

FORGOTTEN FOOTHILLS

TRACES OF PLACES OF THE PAST

Frankburg

Frankburg was established in 1902, 12 kilometres southeast of High River just south of Blackie (NE 1/4-21-18-27 W4).

It was a Mormon settlement founded by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints who immigrated from Salt Lake City, Utah. They were part of the Santaquin Utah Agricultural Community

The post office was opened in May, 1905. Christopher Frank, the first postmaster, gave the community its name. A nearby lake was also named Frank Lake.

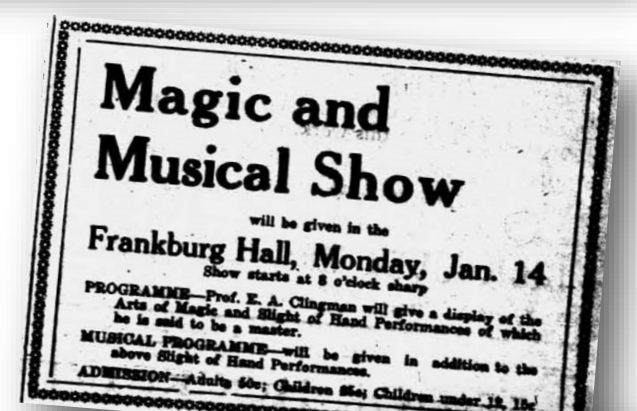
During its heyday, Frankburg consisted of a school, meeting house, post office, church and cemetery, and 25 homes, in addition to neighbouring farms. It boasted a men's baseball team and basketball team. Frankburg was known for hosting dances, musicals and community events. At its peak, church records include 420 members.

The community's namesake, Christopher Frank died in 1924 and was buried in the Frankburg Cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1906 when the first of its citizens, a three-year-old boy, died of diphtheria.

In the Dirty 30s, crops started to fail as they were repeatedly hit by hail storms, grasshoppers, and drought. The post office closed in 1932 and by 1935 most people had moved away — some to High River, some to Calgary and many to Rosebud.

In 1936, the High River Times reported only one family remained in Frankburg and that the community hall was to be dismantled and sold. In 1937 the church dissolved, and by 1945 Frank Lake was dry.

Today, the only remaining evidence of Frankburg is a fenced cemetery and informational sign.



1923 ad above
1935 ad at right,
High River Times



Frankburg Hall Is To Be Dismantled and Sold

For 25 Years Centre of Community Activities, Built by L.D.S. Church

Final Dance, Dec. 11 Before It Passes

Bishop Anderson and Family Only Residents in Frankburg Town, Once 25 Homes

Bishop Ernest Anderson and his family of Frankburg might be described as the sole survivors of a once brisk and busy little town. At one time twenty-five families were clustered in the Frankburg settlement, but the prairies have their ghost towns even as do mining areas.

Twenty-five years ago, the Frankburg hall was opened, a symbol of prosperity and progressiveness. It was an advance guard of the now popular community halls, boasting the first hardwood floor for miles around, and the mecca of all who enjoyed dancing, and happy social gatherings. Today, it still stands, but has fallen into the background, because of the decreased population in and around Frankburg. It is advertised for sale.

It was round 1902, 1903 and 1904 that the trek from Utah commenced, several families making the long distance by covered wagon. With the ar-

rival of Bishop Frank and family, the Andersons, Malmbergs, Johnsons, Robbins, Laytons and Doneys, the church of Latter Day Saints was founded in the community and flourished. The coming to Canada was real pioneering for this little colony. Some had never been engaged as mine workers and in other pursuits. But the fertile farm lands of Alberta were a great attraction, there were years of good crops and prosperous times.

The large hall built in 1911 was something of a venture, as the membership of Latter Day Saints was not great at that time. But in the course of a few years, there were 480 members on the church records, and Frankburg served an area extending as far as Gleichen. Up until about 15 years ago, the town itself had 25 occupied houses in it.

At the present time there is church enrolment of 110, but this includes members from a considerable distance, who find difficulty in attending service with any great regularity. Bishop Anderson's main interest is a flourishing little Sunday school.

Families Scattered
What was the reason for the decrease of Frankburg's population and prosperity? A number of the pioneer residents moved to Calgary in order

(Continued on Page 4)

Frankburg is Now Almost Ghost Town

(Continued from page 1)

give their families more complete education. Several sold their farms at the good prices prevailing in past years, and moved to Lethbridge, Calgary and elsewhere. There came a period however, when Frankburg seemed to be more subject to hail, frost and such visitations than other parts of the country. This took its toll of prosperity, and the depression hit harder when it came. Before governments came to the assistance of farmers in retaining their land, some lost ownership. And one way or another most of the original pioneers disappeared from the district. The Doney family still remains, but aside from Bishop Anderson, there are few others. For the past seven years, Mr. Anderson has headed the church of Latter Day Saints at Frankburg, and though only a young man of 35 years, he has had experience in mission fields which fully qualifies him for this responsible position. He has lived in Frankburg since he was two years of age, has seen the rise and decline of the happy little community, and often it seems like a dream that there were twenty-five houses round him buzzing with family life.

Many local people recall the opening of the Frankburg hall on July 3, 1911. Bishop C. E. Frank officiated over the program celebration. There were visiting church dignitaries and it was a gala day for the countryside, with sports and races of all sorts, winding up at night with fireworks and a dance.

Dec. 3, 1936,
High River Times



Grave of founder
Christopher Frank.

