

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 4, Issue 3, June 1, 2013

Produced by

South Peace

REGIONAL ARCHIVES



The last ferry run on the day of the Smoky River Bridge opening, August 17, 1949, with the bridge in the background. A large number of spectators are gathered on both sides of the river. SPRA 116.09.01.02.466, DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum Society fonds.



*All new Cemetery Tours this year! Take a Sunday afternoon trip in the County of Grande Prairie, June 9th and July 14th.
See back page for more details.*

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TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY
South Peace Regional Archives Society

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The purpose of the SPRA Society is to promote and encourage the appreciation and study of the history of the south Peace River Country by acquiring, preserving and making accessible to the public, records in any format which reflect the history of this area.

June 1, 2013

Dear Members & Supporters;

Mary has suggested that it might be nice if she is not the only one editing the newsletter. Since I recently worked on the DeBolt photograph collection, this issue seemed like a good opportunity to initiate me into the world of newletter editorship!

The DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum has been a great supporter of South Peace Regional Archives over the years. Not only have they contributed their own records, but also collections of records from the DeBolt area that find their way to the museum. We appreciate having such strong support from the museums in our area and DeBolt is a glowing example. In fact, the DeBolt Museum and curator Fran Moore were presented with the 2013 Beth Sheehan Archives award at the March Annual General Meeting of the SPRA Society.

The overall theme for this issue is the Municipal District of Greenview. Greenview encompasses a very large area and we sometimes struggle to document this part of our region adequately. In an effort to reach further into the region, we’ve invited contributions from Little Smoky and Fox Creek.

If you’ve visited the Archives recently, you may have noticed a few changes around here. See page 20 for more on that!

We are continuing to offer Cemetery Tours this year, but at a different location. We’re hitting the road and venturing out into the County of Grande Prairie to bring you new stories about the lives and communities of the Lake Saskatoon/Scenic Heights area. Please join us Sunday June 9th or Sunday July 14th, but don’t forget to register in advance! See page 24 for more details.

Thank you all for supporting the South Peace Regional Archives Society. Have a great summer! And maybe seize the opportunity to visit Greenview and the places mentioned in this issue.

Sincerely,
Leslie Pearson, Archivist (and Guest Editor)

We Need Your Help!



Did you know that the City of Grande Prairie is celebrating 100 years of incorporation in 2014?

In preparation, South Peace Regional Archives is seeking **photographs of downtown buildings** and **records of businesses**, past and present, which have operated in the City.

If you have any questions or material to contribute, please **contact** Mary Nutting at **780-830-5105** or spra@telus.net.

The material gathered will be used for **displays** and **projects** during 2014 and serve as a permanent archival record of the history of business in this city.



Image: SPRA 2003.71.04, Bill's Café on 100 Street and 100 Avenue, ca. 1945. Cropped from original size.

This Issue of Telling Our Stories
is sponsored by
Mr. Mathew Wozniak

DeBolt & District

Pioneer Museum Society fonds

DeBolt & District Pioneer Museum Society fonds. -- [ca. 1905]-2006. -- 99 cm of textual records. -- 737 photographs. -- 1,453 negatives. -- 16 maps.

Agency History

The DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum focuses on the East Smoky area, which is the area between the Smoky River and Sturgeon Lake. The origins of the Museum Society date back to the Hubert Memorial Park Committee, formed in 1969. Tom Hubert left his estate to the DeBolt Country Club, the DeBolt United Church, and the East Smoky Royal Canadian Legion #89, who each had two representatives on the Park Committee (Jean Pushor and Art Boe, Winnie Moore and Sigfred Welander, and John Nielsen and Donald Matlock respectively). They decided to create a museum in the park, starting with the DeBolt United Church manse, which was already located there. Work was done to repair the manse, gather and place artefacts, and beautify the park. The DeBolt & District Pioneer Museum Society was incorporated in September 1975 out of the Park Committee with Winnie Moore as President, Jean Pushor as Secretary-Treasurer, and Fran Moore as Curator.

The aims of the society were to build and maintain a museum and to publish a local history book. The Museum was officially opened in the fall of 1976 and Hubert Memorial Park in August of 1977. Further improvements were made to the park in

succeeding years, including the addition of playground equipment. The second aim of publishing a local history book was accomplished in 1978 with the printing of Across the Smoky. In 1979 another historical building was added to the Museum with the donation of the Mehlum barn, which was moved to the park, restored, and officially opened in 1981. The Mehlum ice house was later donated and moved to the park site. The Museum continued to grow, building a shed for additional storage space in 1982 and a second shed in 1985.

Work was started on a second publication, on the Edson Trail, in 1986. A cairn to the Edson Trail Pioneers was erected at the



Left, Winnie Moore and Jean Wilson mixing mortar for the DeBolt United Church Manse in 1974. The Manse is visible in the background. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0468. Below, Edna Stevenson cutting the ribbon to open the DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum, September 1976. SPRA 116.09.01.01.478.



The John Mehlum Barn being moved to Hubert Memorial Park in spring 1979. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0493.

community hall and the Edson to Grande Prairie Trail book was published in 1988. A smaller book in honour of the 60th anniversary of the DeBolt Country Club & Agricultural Society was published in 1989.

1989 saw the donation of the Edson Trail teach-erage, which was moved to the Park. In 1993, a re-search project on "Sawmills: Across the Smoky" was begun. The ma-terial gathered was published as a small book and later included in the sequel to Across the Smoky, Bridges to the Past. Work on Bridges to the Past also began in 1993, although the book was not completed until 2001.

Another building was added to the Museum in 1993 when the East Smoky Legion #89 dissolved. The Legion Hall remains in its original location

and is used for meetings and workbees. In 1999, the Crowe House was moved to Hubert Memorial Park and restored as a bachelor residence, general store, and post office. An- other house, the Turner House, was moved to the Park and restored, opening to the public in 2005. The following year, DeBolt United Church, across the road from the Park, was also donated to the Museum Society and is now the site of the Museum office, remaining in its original location. In 2006, the Museum was gifted the Bickell Fossil Display and con-verted part of the first shed to accommodate it as a permanent display.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of research files, pub-lished copies, and correspondence regard- ing the planning and writing of five publica- tions. The fonds also includes records gathered by the Museum Society, for use in their publications and for other purposes, including original letters and documents, paper artefacts, maps, and photo- graphs and negatives.

Left, the Crowe House at Goodwin Corner. SPRA 116.09.02.025. Below, the Turner House at Crooked Creek. SPRA 116.09.02.302. The photo- graphs were taken by Fran Moore and Irene Gitzel in 1987 as part of a project to document the pioneer buildings in the Goodwin, DeBolt, Crooked Creek, and Clarkson Val- ley/Sturgeon Heights areas.





All of the photographs on these two pages are from the DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum Society fonds, Photograph series.



From above, clockwise. Cornwall Creek children playing on the roof of the old Thompson shack, ca. 1935. SPRA 0116.09.01.01.0290. F. W. Clegg, a friend, and J. H. Clegg by the Simo-nette River, ca. 1930, while looking for land. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0369. Bill Sargent with his children, Fay and Ken, ca. 1944. The Morrison-Sargent bus, the first bus in the Peace Country, is visible in the back-ground. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0191. The Junior Red Cross parade at the 1930 DeBolt Sports Day/Stam-pede, including Anita Peterson, Winnie DeBolt, Dorothy DeBolt, Mary Doerkson, and others. SPRA 116.09.01.02.527. The Goodwin Co-op, ca. 1940. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0705. Elizabeth and Georgina Given on the steps of William's cabins at Sturgeon Lake, 1931. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0069. Guy Clarke and his children, Morton, Don, Fay, Carole, and Eileen, having a picnic. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0031. A group of women and children at a birthday party at Good-win, ca. 1930. SPRA 116.09.01.02.574. Bill Glaubitz and the Vic Laroche fam-ily, a brushing crew, ca. 1930. SPRA 116.09.01.01.0332.



Excerpts from Iosegun Reflections

Published 1992. Reprinted with permission of The Fox Creek Historical Association.

In the Beginning

Researched and Compiled by Linda Horyn

Our town site was part of the tranquil forest until the 1950's. Oil had been discovered in the Valleyview area in 1953, the Virginia Hills area in early 1957 and the search for oil and natural gas continued. This exploration, and the construction of the highway brought a lot of activity to the area.

Mr. Ryan Krause, a retired Whitecourt Forest superintendent, recorded in his notes that it was on June 6, 1952 that he and Victor Heath, a Forest engineer, chose the site for Fox Creek, which is located in Sections 29 and 32, Township 62, Range 19, West of the fifth Meridian. The town was named after the nearby stream, Fox Creek, which is on the west edge of town and flows into Iosegun Lake. The Fox Creek town site was surveyed October 27th to 29th, 1955. A site was also surveyed for the proposed town on the east shore of Iosegun Lake. This site was so wet that no one was interested in the development of this land, and subsequently the government eventually discontinued this proposal. In July of 1955 a survey was done for a subdivision at Two Creeks, located at Section 28-61-16-5; however, the development plans for this location never materialized. Highway 43 was officially opened in the fall of 1955 and within a few years the settlement of Fox Creek became a reality.

In September of 1956 the Alberta Forest Service began building their Ranger Station, consisting of two houses, near the highway. The Ranger Station was completed in 1957. The first Fox Creek Forestry employees had an engine shed to supply power, an artesian well, and had to travel to Whitecourt for food supplies.

Right, Manix Construction building the road between Valleyview and Fox Creek, 1952. SPRA 175.113.3.

Fox Creek's first streets were constructed, First Street West (the bottom portion of Kaybob Drive) and Highway Avenue, in 1956.

Phillips Petroleum drilled a significant well on the shore of Jerry Lake in 1957. An oil field had been discovered, the North Kaybob field!

In 1957 the first two businesses were completed: the BA (British American) Service Station and Café, Fox Creek Services, by Ernest Coulson and Archie Dunlop, and the Iosegun Lake Imperial Esso and Café, which was built by Andy Babiy. On March 18, 1958 the Iosegun Lake Post Office came into existence. It wasn't until 1968 that the Post Office was officially recognized as Fox Creek Post Office.

In 1957 only a small number of people were living in the hamlet of Fox Creek. Among them were: Ernest Coulson, Ida Coulson, Desiree Coulson, Verna Fabrick, Carolanne Junk, Hank McArthur, Ernest Psikla, Al and Lillian Sturko, Clarence and Orphi Swaren, Cam and Kathie Watt and their children Jim, Judy and Laurie. Jim Watt, probably the only child of school age in town at that time, boarded with the Merrifields at Little Smoky so he could attend school in Valleyview. The grade two student would travel to Fox Creek on the Greyhound bus every weekend so he could be with his family. Wesley and Dorothy Reed were living at Iosegun Lake.

Our long time residents, Jim and Mary Espeseth, were working for Glen Contractors, who had a road construction camp north of town.

There was an influx of drilling camps, rigs, road construction camps and



sawmills in the area during the late 1950's and these were the forerunners of the development of Fox Creek.

Within five years of the town's settlement the community had obtained necessities such as a school and a mobile telephone.

Fox Creek was in the news with the discovery of the Kaybob South Beaverhill Lake "A" Pool Gas Field in 1961. Five major plants were built between 1961 and 1972 in the Fox Creek area, which resulted in the rapid growth and evolution of Fox Creek.

Dan McLean Interview

by Linda Horyn

The Beaver and Slavy people lived in this area before the Cree pushed them out. Cree bands lived at Crooked Lake, Giroux Lake and the outlet at Iosegun Lake during the fall and winter. In the summer, everyone would meet at Sturgeon Lake where they would pick berries and dry them on moose hide. Fish would be caught, dried, and later roasted over a fire. Wild rhubarb was also cooked. In July, sap from the white poplar tree was eaten, which Dan preferred to the gummy sap of the Jack Pine tree that some people ate. You would know that there were natives nearby when you saw peeled trees. These trees would die and then be used for firewood. The little money they saw was spent on groceries and any extra might go for plug tobacco. The tobacco was mixed with dried cranberry leaves, red willow or they would take the outside bark off a tree, peel the inside green out, dry it and then mix it with the tobacco. It smelled good and made the tobacco go further.

Dan said, "The country was beautiful. It was like walking on a carpet." Squirrels were plentiful and 1928 was the first year their pelts were purchased. There were hardly any moose or deer in the area compared to today. You had to be a good hunter and tracker to get a moose and if you did, it was shared with others. When a moose was killed, it

was dried thoroughly so the flies wouldn't contaminate the meat and spoil it. During the winter, dogs were used to hunt bear in their dens. The meat would be eaten, the fat would be used and the hides were sold to the Hudson's Bay Co. Years ago the soldiers wore hats made out of bear hides.

In 1918 the Spanish flu epidemic struck Alberta and it could be caught just by talking to an infected person. Dan was one of the many children at the convent in Sturgeon Lake at this time and there were mornings when he would discover some of the children in the dormitory had died during the night. Jim Mitchell would wrap their bodies in blankets and bury them. The ground was frozen and a pick and fire had to be used. Some of Dan's maternal uncles were among the victims of the flu at Iosegun Lake and are buried there.

A burial ground at Smoke Lake was destroyed when the site was dug up for dirt. Two graves still exist at Smoke Lake.

After 1918, only a few native families continued to trap in the Iosegun Lake area. Besides Dan, some of the other trappers were Napio, who lived on the north side of Smoke Lake, Dave Kappo, Pete Harvey, the Moses, Stoneys and Hamlins.

Ed Robb and Jack Blair, white trappers, lived at the Tony. They had horses, hay and sold groceries. They named the nearby creek, Fox Creek. Theodore Walters lived in this area in the late 1910's and the early 1920's. When Dan was in the convent, there was a man living at Iosegun Lake by the name of Stewart. Stewart made moonshine on the Edson Trail and in the spring would bring it down to his Iosegun Lake cabin to sell. Over the years, there have always been trappers who have made their home in the Iosegun Lake area.

Dan recalls that prior to the depression, moose were scarce and when people were going hungry, moose in large numbers moved into the area. The people knew the Creator was looking after them and they were thankful.

Dan McLean resided at Sturgeon Lake in later years and passed away April 9, 2002.

Explore the History Across the Smoky

by Mary Nutting

In the last issue of this newsletter, we explored the history of the Bezanson area. Today we will cross the Smoky River and explore the history of Goodwin, the area between the Smoky River, where the Goodwin Bros. once ran a Stopping Place, and the Goodwin Ranch.

As you come east out of the Smoky River valley on Highway 43, look for the Forestry Trunk Road. St. Paul's Church and Cemetery are still on the north-west corner of this intersection. Across the road east was the Goodwin Store and Post Office.

The Goodwin Post Office was established in 1923, in the home of Violet Jordan. Mrs. Jordan was a World War I widow who had taken a soldier's grant and was homesteading with the assistance of her artist father, Urias Sherk. After she re-married, the post office moved to Douwe Knobbe's home (where they also had a store) two miles south for a few years, before finally settling in the Goodwin Store ca. 1936. It was Krause's Store then, but in 1942 the Goodwin community organized a Co-op and bought out Krause's at Goodwin Corner. Both store and post office operated here until 1962, when the building burned down and was not replaced.

Meanwhile, across the road, St. Paul's Anglican Church and Rectory were built in 1939, with money donated by a wealthy patron in England and volunteer labour from the people in the area. The first grave in the cemetery was Mr. Douwe Knobbe in 1946, and his wife Anna that same year. The next couple to be buried there were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams from DeBolt. There was a cemetery at DeBolt, but they were buried at Goodwin because they were Anglican. This is now a community cemetery, cared for by community volunteers, with no restrictions as to religion.

Across the road south of the Co-op was Wallace White, known for his blacksmithing skills. He built a large log house here in 1931, a welcome stop for travelers between DeBolt and Grande Prairie and a

good place to get your blacksmithing done. It was also where the earliest teachers for the East Smoky School boarded.

Turning south on the Forestry Trunk Road, we see the Goodwin Hall on the west side of the road. This is where the East Smoky School once stood. Established in 1924, classes were taught for three years in a borrowed log cabin, summers only. The next building was log, with the words EAST SMOKY painted in white letters on the roof. In 1934 a new school, designed to also be a community hall, was built on this site. After East Smoky School joined the Division, another new school was built one mile south across the road. The school closed in 1954, but the Goodwin Hall is still in use.

Continuing south, we come to where a Catholic Community Settlement was planned in the late 1920s, spearheaded by the Croken Brothers (Pat, Rudy and Eugene) and Father Artes. This was soon abandoned in favour of the Grande Prairie area, and some of the land here at Goodwin was purchased by Mr. Xavier Vogelbacker, a community-minded bachelor.

In 1934, Mr. Vogelbacker helped organize The Goodwin Social Club, which held meetings and dances, first in his large log home, then in the log hall which was also the school. Club memberships were \$.25 a year and averaged 30-40 the first few years. The main event was the monthly dance. Later, the club purchased a piano and added summer picnics and Christmas parties to the schedule. The club eventually merged with the DeBolt Country Club & Agricultural Society, which still exists today.

At Twp Rd 714 you can take a side trip to one of the earliest and most romantic parts of this settlement. This was where the Canadian National Railway had surveyed a route into the Peace Country. From here you could look down on the new town of Bezanson, with its ferry, riverboat, flour mill, blacksmith shop, stores and restaurant.

Knowing about the railway survey, many of the early adventurers filed for land in this area, including A.M. Bezanson, the Goodwin Brothers, Douwe Knobbe, and Reg Crowe, who established a ranch on several sections of land.

Another homesteader was Clement Gawlor "Jim" Mead, minister's son, Boer War Veteran, and experienced rancher, in 1914. At 38 years of age, he had just married Kate Thompson who had come in with her mother and siblings in 1910. Perhaps they were planning to live here, but the year they filed, World War I started, and experienced English soldiers were expected to fight for England. The homestead was abandoned. Kate was expecting a baby in 1915, but after the baby was born, Jim left her with her mother at Bear Lake and followed his friends, Captain Charles Nicholson and Anglican Minister Hugh Speke, to war. All three died overseas.

Of course, the railway never did materialize and the townsite of Bezanson died, along with many of the dreams of the settlers.

But the land was magnificent. In 1918, Christopher McLennan arrived and filed on a homestead in the hills overlooking the confluence of the Smoky, Simonette, and Wapiti Rivers. Around 1930, Chris McLennan died after a short illness and was buried here on his homestead, on a high hill overlooking the Smoky Valley.

There is a second grave on this ridge. Jim Newberry arrived in 1920, with a wife and five children, and filed on the SW of section 35, just north of here. He became ill suddenly and died within 12 hours. He is buried on a knoll behind where their homestead house once stood.

Trace your journey back to the Forestry Trunk road and head south down Simonette Hill. As you approach the river, on the right side of the road you would have seen Joe Newman's lumber and shingle mill. On both sides of the river, lovely little camping spots on small benches of land were attracting campers even in April.

Turn around in the campsite and enjoy the trip back towards Goodwin Corner. Turn east on Twp

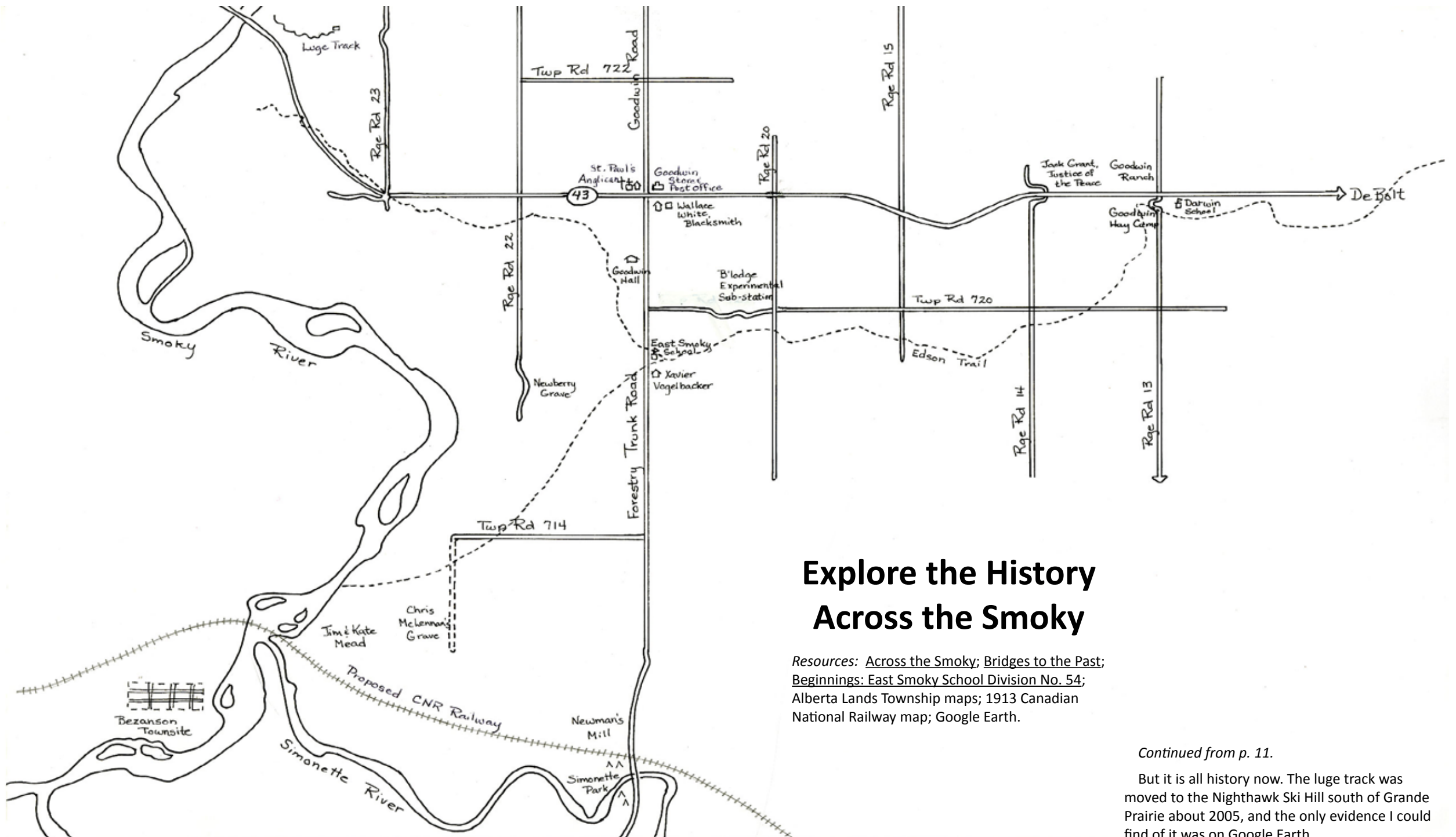
Rd 720, past where the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm had a sub-station on Bill & Sue Perkin's land from about 1934 to 1948. Across the Smoky tells us that *"there were about 15 acres of test plots for grasses, grains and clover. Each year there was a Field Day where friends and neighbours gathered to look over the test plots and listen to Field Supervisors from Beaverlodge discuss the results of their experiments. In the first few years horses, cattle, pigs and chickens were judged and there was always a big vegetable and flower garden for visitors to wander through. Lunch was served by one of the local Ladies Clubs, but Sue Perkins always made a big freezer of homemade ice cream for the children."* (p. 337)

Continue east to Rge Rd 13 and turn north. As you near Highway 43, you are crossing a part of the Edson Trail. This was where the Goodwin Brothers had their home ranch. On this side of the highway was the "hay camp" where they stored feed for their own cattle and for their Stopping Place on the east side of the Smoky River. Most of the corrals were across the highway, with about 500 head of cattle. In the winter of 1919-1920, unusually heavy snowfall caused the death of about half the herd.

In 1934, Darwin School District was formed, and a log school was built on this quarter. In 1949, a World War II barracks salvaged from the American base at the Grande Prairie Airport was moved to NW 3, across the road to the east for a new school.

At Highway 43, head west back to the Smoky River. Coming down the hill, you pass the site of the Luge Track. Bridges to the Past (p. 65) tells us, *"They built the first luge track in western Canada, long before the sport became popular for the 1988 Olympics in Calgary. In the mid 1980s they started the local luge club, built a small chalet and Ernie Moody hauled it to his lease land at the top of the Smoky River valley. In 1985, Henry Pirker coached the Canadian National Luge Team at their first world championship competition in Aosta, Italy. Mark Pirker was on that team. Felicity Pirker won gold at the Nationals."*

Continued on p. 13.



Explore the History Across the Smoky

Resources: [Across the Smoky](#); [Bridges to the Past](#); [Beginnings: East Smoky School Division No. 54](#); Alberta Lands Township maps; 1913 Canadian National Railway map; Google Earth.

Continued from p. 11.

But it is all history now. The luge track was moved to the Nighthawk Ski Hill south of Grande Prairie about 2005, and the only evidence I could find of it was on Google Earth.

Smoke Signals, Gumboots and Muddy Trails

Little Smoky Community Center History Book Committee

The Little Smoky Community Center is located 40 km south of Valleyview and 40 km north of Fox Creek. Both of these communities support and participate in community events and were supportive in the printing of our history.



Denise Gervais, Doreen Hebert, and Karen Danner holding copies of Smoke Signals, Gumboots and Muddy Trails. Photograph courtesy of Doreen Hebert.

The Little Smoky Community started the long process of compiling our amazing history in 2005. The book details the beginning of our Community with the building of the highway to the present time. From hall dances, community weddings, jambores, the popular wild game suppers, archery, curling and our Country Chapel, so many people have passed through our doors and we hope many more will cross the threshold.

Smoke Signals, Gumboots and Muddy Trails has something for everyone young and old alike to read. The book is full of pictures from today and years gone by. The many stories within the covers will surely bring back many memories of both sad and happy times, thanks to those who took the time to submit them. *Smoke Signals, Gumboots*

and Muddy Trails, A History of Little Smoky can be purchased for \$95.00 from the Valleyview Library, our President, Denise Gervais, Vice President Karen Danner, Secretary Connie Amundson, Treasurer Laura Hyatt, Community Hall Bookings Hope Kristiansen.

Getting to School

by Sylvia Behrens (Merrifield)

Excerpt reprinted with permission

In the late 1950s, settlers were moving into the area and schools were needed. New school districts were formed: Dawn, Dusk, and Smoky Crossing. Rather than build schools in these areas, the residents decided it would be better to use the funds to buy buses and have the children taken to Valleyview. Although intentions were good and the highway was being built, the roads to the homesteads were non-existent - they were actually only trails that they themselves had chopped in to their yard sites.

In January of 1956, Harry and Evelyn Merrifield, along with their two daughters Sylvia and Sandra, moved to the area south of the hamlet of Little Smoky. The road from Whitecourt was in the process of being completed - really just the graveled base. John Van Gundy, Jack Merrifield and Harry Merrifield while looking for new land drove to Athabasca around Slave Lake, Peace River and then to Valleyview and south to the hamlet of Little Smoky. It was there they would file on homestead land. Never before had they seen so much top soil, and never before had they seen so much bush and rainfall. The three families were able to trade their flooded land at Whitecourt to the government for the unopened homestead land south of the Little Smoky Township 66 and Range 21.

The homesteaders all had school-age children, and those families already living in the hamlet of Little Smoky - the Druars, Les McLean, Garth McLean all needed to go to school. In September and October of 1956, they organized the Smoky River Crossing School Division #1507, so the grant that was available to build a school was used to purchase a school bus. Jack Merrifield was the first board member. For the first two months the children were taken by McLeans and Harry Merrifield to where the Leslie's sawmill was located and where the school bus run to Valleyview began. Then, for at least the remainder of 1956 school year, the bus run was extended south from McLean's sawmill to Harry Merrifield's. Harold Willson drove that bus and many cold nights had to light a fire under the bus to keep it from freezing up so it would start in the morning. After organizing the district and purchasing the bus, the children were picked up from Harry Merrifield's and also included the hamlet of Little Smoky which was the end of the bus run to Valleyview. Early bus drivers for that run were Mike Hoyda and Ed Farnquist with a 24-passenger bus. When the bridges were being built, the run was interrupted and families again had to drive the children to the bridges for pick-up.

Alvie Smith took over the new bus route from four miles south of Little Smoky Hamlet to Valleyview. You could set your clock by him, and there were no more frozen feet or hands waiting for pick-up. The run now included children who lived along the highway - the Wafler, Gliege, Warren, Boman, Marskell and Antipowich families were some of the passengers. Melvin Knight, Cheri Smith and Nina Merrifield were the first bus monitors who ensured quiet and order on the new 54-passenger bus.

Wages for bus drivers were \$5 per day, and it was a good job that fit well with farming. Other early drivers, although not necessarily on this exact route were Tommy Reger, Don Hyatt and Gilbert Gliege.

As the government opened more crown land up for homestead, there was a need for bus pick-ups for children who lived off the highway in the Shell

Simonette area. Because the Simonette Road was an oil company road, it was designated an unauthorized territory, and a bus couldn't be sent to an unauthorized territory. In 1965, families living on the Shell Simonette Road - including the Schultz, Krumm, Moro, Chouklous and Meyers families met with the school board to get a school bus route established. Mille Myers-Hyatt did a lot of the ground work to get the bus run set up. The children in this area were then picked up by Bud Brown, the first driver for the Off-Highway #43 run.

Little Smoky Service Station

Excerpt reprinted with permission

In about 1954, Everett and Dorothy Watson of Blue Ridge recognized the need for gas and restaurant services in the Little Smoky area. They decided to build the B/A Service Station (British American). Mr. Watson put a lot of thought into the project and did some scouting and chose Little Smoky to accommodate the crews that were constructing the highway that would join Whitecourt to Little Smoky and on to Valleyview. The first part of the service station was for gas only. Alfred Druar helped with the construction.

In 1957, a cafe was added and it opened for business with Art Skinning of Blue Ridge hired as the first cook. Bill and Pauline MacMillan ran the restaurant, while Alfred Druar ran the service station.

Ernie and Dorothy Harrison owned land at the site and also north of the hamlet site. Alex and Hilda Steinke and their young son Garry, along with Wayne Bourgeois, a son from Hilda's previous marriage, moved to Little Smoky from Mystery Lake near Barrhead. Alex and Hilda took over management of both the B/A Service Station and the Little Smoky Motel from owner Ivan Casey, who was also the MLA for the area at the time. This kept the couple very busy, but Alex would always have a treat for the community children. Hilda also helped out Wannie Knight at the Esso when it got busy, serving

customers at the restaurant making 75 cents an hour. Alex also worked on the gravel crusher that was crushing gravel for the highway, for which he received a wage of \$1.25 an hour.

The cafe closed a few years later and the community club used it for fundraising functions to help with the building of the community hall. It was also used for many years by the Summer Bible Camp which many of the local children attended and enjoyed.

In 1972, the Jaschkes took over the motel, and the Steinkes bought a mobile home and moved it between the motel and service station. Steinkes continued to operate the service station until it was sold to Lawrence and Laurette Hawkins. After that, the Steinkes moved their trailer to a permanent lot in Little Smoky and retired.

In 1972, Lawrence and Laurette Hawkins purchased the business from Ivan Casey and moved from High Level along with two of their three children, Lenora and Bobby. Their daughter Linda stayed behind to attend University. The Hawkins also purchased the Gulf Service Station from Everett Watson.

In 1974 a grocery store was added where the old restaurant used to be, as well as a living quarters in the rear and a tire repair bay which was much-needed by local residents. Leonard and Isadore Ilg were hired to level and fill in all the holes and all the old buildings were removed along with a shack that Nancy Badger and her family had lived in. The new fuel island sported new pumps, the service bay was remodeled and diesel and propane were added.

Peter Stoochnoff, who was a Forest Ranger in Fox Creek from 1978 to 1981, took over operations of the Little Smoky Service station from the Hawkins'. Peter's sister, Patricia, also helped him run the station for a time. Some of the local people employed by Peter were: Brenda Hebert, Danial McLeod, Joanne Curial, Dean Ilg, Kerri Danner, and Wendy Jachinski, to name a few.

Peter was on the Committee that worked with the community and the I.D. to bring a decent water and sewer system to Little Smoky.

After Peter moved away, the business reverted back to Lawrence and Laurette Hawkins.

In March of 1985, Elmer Bauer purchased the Little Smoky Gulf Station, which at that time had the Post Office, Groceries, Gas, Diesel, Propane, Bus Depot, and Tire Repair Service. From Gulf it went to Petro Canada and then went independently to Little Smoky Service Station with fuel being supplied by the U.F.A. The Liquor Store was added to the family business to accommodate the rural area. Following are some of the residents from the community that worked along with Elmer and his family at the store: Brenda Iggulden, Edie Knight, Gail Wilburn, Sandra Moore, Gail Curial and his nephew, Kelvin Bauer.

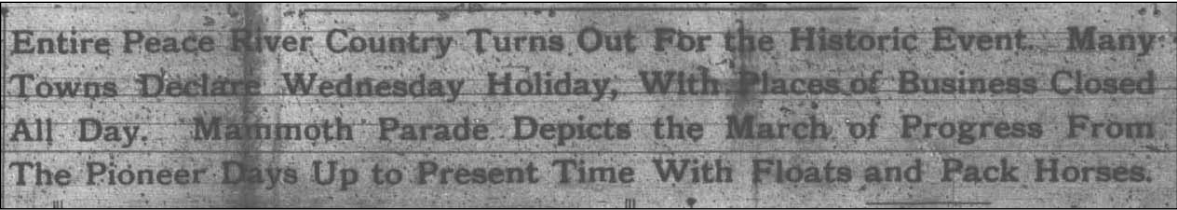
Continued from p. 19.

This society maintains a Directory of Archives, also on their website, <http://www.archivesalberta.org/>, which gives contact information for each member.

Sometimes the local community of interest does not have an archives. If this is the case, try contacting the local museum or library. In the absence of an official archives, these organizations often fill the gap and collect archival material. It may be helpful to contact the local municipality office as well. Accessing the applicable provincial or territorial archives is also worthwhile. These are frequently older institutions with mandates covering the entire province in which they are located. If there is no a local archives and people are concerned about preserving their records, they occasionally approach larger institutions further afield.

Archival records are preserved to be used and can contain a wealth of information for the genealogist and family history researcher. Plan to visit a local archives, like SPRA, soon. We will be happy to assist you!

(Old) Greenview News



“Bridge Over Smoky River Officially Opened On Wed., Aug. 17” blares the headline of the August 25, 1949 Herald-Tribune. The above clipping is the sub-headline and captures some of the excitement connected to this important event. The article goes on to state:

Announcement that the official opening of the 720 ft. steel bridge over the Smoky River would be held Wednesday, August 17 at 3.00 p.m. was made by the committee last Friday, August 12th. The announcement came as a surprise, as the original plans had been made for August 31. However, farmers in the Peace River country objected to the date, because of harvest operations at that time, it was explained. To make it possible for them to attend, the committee moved the date forward to August 17th.

For that reason, The Herald-Tribune was unable to announce the date in last issue. It is hoped that all who planned on attending the mammoth celebration heard of the change of date in time to attend. It was announced continually over CFP. The news was also sent to outside papers where former Peace River residents might see it.

The long-awaited bridge is 720 feet long, has five spans supported by two abutments and four piers. Work was begun on the bridge about Oct. 22, 1948. It was completed about August 14th, 1949, ending forever the tyranny of the Smoky River over those who would cross it.

Since The Herald-Tribune, like the other business establishments in Grande Prairie, was closed Wednesday to attend the second greatest event in the settlement of the south Peace River country, details of the mammoth parade and celebration will have to wait until next issue.

The Herald-Tribune made good its promise and the next issue is full of bridge news and features reflecting on the pioneer days across the region. This issue of the paper is accessible through the “Our Future, Our Past” website (http://www.ourfutureourpast.ca/newspapr/np_page2.asp?code=necp0214.jpg). The cover photograph of this issue of “Telling Our Stories” also shows this event. As a point of interest, are there any of our readers who remember being at the event? If so, please share your memories with us for inclusion in a later issue. Also, does anyone have any thoughts on what the greatest event in the settlement of the south Peace River country, referred to by the Herald-Tribune reporter above, could have been?

Transportation issues and dreams were nothing new. An excerpt from the April 20, 1928 issue collection of DeBolt happenings states:

Four new homesteaders, with 14 head of horses, have arrived on their places this week. Let ‘em come. When we get the country all settled from here to Whitecourt, we will build our own road.

And from the November 16, 1928 issue:

Mr. Allen assures us that we might expect to see a fairly decent road to Sturgeon Lake next summer. Here’s hoping he is right.

Some things never change!

What Archives Do and Why We Do It

by Leslie Pearson, B Sc, MAS

Author's Note: Nearly a year ago, I did a presentation for the local genealogical society on using local archives for genealogical research. If you were unfortunate enough to miss this enthralling presentation, here's your chance to get in on the fun! And if this topic is just not something that appeals to you, please send me a question or idea so I can write you an article that does!

While many genealogists and family history researchers are familiar with the large databases and services available online, local, community archives are frequently neglected in family history quests. This is unfortunate because the records held by local archives often contain a wealth of information about families and individuals that remains hidden except to those willing to dig for it.

At the most basic level, archival records are used indirectly every time an online database like Ancestry is accessed. Archival records have been used to create these resources, but the records are not being consulted directly and it is not necessary to visit an archives to access the information. For many people, the information available online is enough to satisfy the questions they have about their family and it is a good place to start, allowing you to gather basic information before going deeper.

Accessing resources such as newspapers, clipping and reference files (including obituaries), and books, particularly family and community history books and memoirs, is also helpful and increases your knowledge base. Local archives usually have reference collections containing some or all of these resources. They also collect personal and family fonds, which are processed under the individual's or family's name and are therefore fairly easy to locate. The kinds of records available in these fonds can include family albums and scrapbooks, home movies, diaries, letters, and important documents like birth certificates, wills, licenses, and income tax returns.

If you have used online databases, consulted local history books, and accessed family collections you will likely have acquired a good amount of information and may be tempted to stop there. These research methods are relatively self-evident and intuitive; however, there is more information available to those who are willing to dig deeper. The goal here is to gather more details about the identity, day-to-day lives, and activities of family members and to examine the environment and community in which they lived and participated. This is where a local archives, like SPRA, really shines.

You can gather detailed information by becoming a detective, broadening your search terms and considering the kinds of things your ancestors might have been involved in as members of the community. The records of community groups and organizations, such as unions, churches, Women's Institutes, baseball leagues, boy scouts, agricultural societies, historical societies, school boards, Elks, and many, many others, are frequently found in local archives. It is highly probable that your family members were involved in at least some of these groups. Using clues gathered from other sources, you can brainstorm what other groups they may have been involved with. What follows is a list of sample questions that can be asked and the kinds of records the answers point to. It is by no means exhaustive.

- Did they have children? Those children probably went to school. Look for school registers. Maybe the parents were members of the school board. Check the minutes of the Board itself and its correspondence.

- Did they live in a municipality? Which one? They must have paid taxes. Are those tax rolls available somewhere? Maybe they served on the local council? Check the minutes. Did they struggle during the Great Depression and have to apply to

the local government for relief? Again, check the minutes. Did they ever have a complaint against the municipality? Maybe this will appear in the correspondence files.

- Did they attend a church? Which one? Were they involved with the Ladies' Aid? Did they teach Sunday school? Did they serve on the board of managers? Church meeting minutes and scrapbooks could be helpful.

- What sort of occupation did they engage in? Were they farmers? Could they have been involved with the local agricultural society, co-op, or 4-H group? If they worked for a company, are that company's records available? Would they have been a member of a professional organization? Did they attend conferences relating to their occupation?

- What sorts of interests did they have? History? Sports? Literature? Crafts? Service? Drama? Try to predict the kinds of clubs and organizations they might have joined.

- Who were their neighbours? Maybe those neighbours mentioned other community members and friends in their records or stories.

- Did they attend community events sponsored by other groups? If there are photographs of these events, family members might be visible in the background!

The key when engaging in this kind of research is to be creative. Even if your ancestors are not specifically mentioned in the records, an image of the kind of community they were a part of can be formed.

You will also need to consider who would have created the records you need, based on who is responsible for the functions shown in the records. Homestead records are a good example. Up until 1930, administering Alberta's land and natural resources was a federal responsibility, meaning that Library and Archives Canada, the national archival repository, is a good place to start. After 1930, land became a provincial responsibility and some of the earlier records were transferred to the Provincial Archives. So for land transactions before

and after 1930, the Provincial Archives is an excellent institution to contact. What about registrations of births, marriages, and deaths? Again, this is a provincial responsibility, so records need to be sought on the provincial level, rather than at a local archives. In this case, the provincial department of vital statistics is where these records can be accessed. What about baptism? This is a church responsibility. Many church bodies maintain their own archives, either at their own local church or higher up in the church hierarchy by district or diocese. Some church bodies do not maintain their own archives and instead decide to donate them to archives in the locality where the church is operating. What about school? Education is a provincial responsibility, but is administered by various local level bodies. This was even more-so in the past. Some records related to education will be found in the Provincial archives, others will be found with the school districts. In some cases, those districts may decide they do not want to administer their own records and will deposit them with their local archives. What about clubs and societies? If they are large, national, or international organizations, they will sometimes require local clubs to forward their records to the national headquarters. In those cases, local archives would not have local club records. Many times however, the clubs are locally based and the records can remain in the communities where they were created, potentially at the local archives.

Finding a local archives may be less challenging than you think. Canada has a good system of archival networks to help you find the information you need. The Canadian Council of Archives is the hub of this network. They maintain a website, <http://www.archivescanada.ca/>, which can be searched for records in local archives. This website also has lists of local archives in each province and territory.

Each province and territory also has a local council or archives society that provides similar services. Alberta is served by the Archives Society of Alberta, headquartered in Edmonton.

Continued on p. 16.

Transitions at the Archives

If you've dropped in at the Archives recently, you've likely noticed a couple of new faces. And you might have missed seeing Karen. The reason is that Karen has decided to retire and we've hired Patricia Greber to take over as our Archives Technician. The other new face is Simone Bowes, our Summer Student, who is working on updating our website and database and moving us into the 21st Century with social media.

Karen has been working at the Archives more than ten years, and has been active in the community of Grande Prairie much longer than that.

Karen's father, Johannes Sorenson, emigrated from Denmark in 1923 and along with his two brothers, took a homestead west of Dixonville in 1926. In 1935 he met and married a school teacher, Margaret Creighton. Karen, the fourth of five children, remembers well the small log house where she spent her first 6 years and then the move to the new two-storey house by the Beaton Creek near a road allowance that eliminated the mile long walk to a school bus. Here a sister, Susan, completed the family. School, 4-H Beef and Sewing Clubs, farm chores, gardening and picking berries provided fun memories and because she and her mother loved the competition of agricultural fairs, getting exhibits ready for the Manning Fair became a regular summer event.

After completing grade ten in Dixonville, Karen worked for her board with a family in Fairview to attend Fairview High School. For grade twelve, she experienced dormitory life at the re-opened Fairview College and then went on to attend the University of Alberta, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts and then a Professional Teaching certificate.



In 1965 Karen arrived in Grande Prairie and began teaching at Montrose Junior High School. Over the next 13 years she taught in the junior and senior high schools (including a year in Quebec), worked one year for the Alberta Government and started and ran a business called "Unique" specializing in hand crafted goods. By 1978, she was also teaching part-time for the Grande Prairie Regional College and when offered a full time job, she decided it was time to settle down, get rid of the store, accept a job with a good future and marry the man she had just met, Ken Burgess. The College job was teaching English to adults upgrading their high school and she discovered teaching could be fun. In 1980, she too a year off when their daughter, Jill, was born and in 1987 she completed a B Ed. degree during a sabbatical.

After a 23 year College career, Karen's wish was to teach part-time and ease into retirement but that not being available, she took early retirement in 2000. Still wanting to work, she found the available part-time jobs were not very interesting. One day in 2002 she met Mary Nutting, a woman she had enjoyed working with at the College and was surprised to hear she had a new job – setting up an archives! Better yet, she was looking for part-time help. The resulting job turned out to be a perfect fit. Over the next 10.5 years Karen learned to love a job that was incredibly varied, and had the most worthy of purposes – that of preserving this area's history. One day might involve trying to piece together a person's story out of a dusty box of papers and photographs while fighting with a computer database or rescuing photographs from a sticky album or maybe lugging donated records out of a bad storage condition. On another day she might help someone find his family's history or pitch the service of the Archives to a community group, or maybe even help volunteers make cookies for a meeting. On a really fun day she would be showing an elementary class that their school's name belonged to a real person who once lived an interesting life here.

The Archives has been fortunate to have had Karen's enthusiasm, love of the area, and archival skills for the past 11 years. We will miss her, but don't worry, she has promised to return as an Archives volunteer!

Patricia Greber is our new Archives Technician, who started at the beginning of May. We sent her for training through the Archives Society of Alberta Archives Institute, then threw her right into working on our processing grant for 2013. Patricia is new to the field of archives but no stranger to history or to the region.

I am very excited to be a part of the South Peace Regional Archives team. I was born in Montreal, and moved to Albright, Alberta in 1979. Albright is where my mother, Mary Stewart, was raised. Like her, I recall spending many hours playing on the banks of the Beaverlodge River. Later, my family moved to Hythe, where I attended school. In 1992, I married my husband, Clayton Greber. His family has been living in the Hythe area since the early 1900s. We lived in Lymburn and raised cattle on the family farm for over 10 years. Our family grew; we have four children and my youngest may be the last child born in Lymburn, as she was delivered in our bathroom! The next move was to Beaverlodge, where we lived for a few years, and now we call Grande Prairie home. I have always had an interest in genealogy, and have been working on my family tree for the past 15 years. The Archives is a wonderful place for me to continue to be involved in the history of our region.

So a big thank you and farewell to Karen and welcome to Patricia and Simone. Look for more about Simone and her project in our next newsletter.



Thank You to SPRA

Thank you to the South Peace Regional Archives for presenting our society and curator with your annual awards – the "Beth Sheehan S.P.R.A. Award", for 2013.

The DeBolt & District Pioneer Museum Society and Curator, Fran Moore, are most honored to receive this award.

It is an honor to be receiving this award, which proudly has Beth Sheehan's name, - as she is a leader in promoting our regional history for many years – she has inspired us to preserve and record. Thank you to Beth for this.

We've always believed in the need to have a 'regional archives', and our policy is to move our paper collections and including photos, into the archives as they are organized and collected. Therefore, we have supported the SPRA, from it's beginning.

Believing that small museums don't have the resources, space, time to care for the paper collections in a professional way, we've spoken out, suggesting such collections should be turned over to the archives.

We museums can then, in partnership with the South Peace Regional Archives, have access to 'our collections' - in its new proper storage and at no cost to the contributing museum. -- This is a 'win, win' partnership

Due to Fran Moore being away on Saturday, March 16th, our society board member, Irene Gitzel, picked up the award and the 'sweet gifts'. The award is beautiful and is already hanging in our museum, for all to enjoy. The sweets will be shared when we have some special gatherings of our society.

Thank you to the board, and staff of the South Peace Regional Archives, for giving us this great honor, we are very proud to accept it.

DeBolt & District Pioneer Museum and Curator, Fran Moore

Kathryn's Picks

by Kathryn Auger

Try your hand at solving the very first crossword puzzle to appear in a Grande Prairie newspaper. This puzzle is from the May 4, 1925 issue of the Grande Prairie Herald. There will be a prize for the first completed (and correct!) puzzle returned to us!

In Memoriam

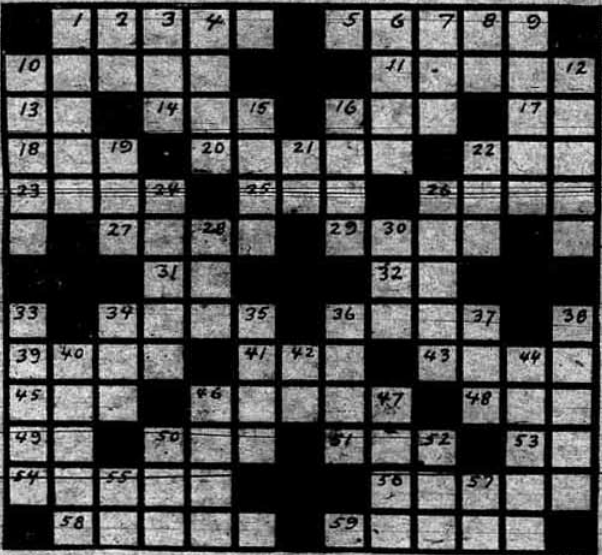


SPRA staff and volunteers are saddened by the loss of long-time volunteer and Honourary Member, Cathy van Everdink on April 22, 2013. Cathy started volunteering at the Archives in 2000, shortly after we opened, and continued until December of 2012. Her positive attitude, friendly smile, and willingness to help with whatever project will be very much missed.

OUR CROSSWORD PUZZLE

"COME ON IN."

Don't pass this one without working it out. It is one of those puzzles which look easy in the solution, but when it comes to working them out well, that's another matter.



Horizontal

- Mother.
- Used by artists.
- Islands in Southwest Pacific.
- Assemblage of persons or animals.
- A conjunction.
- Native mineral.
- Contraction of a Jewish name.
- X. T. E.
- One (Fr. fem.).
- Condition of bodily rest.
- To entangle (archaic).
- Part of spectacles.
- A pronoun.
- B. A. L. A.
- Fruit of North Africa.
- Rip.
- Exist.
- Prefix.
- Child (in contempt).
- Covered with ink.
- Color.
- Pronoun (poss. form).
- Song given by one person.
- Opposite to cold.
- Kind of thread used in hosiery.
- Egg of a small insect.
- River in Siberia.
- River in Scotland.
- To commit error.
- Point of compass.
- Adhesive substance secreted by most plants.
- City in Massachusetts.
- Melodies.
- Fragrant oil from rose petals.

Vertical

- River in France.
- Form of verb "to be."
- Also.
- Part of head (pl.).
- On top.
- Anger.
- Negative.
- Sum.
- The eternal part of man (pl.).
- Part of a flower.
- Otherwise.
- To come together.
- Finis.
- Exclamation.
- Sailor (nickname).
- Cavalry sword.
- A long heaped up mass of any substance (pl.).
- A drink.
- Contraction of "even."
- To detest.
- Conjunction.
- Slim.
- Small island.
- Yonder (abbr.).
- A kind of pole (Indian).
- Parts of ears.
- Form of verb "to be."
- Large ocean vessel.
- Not short.
- Formerly.
- Loud noise.
- Rodent.
- In like manner.
- The (Fr. fem.).

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The collections at SPRA have all been donated by individuals, organizations, and municipal governments. You are our only resource for the preservation of the history of the south Peace.

"I'll Meet You in the Far Pasture" Script
Greg Donaldson

The Way We Were by Lorna Rowland
Phyllis Stewart

Conrad Master Farm Family documents
Calvin Conrad

Tarrant Family documents and photograph
Freda Tarrant

25th Anniversary Photograph Display
City of Grande Prairie

Golden Age Centre fonds
Grande Prairie and District Golden Age Centre

South Peace Horticultural Society fonds accrual
Lorna McIlroy

CFGP (Sun FM) fonds accrual
Gord Percy

City of Grande Prairie Photographs
Paulette Hrychiw, Rob Sweigard, Ken Anderson

Submissions to this Newsletter

SPRA Society encourages submissions in the form of stories, poems, memories, letters and photographs. Do you have a story, or does someone you know have a story about the past in the south Peace? Submit it to us by mail or e-mail, or call us at 780-830-5105.

New on the Website

Nothing! SPRA is in the process of getting a new website, as well as a Facebook page, YouTube channel, and blog! So if you have a great idea of something we should include for any of those, now is your chance to let us know.

The provincial archival databases have also recently changed. Check out the new version at <http://www.albertaonrecord.ca>

Interested in Archival Records from Spirit River?

SPRA is seeking a **volunteer** to transcribe Spirit River tax records from the old tax ledgers into a database --can be done by hand or by computer. Volunteer needs to have good eyesight because the oldest records are quite faint. Some experience reading old hand-writing, and familiarity with Spirit River families would be an asset. Our goal is to have this project done by 2016, when the MD of Spirit River celebrates 100 years!

Are You Enjoying This Newsletter?

Would you like to receive it mailed to your home four times a year? It's free when you are a member of the South Peace Regional Archives Society. See the Membership Form on the back of the newsletter. You can also give memberships as gifts to friends or family.

Benefits of Membership

- Be actively involved in preserving the history of this area.
- Have a voice in keeping archival collections in the Peace River Country.
- Become more aware of the issues and types of collections in archives.
- Receive a quarterly newsletter and notice of meetings & events.

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Interested in being involved as a

_____ volunteer

_____ board member

There are two types of membership:

Full membership--get involved in the society, attend meetings, vote on issues and run for office.

Associate membership--receive communications (like this newsletter) to stay informed about issues and happenings at the Archives.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

Full Membership
\$20.00/person or \$30.00/couple _____

Associate Member
\$15.00/person _____

I wish to donate to the
South Peace Regional Archives _____

Total Membership and Donation _____

Please pay by cash or cheque to
South Peace Regional Archives Society
Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB. T8V 3A8
Phone: 780-830-5105
Fax: 780-831-7371
E-mail: spra@telus.net

Member Support and Upcoming Events

The Perfect Introduction

If you hear someone say:

"My local hall association (service group, ladies' auxiliary, CGIT chapter, etc.) is folding due to declining membership. We've been operating for years and have boxes of stuff sitting at the secretary's home. Should we just junk it?"

Tell them:

"Absolutely not! Those records are valuable to show the history of the area. Why not call the Archives? They would be happy to give your records a home!"

Historic County Cemetery Tour

in the Wembley-LaGlance corridor. The tour starts at 1:30 pm on Sunday June 9 and Sunday July 14 and includes five cemeteries near Secondary Highway 724, wrapping up around 4:00 pm. Please bring your own vehicle or carpool with your neighbours and dress for walking and the weather. Presented in cooperation with members of the Lake Saskatoon & Scenic Heights Communities. Don't miss out! Be sure to register in advance by calling 780-830-5105.

South Peace Regional Archives

is funded by

City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie,
MD of Greenview, MD of Spirit River

grants from the Archives Society of Alberta

and donations from people like you!

Current Projects include

Film Digitization
Event Sponsorship
General Funds