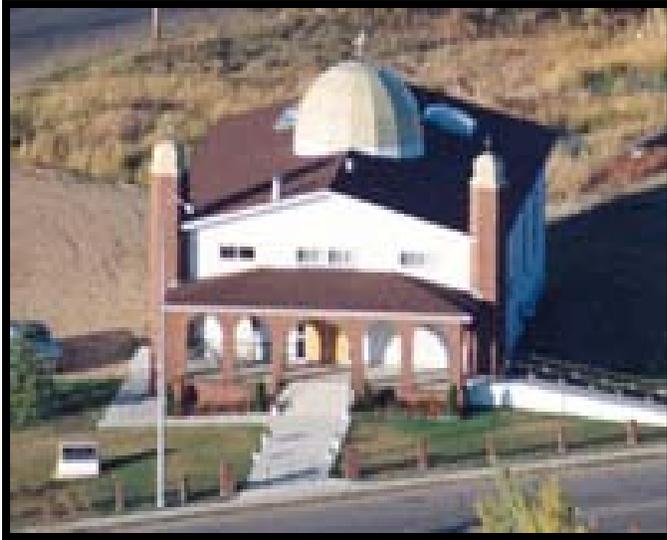


## Lac La Biche Mosque History



During a period in Canadian history, known as the "Laurier Wheat Boom," the Liberal Government of Sir Wilfred Laurier promoted immigration to Canada. Hundreds of thousands answered the call between 1896 and 1911. Some of these immigrants came from the Middle East area, now known as Lebanon and settled in various places in Canada. Some of these settlers pushed further west and in fact some came to the Lac La Biche area. A couple of these

settlers were: Ali Abouchadi (a.k.a.- Alexander Hamilton). The other was Hussein Ali Abougoush, (a.k.a.- Sine Alley).

These two gentlemen settled in and around the Lac La Biche area and encouraged other Lebanese people to join them. As a result, more people followed and by the late 1940's almost ten families were present. Most of these Lebanese settlers who came to Lac La Biche were of Islamic faith. In the early 1950's, they decided to form an organization, better known as the "Lac La Biche Muslim Association" and the first objective was to build a multi-function center to serve the religious and social needs of this small Muslim community. During these early years, the members would meet at each other's homes especially on Fridays to do the noon prayers.

As the community grew larger, they finally pooled their resources together, in the spring of 1958 and started building this center. The community hired a carpenter and they all took turns doing manual labor and completed the building later in the fall of that year. This center was the second center built in Alberta, next to Edmonton. In 1960, the community finally received its first Imam (Minister) from the Middle East to serve the religious and education needs of the community.

In 1966, the Lac La Biche School Division decided to build a high school behind this Islamic Center and they needed the site for an access to the school. An Agreement was reached by the Town of Lac La Biche, the School Board, and by the Muslim community to purchase a new site for a new and larger center. Two lots were purchased east of this site and the Muslim community center was moved and additions

were made to it to make it bigger. The top floor served as a mosque and the basement served as a school and social gatherings. Approximately twenty years later, the community grew larger and again, a new center was urgently needed. ( Muslims now form about 14% of the total population of Lac La Biche). The Muslim community pooled their resources, and with some help from other communities, as well as the Wild Rose Foundation, built the present-day center in 1986.

Lac La Biche is well known throughout the Muslim world for its hospitality and vibrant activities. The Lac La Biche Muslim community is proud of its accomplishments and hopes that the up-coming generation will continue to work together to preserve their religion and culture.