

# ROCKING REGINA

by W. O. KUPSCH\*

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On Saturday night, May 15, 1909, the farmers from the neighbouring district had come to Regina to do their usual weekly shopping. The city's night life was quite different then from what it is now. In many respects it was more liberal: night shopping followed by a drink at the bar was an accepted custom. It was the time when "Take me out to the ball game" became a popular hit for the first time, when high collars by Tooke were the latest fashion, and when a man's "fancy worsted suit of splendid quality" could be bought for \$15.00. Advertisements in the paper urged ladies to "iron by electricity and be up-to-date" and to buy "infants boots for \$1.00 to \$1.50."

Thoughts of purchases for the family and home must have filled the heads of the people who were still in the stores by 10:20 p.m., Mountain Time, when they "... found bundles they were reaching for slipping away from them and coming back again as though bewitched, while their bodies suddenly swayed backwards and forwards ...". Those who were already in the bar at the Lansdowne may have swayed too, but thought nothing of it, except the proprietor (who) was in the bar room kicking stock, and ... (who) was surprised to find the floor suddenly rocking and the bottles and glasses crashing together." At the Clayton the manager was in an even greater predicament when he "... found his chair sliding underneath his desk and

wedging him there for a moment then swimming back again towards the office wall." Not only management, but also guests were endangered at the King's when "the safe nearly capsized and the lights were put out for a few moments. The elevator wobbled to and fro and there was generally for a few seconds much excitement. In the newsstand the magazines toppled and fell, the cigars jumped around in their boxes and the floor of the rotunda appeared to rise and drop back again."

To get the full explanation of these and other Saturday night antics in Regina, the residents had to wait for the Monday edition of the *Morning Leader*<sup>1</sup>, which heralded the news in a big headline: PRAIRIE PROVINCES ROCKED BY SEISMIC SHOCK; BUILDINGS TOTTER AND PEOPLE RUSH INTO STREETS. From the account readers gathered that the estimates of the duration of the shock ranged from one to four minutes, that rumblings had accompanied the quake, and that this was the first time in recorded history that a shock had visited the Red River or the Saskatchewan Valley. Most of the editorial space was devoted to the earthquake, which had great news value because "the last thing in the world that a resident in the prairie provinces expects to run up against is an earthquake shock." The editor first expressed the belief that the shocks were after-tremblings of a far-away source, but he ended with the supposition that "the shock may have been merely a disturbance peculiar to Saskatchewan and the surrounding territory, and hitherto unknown, and, if so, there is another phenomenon for the scientists to discuss."

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During the next few days accounts were received from other points on the prairies and it became evident that the shock was felt as far east as Winnipeg. It was strong in Estevan, but slight in Moosomin. In Calgary it was almost not felt at all. In Saskatoon it did not pass unnoticed by the citizens, but no scientific record was kept because no seismograph was then located in that city as there is today. It was, however, recorded on seismographs in Toronto and Ottawa. From the eye-witness reports and the few seismograph records in the United States and Canada it became later clear that the shock was not related to any far away source, but had originated on the prairies. The epicenter was placed at 105°W longitude and 50°N latitude (Heck, 1928, p. 37). This bit of scientific intelligence never hit the readers of the *Morning Leader* as did the quake itself. The location of the actual earthquake remained hidden in a relatively inaccessible scientific publication, whereas the effects of the quake had made the headlines.

If the epicenter is plotted on a map

of Saskatchewan it will be seen that it is located in front of the Missouri Coteau in the Avonlea area, (Heck 1928, p. 37) mentions the strength of the earthquake as 9 on the Rossiford scale, which is an extremely strong shock. This is a compelling argument for the occurrence of tectonic faulting in this area. The shock was apparently much too strong to have been caused by local faulting due to salt-collapse the only type of faulting that some geologists are willing to accept in the Avonlea area. Whatever the origin of some of the structures in this area may be, geologists interested in the structural geology of southern Saskatchewan in general and of the Missouri Coteau in particular should regard the 1909 earthquake as "another phenomenon for the scientists to discuss."

<sup>1</sup>All quotations are from the *Morning Leader*, Regina, Monday, May 17, 1909.

HECK, N. H., 1928. *Earthquake History of the United States Exclusive of the Pacific Region*. U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Spec. Pub. 1949, 61 pp.

## IN REMEMBRANCE — EDWARD DEREK BEACHAM (1916 - 1973)

by C. STUART HOUSTON\*

E. Derek Beacham, born in Worcestershire, England, on June 1, 1916, passed away in the Shuswap Lake Hospital, Salmon Arm, B.C. on May 5, 1973, after a lengthy illness.

Derek came to Canada in 1927 and his first notebook entry on May 1 of

that year, exactly one month before his 11th birthday, recorded a Herring Gull on the Toronto waterfront. Gulls were to remain one of his main interests throughout life.

As a young man, his football prowess was such that he played at Balmy Beach and the Toronto Argonauts. He was an ardent fisherman and his early bird interests were encouraged by Jim Baillie of the Royal Ontario

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