

Moose Jaw: A Reinactment Of Canadian History In Secret Tunnels

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Back at the turn of the century Moose Jaw, in Saskatchewan a prairie province of Canada, was a booming town. While things seemed pretty on the outside underneath the streets there was a whole different world. Moose Jaws building relied on steam for heat and when many of the buildings were constructed on Main Street, steam engineers built tunnels underneath the roadways for easy access for the furnaces in the basements. Unfortunately, some of these tunnels were then used for illegal activities such as people smuggling and other illegal businesses. It's even rumoured that Al Capone used Moose Jaw for a hang out when things got too hot in Chicago.

There are guided tours of the tunnels. The tour guide is an actor and will play the part of a smuggler or a gangster for 45 minutes. Archival displays of document materials spanning the late 1800's to 1930's show original photographs, land titles and newspaper articles about the town and its infamous characters.

The Passage to Fortune tour is a highlight. A costumed interpreter gives out the role of "coolies," or low paid workers, to visitors taking the tour. As they travel back in time, they see tiny bunk beds that illustrate the crowded environment and utter disregard of these immigrants.

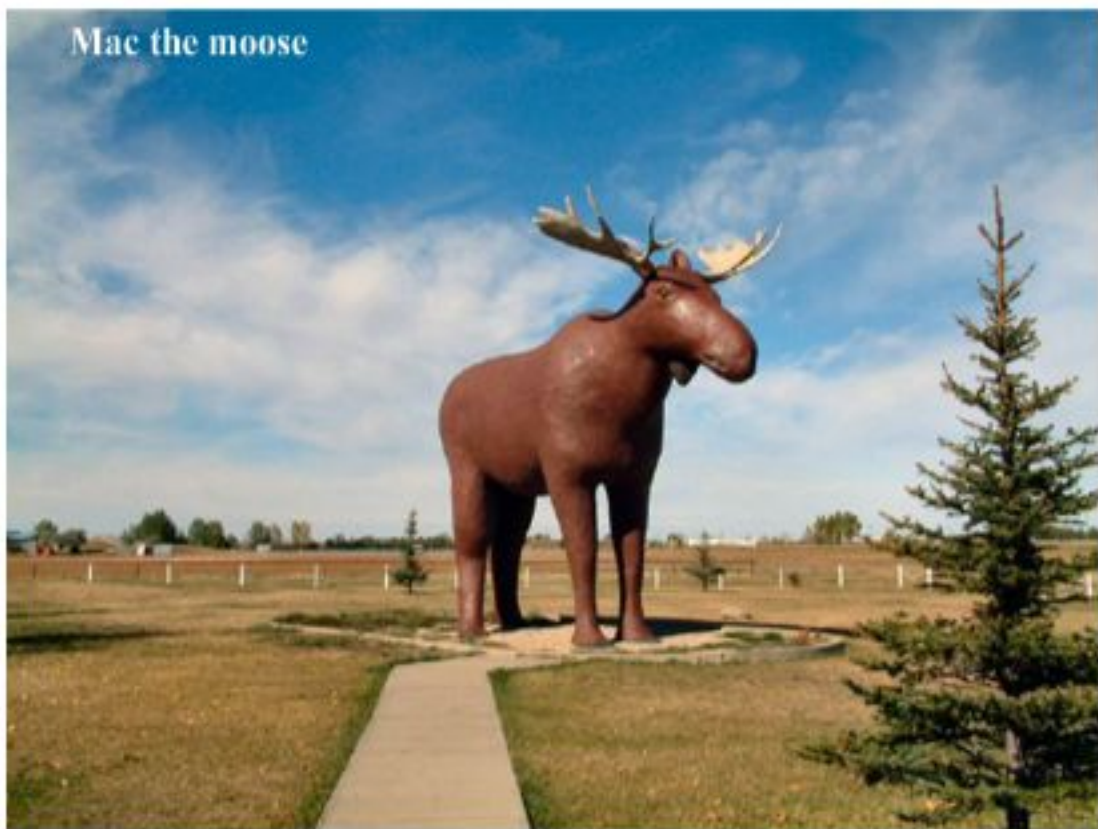
The tour ends with a round up of



Moose Jaw river



Mac the moose



Entrance to the tunnels



how far Canadian society has come today towards valuing immigrants as well as a lovely photo gallery of the people who lived through those difficult times. The Al Capone-themed tour is full of action and impressive special effects. The pulse is kept high as the saloon owner rushes the group through secret doors, on the run from the cops. Subtle play on the guide's part allows hidden doors to

suddenly open and sound effects to go off. Underground tunnels aside, Moose Jaw is best known as a retirement and tourist city that serves as a hub to the hundreds of small towns and farms in the surrounding region of Saskatchewan. It is situated on the Trans-Canada Highway 71 kilometres west of Regina. Marked on a map as Moose Jaw

Bone Creek in an 1857 survey by surveyor John Palliser there are two theories as to how the city got its name. The first one is that it comes from the plains cree Indian name moscâstani-sîpiy meaning «a warm place by the river», indicative of the protection from the weather that the Coteau Range provides to the river valley containing the city and also the plains cree word Moose Gaw

meaning warm breezes. The other is that on the map of the city the Moose Jaw river is shaped like a moose's jaw.

The Moose Jaw River as well as Thunder Creek which intersect the city contain a number of fish species including walleye, yellow perch, northern pike, white sucker, common carp and burbot. The intersection of the two rivers is the reason the founders chose the

Moose Jaw river





city's location as it provided a steady source of water for steam engines.

In addition to the tunnels there are many other tourist attractions in Moose Jaw including the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, Captain Jacks River Boat Tour, The Western Development Museum, and the Murals of Moose Jaw.

Every July the Saskatchewan Festival of Words takes place over a four-day period showcasing

top Canadian writers in a wide variety of genres. In 1996, a founding committee led by local teacher and poet, Gary Hyland, began laying the groundwork for a literary festival in the city of Moose Jaw. Realizing the need to differentiate from other book-based literary festivals, the founders developed a festival concept emphasizing all aspects of creative language and promoting literacy and lifelong reading. Books

and authors are the foundation of the festival, but variety comes through the addition of storytellers, illustrators, journalists, editors, singer-songwriters, film-makers, dramatists, and actors. It was also early in the planning stage that efforts to provide programming for a variety of age groups and that year-round programming promoting literacy, creative writing, and life-long reading would be part

of the organisers vision. Over the following months the Living Skies Festival of Words was born. In June 2010 the organization formalised a name change to become the Saskatchewan Festival of Words Inc.

There are many parks in Moose Jaw. Crescent Park is located down town and features a creek, picnic tables, library, art museum,

Mineral spa





playground, outdoor swimming pool, water park, gymnasium, tennis court, lawn bowling field and an amphitheatre.

Wakamow Park follows the Moose Jaw River and features both natural and maintained areas. There are many trails throughout the park for hiking and cycling as well as picnic tables, barbecues, a

burger restaurant and two playgrounds.

One of the most colourful characters is a giant fibreglass moose: Mac the moose. It is claimed to be the world's largest moose at 9.8m feet tall and a weight of approximately 10 long ons. It was Moose Jaw's first tourist attractions and has never lost its curiosity value and charm.