



HEADQUARTERS'

NOTES

ALBERTA GUIDE AND BROWNIE FUND - May we remind you about this Fund if you have not already sent your contribution in?

COOKIE DAY - This seems to have been very successful this year and letters have reached us to say that next year there will be a bigger sale than ever. Now is the time to make notes for better organizing of the districts next year. Use a map of your town or city and mark on it in coloured pencil the routes your Pack or Company canvassed this year. It will help with plans for next year.

Some Companies and Packs have already sent their one cent per package to Provincial Headquarters.

CAMPING - Going Camping this year? Now is the time to apply for your permit. Miss Riddoch, Provincial Camp Adviser, will be leaving for Scotland towards the end of June and will be quite unable to answer your questions and supply you with forms and Permit then!! Edmonton Guiders will apply to their Division Camp Advisor for forms etc. But do remember --

YOU MUST APPLY FOR A PERMIT IF YOU GO TO CAMP!!!

STORES DEPT. - If you have an outstanding account with the Provincial Office we would very much appreciate a settlement before the end of May.

HANDICRAFTS - Please remember to send your ideas about the Handicrafts Competition for 1952 to us before the end of May.

-o-o-o-o-

I meant to do my work to-day,
Forgetting the world of growing things
For a gay bird calls in a luring way,
And what could you do when a robin sings?

A whiff of earth
And a butterfly,
And a tinge of green
And a Summer sky,

The little breezes whispering low -
What could I do but rise and go?

-o-o-o-o-

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"MUCHIAS"

-by Ella Jacoby Walker.

Ask your father or your mother if they remember Muchias -- Muchias, the funny little gnomelike man who once lived down by our river. Close beside the Saskatchewan's swirling waters, across the stream from where the Provincial Capitol building now stands, he had a wee house, all his own. All its furnishings were made small to fit his diminutive proportions. For Muchias was no taller than a Brownie and even a little Brownie at that. So his bunk was tiny, and he sat in a sawed down chair at a table that had the height you commonly see in nurseries.

What a sight he must have made -- a bushy-bearded man eating at a child size table! For Muchias had the head and shoulders of a man but scarcely any length of leg at all. This gave him the same stocky sawed down look of the chair he sat upon.

In the records of his church we find that Muchias was born at Lac Ste. Anne in 1853, the son of Richard Collin and Genevieve Bruyeres who worked in the Fort. The records tell too, that he was baptized Mathias Collin, and his God-mother was Cecile Kalliou, who was one of the forebears of the family from which the Alberta town "Calihoo" is named.

Muchias, like his father, worked in the Fort too from early youth and his chief task was carrying up water to the palisaded Fort from the river. Old Fort Edmonton, as you know, stood on the site of our present Legislative Buildings. Many were the times each day that Muchias, the water boy, must go down the hill to fetch more water to supply the kitchen needs of the Factor's big house. He liked his task, and loved to be near the river -- the river was like a friend to him. He knew its ways and dangers too. He became a familiar figure to all the people at the Fort, carrying the water vessels on a cross beam over his broad shoulders.

He always wore a wide brimmed hat, which served him well as a sun-shade on hot days and as an umbrella when it rained. One very wet day, when nearly to the top of the steep trail, he slipped on the muddy path, and over he went, tumbling downwards towards the river level. As he hurtled down, he did an amazing thing, he buckled up his stumpy legs, and wrapped his arms over his head and knees, thus making himself into a ball, and rolled down the bank like a pinwheel. The rough workman, beholding this, laughed aloud at the odd sight. On coming to a halt at the river level, did our little dwarf show himself to be angry at his companions for this? Not he! Instead, he jumped to his feet at once and even pulled off his big hat to wave triumphantly at those fellow workmen above who had witnessed his feat.

Surely he must have suffered some hurts and bruises bounding down that rough embankment! But Muchias was not one to complain or shirk in the line of duty -- he was a plucky sort!

A tale of real heroism is told of Muchias, too. In his long life beside the river he became an expert swimmer. He would kick out swiftly with his short legs and stroke steadily on with his strong arms, looking for all the world like a big bull-frog skimming the waters.

One May day when the river was very high he noticed some Indian children

MUCHIAS (continued)

playing on the opposite shore. Then suddenly he heard them screaming loudly and saw that one of the smaller ones had slipped from the bank into the water, and was being rapidly carried downstream with the current.

Few would have attempted to swim across the river at flood level, but Muchias leapt in without hesitation and actually reached the little one before she had gone under, as the woollen blanket and leather garments she wore floated her light body on the water's surface like a rubber boat. So she was saved without even being thoroughly chilled and wet when her rescuer pulled her back to shore.

In later years when wells were dug (even on hill tops!) our little water boy did other work, but he still stayed beside his beloved river as a helper in John Walter's saw-mill. For many years he was the trusted servant of the pioneer lumberman, and lived close beside him in that wee house which was demolished only last summer (1950).

As he grew older, and the town of Strathcona grew larger, many of the neighboring children came down to see the curious looking dwarfed man. They even teased him and this made Muchias cross. Some children would be frightened of him then, but Muchias never harmed children and was always their friend.

He died in the Fall of the year 1939 - when the water of the river was low and slow moving. Perhaps it became altogether becalmed for just a moment with the passing of this beloved friend of the waters, and I like to think too, that they murmur a little sadly as they now pass beside the bank where once stood the little house of Muchias, the dwarf.

TRAVELS OF KIM (continued)

I spent the time going back and forth to the office. At the end of the month Mrs. Gandier and Miss Riddoch took the train to Edmonton for the Executive meeting (it was too cold for me!) and in February Miss Riddoch had to make trips to the Drumheller and Wetaskiwin Divisions by train (too many drifts for me this time).

On February 16th the weather had cleared and we journeyed to the Red Deer Division where plans included Guiders training sessions, a trip to Sylvan Lake and a Mother and Daughter banquet at Innisfail. We arrived back in Calgary about 3.30 p.m. on February 20th and at 5 o'clock Miss Riddoch left for Banff, travelling with some Scout officials.

We went to Turner Valley for the week-end of February 23rd to 25th and Guiders from all points of the Division gathered for training.

I was looking forward so much to the Provincial Annual Meeting in Edmonton but an unexpected change in the weather prevented my making the trip. Many delegates could not make it either because of blocked roads. The weatherman certainly wasn't very good to us.

THEN came a very exciting event - the Scroll of Friendship and Log Book had been returned to Alberta and I was to have the privilege of transporting them for the greater part of the journey throughout the Province. I fairly burst with pride as I drew in to the various centres and was met by Commissioners, Guiders, Guides, Brownies, Colour Parties, Mayors of towns and Mounties in their Red Coats! But you will find an account of our travels elsewhere in Woodsmoke.

In the meantime I hope you are all getting ready for camp and keeping your eye on plans for the National Camp in 1952.