

Royalty visits the Okanagan

By Maurey Williams – March 2018

Maurey Williams spoke about a time in the fall of 1893 when Franz Ferdinand visited the Okanagan Valley. Franz Ferdinand was crown prince and in line to the throne of the Habsburg Empire. When he came to the Okanagan he was a young man of 29 eager to hunt animals – bagging a grizzly bear being his most cherished wish.

Years later, Ferdinand's execution was the tipping point that set off the First World War. While he lived, he was a keen hunter, killing over 274,511 animals. Conservation was not a high priority for him! However, his journey did provide valuable photos and personal observations about the area.

His diary notes give us a glimpse into the changing lifestyle of First Nations and how they were being pushed off the land and sadly becoming colonized by European interlopers. He hired 150 "Indian guides" for his hunting adventure up to Brent Mountain, just east of Penticton. Many of the photos Maurey showed included recognizable landmarks and even a photo of the powerful and wealthy land owner and rancher, Tom Ellis. We look forward to the article Maurey is writing on the subject. As for Ferdinand, he never did catch the prized grizzly he was after!