

Time Out

# Cross the lines of time, history on a stroll through Inglewood

By Cinda Chavich  
Calgary Herald

Inglewood was the original centre of business in Calgary, and the neighborhood where some of the city's first settlers put down roots.

On a late fall day, at the turn of the century, you'd likely meet A.E. Cross striding down Atlantic Avenue on the way to work at his brewery.

Cross was one of the "Big Four" who put up the first hundred grand for the Calgary Stampede and one of the city's early employers. From his home, on 8th Avenue and 12th Street S.E., he could keep tabs on his business while exercising the polo ponies or checking the flock of pheasants he kept at his riverside property.

Half of his neighbors were his employees back then, and when Cross delivered some of the first beer brewed in these parts (famous for its buffalo head label), it was to his own pub at The National Hotel.

While the brewery recently closed (after 101 years of operation), much of the landscape that Cross knew in the Inglewood neighborhood is unchanged.

A walk down 9th Avenue S.E. (Atlantic Avenue), in the throes of a major historic renovation program, uncovers many of the haunts that Cross and his cronies would have seen around 1910.

It's also here that the bulk of Inglewood's new retail development is housed, with live theatre, funky coffee shops and lots of nifty shops for antique and collectible hounds.

These new businesses have opened in classic brick buildings, named for their original builders with handles like the Aull Block, Befus Block, Fraser Block and Seablom Block. With the help of the Atlantic Avenue BRZ Mainstreet Programme, layers of stucco and paint have been scraped away from these once-decaying facades to reveal a streetscape of local history.

The Edwardian Aull Block was built in 1908 by Dr. Erastus Aull, a physician, and once held doctors' offices. In 1931, Aull sold the building to the Sheffel family. The Sheffels (who also owned the Carriage House and Highlander hotels) opened Empress Groceries on the main floor of the building. Today it's The Karma Cafe Gallery but if you look down in the sidewalk outside the front door, you'll still see the words "Empress" in the cement.

**ROUTE:** Start your travels at the Garry Theatre at 1229 9th Ave. S.E. and work your way west along this block. Cross the street and head back along the north side of the street for three blocks to the East Indian Tea House. Double back to 13th Street and turn right heading up to New Street for a block to New Place. Turn left and head to the riverbank to see the osprey nest. Retrace your steps back up New Street to 8th Avenue and head west to the A.E. Cross House, on the corner of 12th Street and 8th Avenue S.E.

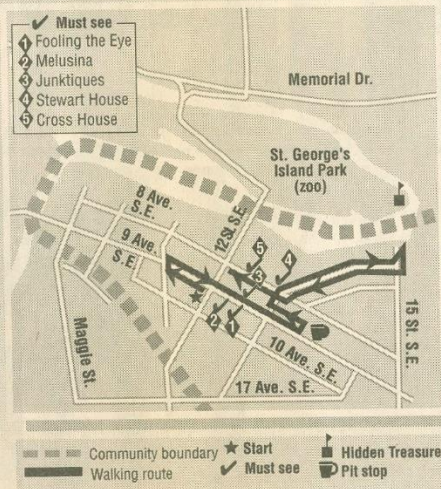
**HIDDEN TREASURE:** The osprey nesting box on the Zoo island, easy to see from the riverbank at the end of New Place.

**MUST SEES:** The Cross House, Fooling the Eye, Melusina, Junktiques, The Stewart House.

**PIT STOP:** The East Indian Tea House has great curries, exotic samosas and traditional Indian chai.

**NOTES:** The Old Town Calgary Society has done extensive historical research in Inglewood and offers regular guided walks through the neighborhood. Groups of five or more can call the society at 265-4171 to make their own arrangements, or you can join a regular tour Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. in front of the old fire hall. Cost for the walking tour is \$3 per person.

## Central Inglewood



Cross also would have remembered the Fraser and Seablom blocks, built during the pre-war building boom of 1910-12 by partners Maxwell Fraser and Oscar Seablom, and the Burn Block, with its two-tone brick and classical arched entry. But Cross would be hard-pressed to recognize the building's current creative tenants.

At Fooling the Eye, interior designers Sylvia Palka and David Budd do some amazing hand-painted designs on otherwise tacky old furniture. They can take that ugly brown arborite end table and turn it into a work of art.

Also in this building is a neat cappuccino bar called Appleberry's; The Tea Trader which dispenses every description of bulk or packaged tea; Kensington Antiques, which has an incredible collec-

tion of colorful Depression glass; and Melusina, an interior design shop specializing in decorating details such as elaborate plaster mouldings and wrought iron furniture.

Cross might have been more at home at the many antique and collectible shops clustered in his old stomping grounds. There are stops like Home Again Antiques, Chelsea Antiques, de Caro Antiques and Junktiques, a treasure trove of wonderful, if expensive, Eastern pine pieces.

Silvia Burrows of Chelsea Antiques shares her space in the Befus Block (circa 1910) with Manana, an interesting spot full of treasures collected in South America. And up the street in the old Haskin's Hall (where Cross and his wife might have gone dancing in 1908) you'll find Old Tyme Antiques.

Another good place to look down at the sidewalk is the Carson Block at 1336 9th Ave. S.E. Note the amethyst glass blocks in the cement as you cross the threshold into the building - in the Fair's Fair used bookstore downstairs they form pretty purple skylights.

The nearby East Indian Tea House is a modern spot, reflecting Inglewood's new ethnic mix, and a great place for a chai (a milk/spice tea) and samosa stop.

At 26 New Street you'll see the rambling Stewart House, one of Calgary's oldest buildings: constructed in 1884 and one of the few homes that predates Cross's. Built by Major John Stewart, an early rancher, land developer and stage coach operator, this historical resource was restored by former alderman Jack Long.

Stewart surveyed and sold some of the first town lots in Calgary, before the coming of the CPR railway in 1884 moved the city centre across the river to the current downtown core. Like his home, those along New Street are some of the few in the city with "riparian" rights - meaning the property extends to the middle of the river.

Stewart certainly would have seen lots of birds and wildlife from his home along the riverbank, and if you head to the east end of the street and look across to the Zoo island, you can see an osprey nest on an 80-foot platform. Brian

Keating of the Calgary Zoo says a pair of osprey made their first nest here this year and raised a single chick. Watch for them plunging feet-first into the river, hunting for fish.

That's something that A.E. Cross might have enjoyed, too, on his way to and from work, past the big five-acre rhubarb patch that's now the site of a seniors' apartment by the same name. He also might have enjoyed a meal in his old house, restored by restaurateur George Diamant to become the Cross House Garden Cafe, and now the perfect place for lunch, dinner or Sunday brunch.



Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald

**LOOKING BACK:** Jennifer Hyde, project co-ordinator for the Mainstreet revitalization program, in front of the historic Burns Block.



Do you know of a great neighborhood walk? Call the Talkies line, press 1272 and leave your name and a message. If we use your suggestion we'll give you a Living T-shirt to say thanks!