

A Legacy to Last Forever

Felicia Deng
Word count: 650



Sam Livingston

A Legacy to Last Forever

Calgary: the largest city in the whole of Alberta; an urban metropolis buzzing with life, and the home to more than a million people. This all started with one man: Sam Livingston. Not only did Livingston pioneer a whole new future for southern Alberta, but he was also the father of agricultural development in Calgary and a spokesman for the rights of many. On first sight, Sam Livingston looked like a buff, burly, scraggly-bearded man. If looking at his picture while being uninformed, one might assume that he was a farmer who minded his own business. It was hard to imagine him affecting my life in any way. Quite the opposite is true. More than a hundred years after Sam Livingston walked on this planet, we are still affected by the many things he accomplished.

Sam Livingston was born in Avoca, Ireland in 1831. Facing famine at home, Livingston set out for the California gold rush at age sixteen. Although he did not strike it rich, he continued prospecting, and by the early 1860s, he had already explored a lot of North America.

In 1873 Livingston settled just east of present-day Morley, Alberta, and set up a trade post near Our Lady of Peace Catholic missionaries. During this time, he also discovered that many of the Blackfoot communities he was trading with were being torn apart and destroyed by whiskey traders. Devastated, he urged the federal government to ban the sale of whiskey to first nations in the Bow River area.

Livingston relocated to Calgary in 1876. Realizing that his days of trading and prospecting were over, he decided to take up farming. Between the mid 1870s and 1880s, Livingston introduced new crops and livestock to the Calgary area, brought advanced and

more efficient equipment, and popularized new farming techniques. This created a resourceful and sustainable farming industry.

One major challenge Livingston faced was obtaining ownership of his land. Ranchers owned the land he lived on, and he could have been forced off of it whenever they wished. Livingston founded the Alberta Settlers Rights Association, and fought for the rights of “squatters”: farmers who lived and farmed their land, but had no legal right to it. After contacting Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, Livingston and his fellow farmers finally got legal titles for their land.

Today, we are constantly affected by Sam Livingston’s legacy. He proved that Calgary was not just a remote landscape that was only suitable for ranching. He conquered all challenges presented to him and encouraged the development of farms and settlements. He improved the lives of settlers and demanded equality and rights for farmers, while also speaking up for others in the area. Without Livingston, Calgary might only be a small, rural ranching town in southern Alberta. Sam Livingston’s tenacity attracted thousands of settlers, and transformed Calgary into an astoundingly self-sustaining city.

Sam Livingston has taught us to persevere through hardships, to be empathetic, and to speak up for others. Although Livingston faced many troubles, such as the Great Famine in Ireland, and returning from the California Gold Rush empty-handed, his hopes were never crushed. I will follow his example and never give up, no matter how hard something seems. Secondly, I will learn to be compassionate and to speak up for others. Sam Livingston was truly concerned for the Blackfoot communities that were being destroyed by the whiskey trade, so he urged the government to do something about it. I

will help other Calgarians by volunteering at food banks and humane centers, and will donate to global organizations to aid people in need of help. I promise to speak up for what I believe is right and support the people around me.

Sam Livingston was a true hero of southern Alberta. Although he lived long before us, his spirit of determination, benevolence, and leadership will stay with us forever.

References

Who is Sam Livingston? (2006.) Retrieved March 9, 2015 from

http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks/english/newcomers/sam_livingston.html

Jameson, S. (1990.) *LIVINGSTON, SAMUEL HENRY HARKWOOD*. Retrieved Feb 20, 2015 from

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/livingston_samuel_henry_harkwood_12E.html

Hipkin, K. (2012.) *LIVINGSTON CABIN*. Retrieved March 8, 2015 from

<http://www.crebnow.com/livingston-cabin/>

Image References

Sam Livingston. Retrieved February 21, 2015 from

http://projects.cbe.ab.ca/ict/2learn/mmspeight/leavingfootprints/project_gallery.htm