today, agriculture remains a major factor in the Alberta economy. The small towns that grew up around the giant grain elevators remain. Many of them—such as Bergen, Vilna,

Bruderheim, New Norway, and Kirriemuir—still proudly bear the names of their early-twentieth-century settlers' Old World homelands. Faster and better transportation has made most of the old, gaily painted wooden grain elevators obsolete, but their hulks remain important landmarks on the Alberta prairies. In many communities, local efforts are underway to preserve and restore these structures that evoke so many historical memories.

Over twenty years ago, the Alberta Wheat Pool established the Grain Academy Museum to preserve the history and memories of Alberta's grain growers. The Grain Academy in Calgary's Stampede Park is dedicated "to the farmers who grow all types of grain, scientists who develop worthy qualities of western Canada's crops, and those who operate our grain elevators and terminals." This summer, Academy staff members bring some of their exhibits to the Mall along with their stories of elevators, fields, and the challenges of farming on the Alberta prairies.



Farms and ranches dot the foothills of the Rocky Mountains along "Cowboy Trail" (Highway 22) in western Alberta. Photo courtesy Travel Alberta

Alberta Foodways

The earliest Albertans enjoyed a diet based on venison, bison (or buffalo), elk, deer, and moose, numerous species of freshwater fish, wild grains, and the local favorite, saskatoon berries (*Amelanchier alnifolia* or *misâskwatômin* in Cree). With the arrival of European settlers, Alberta became famous for the excellent quality of its beef and its ample harvests of grain—particularly wheat, oats, and barley. In recent years, these products have been supplemented by award-winning Alberta produce, locally brewed beers, honey, cheeses, and (with the occasional help of greenhouses) a year-round supply of locally grown herbs and vegetables. Alberta is also one of the world's major producers of mustard and mustard seeds.

Throughout the province, well-attended farmers' markets allow distinguished chefs and dedicated home cooks to buy fresh, local ingredients directly from the farmers and ranchers who produce them. Alberta's ethnic diversity is reflected in the profusion of available restaurant cuisines. Chinese, Indian, Greek, Ukrainian, Thai, Druze, Japanese,

and numerous other eateries do a brisk business not only in Calgary and Edmonton, but throughout the province.

The Albertan cooks at this year's Festival range from home cook Elsie Kawulich, who carries on the food traditions of her Ukrainian-Albertan community of Vegreville, to chef Tim Wood, who blends sophisticated multicultural cuisine with local products at his small Eco Café in the central Alberta village of Pigeon Lake. Wilson Wu, owner of the innovative Wild Tangerine restaurant in Edmonton, draws on his Hong Kong youth, his training as a chemist, and his 30 years in Alberta to create such treats as a bison hot dog coated in toasted, crushed popcorn in honor of the Chinese Year of the Dog. And chefs from the internationally acclaimed Rocky Mountain resort, the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, and Calgary's River Café demonstrate their award-winning art using the very finest local food products. The Foodways area will be facilitated and hosted by well-known Edmonton food expert Gail Hall.



Siblings Judy and Wilson Wu fuse Asian and Albertan cuisines at their Wild Tangerine restaurant in Edmonton. Photo by Brian J. Gavriloff, courtesy Wilson Wu

Crafts

Careful workmanship is highly valued in Albertan culture, and this might explain why artisans of all descriptions thrive throughout the province. At this year's Festival, we highlight several distinctive regional craft traditions—those practiced by the First Nations peoples of Alberta, those practiced by immigrants to Alberta, and the western crafts that grew out of Alberta's early ranching culture.

Alberta is home to numerous Aboriginal peoples with exceptional craft traditions. We are delighted to have participants from several of the province's First Nations—including Nakoda artisans Teresa Snow and Eli Snow, Woodland Cree artisans Margaret Cardinal and Ben Moses, Métis sash maker Laura McLaughlin, and artisan-presenter Melissa-Jo Moses—to demonstrate and explain the distinctive history, crafts, and traditions of their peoples. Although the arts and craftsmanship of Alberta's First Nations share some common techniques such as beading and quill work, they also reflect each nation's individual history and unique traditions.

The work of many of the First Nations artists here at the Festival mirrors cultural change and adaptation. Many traditional crafts are still valued and taught, but their use has changed significantly over the years. For example, Margaret Cardinal, who teaches in the Native Cultural Arts program at Northern Lake College in Grouard, is a respected teepee maker. Although once a common structure in Aboriginal culture, teepees are now made and used primarily for summer retreats and at powwows. (Powwows are tribal or inter-tribal gatherings featuring traditional music and dance, often in competitive settings.) The furnishings that Aboriginal Albertans bring for their teepees at powwows reflect their lives as contemporary Albertans, as will the teepee that Ms. Cardinal brings to the Festival.



Western Crafts

The ranching culture that defined much of the American West also shaped the lifestyles and material culture of Alberta. The province is still home to thousands of working cowboys and the industries that provide them with the equipment and gear they need to follow their profession. The work of some artisans transcends basic craftsmanship and moves into the realm of art. Saddlemaker Chuck Stormes and silversmith Scott Hardy bring their world-class designs and craftsmanship to this year's Festival. Their work draws inspiration from the western ranching culture in which they were raised and the beauty of the foothills region of southwestern Alberta where they live.

Master saddlemaker Chuck Stormes in his workshop near Millarville, in southwestern Alberta. Photo by Ron Marsh, Calgary, courtesy Chuck Stormes



Clay and Clay Industries

The discovery of deposits of excellent pottery-grade clay, a large supply of natural gas for firing kilns, and the arrival of the railway in 1883 made the southeastern Alberta city of Medicine Hat the center of the clay products industry in western Canada. By the early twentieth century, the Medalta Potteries, Hycroft China, and other local manufacturers were supplying utilitarian but stylish crockery for Canadian homes and prestigious commercial clients such as the Canadian Pacific Railroad, as well as hotels and restaurants throughout Canada. At its height in the mid-twentieth century, thousands of workers were employed in Medicine Hat's pottery, clay, and brick industries.

Changes in taste and style and economic setbacks forced local companies to close during the 1960s, but the pottery industry received a second lease on life when the site was reopened as a museum within the Medicine Hat Clay Industries National Historic District. In addition to preserving the historic factory complex and establishing an interpretive center celebrating the local industry and its social impact, the Historic Clay District has also instituted the Medalta International Artists in Residence Program, which draws leading ceramic artists from around the world.

We are pleased to welcome three participants from Medicine Hat to this year's Festival: the Historic District's Barry Finkelman, an

expert on the history of Medicine Hat's clay industry; Basil Leismeister, who worked at the Medalta factory at its prime and continues to demonstrate "jigging" at the Historic District; and leading Albertan contemporary ceramic artist Les Manning, the Artistic Director of the Artists in Residence program. Manning's art combines the history of his region with an innovative style that echoes Alberta's landscape.

Wilderness

It is difficult to comprehend the sheer size and extent of Alberta's wilderness areas. In many parts of northern Alberta, the population is sparse. Some towns, even important ones such as Fort Chipewyan (population 1200) on the shores of Lake Athabasca, are accessible only by "ice roads" in the winter. At other times visitors must rely on water or air access.

The responsibility of being stewards of some of North America's most pristine and extensive wilderness areas is one that Albertans take seriously. Protection, management, and sustainability of resources in wilderness areas generate considerable public debate and are the focus of extensive government policies.

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, the government ministry responsible for the province's wilderness areas, employs biologists, foresters, fish and wildlife officers, meteorologists, agrologists, forest officers,



(Top) Workers trim tea pots at Medalta Potteries during the 1940s. Photo courtesy Medicine Hat Clay Industries National Historic District

(Right) Maligne Lake in the heart of Jasper National Park is one of Alberta's most popular tourist attractions. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution



technologists, and policy analysts. Their duties include assessing the impacts of wild-fires, insects, or diseases; developing public education and awareness programs; planning and supervising timber harvesting operations; and conducting wildlife population studies. Representatives of its Junior Forest Rangers program, together with a naturalist from the Foothills Model Forest working on the world-famous Grizzly Bear Research Program, have come to Washington to talk about their programs and activities.

Of course, not all Albertans involved with the wilderness are associated with the government. Other Festival participants include naturalist, guide, and author Ben Gadd, an acknowledged authority on the Canadian Rockies, and fly-fishing experts, authors, lecturers, and teachers Jim and Lynda McLennan, who have made their living on Alberta's beautiful Bow River since the 1970s.

Sports and Recreation

Recreation and sports are important aspects of life in Alberta. Many activities such as cycling, hiking, rock climbing, camping, and horseback riding take advantage of Alberta's more than 500 parks and wilderness areas. Others such as skiing, snowboarding, sledding, snowmobiling, ice skating, and heli-skiing, take advantage of Alberta's climate. Amateur and professional

ice sports are particularly popular. Patrick Francey from Edmonton's Professional Skate Services (Pro Skate) has come to the Festival to explain how his shops serve skaters of all kinds. Pro Skate's clientele includes children just learning to skate, all levels of hockey and ringette players, as well as Olympic Gold Medal competitors and National Hockey League stars. Pro Skate is where Albertans who love ice sports come to "hang around," trade information, and reinforce their sports-based community.

When it comes to organized sports, none is more closely identified with Alberta than ice hockey. In addition to Alberta's two professional NHL teams—the Calgary Flames and the Edmonton Oilers—the province supports 215 hockey associations and 200 clubs. Hockey Alberta, an organization established in 1907 to promote the sport, has over 150,000 adult volunteers involved in its programs. In addition to hockey, ringette, a variant of ice hockey for women and girls, is also popular. First introduced in 1963, ringette is a fast-paced team sport in which players use a straight stick to pass, carry, and shoot a rubber ring to score goals. Several coaches join us at this year's Festival to explain their sports and discuss the important role amateur ice sports play in the culture of towns and villages throughout Alberta.

Summer recreations include hiking and riding in many of Alberta's 500 parks.

Photo courtesy
Travel Alberta

Paleontology

It's difficult to think of landlocked Alberta as having anything to do with the ocean, but some 200 million years ago, things were very different. In the middle of the Mesozoic era, much of what is today Alberta was part of a vast, shallow inland sea. Dinosaurs lived along its shores, and when they died, their bones became part of the landscape. Millions of years later, their fossilized remains are a treasure trove for modern paleontologists. (Vegetation and marine life from the inland sea were also the source of Alberta's giant oil reserves.)

Among the pioneers of paleontology in Alberta was geologist Joseph Tyrrell, who discovered a large carnivore's skull in the Drumheller valley in 1884. On the occasion of Alberta's founding in 1905, this important discovery was named the *Albertosaurus sarcophagus*. Since then, numerous species have been named after the province or places in Alberta.

Today, Alberta is one of the world's leading sites for research in paleontology, and dinosaurs are even considered a local mascot, so we are highlighting the work of Alberta's paleontologists at this year's Festival.

Southern Alberta is home to a dinosaur-related world heritage site—Dinosaur Provincial Park—as well as the Royal Tyrrell Museum, an internationally renowned paleontology center outside Drumheller. Other major dinosaur finds have been discovered in the Milk River area in southern Alberta as well as Grande Cache and Grande Prairie in northern Alberta. It is a rare paleontologist who has not spent time in Alberta. Several staff members of the Royal Tyrrell Museum in the Alberta badlands have come to the Festival to explain not only dinosaurs, but also the occupational folklore involved in being a working paleontologist.



In Drumheller, home of the Royal Tyrrell Museum, dinosaurs are part of local cultural identity. Some are even found on downtown streets. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

When the American West was “wild,” the Canadian West was considerably more stable, thanks in large part to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In 1869, the Hudson’s Bay Company turned over control of its entire Northwest holdings to Canada, and in 1872, the region was opened for settlement. To support its claim to the Northwest and to keep law and order in the region, the Canadian government formed the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873, later renamed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1920. The “Mounties,” as they are more fondly known, established their first Alberta post in 1874 at Fort Macleod.

The Mounties are an integral part of Alberta culture. The province actually has two separate systems of law enforcement: the RCMP, responsible for provincial law enforcement, and the local police employed by each municipality. The RCMP’s K Division maintains law and order throughout rural Alberta, including the province’s sparsely settled northern regions. Today, the RCMP recall their proud history and uphold their honored traditions while meeting the challenges of law enforcement in the contemporary world. We are delighted that three members of Alberta’s K Division RCMP are able to join us for the Festival to share their occupational culture.

Radio

In an area as vast as Alberta, bridging distances has been essential to creating a sense of community. No medium has done this more effectively than radio. Throughout the Festival several prominent Alberta radio stations will record and broadcast shows featuring the vibrant local culture heard on contemporary Alberta airwaves.

Station CKUA, broadcasting today from both Calgary and Edmonton, was Canada’s



first public broadcaster. It went on the air in Edmonton in 1927 and has championed the music and culture of Alberta ever since. Today, it is a thriving member-supported nonprofit station. CKUA’s eclectic, multi-genre playlist draws listeners from throughout Alberta. Its recent ability to stream broadcasts via internet is drawing enthusiastic listeners from around the world. Like all Canadian radio stations, CKUA follows Canada’s MAPL regulations that require 35% of the music played between 6 a.m. and midnight must have “Canadian content” by fulfilling at least two of the following conditions: M (music): the music must be composed by a Canadian; A (artist): it must be performed principally by a Canadian; P (production): the music must be recorded in Canada or performed in Canada and broadcast live in Canada; and L (lyrics): the lyrics must be written by a Canadian.

Alberta’s CFWE “The Native Perspective” is based in Edmonton and broadcasts province-wide. In addition to playing a high percentage of Native American music, its multilingual programming strives “to preserve and promote

The musical ride, a complex performance by thirty-two RCMP equestrians wearing their traditional red serge uniforms, has been thrilling international audiences since 1876. Photo courtesy Royal Canadian Mounted Police

aboriginal culture” and address the concerns of its largely First Nations audiences. Several other stations will also be making guest appearances during the Festival.

The Energy Sector

The primary factor driving Alberta’s economy today is the energy industry, or the “energy sector” as it is referred to locally. Every day, Alberta produces an average of 630,000 barrels of crude oil through conventional drilling and another million barrels through oil sands production. It exports over a million barrels a day to the U.S., accounting for 10% of U.S. oil imports. Nearly one in every six workers in Alberta is employed directly or indirectly in the province’s energy sector.

In fact, there are several distinct energy industries within the sector, each with its own occupational folklore of history, traditions, and stories. Each industry also presents its own environmental risks and challenges—matters of great concern to energy producers, to those working in the energy sector, and to all Albertans. At this year’s Festival, we are highlighting workers in three major components of Alberta’s energy sector: oil and gas drilling, the oil sands, and laying and maintaining pipelines.

Conventional Drilling

Geologists had long suspected that there was oil and natural gas in porous rock formations deep below Alberta’s farmlands. On a bitterly cold day in 1947, after years of unsuccessful dry holes, drillers struck oil near the small town of Leduc, about 40 miles south of Edmonton in central Alberta. Within a decade, there were 7,400 wells; today, there are more than 52,000 active oil wells and 55,000 active gas wells throughout the province. Among the first wave of Albertans to

leave farming and ranching for work on the oil rigs were Festival participants Dan Claypool and model maker Vern Blinn. Concerned that the early history of the rapidly changing oil industry was being lost, Claypool and some of his colleagues founded the Canadian Petroleum Interpretive Centre in 1997 to preserve and display oilfield and related artifacts of the past and give the public “a taste of what it is like to be part of our oil industry.”

Since Leduc #1 “spudded in,” drilling for oil and gas has become much more complicated. To ensure that Alberta maintains a workforce trained in the latest procedures and knowledgeable about health and safety requirements, the Petroleum Industry Training Service (PITS) and the Canadian Petroleum Safety Council (CPSC) established Enform, a nonprofit training center in Nisku. Enform’s Doug Gibson joins us to talk about the center’s state-of-the-art petroleum training facility and his own experiences in the oil patch.

Alberta’s Oil Sands

The oil sands in northern Alberta contain one of the world’s largest known oil reserves. An estimated 174 billion barrels of oil are trapped in a complex mixture of sand, water, and clay. This vast resource probably originated as light crude oil from southern Alberta, formed by vegetation and marine life from the Mesozoic inland sea that was forced north and east by the same geologic pressures that formed the Rocky Mountains. Over time, the actions of water and bacteria transformed the light crude oil into bitumen, a much heavier, carbon-rich, and extremely viscous oil. The oil-saturated sand deposits left over from ancient rivers are found in three main areas: Peace River, Cold Lake, and Athabasca.

In the Athabasca region of northern Alberta, where the oil is closest to the surface,



significant open pit mining for oil sands began in the late 1960s. The largest reserves were located under state-owned Crown Lands, largely undeveloped wilderness areas with few roads and fewer amenities. As the pace and size of oil excavation increased, nearby Fort McMurray, the largest city in the area, became a boomtown. Today, Fort McMurray (population 60,000) is the headquarters of numerous oil sands companies and the primary staging area for thousands of skilled oil workers who spend rotating shifts in oil camps located even further north in the Alberta wilderness.

The complicated process of mining for oil sands begins by clearing trees, draining and storing the swampy topsoil or “overburden” for reuse when restoring the landscape, and then removing the top layer of earth to expose the oil sands. After it is mined, the thick, sticky oil sand is mixed with hot water to create a slurry. Hydrotransport pipelines carry the slurry from the mine to a nearby extraction plant, where it is separated into three layers—sand settles on the bottom, water and clay settle in the middle, and bitumen floats on the surface as a bubbly froth. The bitumen is skimmed off the top to be cleaned and further processed into the oil products we use every day.

After the bitumen from the oil sands has been “recovered” and the cleaned sands returned to the excavation site, reclamation specialists take over. It is their job to return the mined area to a healthy boreal forest.

Steamed Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD), a new technique that pumps hot steam into the ground to extract bitumen *in situ* from oil sands, is gaining popularity.

Oil sands workers from several of the largest companies in the Athabasca oil sands—Albian Sands, Suncor, and Syncrude—as well as engineers and heavy duty mechanics from Finning and Caterpillar, whose machinery forms such an essential part of the oil sands, and interpretive staff from the Oil Sands Discovery Centre have come to the Festival to explain their work, their occupational community, and the Fort McMurray region.

Pipelines

Pipelines are used to transport Alberta’s oil and natural gas to processing plants and customers throughout North America. Natural gas travels through pressurized pipelines at speeds of up to 25 miles per hour. Modern pipelines are major construction projects, especially in Alberta where they are often laid in remote wilderness areas. However, because pipelines are usually buried, the amount of work and the engineering ingenuity involved in laying them are rarely acknowledged. Although pipelines are monitored continually and modern technology and construction techniques have lessened the number of leaks and accidents, the risks presented by pipelines and the overall impact of the energy sector on Alberta’s landscape are of great concern to both environmentalists and energy producers.

Giant trucks used for oil sands dwarf regular pickups near Fort McMurray in northern Alberta.
Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

Technology

"If we don't have it, we'll build it," is a phrase heard frequently throughout Alberta. The frontier concept of relying on local ingenuity and hard work for solutions to local challenges has transformed itself into what contemporary Albertans call their "can-do spirit." This open-minded approach to solving problems might be the cultural explanation of why technology is so highly valued and nurtured throughout the province.



The SuperNet, a high-speed, high-capacity broadband network, links more than 4,700 schools, government offices, health-care facilities, and libraries throughout Alberta.

Photo courtesy
Alberta Education

At major universities, private laboratories, and government-supported "centers of excellence," Alberta researchers and scientists are making major contributions in fields that range from medicine to chemistry, nanotechnology to computer science. Excellent government support and private research facilities increasingly attract leading researchers and dedicated graduate students from around the world. We are highlighting a few examples of Alberta's thriving technology sector and the scientific community behind it at this year's

Festival. To do so, we've invited researchers from a few significant projects currently underway in Alberta:

The Government of Alberta recently made a substantial commitment to the future by supporting the SuperNet project, a high-speed, high-capacity broadband network that links classrooms, provincial and municipal government offices, health-care facilities, and libraries throughout the province. Today, there are approximately 4,700 SuperNet connections in 429 communities throughout Alberta, including many in remote areas where internet access had previously been expensive or inadequate. Throughout the Festival, staff from Alberta Education, the agency responsible for SuperNet, will connect the Wild Rose Stage on the Mall to selected classrooms throughout Alberta. Through interactive video conferencing sessions, visitors will have the opportunity to engage and ask questions of Alberta students and teachers.

The Light Up The World Foundation (LUTW), a project nurtured by and affiliated with the University of Calgary, seeks to improve the lives of the world's poor by bringing "affordable, safe, healthy, efficient, and environmentally responsible illumination to people currently without access to proper lighting." Like other Canadian provinces, Alberta has a long and proud history of providing international humanitarian assistance. LUTW has coupled this national spirit of generosity with Alberta's pragmatic can-do spirit, and today it is bringing solid-state lighting technology to communities in Peru, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and many other countries.

Also joining us to highlight research taking place at the University of Alberta's Faculties of Engineering and Science will be several AIBO robotic dogs and their

handlers. Getting a robotic dog to play soccer, as these do, is not the ultimate point. They are used to demonstrate the practical applications of more abstract technological innovations in areas related to sensors, locomotion, vision, localization, behavior-based control, and multi-robot communication and coordination. Researchers will explain how these breakthroughs might be applied to future technologies that will affect our daily life and work, as well as discussing what it is like to be part of Alberta's high-tech research community.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome representatives from the Alberta Chapter of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, who have come to Washington to demonstrate how innovations in construction materials and new approaches to design and urban planning are changing Alberta's built environment. Their work combines a need to meet Alberta's climatic challenges with increasing demand for "green," environmentally sensitive approaches to construction in Alberta's booming economy.

In its one hundred short years as a province, Alberta has grown in ways that would have astonished its earliest founders. From a frontier outpost, Alberta has transformed itself and its diverse population into a distinctive culture unlike any other. Drawing on its history, cultural strengths, and ingenuity, Alberta enters its second century poised to make increasingly significant contributions to Canadian, North American, and international culture. The many talented participants who join us this summer in Washington, D.C., draw upon the best of Alberta's past and present as they lay the cultural foundations that will shape its future. We are delighted to welcome them to the 2006 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

AL CHAPMAN

Project Manager for the Smithsonian Project Office of Alberta Community Development, Al Chapman has sixteen years of experience in the field of music as a musician, engineer, music educator, and arts administrator. He holds a Music Diploma from Grant MacEwan Community College, a Bachelor of Education degree in Secondary Music from the University of Alberta, and a Master of Education degree from the University of Alberta.

NANCY GROCE

Nancy Groce is a curator at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and curated the Alberta at the Smithsonian program. A folklorist, historian, and ethnomusicologist, she holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Michigan and has authored numerous books and articles on music, folklore, and culture.

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