

The C.B.C.'s “*Still Standing*” Series

“*Still Standing*” is a currently-running production of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It features actor and comedian Jonny Harris who is best known for his role in the series “Murdoch Mysteries”. As described in Wiki “*Still Standing*” features “towns that are against the ropes but still hanging in there” and specifically the stories of “small towns in Canada and how they overcome struggles”. Each half hour episode is split between a stand-up commentary held in a local hall and a number of encounters with members of the community who are engaged in a business or some other activity of interest. Historical footage is interspersed throughout. The program was first screened in 2015 and is now in Season 6 having aired 75 episodes. The program and those involved in its production have won numerous awards. Of particular interest to P.H.S. members is [Episode 74 which was first broadcast on December 8, 2020 and featured the town of Turner Valley](#). The outdoor footage was shot on a gorgeous, clear and snow-covered winter days, probably in late 2019 or early 2020. There is some great drone coverage of the gas plant and the town. I wasn't really aware of how much the town had grown to the west. Aerial shots along Sunset Blvd. looking west show the older treed portion of the town to the north and the newer developments with virtually no trees to the south. Jonny is led through the plant by Donna Elkow, a tour guide employed by Alberta Culture. He also has encounters with local business people including David Farran (President – Eau Claire Distillery), Crystal Salamon (Adult colouring book author – Ignite and Awaken), Chad and Erin Kendrick (Founders – Treeline Outdoors), Elliot Duff (Owner – Foundation Martial Arts) and Dave Lawrence (Owner of the Woodstock Hotel). Harris's banter is quite funny and the large packed audience gathered in the Flare and Derrick Community Centre certainly appreciated it. Some off-colour jokes about wet gas got all in a good mood. During Donna's walk along the street with Jonny, she reveals the history of the town and its petroleum legacy. Farran describes the logic for their whiskey distillery and how the local economy is now partly driven by oil field reclamation projects. Harris doesn't believe that you can clean dirt!

One hates to be too critical about a program that actually highlights the petroleum industry in a (mostly) positive light but there are a few aspects that seem a bit off. Quite a lot of the historical footage isn't from Turner Valley – maybe from Leduc or beyond? As usual the colourful production testing of oil wells is shown as examples of natural gas flaring. A claim is made for some reason that the floor of the compressor building, while it was active, was so clean that you could eat off of it. Probably most galling, however, is Jonny's comment at the end that “you've survived for 30 years without oil and gas”. While this may sound like music to the ears of environmentalists, it isn't true. While the original plant did shut down in the 1980's there is still an active natural gas compression facility on site. Oil and gas wells remain active throughout the region. So this is hardly the place that hydrocarbons forgot. At the end of the program you can see the long list of script developers used by the C.B.C. for the program. You would think that they'd be able to get it right, but maybe that didn't fit their preconceptions.

“*Still Standing*” has had a few other episodes that connect with the petroleum industry. [#73, which aired on December 1, 2020, is about Botwood](#) in Newfoundland. A central aspect of their story is that Botwood used to be a refueling stop for the flying boats of the 1930's. They have the Botwood Flying Boat Museum and Archives as well as the Newfoundland Flying Boat Festival. P.H.S. *Archives* featured the latter in an article in our [February 2006 issue](#), page 6. Other episodes with a petroleum collection are [#6 – Oil Springs, Ontario](#) and [#27 – Fort McMurray](#), Alberta. There are lots of coal mining and hard rock mining ones as well.

“STILL STANDING” – ITS PETROLEUM CONNECTIONS



Jonny Harris inspects the piping in the sweetening building at the Turner Valley Gas Plant.



Jonny Harris discusses flying boat aviation history with Lisa Hemeon, Curator of the Botwood Historical Society, in the Botwood Flying Boat Museum, Newfoundland.

HARRY POLLARD – PHOTOGRAPHER EXTRAORDINAIRE

The following article is reproduced from [Alberta History magazine, Spring 1981 edition, v. 29, no. 2, pp. 20-28](#). The additional pages contained examples of Pollard's craft. It should be noted that there are only a handful of key Canadian photographers. These include Nicholas Morant and Omer Lavallee of Canadian Pacific fame and Yousef Karsh of portrait fame. Pollard was in that esteemed group and he has left us a tremendous historical legacy spanning half a century.

Harry Pollard, Photographer

By

WENDY S. MEDLAND

IN 1898 AT TILLSONBURG, Ontario, photographer, Harry Pollard, arrived in Calgary to begin a lifetime career that would take him to the tops of mountains and around the world more than a dozen times.

Harry Pollard's career began in his family's photographic studio in Tillsonburg. He prepared the plates for his artistic father, James, from a young age and evidently picked up his father's artistic eye and sense of history. Harry's brother Fred, was to continue the family business so Harry moved on and found Calgary promised him the adventure and recognition he was seeking.

Once in Calgary, seventeen-year-old Pollard lost no time in setting up a studio specializing in portrait photography. He soon became interested in the Indian population and inspired by artist Charles Russell, Pollard visited the Blackfoot, Sarcee and Stoney camps painstakingly gaining their confidence with trade and gifts. As Pollard explained his interest in their culture the Indians came to respect him and thereafter posed for him. The Indian portraits Pollard took have captured the pride, the torment, the courage and the beauty of those people Pollard had come to admire. Duck Chief in particular was a friend and Pollard described him as "a real aristocrat." Pollard's collection from this period (1899 to 1910) include rare photographs of religious and social ceremonies such as funeral rites and the Sun Dance ceremony.

The keen sense that enabled Pollard to capture such exquisite detail in his Indian portraits is also apparent in his photographs of Calgary personalities and pioneers. As his base was in Calgary he had an excellent opportunity to record the growth of business, the Stampede parades, the victory celebrations, and Calgary street scenes. He also travelled around southern Alberta photographing the farmer, the rancher, and the vastness of the prairie. He was in Turner Valley in 1914 when the Dingman discovery well blew in and reported that many of the motorists had their autos filled directly from the well and ran their autos on it without refining. He was in the first automobile to complete the Golden-Field

Highway in 1927. He was at Leduc in 1947 to record Imperial Oil No. 1 blowing in and as at Turner Valley recorded the people who were making history as well as the events.

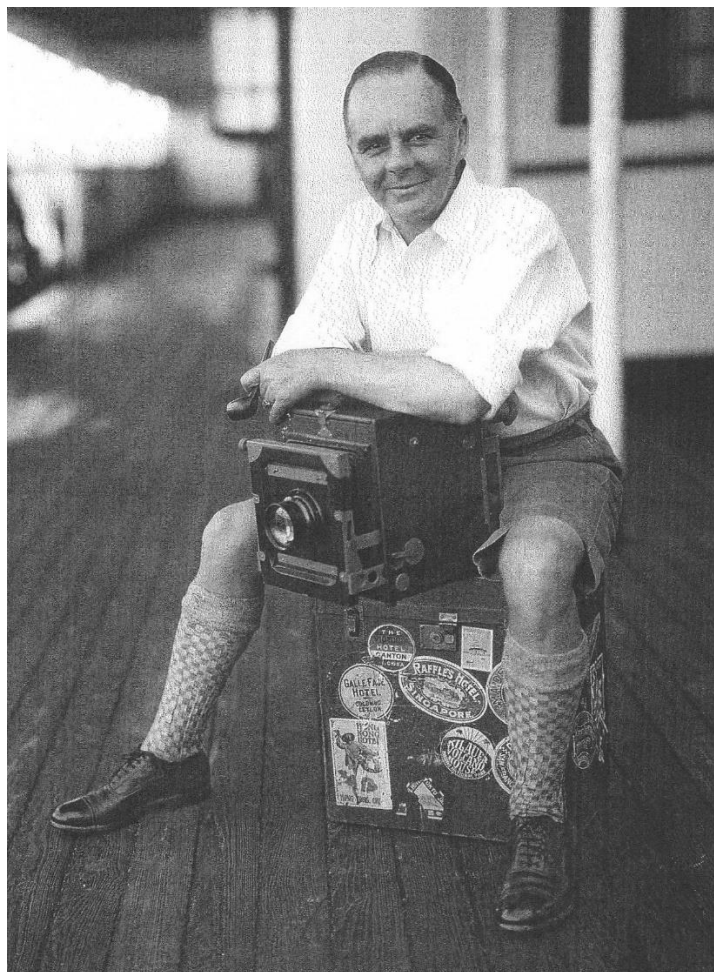
Pollard became not only recognized in Calgary but throughout Canada and in 1924 became the press photographer for Canadian Pacific Railway and Associated Screen News. In this role he travelled the world on steamships, photographing passengers, dignitaries and monuments in 38 countries including Egypt, Siam, Japan, Greece, India, Spain, Cuba and Panama. He became involved with the people of these countries, interviewing them and candidly giving his impressions of them and the cultures they represented.

Pollard made 16 world tours but Calgary was his home and as a member of the Canadian Alpine Club he climbed over 50 mountains with his camera and glass plates in tow. He was in the second party to climb Mount Robson and also climbed Cascade, Victoria and Assiniboine Mountains. One man, Osborne Scott, wrote to Pollard requesting a photo of Pollard and himself at the top of Mount Robson ". . . so that I can say I know the guy who carried a 5 x 7 a couple of miles straight up in the air!"

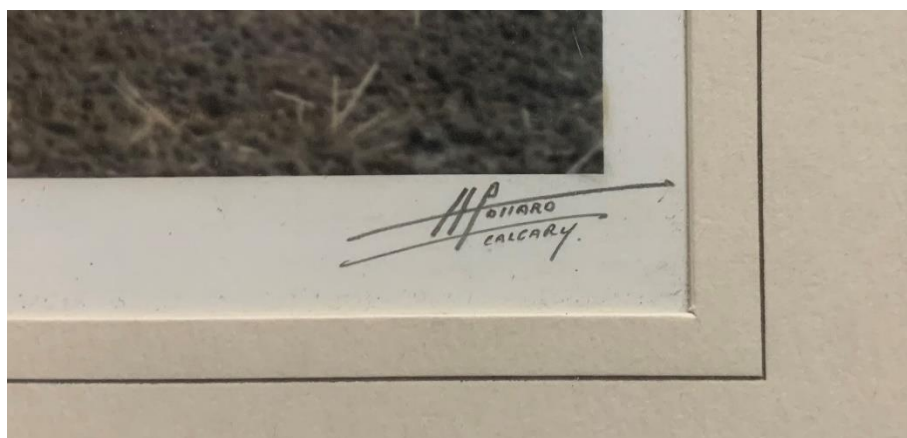
Harry Pollard retired in 1954 and retained the high energy that had typified his working career. Not only did he spend time with his wife Ella, a former Miss Canada, but gave slide shows on the countries he had visited, hand coloured his Indian portraits and remained active in numerous clubs. In the 1960s he again made headlines by threatening to destroy his historically valuable negatives unless his price was met. In 1964 the Alberta government acquired his entire collection of over 10,000 negatives and it is now housed in the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Harry Pollard died four years later at the age of 87. His lifetime work has assured him of the recognition he so rightly deserves.

Ms. Medland is on the staff of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, and works with its photographic collections..



This picture of Harry Pollard was contained in David L. Lawrence's book "*See This World before the Next – Cruising with CPR Steamships in the Twenties and Thirties*". The photo was captioned "*In the twenties and thirties, Associated Screen News photographer Harry Pollard was probably the most well-travelled cameraman in the world, cruising on more than a dozen CPR world tours*". (Photograph from the Provincial Archives of Alberta - P10125)



Pollard's signature (and Calgary base) on one of his photos (see next page)



Continental Leduc No. 9 Blowing in April 19, 1949. Photograph by Harry Pollard (signature in lower right corner). This is a good example of what a production test looks like. The well is being allowed to “clean up” by flowing and burning off oil and whatever other matter might be in the wellbore (drilling mud, water). This is not the flaring of waste natural gas. The clue is partly in the colour – oil burns with an orange colour whereas natural gas burns colourless or bluish.

Such pictures are generally composed with the flare in the foreground and the rig in the background to show the context. Despite the optics, the flow is not coming from the wellhead but from a flare stack some distance on this side of the well. The fact that the rig is still there times this test and photo to shortly after the completion of the drilling. *Editor's comment: I came into possession of this framed photograph accidentally. I purchased another picture at the now defunct Wordsworth bookstore in downtown Calgary and when I got it home I realized that the photo above was hidden in behind the one that had been visible. As this was far better than the one that I had based my purchase on, it was a very pleasant surprise!*