Fort Walsh National Historic Site of Canada

A North West Mounted Police post (1875-83) later used (1942-68) to breed horses for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Musical Ride

Merryflat, Saskatchewan, Canada (1878)

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1875, Fort Walsh quickly became the most important, largest and most heavily armed fort of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP).

When a group of wolf hunters and whiskey traders attacked a Nakoda camp to recover a missing horse in 1873, the ensuing massacre convinced the Canadian government that an organized presence was needed in the lawless west.

The NWMP were sent west in 1874. Inspector James Morrow Walsh and his men built Fort Walsh in June 1875. Fort Walsh was built to bring Canadian law and order to the area. It was supposed to end the local whiskey trade and patrol the American border to protect Canada's independence.

Fort Walsh became more important during the Lakota refugee crisis and for four years it was the headquarters of the force. When the NWMP discovered that the railway and territorial government were going to be in Regina, the NWMP decided to move their headquarters to Regina in 1882. Fort Walsh was closed and taken apart in 1883.

In 1942, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP - formerly the NWMP) purchased the site of the fort. They wanted to use it to raise horses for the force and the RCMP Musical Ride. The RCMP Remount Ranch was built to look exactly like the old fort. In 1968, the RCMP Remount Ranch was transferred to Parks Canada and the RCMP horse-breeding program was moved to Packenham, Ontario.

REASON (S) FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

In 1875 a detachment of North West Mounted Police under Superintendent James Morrow Walsh built a post here, which served from 1878 to 1882 as the headquarters of the force. The men stationed here played a key role in implementing Canada's Indian Policy and in supervising the Sioux who had fled to Canada with Sitting Bull after the Battle of Little Big Horn. Following the return of the Sioux to the United States and the settlement of Canadian Indians on reserves, the fort's importance declined and in 1883 it was abandoned. From 1943 to 1968 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police used the site as a Remount Station.
HSMBC, 1973.

The North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) built Fort Walsh in 1875. From 1878 to 1882, Fort Walsh was the headquarters for the NWMP.

The NWMP helped to enforce Canada's Indian Policy. They also kept the peace when the Lakota (Sioux) from the United States came to Canada after the Battle of Little Big Horn. Once the Lakota went back to the United States, Fort Walsh was less important so the NWMP left the fort. Later, the RCMP used the site for breeding horses.
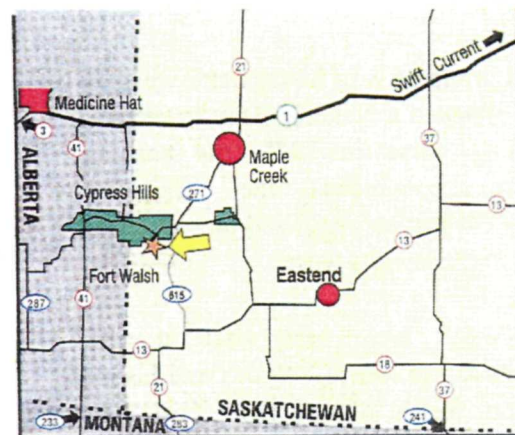
MILESTONES

1873	Cypress Hills Massacre takes place on June 1.
1874	NWMP march west.
1875	Fort Walsh is built in June.
1876	Lakota refugees from the United States begin to arrive in the Cypress Hills area.
1878	Fort Walsh is made the headquarters for the NWMP.
1881	The last of the Lakota, including Sitting Bull, return to the United States.
1882	NWMP headquarters are moved to Regina.
1883	Fort Walsh is closed and taken apart.
1924	Fort Walsh is designated a National Historic Site of Canada.
1942	RCMP purchases the old fort site and builds a Remount Ranch.
1968	RCMP transfers the fort to Parks Canada.

LOCATION

Fort Walsh National Historic Site is located 55 km southwest of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, off the Trans Canada Highway. Take highway #271 from Maple Creek and travel 3km west then turn left at the sign for Fort Walsh. Continue south on the highway #271 and watch for signs leading you directly to the historic site.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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