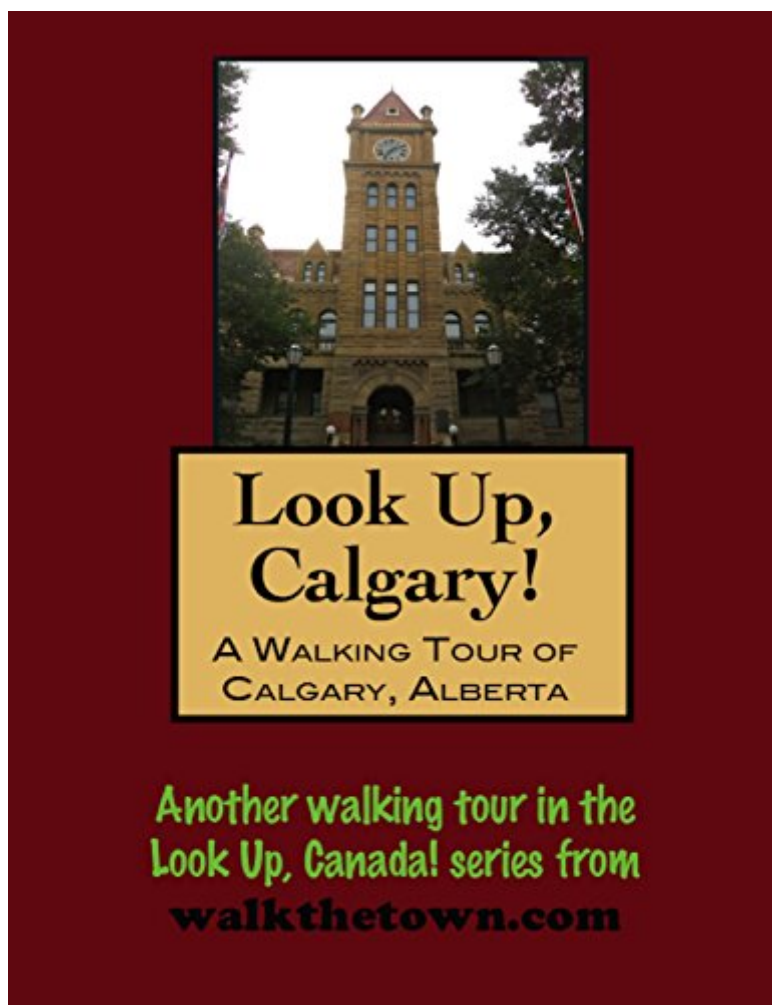


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A Walking Tour Of Calgary, Alberta (Look, Up, Canada!)



Synopsis

There is no better way to see Canada than on foot. And there is no better way to appreciate what you are looking at than with a walking tour. Each walking tour describes historical and architectural landmarks and provides pictures to help out when those pesky street addresses are missing. Every tour also includes a quick primer on identifying architectural styles seen on Canadian streets. The cities of Canada's interior owe their existence to rivers. For Calgary, the water courses were the Elbow and Bow rivers. Where the two flowed together is where a detachment of the North-West Mounted Police built a command post in 1875 to orchestrate operations to protect the fur trade on the plains. The fort was named after Ephrem-A. Brisebois, a Mounted Police officer, but a year later Colonel James Farquharson Macleod renamed it Calgary after a village on the Isle of Mull in his native Scotland. The Canadian Pacific Railway built into the area in 1883 and the town was incorporated the following year. The young settlement received a sobering wake-up call on November 7, 1886 when fire broke out in the rear of a flour and feed store. Before the conflagration burned out the flames consumed fourteen wooden buildings, a considerable chunk of the town at the time. No lives were lost but city officials quickly drafted a law that any substantial downtown building going forward must be fashioned from Paskapoo sandstone. The growth of "Sandstone City" was spurred by the Dominion Government that offered grazing land for rent for one cent per acre up to 100,000 acres. The era of big ranches and cattle barons was on in the rapidly growing frontier town. The four biggest - Pat Burns, George Lane, A.J. McLean and A.E. Cross - transformed a local agricultural fair into the Calgary Stampede in 1912 as a celebration of their long careers. They guaranteed \$100,000 to fund a six-day rodeo and the city built an arena on its fairgrounds. The event was a smashing success but the "Big Four" saw the Stampede as a closing act and expressed no interest in a sequel. Civic leaders, however, doggedly pursued the idea until the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede became a fixed annual event in 1923 and eventually a famous worldwide attraction. Oil was first discovered in Alberta in 1902 but Calgary did not begin transforming from an agricultural and ranching community until the province's most prolific oil reserves were tapped in the Leduc Formation on February 13, 1947. Until that point Imperial Oil had suffered through 133 dry holes, always missing the 300 million barrels of black gold trapped underground. Over 500 oil exploration companies were formed within days. By the time of the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s Calgary was well positioned to fill the petroleum void. The burst in oil prices led to a building boom that sent steel-and-glass skyscrapers soaring in the downtown core, hard by heritage structures that seldom rose above ten storeys. Sensing the threat, Calgary officials began preservation efforts. The flavour of

turn-of-the-20th century Calgary was salvaged on much of 8th Avenue which became touted as Stephen Avenue and transformed into a part-time pedestrian mall. Our walking tour of Sandstone City will revolve around Stephen Avenue and will begin where the old and new stand side-by-side, clashing in stark opposition to each other...

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