

Joseph McKay Bannerman: Chestermere Ditchrider (1908?-1912)

Joseph was born in Kildonan parish, Sutherland, Scotland on 12 March 1851 and grew up in Navidale where his father was employed as a labourer.^{1 2} He emigrated to Canada while still in his teens and lived in Ontario for some years.³ Joseph moved to Edmonton and then to Calgary in 1883.⁴ One of his early business ventures was a tobacco and cigar store located on Stephen Avenue.⁵ On 15 September 1885 he married Christina Miller Sutherland in Winnipeg.⁶ Christina, the daughter of a blacksmith, was born on 28 May 1857 in Helmsdale, Kildonan parish, Sutherland.⁷ She emigrated to Belleville, Ontario with her family in 1875 before moving to Winnipeg about 1881.⁸ Following her marriage, she came to Calgary with her husband where together they had a family of four sons and two daughters.⁹ Joseph partnered with his brother James in a flour and feed business and also operated a wholesale liquor business.¹⁰ He was active in civic and social affairs and the curling club.

In January 1888, Joseph made application for a homestead on SW ¼ 36-24-1 W5M, began occupying it on 30 July 1888, and received patent on 14 September 1892.¹¹ This property is now covered by the south half of McCall Lake Golf Course. The Bannermans built a house there and called it Morven Cottage, perhaps in reference to a mountain of the same name near their old home in Scotland.¹² The 1891 census recorded Joseph's occupation as a "rancher" employing an average of two people per year.¹³ He had likely purchased additional property to add to his original quarter section homestead.

In January 1894 he was one of three alderman elected to represent Ward 1 on the council of the newly proclaimed City of Calgary and in October 1894 he became the member for East Calgary to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.^{14 15} This electoral district extended east at least as far as Gleichen and the Assembly sat at Regina so Joseph would have travelled regularly. He ran again in the fall of 1898 but lost his seat to A.E. Cross.¹⁶ At the time of the 1901 census he and his family were living on their homestead and he was a rancher.¹⁷ In January 1904, Joseph's property was one of a number that were searched by the police during their hunt for the notorious escaped murderer, Ernest Cashel.¹⁸

Christina Bannerman died on 9 April 1907, leaving Joseph to care for the children, two of them under ten years old. At Calgary in 1908 he married Emma Northfield, who was born in 1870 in Harston, Cambridgeshire, England and came to Canada in 1906.^{19 20 21} Joseph and Emma had two daughters together.

The first person known to have worked for CPR at Chestermere was Joseph Bannerman. It is uncertain when he began his association with the Irrigation Department or when he moved to the Chestermere area, but it appears to have been some time after the death of his first wife. He was certainly living at the lake by October 1910 when two people got in trouble after they fell out of their canoe. Fortunately, CPR employee G.H. Patrick was close at hand and rescued them in a gasoline powered launch. According to the *Calgary Daily Herald*, "They were taken ashore, and after a short walk reached the home of Joe Bannerman, where dry clothing was secured and stimulants were applied."²² The 1911 census enumerated Joseph, Emma and his two youngest children living in the area. His occupation was recorded as "Inspector CP Irrigation canal" - certainly a much grander title than ditchrider!²³

The MacKenzies were neighbours of the Bannermans who lived about a mile to the southeast on the opposite side of the canal. In the mid-1960s, Kate MacKenzie recorded some memories of her family's early days in the district. One such anecdote related an incident when her young children were showing her insects they had captured. She wrote, "Jean came with both hands closed, she opened her hand to show me a lanky grasshopper. I call this one father she said and opening the other hand to show me a

big fat cricket she said I call this one Mr. Bannerman.”²⁴ It can be surmised from this that Joseph was probably a large man, at least in comparison to Mr. MacKenzie.

Joseph’s work as an irrigation man ended in the spring of 1912. Bessie Hinchey, daughter of his successor Fred Woods, wrote, “For one month the two families lived together. Then Bannermans moved on.”²⁵ A brief item in the newspaper on 11 April 1912 reported that Joseph and family had left to spend the summer in Banff.²⁶ They apparently enjoyed the mountain community as they moved there permanently.

While living in Banff, Joseph continued to pursue his interests in politics, curling and local affairs. Emma died on 28 February 1917 in Banff.²⁷ In 1920 Joseph married her sister Ruth, born about 1869 in Harston, Cambridgeshire.²⁸ Joseph died at the home of a daughter in Calgary on 17 April 1932 and was laid to rest beside his first wife in Union Cemetery.^{29 30} Ruth returned to England and died in Cambridge in 1951.³¹

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Provincial Archives of Alberta – PAA A3827 1896
Joseph Bannerman



Joseph Bannerman 1920 Glenbow
Archives NA 2687 1

A LONG WAY DOWN

MESSRS. REID AND BURKE HAVE
A SWIM IN CHESTERMERE.

In Fact They Were Almost Drowned—

Johnnie Went Away Down Among
the Fish—Says It Was Long Way

Yesterday afternoon, on Chestermere lake, two of Calgary's citizens, narrowly escaped a watery grave. Johnnie Reid and a companion, named Burke, who is filling an engagement at the Empire theatre, went out onto the lake in a canoe to shoot ducks. When they reached a spot about a mile out from the shore, Johnnie shot a duck. Suddenly a large flock of the wild fowl soared overhead, and Burke decided to take a shot. He was not experienced in shooting from a canoe, and when the flock of birds came within range he stood up in the canoe and fired. The canoe swayed from side to side, and finally overturned, throwing Johnnie Reid from the rear into thirty feet of water, while Burke fell backwards into the lake on the other side.

Had Too Big a Load.

Reid was loaded down with fifty shells and a large pair of rubber boots. Burke was unable to swim a stroke, and struggled in the water to keep afloat.

Reid tried to swim ashore, but after covering a short distance found that he was unable to kick the long, heavy boots from his feet, and Burke called to him to come back. Reid returned to the canoe and clung to the side, while Burke secured a hold on the cross bar underneath, and for some time both called for help.

After fifteen minutes' strenuous effort to keep afloat both men were on the verge of exhaustion, being chilled with the water and fatigued by incessant effort.

Mr. Patrick to the Rescue.

About this time Mr. Patrick, a C. P.R. surveyor, was on the shore, and heard the cries of help from the canoe. He secured the gasoline launch which was near at hand, and started out to the rescue. The proprietor of the 6th avenue garage, who is known as Scotty, was also on hand, and he left the shore in a boat. The launch reached the boys, and Reid and Burke were both lifted inside.

Too Much Water.

Burke became unconscious directly after he was placed on the floor, and Reid appeared to have reached the limit of his endeavors to keep above water.

They were taken to the shore, and after a short walk reached the home of Joe Bannerman, where dry clothing was secured and stimulants were applied.

Was a Long Way Down.

Today Johnnie Reid told The Herald that when he sank after being turned out of the canoe he did not think that he would ever reach the surface again. The weight of the shells and the heavy clothing seemed to pull him down, and for some time he fought with the weight that seemed to hold him down.

J. M. BANNERMAN, PIONEER, PASSES

Member of Early Council
And Territorial Legislature
Dies

One of the early pioneers of western Canada, Joseph McKay Bannerman, 81 years of age, died Sunday evening at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. A. E. Crick.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 from Jacques funeral home, Ven. Archdeacon Tims officiating. Interment will follow in Burnsland cemetery.

For more than 60 years, Mr. Bannerman played a great part in the



building of western Canada, and served in Calgary as one of the earliest members of the council. He was also member of the third legislature, of the Northwest Territories, being elected as representative of Calgary East in 1894.

J. Bannerman

Born in Helmsdale, Scotland, Mr. Bannerman came to Canada when 16 years of age, and settled for a few years in Ontario. But the western prairies lured him and he traveled westward, partly by rail in the United States, ultimately arriving in Edmonton.

He came to Calgary in 1883 where he opened one of the first flour and feed stores in the territories. He was a strong Conservative, and his brother James served many years as a member of the council. Mr. Bannerman later opened a liquor store in Calgary, entering this business with his brother. For the past 20 years he had resided in Banff.

He is survived by his widow, at Banff; four daughters, Mrs. A. E. Crick; Mrs. L. S. Thomas, Calgary; and Evelyn and Mary, at Banff; and four sons; W.S., at Kew, Alberta; J. R., at Calgary; J. H., at Banff, and D.S., at Kew. Two sisters, Mrs. R. C. Mills, at Honolulu, and Mrs. E. Watson, in Scotland, also survive.

Mr. Bannerman was a member of the Bow River Lodge, A.F. and A.M., the Orange Order and the Southern Alberta Pioneers' and Oldtimers' Association. Jacques funeral home has charge of funeral arrangements.

Joseph Bannerman obituary Calgary
Daily Herald Mon 18 Apr 1932 p 9 c 5

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- ¹ "Joseph Bannerman Pioneer Profile," Southern Alberta Pioneers and Their Descendants, accessed April 3, 2020, <http://pioneersalberta.org/profiles/b.html>
- ² Scotland 1851 Census, Kildonan, Thomas Bannerman household; digital image Ancestry.ca, (<http://www.ancestry.ca>); citing *1851 Scotland Census*, Kildonan, ED 2, Page 9, Line 18, Roll CSSCT1851_12, General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- ³ "J.M. Bannerman, Pioneer, Passes," *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 18, 1932, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/479269435/>
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ George Babington Elliott and Thomas S. Burns, *Calgary, Alberta, Canada, her industries and resources* (Calgary: Burns & Elliott, 1885), 27. <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/1436.html>
- ⁶ Bannerman - Sutherland Marriage index entry, registration no. 1885-001197, Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency. <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/Query.php>
- ⁷ Statutory Registers: Births, database and images, *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>: downloaded 13 April 2020), ref. 052/26, image of birth registration for Christina Miller Sutherland, born 28 May 1857, registered 5 June 1857, Parish of Kildonan, County of Sutherland.
- ⁸ "The Late Mrs. Bannerman," *Daily Herald*, Calgary, April 17, 1907, 11. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/478940603/>
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ "J.M. Bannerman, Pioneer, Passes," *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 18, 1932, 9.
- ¹¹ Joseph Banerman [sic] entry, database and digital image Ancestry.ca, (<http://www.ancestry.ca>); citing Homestead Grant Registers, R190-75-1-E, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
- ¹² "Wedding Last Night" and "Married: Campbell-McKay," *Calgary Daily Herald*, August 6, 1891, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/478940603/>
- ¹³ 1891 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada, RG31, Roll T-6425, Northwest Territories, district 197, subdistrict A, division 17, page 50, family 208, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1891&op=img&id=30953_148227-00458
- ¹⁴ "List of Calgary municipal elections," Wikipedia, last modified March 19, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Calgary_municipal_elections
- ¹⁵ "North-West Territories: Council and Legislative Assembly, 1876-1905," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, <https://www.saskarchives.com/sites/default/files/documents/NWT-Council.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ 1901 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada, RG31, Roll T-6551, The Territories, Alberta, Nose Creek, division 1, page 6, family 38, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. <http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1901&op=&img&id=z000179157>
- ¹⁸ "Cashel the American Desperado Captured This Afternoon," *The Daily Herald*, Special Edition, Calgary, January 25, 1904, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/478938475/>
- ¹⁹ Bannerman - Northfield marriage registration index entry, Provincial Archives of Alberta, registration no. 1903 (1908 "L"), <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/grooms-ba-1877-1918.pdf>
- ²⁰ "Death of Mrs. Bannerman," *Crag and Canyon*, Banff, March 3, 1917, 1. <https://cdm22007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p22007coll2/id/25427/rec/4>
- ²¹ 1911 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada, RG31, Roll T-20326, Alberta, Calgary, Subdistrict 4, page 23, family 216, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. <http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1911&op=&img&id=e011069907>
- ²² "A Long Way Down," *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 17, 1910, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/481805246/>
- ²³ 1911 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada, RG31, Roll T-20326, Alberta, Calgary, Subdistrict 4, page 23, family 216, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. <http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1911&op=&img&id=e011069907>
- ²⁴ Kay Clarke, email communication, April 20, 2020.
- ²⁵ Bessie M. (Woods) Hinchey, "The Fred Woods Family of Chestermere," in *Saddles, Sleighs and Sadirons*, Chestermere Historical Society, 1971, 247.
- ²⁶ "Calgary Society," *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 11, 1912, 20. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/481562003/>

²⁷ “Death of Mrs. Bannerman,” *Crag and Canyon*, Banff, March 3, 1917, 1.

<https://cdm22007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p22007coll2/id/25427/rec/4>

²⁸ Bannerman - Northfield marriage registration index entry, Provincial Archives of Alberta, registration no. 1829 (1920), <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/grooms-ba-1919-1930.pdf>

²⁹ “J.M. Bannerman, Pioneer, Passes,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 18, 1932, 9.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/479269435/>

³⁰ “Complete Funeral Arrangements for Joseph Bannerman,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 19, 1932, 9.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/479269453/>

³¹ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010; citing Principal Probate Registry, *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*, London, England.