

Take a pleasant walk on the Sunnyside of the city

By Debra Cummings
Calgary Herald

There's no plaque on the rickety wooden door to tell you that inside is a world of eclectic Italian glass, Indian cottons, local floppy hats and dishes of hot, crumbly blueberry cobbler.

No marker tells you that a bowl of spicy Yogi tea and a chuckle through their card collection is the perfect antidote to a nippy fall evening.

But that's what you find at Heartland Country store, 940 2nd Ave. N.W. — just one of the hidden places sprinkled throughout this colorful, historical downtown neighborhood known as Sunnyside. Built in 1912, this yuppied-up general store/loft complex known as the Vendome Building has functioned as a shoe store, umpteen grocery stores and office space since its birth.

The only plaque of any historical significance in Sunnyside is next to the doorbell at 830 Memorial Dr. N.W. Unless you make a habit of going up to doorbells of strange apartment blocks, you'd never know that here is nailed a little chunk of Calgary's history. The sign tells you that former Alberta premier John Brownlee lived in one of these suites for 16 years, shortly after the Second World War.



At that time, gazing out at the clear waters of the Bow from his livingroom window, Brownlee would have stared past not Memorial Drive, but Sunnyside Boulevard, as it was known then. The story goes that after the First World War, trees were planted along the boulevard as a memorial to soldiers who had lost their lives. Name plates bearing the names of soldiers were nailed to the trees, but it wasn't until the '50s that the name Memorial Drive was officially adopted.

Following Inglewood, Sunnyside is one of Calgary's oldest neighborhoods, dating back to the turn of the century when English and Scottish immigrants set up small working farms where skinny 25-foot lots now exist. Arriving in 1913 a former resident, Mr. Pemberton, writes in Hillhurst Sunnyside Remembers that everyone had a skull on their fence.

That's because the hill that flanks Sunnyside — where Rosedale now presides — was a slaughter ground for buffalo.

"We used to play up on the hill,"



Bill Herriot, Calgary Herald

ECLECTIC MIX: Heartland Country Store offers a colorful potpourri for shopping and dining.

he writes, "and there were so many bones you couldn't walk without stepping on one. But when the war began in 1914, the government came and gathered them all up. I think they made bone meal for chicken feed out of them."

But that didn't stop Pemberton and his buddies from poking around. After unearthing a skeleton, the police took over the dig and discovered the kids were on to something — an ancient Indian burial ground. Re-covering the area with 20 feet of dirt, they let things be and banished the kids from playing there.

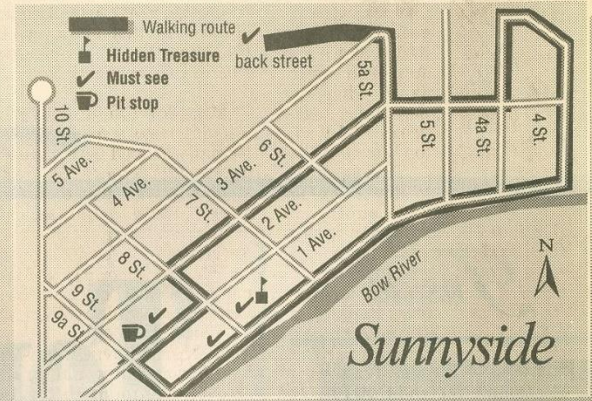
While not as famous or as commercially developed as Hillhurst, Sunnyside's sister neighborhood to

ROUTE:

The Hillhurst Sunnyside community is actually divided into three sub-communities. Today's walk concentrates on Sunnyside (east of 10th Street N.W. to 4th Street N.W.). Begin on the corner of 1st Avenue and 9th Street N.W. Head south to Memorial Drive, walk east to 4th Street, north to 9th Avenue, west one block to 4A Street, south to 7th Avenue and then back along 2nd Avenue to 8th Street.

HIDDEN TREASURE:

John Brownlee, Alberta's premier from 1925-35, lived in the Donegal Mansions at 830 Memorial Drive for 16 years. This stately brick building, constructed in 1930 by Andrew Murdoch, is this city's only example of an Italianate facade and still operates as an apartment block. On a dark evening's walk, look up at the



central arched window — lights twinkle behind the leaded glass and given the right angle, the effect can be kaleidoscopic.

MUST SEES:

Glenwood Manor, Donegal Mansions, Heartland Country

Store and the higgledy-piggledy back street, tucked in behind 5A Street and 3rd Avenue N.W.

PIT STOP:

Heartland Country Store, 940 2nd Ave. N.W.

the west, Sunnyside has gone through a half-dozen reincarnations in the last 100 years. You'll find many more apartment blocks, townhouses (The Arbours at 2nd Avenue and 8th Street was one of the city's first) and a housing co-operative (725 3rd St. N.W.) in this area, making it more of a high-density neighborhood than Hillhurst.

It also boasts of its own "castle" at 440 Memorial Drive N.W. Built in 1907 by James Smally, this corner house was then owned by one of the first mortgage companies in Calgary. The two Smally brothers came to Calgary from Blackwood, England, in 1901 and in less than two years had built 50 homes, supplying mortgages for all of

them. The unique bell tower on the east side of the home is said to have been "a pleasant retreat on warm summer days affording a view of the Bow River and a cooling breeze." The original tudor interior remains today, as do two large oak fireplaces and a pressed tin ceiling.

Heading north along 3rd Street from this home, you'll wend past the housing co-op which sits at the foot of a paved walkway leading up the steep embankment to Rosedale. Now used by runners and cyclists, this once was tracked by trolley cars.

Don't believe me? Then check out the front lawn at 1602 2nd Ave. N.W. Embedded in the sod, six

inches from the public sidewalk, are the cement remains of an old retaining wall used for streetcars, explains Linda-Rae Treliving, a volunteer for the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association.

Heading west on 2nd Avenue, back toward Heartland, stop in at Sunnyside Grocery, built in 1915.



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!