

Monuments to Icelanders at Markerville Alberta



Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society, created in 1974 with the goal of getting Icelandic poet Stephan G Stephansson's homestead declared a historic site by the provincial government. With interest, inspiration, co-operation and financial assistance from Calgary and Edmonton clubs, the farmers group in Iceland, Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism and many interested friends, this was realized. The designation took place August 1975 and the Official opening August 1982. The Stephansson House Historic Site is owned and operated by The Government of Alberta with the Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society providing cooperation and volunteers as needed.

Historic Markerville Creamery Museum

In 1899 Markerville farmers organized a co-operative, The Tindastoll Butter and Cheese Manufacturing Association to start a creamery which would give farmers an opportunity to keep a few cows and earn some badly needed cash. They would no longer have to leave their homesteads to work in mills or the railroad, but could stay home and work their land.

In 1984 the Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society started the restoration process of the old building. It is now operated as a museum by our society to teach the public Icelandic heritage and early dairying.



Historic Fensala Hall

By 1904 the Ladies Aid "Vonin" recognized a need in the community for a social centre. A stock company was formed and Fensala Hall was built. By 2000 it was obvious that Fensala needed attention. After much deliberation – tear it down – build a new one – restore the old hall. Restoration was deemed the best option and Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society started a huge fundraising campaign. Fensala is ready for its *Second Hundred Years* with the original building restored to its 1930's glory and an addition added to house a modern kitchen, bathrooms and mechanical room.

Markerville Church

In 1907 the Markerville Lutheran Church was built entirely by donation. Sandstone for the foundation was hauled from the Red Deer River and community farmers got together and built a church.

In 2006 a huge hail storm ruined the shingles and stained glass windows. The windows were replaced by volunteers and fundraising and community donations replaced the shingles. Fundraising is again underway to put in a cement foundation and face it with the original sandstones.



Tindastoll Cemetery

The wrought iron gates at the cemetery acknowledge the Icelandic beginnings of Tindastoll Cemetery. The plaque beside the gate commemorates the first post office west of the Red Deer River.

In 2008 the Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society took ownership and will begin some upgrades when the church restoration is complete.

Stephan G Stephansson Cairn in the Christinnson Cemetery at Hóla.

Stephan G Stephansson died in 1927. In 1936 by public subscription from Canada and the United States, a cairn of field stones from Arni Palson's and Ralph Smith's farms was erected by Tony Kressman of Sylvan Lake under the direction of Mr. O Sigurdson, an old time friend.

STEPHAN G STEPHANSSON
FAMOUS POET

FÆDDUR Á ISLANDI 1853
DAINN 1927

THOUGH YOU HAVE TRODDEN IN TRAVEL
ALL THE WIDE TRACTS OF EARTH.
BEAR YET THE DREAM OF YOUR BOSOM
BACK TO THE LAND OF YOUR BIRTH.

AÐ HUGSA EKKI I ARUMEN ÖLDUM.
AÐALHEIMTA EI DAGLAUN AÐ KVÓLDUM.
PVI SVO LENGIST MANNSÆFIN MEST.



A Cenotaph was erected in Markerville Community Park 1964 by Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to honour our poet.

STEPHAN G. STEPHANSSON
1853—1927

BORN IN ICELAND, STEPHANSSON EMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1873, THEN TO CANADA IN 1889. TEN YEARS, LATER, HAVING ENDURED THE HARDSHIPS OF THE PIONEERS AND HAVING WON RESPECT FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, HE PUBLISHED HIS FIRST VOLUME OF POETRY IN REYKAVIK, ICELAND. BETWEEN 1900 AND 1920 SIX ADDITIONAL VOLUMES WERE PUBLISHED. SELF EDUCATED, HE MASTERED ALL THE SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURES, AND CRITICS SAID OF HIM THAT HE WAS "UNSURPASSED BY ANY OTHER ICELANDIC POET SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES. HE DIED ON HIS ALBERTA FARM.

The message is repeated in French and Icelandic.



Dairy and barley were the staple crops that allowed the pioneers to prosper. A cream can and barley were chosen to represent them.

The plaque reads:

1888—1988

DEDICATED TO THE PIONEERS OF MARKERVILLE AND DISTRICT WHO PREPARED THE WAY.

“THEY DID SO MUCH WITH SO LITTLE”

THE BEST THAT WAS IN ME FOREVER SHALL LIVE.
THE SUN OVER DARKNESS PREVAIL.

STEPHAN G STEPHANSSON

This monument was designed and built locally by the Centennial Committee which included Stephan G Stephansson Icelandic Society. It was paid for by Alberta Treasury Branch and Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism.

