## Regional sasktoday.com NEWS-OPTIMIST Service the Bettlefords since 1905 Serving the Battlefords since 1905 Thursday, June 29, 2023 **Published every Thursday**





As the federal government and Parks Canada push for reconciliation, some less-thansavoury parts of Canada's history run the risk of being forgotten, including the seemingly abandoned Fort Battleford National Historic Site.

**By Miguel Fenrich** Staff Reporter

BATTLEFORD – A line of children with red face paint swirled in the shape of a maple leaf wait

impatiently for Canada Day cake, anticipating scavenger hunts or seeing cannons fired during live demonstrations. The late autumn ghost tours see tales of long-dead settlers



recounted to teenagers by candlelight inside buildings reeking of old sweat and dried wood sap. Scores of guests from across Canada line up at gifts shops and for horse-drawn wagons, or mull over artifacts and read signs at one of Saskatchewan's three oldest national historic sites.

Or at least, they used to. The Fort Battleford National Historic Site, a former stronghold for the North West Mounted Police, currently celebrating its 147th birthday following its establishment in 1876, reeks of history. The site is desperate to tell the story of Colonel Otter and his attack on Chief Poundmaker and his people, the 1885 rebellion as Indigenous people sought to stand up to the Canadian Government and the subsequent largest mass execution in Canada.

eford, nearly 400 kilometres northwest of the province's current capital of years since the fort and Regina, and south toward many other NWMP strongthe remnants of a residential school and the former capital of the North West Territories.

This year, 2023, marks holds across the country were among the first sites to be recognized for their historical value in 1923.

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Today, all that remains of the once-thriving historic site are locked buildings and boarded-up windows, pamphlets that walk guests through self-guided tours of the grounds, and Continued on Page 6

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The flags of 11 local Indigenous communities are flying at Fort Battleford, but not much else is happening. | Photo by Miguel Fenrich

The site looks north toward the Town of Battl-





