

The Histories of the Bagpipe Bands of Manitoba

** Herodotus, the first historian said, his "purpose is to prevent the traces of human events from being erased by time, and to preserve the remarkable achievements produced by both Greeks and non-Greeks;" Like Herodotus, the purpose of this collection of Manitoba Pipe Band Histories is to prevent their being erased by time, some of which has unfortunately already happened, and to preserve the remarkable achievements produced by these pipe bands for future generations.*

The great highland bagpipe has been an integral part of the Manitoba landscape since the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers in the early 19th century. As Manitoba grew into a province in the 1870's and beyond, pipe bands became an important part of the cultural fabric of the province. Important events such as the dedication of a new building, Remembrance Day Ceremonies, parades, curling events and elections, were not complete unless a pipe band was there to perform. In addition, as evidenced by the street and building names of Winnipeg, such as McDermot Avenue, Munroe Avenue, McMillan Avenue, and the McIntyre Building, the Scots played a central role in the growth and development of Manitoba as a province. Unfortunately, significant names and histories of the earliest bands have been lost in the mists of time, but with the help of Don Morrison, an esteemed piper and former Pipe Major of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and the City of Winnipeg Police Pipe Band, some of the names of the early pipe bands and pipers associated with them have been provided. These bands date from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, and they are: the Elmwood Pipe Band, with Pipe Major Donald Gunn, The Transcona Pipe Band, with Pipe Major Sandy Cameron, The Winnipeg Pipe Band, the City of Winnipeg Police Pipe Band, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, with Pipe Major John Duke, and the unusually named, The Dokies and the Knights of Pythis Pipe Bands. Some of the pipers and drummers from the recent past who have made significant contributions to the piping scene in Manitoba are: Bob Fraser, Pipe Major and founder of the Lord Selkirk Boys (Scout) Pipe Band, and the St. Andrew's Society Pipe Band; Douglas Will, piper and teacher of the Lord Selkirk Boy Scout Pipe Band; Harold Cooper, drummer and instructor, Lord Selkirk Boy Scout Pipe Band; Neil Sutherland, Pipe Major and Piobaireachd teacher, City of Winnipeg Police Pipe Band; also a contemporary and friend of Donald MacLeod; Ian Conn, Pipe Major and founder of the Centennial Pipe Band; Jim Barrie, Lead Tip, Centennial Pipe Band; Marlene Stephen, Pipe Major of the Heather-Belle Ladies' Pipe Band of Winnipeg; John Pollock, founder and Pipe Major of the Senior Transcona Pipe Band, and George Lawrence, Pipe Major of the Junior Transcona Pipe Band; Pipe Major Bill Ramsay of the ANAVET's #303 Pipe Band; Alex Graham, Pipe Major of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders; and Bill MacLeod, founder and Pipe Major of the Pine Falls Pipe Band. More recent pipe major and lead tip iterations will be added to this website as time passes.

The following is a list of the pipe band histories provided to the Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba (PPBAM) to date:

1. ANAVET's #303 Pipe Band
2. Heather-Belle Ladies' Pipe Band
3. Lord Selkirk Boys Pipe Band
4. St. Andrew's Society Pipe Bands
5. Pipes and Drums of Manitoba
6. Winnipeg Police Pipe Band
7. Transcona Pipe Band
8. Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada
9. Glenaura Pipe Band

Of course, this is an incomplete list of the pipe bands in Manitoba and there are still many histories and information to be provided.

On behalf of the Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba, I hope you enjoy these histories, and if you or someone you know has further information about the pipe bands of Manitoba, and would like to make a contribution to this site, please forward the information to:

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Prepared and respectfully submitted by;
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The Great Highland Bagpipe is an ancient instrument. It can trace its modern form as far back as the 1500's, when it was developed by the Gaelic speaking people of Scotland's Highlands and western islands. The distinctive music of the pipes was first used by Scotland's Highland clans to initiate gatherings, provide accompaniment for celebrations and games, and to inspire warriors in battle. It was later adopted by the British military to lead its own soldiers in battle, thereby introducing this important part of Scottish heritage to the farthest reaches of the British Empire, and the world.