



Heritage Day - Celebrate!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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The first Monday in August offers a long weekend to many Canadians. Each province, however, has adopted a different name for the civic holiday. We hear it called Saskatchewan Day, British Columbia Day, Natal Day (Nova Scotia), and Terry Fox Day (Manitoba). Cities in Ontario have each chosen to name the holiday after a former leader or pioneer such as Alexander McKenzie (Sarnia), Simcoe (Toronto), George Hamilton (Hamilton), or Peter Robinson (Peterborough).

Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Prince Edward Island recognize the first Monday of August as a statutory holiday. Quebec, Yukon Newfoundland and Labrador do not celebrate on that date but instead have chosen other days in the summer for civic holidays.

In 1974 the government of Alberta declared that the first Monday of August to be an annual holiday that would be called Heritage Day. This is not a statutory holiday so companies and organizations have an option as to whether they will be open for business or not.

Because this holiday is in the middle of the summer, Canadians have a variety of options. Some use the long weekend to go out of town while others spend time at home with family and friends. Many enjoy visiting museums, festivals or multicultural events that focus on the birth of our nation and the uniqueness of our people.

There isn't any specific way to observe the first Monday of August holiday and so I am going to make a suggestion.

Sometime during the day, no matter where you are at the time, ponder the following questions:

1. Would I have had the courage of my ancestors to leave the homeland, family and friends in order to move to a new country and become a pioneer?
2. How would I have handled life in a sod hut without any conveniences such as running water, electricity and paved roads?
3. What skills do I have that would have helped with my survival? Could I build a house out of my surroundings? Are my hand stitching skills adequate to make clothing? Would I be able to make meals from nature without store-bought goods?
4. What do I know about the experiences of my ancestors that I can share with the next generation?
5. Are there examples in my family tree of individuals whose lives offer this generation healthy pride and hope for the future?
6. When I examine my own life, can I name at least ten things for which I am truly thankful?
7. How am I contributing to the growth and well-being of Canada and my province?
8. Knowing that it won't be long until my life will be viewed as part of history, what can I leave as a legacy for this generation and those who are yet to come?

Have an enjoyable and thoughtful long weekend!