

James Macleod

Colonel James Macleod embodied the larger-than-life myth of the Mounties.

On the terrible March West he led by example, growing a great golden beard to keep off the mosquitos and flies. His pragmatism in detouring to Fort Benton, Montana for supplies and his wisdom in hiring Jerry Potts as a guide ensured the recruits' survival.

Once the forts were built, Macleod enforced a watchful version of frontier law. He was a close friend of Chief Crowfoot and oversaw the signing of Treaty 7. As a magistrate, he meted out tough but fair justice, although the rules decreed from Eastern Canada did not always fit the West.

Liquor was outlawed but everyone drank, and Macleod could outdrink everyone. After one legendary competition, when Macleod was the last man standing, the second last man managed to ask, "By God, Colonel, where do you put it?"

Crowfoot called him Bull's Head. His subordinates called him Sir. His wife Mary called him Jimbo. He was the premier Mountie, constructing their myth as much as their myth constructed the West.



Lieutenant-Colonel James F. Macleod, North-West Mounted Police Commissioner, 1876-1880
Glenbow Archives NA-23-2

Macleod the Judge

As a judge, James Macleod helped shape his vision of the West – a secure and peaceful colony of central Canada. Macleod heard both civil and criminal cases as he travelled throughout the North-West Territories. He was known as a fair and impartial judge.

“Colonel Macleod did not profess to be a very well-read lawyer ... the nicer distinctions and subtleties of the law did not appeal to his type of mind at all,” said C.C. McCaul, a defence lawyer and friend of Macleod’s. “He professed, however, a solid sense of justice and a fund of common sense; and, above all, he was a gentleman and very human, the best of all qualities in a judge.”

Full Name: James Farquarson Macleod

Born: September 25, 1836 – Died: September 5, 1894

Additional Resources

- **Alberta Champions Society**
<https://albertachampions.org/Champions/macleod-james-f-1836-1894/>
- **Dictionary of Canadian Biography**
http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macleod_james_farquharson_12E.html
- **The Canadian Encyclopedia**
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/james-farquharson-macleod>

Our Collections

Glenbow Museum

<https://www.glenbow.org>

Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>