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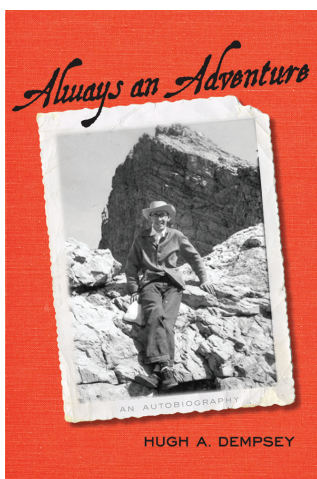
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**ALWAYS AN ADVENTURE:
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**
by Hugh A. Dempsey
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The Aftermath

The year 1988 had started off in grand style for Glenbow, but it was too good to last. And it didn't. After the Olympics and the transfer of our exhibition to Ottawa, a sort of malaise set in. We had been working non-stop for months; now it was over and it was time to face some ugly truths. One was that regardless of the millions in grant money we had spent for the Olympics, our basic financial situation was still perilous and we were coming to the end of a long-term funding agreement we had with the Alberta government. Past experience showed that the government reluctantly endured us, rather than giving us its wholehearted support. It financially supported its own Provincial Museum but we were treated like poor cousins.

Another problem was that the pressures of the exhibition had placed a strain on just about everyone. Duncan stated that "nerves were frayed in the latter months [and] tales of the physical and nervous exhaustion [were] rampant in the ranks."¹⁵⁴ One sign of this occurred with Duncan, who, under pressure from the Board of Governors, drafted a five-year plan that called for new and expanded programs with existing staff. This did not go over well with some of our people. As I commented in my diary, "Our staff is already doing so much that the stress level is high & dissatisfaction among the rank & file is great. We have a very unhappy place at present. Duncan is an excellent director but he has been under so much pressure from the Board that it is telling on him. I just hope we won't lose him in the process."¹⁵⁵

The response of the Board to our unhappy post-Olympic situation was to engage a management consulting firm to make a study of management and Board activities. They came around and interviewed each of us on the management team and left us all feeling somewhat insecure. Our Assistant Director

of Administration, Joe Konrad, was convinced he would be fired because he did not support Duncan's expanded program. Others felt equally uneasy. Then in August, Duncan called me into his office and told me that the report had been made to the Board. Among other things, it called him a tyrant and dictator, another of our team incompetent, another an over-promoted secretary, and said that I spent half my time in the library. Of those, mine was the most accurate description and, although it was meant as a criticism, it had never been a secret where my primary interests lay.

In September, I left Glenbow's problems behind as Pauline and I travelled by air on our first trip to Europe. We first went to Hastings, where we spent some enjoyable time with Colin and Betty Taylor. Colin had written a number of books on the Plains Indians and was a real enthusiast. Pauline was absolutely enchanted by the view of the English Channel from our window. We then went to Folkestone and found the church where my Mom and Dad had been married in 1916 and also looked up Mom's grand-nephew, Clifford Sharp. We found him in a pub on the waterfront and he couldn't have cared less if we were alive or dead. Next was a double-decker bus trip to Canterbury Cathedral, where Pauline stood on the stone in the church that marked the burial place of Becket. We then prowled around London for a week, visiting all the tourist spots, and got back to Calgary three weeks later, exhausted but happy.

But what a homecoming! Duncan told me as soon as I arrived that he had had an unpleasant meeting with the Board and it ended up in him tendering his resignation. I don't know if he had a choice. Certainly matters had come to a head by this time and the gulf between the Director and the Board was as wide as the Pacific. Summing up the situation, I made the following comments about Duncan:

He had an uncanny knack for knowing what kind of shows would do well in Calgary & had the organizing genius to make them happen. There was no question that "The Spirit Sings" would never have opened without his leadership. He had the ability to stick his (and Glenbow's) neck out a mile in financial matters and always came out on top. When he had confidence in people, he had no trouble in delegating authority to them. For the most part, he operated a good team process, with excellent relations among staff. He has the sensitivity, nerve, intelligence, experience, and ability that cannot be matched by another museum director in Canada.¹⁵⁶

On the negative side, I said, “He loved an argument and seemed to relish stonewalling the Board. You can do that only for so long.” Other problems included his aggressiveness, his drinking, and his tendency to involve himself in Glenbow matters even after he had delegated them to someone else. He was a great person to have on your side, but not so nice if he lost faith in you or your performance.

In early October, Duncan and I went to the Chairman’s office to wind up the legal matters and I was asked if I would take over as Acting Director. I said yes. I was also asked if I wished to apply for the position of Director. I said no. Afterwards, Duncan told me he was sure I’d change my mind, but it was not to be. In my diary I noted, “I have already decided that I do not want the job permanently. I do not want to spend the rest of my time fighting with the Board or worse, knuckling under to them while they interfere with our administration. Also, I think we are going to be in for hard financial times and I do not want the worry.”¹⁵⁷

The following day, the Board announced Duncan’s retirement, effective November 1st, stating that he would become Director Emeritus and be given an office and a secretary until March 31, 1989. I was to take over until a new Director had been named.

When I assumed the position there were a thousand things to do, including a lot of fence mending. Our management committee and some of the senior staff had been torn apart by the events of the previous few weeks and my first task was to get them back working as a team, just as they had during the Olympics. I appointed Ron Getty as acting chief curator to relieve myself of departmental responsibilities and made Joe Konrad chairman of our budget committee. The departments that were doing well, such as the Library, Archives, and Cultural History, I left alone while frequent meetings were held with curators of the others.

Because of the consultants’ poor representation of our management committee, the Board decided to have one of its members attend our weekly meetings. Some of our people were up in arms, one almost hysterical, saying that our daily operations were being taken over by the Board. I had a different reaction. I said the Board seldom had a chance to see us in action on a day-to-day basis. Here was an opportunity to show them what we really could do, and how unfair some of the consultants’ assessments had been. Bob Erickson, vice-chairman of the Board, was chosen to be their representative. I knew Bob when I liaised with the Collections Management Committee of the Board, of which he was chairman, and I knew he was a considerate and gracious man.

The others in the management group had no choice but to go along, some reluctantly. But it turned out I was absolutely right. Bob reported back to the Board, but after a couple of months he said that it was a waste of his time, that we were doing a good job. In the meantime, I attended meetings of the various committees of the Board and tried to keep our staff informed. One time I wrote, “Met most of the morning with all Department heads to bring them up to date on Glenbow’s fast-moving crap game” and on another occasion, “At this particular time, relations between Board & Management are very convivial. I wonder how long this will last?”¹⁵⁸

Once I had taken over as Acting Director, I decided to enjoy myself. There always had been a lot of little things I had wanted to do but never had the chance. One of my first foolish actions was to round up a bunch of toys. As a reporter wrote, “In a corner of the director’s office is an elegant antique museum display case. Dempsey has filled it with a dozen beautiful old toys, including a fire engine, a tractor, and a couple of dolls.”

He quoted me as saying, “I’m only going to be in this acting capacity for a few weeks, so I’m going to have fun. And if you’re going to have fun, what better way is there than to have a few toys about you?”¹⁵⁹

Actually, I held the office for the better part of a year, and it wasn’t always fun. I had to attend innumerable meetings, keep peace between departments, work on the budget, and generally keep the place running shipshape. At the same time, I continued to teach a half-year course at the University of Calgary where attendance numbers were increasing so fast that it had become quite a workload. When I had twenty students, I could sit on the edge of my desk and chat with them. When it trebled, the formality seemed to fade under the weight of sheer numbers. Exams, marking essays, etc., also became much more onerous. My other activities during these months included acting as general editor of the Alberta Records Publications Board, editor of the quarterly *Alberta History*, member of the federal Postage Stamp Advisory Committee, and a bunch of other things.

After I was well into the new job, I told Jack Ewers, “In all honesty, I must say I’ve enjoyed myself – mainly because I’ve been able to accomplish something I always felt needed to be done.”¹⁶⁰ It was demanding work but I think we got a lot accomplished. There were some things, however, like long-range financial planning, that had to be left to the incoming Director.

Much to my surprise, I was appointed to the Board’s Search Committee, headed by our new chairman, Catherine Evamy. This placed me in the odd position of helping to choose the person who would become my boss. The

same thing had happened in 1970 when I was in an acting capacity and recommended Allan Hammond for the top job. I guess history does repeat itself.

After the advertisements were sent out, we sat back and waited for the results. I had hoped that some top people, or those second in command of some of the big eastern or West Coast museums might apply, but they were noticeable by their absence. I concluded that Glenbow's bad reputation in the museum world, compounded by the unfavourable publicity surrounding *The Spirit Sings* exhibition, had a lot to do with it. I must say I was disappointed by the results. Most of the applications were from prairie people, some at smaller museums or with no museum experience at all.

I did the initial sorting and ruled out those who obviously had neither the experience nor the skill to handle the job. Catherine and I then made day trips to places like Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, etc., to interview our short list. We also went to Yellowknife, where we interviewed Bob Janes, who was Executive Director of the Science Centre of the Northwest Territories and previously had been Director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre there. He had known Duncan quite well and had been to Glenbow a number of times. He seemed to be the best of the bunch. Catherine described him as "a dynamic individual, a natural leader who will be able to guide Glenbow into the 1990s."¹⁶¹ My initial impressions of Bob were good. He struck me as an intelligent, kindly person who was well motivated and – to my liking – was quite interested in Indians.

When the appointment was made, I wrote to Ewers, who had been in a similar situation to mine. He had been the Ethnologist at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., when he was asked to oversee the construction of their new Museum of History and Technology. He was appointed director but made it clear he would remain only until the building was opened. I don't think anyone believed him. After all, he had a corner office, a secretary, a parking place next to the door, and was invited to all sorts of official functions. It was a civil servant's dream. Therefore there was shock and disbelief when the museum opened that he actually did step down and resumed his old position in a small office, with no secretary, and parking space in the boondocks. All he had to do now was his research and writing.

In my letter to Jack I said:

I can understand now why you were so happy to step out of the Museum of History and Technology and back to your job as Ethnologist. When Duncan Cameron left our organization last

October, I agreed to be Acting Director until the new person was appointed. Well here I am, at the beginning of July, still holding down the same post. The new director, Bob Janes, **will not be taking** over until September 1st. That means it will have been almost a year that I've done nothing but administration. I'm so worn out at the end of each day that I've done only two major writing assignments since October. And I've done practically no research.¹⁶²

When Bob took over, I thought I would return to my previous ways but I was wrong. Bob turned out to be a real bureaucrat. Meetings quadrupled, accountability became paramount, and management meetings changed from being relaxed to ones that were tightly controlled. This ran counter to my philosophy of team management, open discussions, and open doors. I also believed "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." The Library, for example, operated so efficiently and smoothly that I just left it alone. No more. Now I was expected to hold regular meetings with them, scrutinize their performance, and look for ways of improving their operations. As it turned out, even after all the extra work nothing really changed in an already efficient operation.

But I must balance these comments with the fact that Bob was under a great deal of pressure about our financial problems right from the time he entered the organization. The budget was, and had to be, the big feature in his life. And he had the misfortune to enter Glenbow just at the time when it was in danger of going down the slippery slope. I am sure there must have been many times when he wished he was back in Yellowknife.

Over the years, our funding from the Alberta government had been taking a beating, and in spite of all restraint measures, we were looking at major layoffs of staff. Board members had been discussing the problem in Edmonton but this didn't seem to produce any results.

I must say here and now that in my opinion, Glenbow's greatest enemies were some of the senior bureaucrats in the Alberta government. Time after time, agreements appeared to be ignored during periods of financial restraints, promises were broken, and benefits never seemed to come our way when times were good. When Eric Harvie made his deal in 1966, it resulted in the Glenbow-Alberta Institute being formed, and our first museum was called the Glenbow Foundation-Alberta Government Museum, all indicating our special relationship to the government. Yet I was told that there was just one culture budget from which funds came for government institutions while all the non-government arts institutions were lumped together. In bad times,

the government agencies got their money but the others, including us, were cut back. There was no recognition of the fact that we were not like all the other arts groups. Time after time, the government's own Provincial Museum, the Remington Museum, and Tyrrell Museum at Drumheller got money for capital expenses and adequate funds to operate. One didn't hear about big layoffs and financial crises at these places. Glenbow seemed to be the victim of bureaucratic manoeuvring. I don't know what the various ministers were told, but they seemed to go along with the bloodletting at Glenbow, and Eric Harvie's gift to the people of Alberta in 1966 became their poor relative in the Alberta museum world.

When Bob Janes came on the scene, government support was continuing its decline. We held numerous meetings to try to come up with some solutions but the bottom line was always not enough money. Government grants covered only 65 per cent of the budget, with the balance coming from donations and admissions. Bob thought that a Strategic Plan might cause the government to get a better idea of what we hoped to accomplish. But it all came to naught and by spring of 1990 we were looking at a layoff of twenty people, or 15 per cent of our staff. As I told Jack Ewers, "As a result, the stress level is unbelievably high and the sickness rate and absenteeism is unbelievable. I had two department heads crying in my office last week and have had to deal with three departmental confrontations. If it keeps up, I think I'll seriously look at early retirement and devote myself to writing."¹⁶³

Looking at all these factors, I finally concluded that I could not live with Glenbow's malaise and decided to resign.

But just as I was contemplating my move, I was handed two assignments that caused me to delay my decision. First, a \$150,000 grant had been given to Glenbow for it to prepare a book featuring its treasures. The second was the task of preparing an exhibition based upon Eric Harvie's favourite acquisitions. These were in recognition of Glenbow's silver anniversary in 1991. I was seconded from my regular duties in September 1990 in order to carry out these two pleasurable tasks. This also gave me the chance to finish a couple of projects that had been held in abeyance. One was a book of essays by Everett Sloop and the other was the publication of the reminiscences of William M. Graham, onetime Indian Commissioner. I was proud of the fact that my son James was writing the introduction to this latter book.



An incident occurred about this time that ultimately had a great impact on Glenbow and its relations with the Blackfoot. In June 1990 I got a call from Phil Stepney, the Director of the Provincial Museum, asking me if I could attend a meeting with some Bloods. When I got to the reserve, I learned that the Bloods wanted me to be a witness and an honest broker in any dealings between them and the government. The meeting was held in Dan Weasel Moccasin's rumpus room, in the shadow of the Belly Buttes. As usual, it started with long prayers and the passing of the pipe, after which the Bloods explained their problem. Dan wanted his son, Daniel, to become a medicine pipe holder but there was nothing available on the reserve. He wanted the government to loan one of its pipes for four months of each year, starting in the spring just before the first thunderstorm.

Stepney turned the request down flat and later I heard he told his staff that he had had a confrontation with the Bloods. It wasn't like that at all. The Bloods believed that because he had smoked with them, he would accede to their wishes.

After everything broke up, a number of us were visiting when I remembered that Glenbow had a Blood medicine pipe bundle in its collection. I was always opposed to us getting active bundles, but in this case the pipe had been transferred without proper ceremony and the owner could not use it. I took it from the man, Steve Oka, on the condition that if he changed his mind within a year he could get it back but he never did.

Our Board was just as hard-headed as the Provincial Museum when it came to giving back bundles, but I had managed to get a loans policy approved that could, in a stretch, be applied to medicine bundles. So I told Dan about the bundle and said if he made a formal application I would try to get permission from the Board for him to borrow the Oka bundle. You never saw a happier bunch at the prospect. The application was made, and when I took it to the Board, I made it sound so routine that they just rubber-stamped it. A few days later, Dan took the bundle to the Blood Reserve and two days later I commented in my diary, "Medicine pipe ceremony at Dan Weasel Moccasins. Pauline & I went. There were about 20 men & women participating, including Pauline & me, and another 15 looking on."¹⁶⁴ A formal transfer was conducted after the first thunderstorm, when four pipe holders acted as surrogate owners and transferred the pipe to Daniel. The family erected a large open-sided tepee and more than 2,500 happy people turned out to witness the historic event.

My expectation (or perhaps my hope) was that once the pipe was loaned, we'd probably never see it again. But I was wrong. The Weasel Moccasin family faithfully returned it each year to be re-issued to them, and when Daniel died and the pipe passed to someone on the Peigan Reserve, he too honoured its terms. That became the thin edge of the wedge. As time went along, and after I had retired, this incident could be used as a model for making other loans in the future. I was very happy about it.

I also agreed at that meeting to loan a Natoas Sun Dance bundle to the Old Shoes family, but there was a death in the family and they never followed through with it.

Jack Ewers strongly disapproved of my decision. In a hard-hitting three-page letter he asked, "Is not the idea of loaning items from museum collections for Indian temporary use a denial of the museum's responsibility for preservation of items in its collections?" He added, "I think I am sensitive to Indian concerns, but I am also a dyed in the wool museum man."¹⁶⁵

This opened up a whole dialogue between us on Indians, religion, and revisionist history. Jack commented, "I cannot understand the current Indian attitude (I hope it does not extend to all or a majority of them) that only Indians can know the real history."¹⁶⁶

He told me that he had been approached for advice by the National Parks Service where their display people were removing all the stems from the pipes and laying them side by side. This was because a young Indian had protested, saying that the only time that the stem and bowl should be together was during a ceremony. Jack and I talked about this and figured out what had happened. The young Indian had gone to a ceremony, probably for the first time, and saw a holy man take his pipe and bowl out of the pipe bag, fit them together, and begin the ritual. After it was over, he separated them and put them back in the bag. "Ah!" thought the young Indian, "the pipe and stem are only together during a ceremony." He didn't ask, or he would have been told that to keep them together in the pipe bag would probably have resulted in the bowl being broken. Besides, together they would be too long to fit into the bag. So with this "discovery" the young man went to the National Parks people and they, without checking with anyone, acceded to his wishes. Jack was disgusted.

I followed with a story of my own. A group of Native students on a computer upgrading course were on a tour of our exhibition floors with one of our Ethnology people. During the tour, a student remarked that no Midewiwin material should ever be placed on public display. Immediately, this staff member recommended that we pull everything. I pointed out to her that we had

had actual Midewiwin practitioners in looking at the exhibition and not only did they give it their blessing but they offered us information about some of the artifacts. When I asked the ethnologist about the qualifications of the student who made his statement, she couldn't tell me. The fact that he said he was an Ojibwa was enough. The exhibition stayed where it was.

When this situation occurred, I told Jack, "I think this current attitude in many museums is simply a form of racial discrimination; the staff is not prepared to give equal treatment to Indians but somehow must exhibit their superiority and collective guilt complexes by overreacting to many situations."¹⁶⁷

Over the years, my thinking about medicine bundles had undergone considerable change. Of course, I never wanted Glenbow to have them in the first place, but once we had them, I thought it was our duty as a museum to keep and protect them. But by the 1980s, a revival was taking place at a time when there was still knowledge of the proper use of bundles. The more aggressive young people started to demand these bundles back, and even the more conservative people were saying that bundles were still important to the well-being of the tribes and that some accord should be reached with museums. I told myself that if they could be a source of identity and strength on the reserves, maybe they should be returned.

Jack Ewers disagreed but in the end we agreed to disagree.

Mind you, I am not talking about all religious items being given back *holus-bolus*. I believe that if a museum has objects from an active and ongoing religious body, and their possession of those objects restricts the practice of those rituals, they should give them back. As far as I am concerned, there are only a few religious groups where this situation applied. These are the Horn Society and Motokix Society on the Blood Reserve; the Blackfoot Sun Dance; the Cree Wetigo dance; and the Ojibwa Midewiwin. Also, I had no problem in refusing a loan when Indians said they wanted to "revive" a ceremony that had died out. I had no doubt that in the end any such ceremony would bear little resemblance to the original and be pan-Indian in nature.

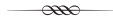
As I told Jack, I didn't think it was a question of legal right, but of moral right. If a museum by holding religious objects was contributing to the demise of that ritual, then I didn't think it was proper.

Another problem for both of us was religious and historical revisionism. As I told Jack, "Some of the stuff that Indians are coming out with today regarding their history and culture is so fanciful that it's hard to comment on it. It is a classic case of Indians perceiving their history as they would like it to have been, rather than as it was."¹⁶⁸ I added, "I see our role as presenting

an accurate portrayal of native life, based upon solid anthropological research. Now, however, the young people (Indians and white) are saying that the early records can't be trusted because they were written by white anthropologists and contain too many biases. They say that the only way one can get the real story is through consultation with native elders."¹⁶⁹

I have heard it said by elders that the Blackfoot never scalped their enemies, that women were treated equally with men, that at Treaty Seven their chiefs surrendered only the top six inches of soil, that Indians still had the mineral rights, and that the Indians had lived in harmony with Nature. All, in my opinion, were wrong. On the last point, Stan Cuthand was right when he said that Indians were in a constant battle with Nature in order to survive.

But what really bothered me was the willingness of museum people and university staff in their effort to be politically correct, to take all this stuff seriously. Many Indians have an idealistic and unrealistic view of their history, but some of the curators seem prepared to incorporate their ideas into exhibits because this is what Indians today accept as correct. There seems to be an apparent willingness to "listen to the Indians" to the extent that I felt it compromised their (and Glenbow's) integrity. Personally, I think their history is impressive and remarkable enough without having to resort to revisionism.



Getting back to my secondment, I spent the better part of a year on the book, called *Treasures of Glenbow*, and on the Harvie exhibition, *The Eclectic Collector*. Both were a lot of fun, as I had a completely free hand.

In preparing the book, I wrote all the chapters, selected most of the images, and did all the design work. I also had a chance to include a chapter on the history of Glenbow, which never had been done before. Ron Marsh, our photographer, did a masterful job and when it was completed we had a beautiful book. Also, it was finished a month early and \$10,000 under budget. And to put a little icing on the cake, it won the 1991 Alberta Book Sellers' Award for the best book published in Alberta.

The exhibition enabled me to draw on my memory for the things that Eric Harvie had liked. There was a pair of porcelain swans that graced his desk, several paintings that I knew were his favourites, some carved military figures, and a bunch of other impressive objects. Again, the final results were spectacular, thanks to some good work by our exhibition staff.

While I was working on these projects, I decided that I wanted my tenure at Glenbow to reach thirty-five years, so I asked to retire on February 1, 1991.

This was approved and I was sent off in grand style. The staff made a “throne” for me in the auditorium and I was given all sorts of weird and wonderful gifts. After it was over, I went back to the book project and the exhibition, but now I was on contract so, in theory, I was as free as a bird.



Before sailing off into the sunset, I must bring the sad financial story of Glenbow up to the time of this writing – at least in my prejudiced view.

When facing a serious shortfall for 1993, Bob’s strategy at first was to sell the government on a multi-year funding commitment – which was a good idea – but this was rejected out of hand. This was not surprising, considering the way the government had been band-aiding our operations for years. The next strategy, in my opinion, was ill-advised. Instead of trimming just enough to barely meet the year’s shortfall and fighting for a better deal, the plan was to cut deep and come up with a type of budget that could be maintained for the next few years. As a result, Glenbow trimmed a massive \$1.1 million, or 20 per cent of its budget, and laid off about a third of its staff. This consisted of thirty-one employees with another eleven reduced to part-time status. In my view, this played right into government hands. Glenbow simply proved it could survive such a cut, and was ripe for further cuts in the future.

Also, the various departments were transformed into five “work units” and a business plan formulated. One of the ideas was to sell off parts of its collection. This, to me, was desperation in the extreme. But there was worse to come. Instead of launching an all-out battle for a better deal through the MLAs, the press, and anyone else who would listen, the decision was to roll over and play dead. I honestly couldn’t believe it in 1997 when I learned that the Board of Governors had turned its entire collections over to the Alberta government and became an independent non-profit institution! In return, the government was supposed to provide enough funds for the care and maintenance of the collection. This meant that the government no longer had any responsibility for Glenbow itself, as indicated by the original 1966 Glenbow Act, just the collections, which it now owned.

These collections had been Glenbow’s only bargaining chip. As long as it had them it could threaten to sell off popular parts of the collection, show the public its sad state of affairs because of a lack of government funds, and even hold the collections for ransom as Duncan had tried to do with the Library and Archives. Glenbow should have fought the government, publicly if necessary, tooth and nail, before surrendering its collections.

According to press reports in that year, “the museum receives only \$2.5 million of its \$9-million budget from the province.”¹⁷⁰ This was only 22.5 per cent of its total budget. Meanwhile other museums were receiving from 50 to 90 per cent their funding from their governments.¹⁷¹ The rest of Glenbow’s money had to be obtained through fund raising, interest from its endowment, opening a cafeteria, and expanding a craft shop. The results were predictable. By 2000 the situation had become so desperate that the Library staff was chopped from five to one person.

To add to the misery, a decision was made to sell the Edward S. Curtis volumes and portfolios on the North American Indians. These went for a cool \$1 million for Glenbow’s acquisition fund. When a museum starts selling off parts of its collection to raise money, it is abdicating its responsibility both to the public and future. Then in 2001 half the Military staff was laid off, and fifteen more general staff were cut in 2002. As a Glenbow employee wrote in 2002, “The Museum is at the point now where further cuts to staff will seriously endanger the care of the collections and limit attempts to increase public interest in the museum as exhibit preparation and community outreach are compromised. The heritage collections and staff knowledge base at Glenbow are a provincial resource. We think it is time the provincial government recognized it.”¹⁷²

By this time, Bob Janes had resigned and was replaced by Michael Robinson. It is a real tribute to his remaining staff that they were able to continue with its programs, albeit in abbreviated form. At the Board and senior level, the focus now had to be on fundraising, to the detriment of social and business activities. Exhibitions continued to be fielded, many home grown, while a major international show was *Mysteries of Egypt* in 2001. Donations also enabled the museum to refurbish its Native galleries with the show *Nitsitapiisinni, The Story of a Blackfoot People*, while major productions were *Mavericks* costing some \$8.5 million and exhibition of the art of Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington.

But with its limited staff and financial woes, Glenbow was in no position to provide full service to the public and to its collection. By 2009 it faced a deficit of \$1.6 million and revenue was down 14.5 per cent. Much of this shortfall came from donations which virtually dried up during the recession and from a decline in value of its endowment. The ripple effect was devastating. Late in 2009 eleven positions disappeared from Glenbow, the most disastrous being the reduction of three Archives positions, leaving a skeleton staff of two.

The stringencies will remain and the staff numbers will continue to decline unless the Alberta government steps up and shoulders the responsibilities which are theirs. The intent of the agreement made by Eric Harvie in 1966 is clear, and to renege on this and cast one of Canada's major museums to the wolves is unspeakable. I loved Glenbow when I worked for it; I love Glenbow today, but I am saddened by what it has become due – as I have said – entirely to the actions of the Alberta government and some of its mandarins.

That's my editorial for today.