

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 11

MARCH 2020

Issue 2

MOOSEHILL FIRE
75 YEARS LATER

HODGSON'S
SAW MILL
& FORESTRY RECORDS

SAWDUST
FUSILIERS
VETERANS OF THE CFC



GRANDE PRAIRIE
LOGGERS
SPORTS

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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Cover: Unknown man competes in a chainsaw event at the Loggers' Sports Show, 1981 (SPRA 1998.22.5.13.5)

Note on Photographs: Photographs featured in *Telling Our Stories* are unedited, apart from minimal cropping. In cases where substantial cropping may impact the context of the photograph, this will be noted in the caption.

A Publication of the South Peace Regional Archives

Our Vision: Preserving and Sharing the Past.

Our Mission: The purpose of South Peace Regional Archives is to gather, preserve, and share the historical records of municipalities, organizations, businesses, families, and individuals within the region, both now and in the future.

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Mailing Address

Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 3A8
Telephone: 780-830-5105

E-mail: director@southpeacearchives.org
www.southpeacearchives.org



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Letter from the Editor

Forestry is the science and practice of caring for forests. Here in the South Peace region, surrounded by vast stretches of forest, forestry also serves as a major economic sector and source of cultural identity. The Peace River region is one of the top two Alberta regions for the production of forest products. It is also first in the province for employment in the forestry sector and the leading producer of pulp, paper, and panel board. In years past, communities within our region have claimed titles such as “Timber Capital of Alberta” and “Forestry Capital of Canada.”

In this issue of *Telling Our Stories*, we explore the history of forests and forestry in the South Peace region. Much, but not all, of this history focusses on harvesting forests. But forestry is so much more than logging and milling. Through this issue, we hope you will consider the many aspects of forestry that are under-represented in the historical record and therefore often overlooked. Our society’s relationship with the forests that surround us have ebbed and flowed through time, with many changes to forestry practices and—especially in recent years—sustainability.

The articles in this issue have been thoughtfully contributed by staff, volunteers, and guest contributors. Much like a healthy forest, our magazine is enriched by the diversity within it: diverse topics, perspectives, resources, and opportunities for further learning. From all of us here at the Archives, we hope you will enjoy this meander through the forest ...and maybe learn something new along the way!



Alyssa Currie
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note: AGM

The **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** for the South Peace Regional Archives is taking place **Saturday, March 28th at 1:00pm**. Join us at the Archives (10329 101 Ave, Grande Prairie) for light refreshments and:

Archives Updates

Election of Board Members

Special Resolution to Repeal the Existing Bylaws and Accept Rewritten Bylaws

and...

Volunteer Recognition

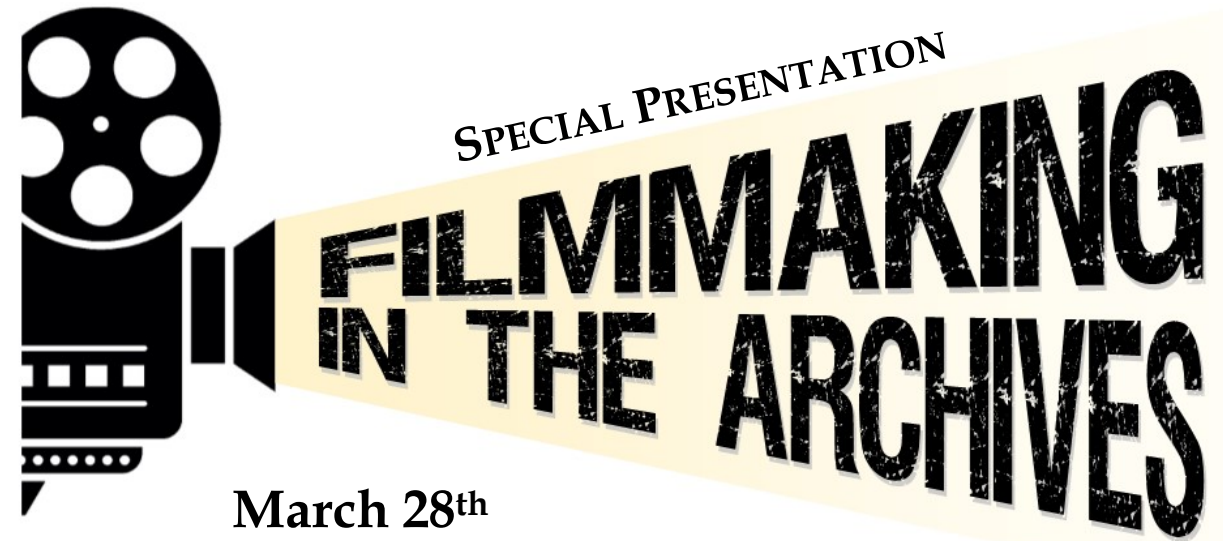
Beth Sheehan Award

This year, the AGM special presentation will highlight local filmmakers who have made use of the Archives in their craft. We hope you can join us for this exciting afternoon!

Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect that the South Peace Regional Archives is located on the ancestral and traditional lands of many Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by Treaty 8, signed in 1899. The continuing relationship between Indigenous peoples and this land contributes to the rich knowledge and culture of the South Peace region.

We are grateful to serve the people on this land and honor the Calls for Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



March 28th
COMMENCING AFTER THE AGM

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

“The South Peace Regional Archives are All About Time. The time that has passed, the time that keeps on passing, but also the time that is given to all of us to create a future for that past time.”

-Mary Nutting, 2013

South Peace Regional Archives is running out of time to continue to create a future for the history and memories of all those who call and have called the South Peace home. Our current facility and offsite storage is almost full to capacity.

With help from our regional partners, businesses, and individuals contributions, Our mission is to establish a secure and purpose-centered archival facility.

An Archives stores the collective memory of a place — the records we create as we go about our daily lives, in our home, at our jobs, in our communities, and during our leisure activities. In the case of the South Peace Regional Archives (SPRA) it is the unique records of the South Peace— on paper; in digital files, in maps and photographs, on film and video — and its individuals, families, organizations, institutions, and municipal governments.

Fundraising Goal: \$6,000,000

The Forest *and* the Trees

This issue's Archiveology

There is an old proverb, “see the forest for the trees,” that relates a tendency to be overwhelmed by detail to the point of hiding the overall situation. As Archivists, our job is to help researchers see both the forest *and* the trees. It is our first step in providing access to the records housed in our institutions. We do this through our core functions of arrangement and description. Together, these two processes help us make that first foray into the landscape of records so we can prepare a guide for future explorers.

Arrangement is how we define the trees; it is the physical processing of records in our holdings. Archivists go through the boxes and files to see what is present and how it may be organized. One of the important guiding principles in archives is original order.

Original order is highly regarded because it provides evidence of the relationship between the creator/collector and the records. How did they create the records? How did they use them? How often did they return to them? Original order can help us answer these questions. As with any kind of research, we do not always know the questions to ask. Preserving original order also means that we reduce the risk of inadvertently destroying relationship evidence for future researchers to discover.

These concerns do not mean we never impose order. In many cases, there is little to no order in sight when we open a box of donated material. We do not merely folder this material as is and wish researchers the best as they sift through it all. That is not true access.

Where there is little to no order, we impose a logical order based on the records, indicating in the final description that we have done so. Future researchers will know our part in the arrangement of the records and be better able to take into account the relationship between various records and the creator.

Arrangement can also include removing records from a holding. For most collections, especially large ones, we do not try to save everything. If we did— just like in the forest— two things would happen: we would impede new growth and discourage explorers by making it difficult to wade through the underbrush. Although we want to preserve the past, we have to make sure we preserve space for current and future generations of records. Generally, we remove multiple copies of documents, multiple similar photographs, irreparable items, or receipts where statements are available. We might also move items from bulky binders, and remove clips and staples.

Once we are done with processing, we create a description. This is how we define the forest. A well-written biography or agency history provides researchers with context for the holding. This helps researchers better understand the records, their value, and their place in the world. A finding aid that details how the records are organized becomes part of their map through the forest: a guide where you can see what we have seen. We do not travel with you along your chosen path. We will not know all your false starts, wrong turns, or delightful surprises deep in the forest of records. But we can help you on your journey of discovery.

Forestry Capital of Canada

Highlights from the Historical Forestry Photograph Collection

The Pioneer Museum Society of Grande Prairie & District was formed in 1961. After the establishment of the South Peace Regional Archives in 2000, the Museum began transferring photographs and other archival records from its collections to the SPRA. The Historical Forestry Photograph collection (SPRA 001.08.05) contains over 500 images! These photographs were donated by local families for the “Forestry Capital of Canada” exhibit in 1997. How many of these local family names do you recognize? The Mencke, Yates, Rodacker, Steeves, Nilsson, Hrychiw, Card, Oilund, Haudseth, Schenk, Pisanello, Stark, Cooke, Bickell, Grothowski, Cissell, Leggatt, Moore, Lowe, and Bauman families all donated photographs for the exhibit.

Enjoy these highlights from the Historical Forestry Photograph collection. Interested in seeing more? Schedule a visit to the Archives reading room today!



Top right: Dave Bauman & Jim McLachlan at the Bauman family sawmill, ca. 1950 (SPRA 1997.44.01)

Middle right: Two men are using a cross-cut saw to fell a very large tree, ca. 1950 (SPRA 1997.44.05)

Bottom left: Two men pose with saws and axes before a very large tree, ca. 1930 (SPRA 1997.44.06)

The Sawdust Fusiliers

Local Veterans from the Canadian Forestry Corps (CFC)

This article was contributed by Archives volunteer Kaylee Dyck. Kaylee researches First World War veterans of the South Peace in order to write biographies for the Archives' online Soldier's Memorial.

Forests play a crucial role in Canada's history and economy. In times of war, this has been particularly true; after all, 40% of Canada is wooded land. During the Napoleonic Wars, Britain imported tremendous amounts of timber from Canada to build up the Royal Navy. When the Great War began, Britain wanted not only the timber, but Canada's lumbermen as well.

At the start of the war, timber was shipped across the Atlantic. However, limited space aboard existing ships and the threat of U-boat attacks prompted change. In February of 1916, the British government requested that 1,500 skilled lumbermen be sent from Canada to harvest forests in England and Scotland (and, later, in France). The 224th Battalion produced its first sawn lumber in England within three months. It soon became apparent that more than one battalion would be needed to keep up with the demands of war. On November 14, 1916, the Canadian Forestry Corps

(CFC) was officially established. By the end of the war, the CFC was a force of over 30,000 men, including some foreign labourers and German POWs.

When the CFC was first formed, the army preferred experienced men like Jack Cummins, who homesteaded between Sexsmith and La Glace after the war. Jack had been logging in British Columbia when he decided to join the CFC, and he was assigned to a company in France. In August 1918, he was one of 1,300 forestry men who volunteered for active service in aid of the final push that led to the end of the war.

As the war dragged on, the CFC needed more and more men. Men previously deemed unfit for active service at the front lines were now welcomed to the CFC. Many lied about their age, desperate to "do their bit." William Paige of East Pouce Coupe gave his age as 17 when he enlisted, and though the recruitment officer believed him to be even younger, William was able to join the CFC. At the opposite end of the spectrum were those who were overage but unwilling to let the young fellows do all the work. Omer Dupont of Goodfare was 54 years of age when he was enlisted

(he claimed to be ten years younger). Omer served with the CFC until April of 1918, despite suffering from rheumatism. Herman Klukas was transferred to the Corps after sustaining injuries at Passchendaele and Ypres. Flat feet and

Left: A group of six men traveling by horse and wagon from Grande Prairie to Athabasca to enlist with the R.N.W.M.P. at the beginning of WWI. Harlie Conrad, who later served with the CFC, is at the far left. 1914 (SPRA 356.03.08, cropped)



the lingering effects of a gas attack landed Walter Bowen, a Beaverlodge farmer, in the Forestry Corps. This motley crew of the too-young, too-old, and injured would disprove the critics and become the backbone of the Allied effort.


The CFC produced an estimated 70% of all Allied lumber during the war. This lumber was used to construct trenches, duck boards, telegraph poles, troop shelters, ammunition boxes, aircraft, guns, rail lines, bridges, roads, and countless other necessities of war. The CFC operated 151 logging camps in Britain and France, and was made up almost entirely of Canadian men, machinery, and methods. In most cases, locals greatly admired these hardworking lumbermen. The press described them as having "the bronzed, healthy look and the easy confident swing which we have learned to look for in Canadians." The royals too were great supporters of the Forestry Corps; Princess Anne acted as an informal patron, and King George V donated Windsor Great Forest to the war effort.

Over time, the CFC became more sophisticated. In 1917, the CFC began to farm its own plots of land in order to become more self-sufficient, rather than taking valuable rations away from those at the front. Also that year, a training camp was opened for the men who had no previous experience in the logging industry. No amount of training or experience, however, could prevent accidents. Two South Peace men, Herbert Stewart and Thomas Rice, sustained injuries while serving with the CFC. Herbert joined the Forestry Corps in England after receiving shrapnel wounds and showing signs of shell shock. In March of 1918, a log fell from a wagon onto his leg, causing a serious fracture and resulting in a permanent limp. Thomas's injury was less serious; he slipped on ice and his foot became "jammed between the log and the carriage and the skidway."

Klukas, Herman

Regimental Number: 101095
Rank: Private
Branch: 49th Battalion; Canadian Forestry Corps

Herman Klukas was born in Russia on July 18, 1892, and came to Canada with his family in 1894. He came up to the Peace country in 1908 and in May 1912 filed on a homestead at SE1/4 35-71-6-W6, just north of the new townsite of Grande Prairie. He abandoned this in 1913 and moved on to the Bad Heart district, where he spent the winter trapping. In July of 1915, Herman enlisted in the Canadian army. He received shrapnel wounds to his chest and abdomen in November of 1916 at Passchendaele, and a bomb wound to his left shoulder in October of 1917 at Ypres. Herman was transferred to the Canadian Forestry Corps in May of 1918 and remained in England for the duration of the war.



After the war, Herman worked for the Egg Lake Ranch near Eaglesham, which used the Bad Heart prairie as their summer grazing lease. Taking a great liking to the land at Bad Heart, in 1920 he filed for a homestead on the SW1/4 28-75-2-W6. This homestead was abandoned in 1922 for a position as game warden in Wood Buffalo Park. While working in Wood Buffalo, Herman, met Catherine Jessie Norris and they were married in 1925. Around 1930 Herman and Jessie moved back to the Bad Heart district. Herman became a blacksmith and mechanic as well as proving up on his homestead where they raised their six children.

As Herman grew older, the old war wounds became more troublesome and he was confined to a wheel chair at Mackenzie Place for the last few years of his life. He died on February 24, 1979 and was buried in the Bad Heart cemetery.

Sources: Pioneers of the Peace p. 297; Smoky Peace Triangle p. 258; Wagon Trails Grown Over p. 46-54, 1147

Above: Biography of Herman Klukas, who served in the Canadian Forestry Corps (SPRA's WWI Soldiers' Memorial)

By the end of the war, at least 75 men from the South Peace region had served with the Forestry Corps. For some, serving in the CFC marked the beginning of a new path in life. George Nowry, once a barber, used the skills he had learned during the war to take over a sawmill in Grande Prairie in 1921. Researchers can visit the Archives' online Soldiers' Memorial to learn about Nowry and others who served in the Canadian Forestry Corps. A list of local CFC veterans can be viewed on the Archives' blog.

Without the work of the Canadian Forestry Corps, the Allies would have suffered from a serious lack of supplies. The outcome of the war might have been very different without their efforts. While most of those who served far behind the front lines were spared from the atrocities that the soldiers in the trenches witnessed, the labour and dedication of these Sawdust Fusiliers was no less significant.

Continued from page 7

History and Method of Constructing B.C. Log Scale

The following excerpts come from the document "History and Method of Constructing B.C. Log Scale" from Fonds 630: Hodgson's Family fonds. Many thanks are due to Gail Prette, volunteer and board member, for transcribing the records.

In order to allay the friction existing between mill men and loggers throughout the Province regarding the proper method of ascertaining the board-measure contents of logs, especially those of large dimensions, the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works appointed Messrs. Richard E. Alexander, of Vancouver; M. King, of Victoria; and A. Haslam, M.P., of Nanaimo, a committee to make a thorough examination of the question, and to devise a rule which would satisfy as nearly as possible all the demands of both loggers and mill men.

The above action took place in the year 1894.

The result of their labours was placed before a general meeting of Members of the Legislature, mill owners, and loggers, and the rule, as devised, being thoroughly explained by means of diagrams, and by practical results obtained in several mills, was approved and adopted. Tables were ordered to be computed according to the rule and printed in the form of a book, which should be authoritative, and known as the "British Columbia Log Scale."

....

PRINCIPAL LUMBER PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED FROM THE FOLLOWING SPECIES:

Douglas Fir

Flooring, finishing, dimension and common lumber,

structural timbers, veneer stock, ties, doors.

Western Red Cedar

Siding, shingles, shiplap, common and finishing lumber, ties and boat lumber.

Western Hemlock

Pulpwood, common and dimension lumber, box shooks and flooring.

Western White Pine

Fine finishing, pattern stock, common lumber, box shooks and match stock.

Sitka Spruce

Pulpwood, aeroplane stock, shiplap, common lumber and box shooks, musical instruments and oars.

Balsam

Pulpwood, common lumber and box shooks.

Cottonwood

Pulpwood and veneer stock.

Alder, Birch and Maple

Chiefly furniture stock.

Engelmann Spruce

Dimension and common lumber, butter boxes, sounding boards for musical instruments, agricultural implements, ladders and shelving.

Yellow Pine

Shop lumber, common lumber and box lumber of all kinds. Car lining, cabinet work, pattern making, agricultural implements, kitchen furniture.

Larch (Western Tamarack)

Railway ties, dimension and common lumber, car decking, piling and tanks.

Listen to This!

Oral Histories from the Archives

Dorothy, Fred, and Phil Comeau

This article was contributed by one of the Archives' newest volunteers: Erika Cymbaluk. Erika is a former teacher and lifelong learner. Her research will contribute to the Archives' blog and Telling Our Stories.

Have you ever travelled to the Kakwa and Two Lakes area for recreational purposes? Then you are aware of the forestry industry that has been ongoing for many years in that area. Forestry has always been a valuable resource for people: a source of shelter, protection, and heat, but also a source of income—sometimes on a small scale, and now typically on a larger, commercial scale. Forest management today has changed substantially from when Indigenous Peoples and, later, homesteaders first used and cultivated the land we now know as the Peace Region.

The Comeau family interviews in Fonds 133: Folk History Project (Kakwa/Two Lakes Oral Histories) collection provide a personal and concrete take on what life was like for those who were here in the early days. Dorothy, Fred, and Phil Comeau shared their stories with interviewer Jim Nelson as part of a pro-



ject to collect information about historical land use in the Kakwa and Two Lakes area and about the people who lived and traveled there.

Dorothy married Pete Comeau, an early forest fire ranger with the Dominion Forest Service in the South Wapiti Region for over thirty years. Together, they had two sons: Fred and Phil. In her interview, Dorothy shares what life was like for her living at the Forest Ranger Station. She provides glimpses into the social aspects, the typical work day and life as a homesteading wife of a fire ranger. Fred shares his experiences as a road building and seismograph operator.

We learn a bit more about the life and work duties of a fire ranger from Phil, who followed in his father's footsteps. According to Phil, ranger work in the winter consisted more of managing timber trade than actual fire duties. The winter season required long, arduous trips to the 14 mills that sustained the timber trade in the area, often by catching a ride with a logging truck or hitching a team of sled dogs. Reliable and easily accessible roads were not common. Much has changed since then but the basics remain the same.

Want to experience these interviews for yourself? You can listen to Dorothy's interview on the Archives' YouTube page, or read the transcript on our website. You can listen to Fred and Phil's interviews by scheduling a visit to the Archives' reading room.

Left: L-R Pete Comeau, Sherman Head, John Miller, Ole Overland, and George Kalischuk stopping for lunch at the side of the road they are working on. (SPRA 256.03.09, cropped)

Olwen's Own Words: Clearing the Land

"Olwen's Own Words" features excerpts and illustrations from the scrapbooks of Olwen Sanger-Davies.

Olwen's Scrapbook: A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933 can be purchased from the Archives for \$40.00 + \$2.00 GST. Cash and cheques are accepted. Limited quantities are available.



Uncleared Land



The Beginnings



Cleared Land

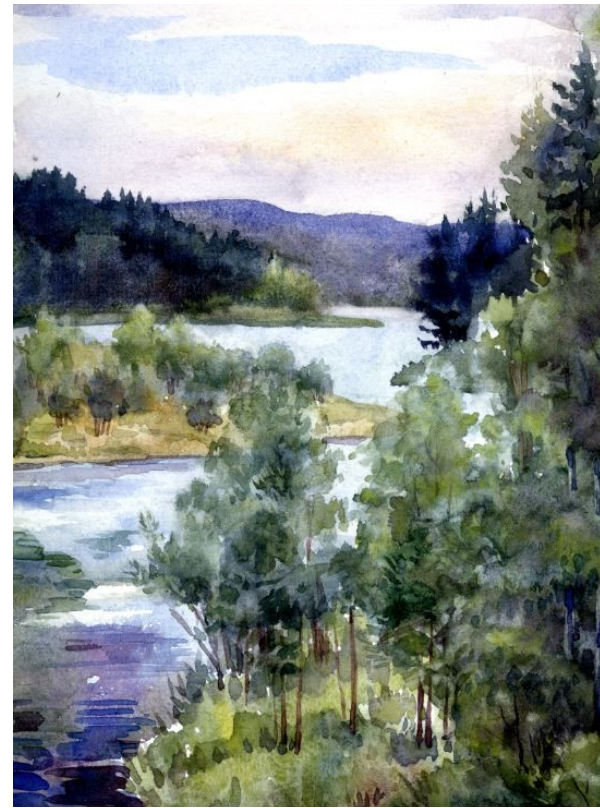


Saskatoons and Poplars

Tuesday, July 4th

At midnight Mrs. Cameron let me go across to her berth to see the Lesser Slave Lake in the moonlight. When I woke up at 7:15 we were just crossing Smoky River, and Morgan called down from the upper berth - where he had no window - and asked if I had seen it. We stopped soon after Watino.

The scenery was very varied: uncleared land with swamps, tall trees, patches large and small of cleared land, and many varieties of dwellings.



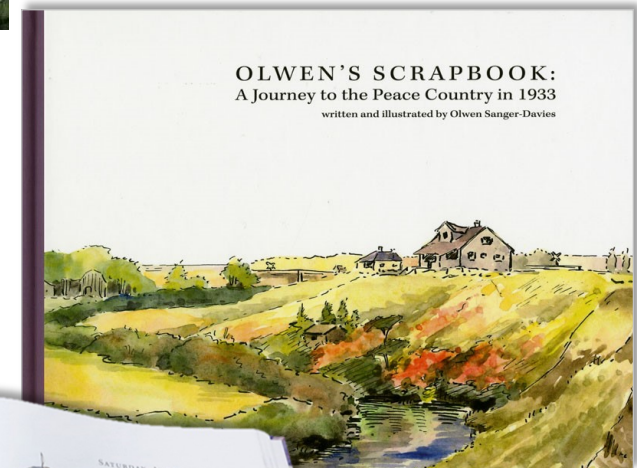
Beaver Dams

Thursday, July 20th

We had a lovely drive down to the Wapiti River, six miles south of Grande Prairie. All round the river for some miles it is wild, with a "homesteader's" shack here and there. The roads wind about, and the trees are tall as there is enough water. Blue wild larkspur and evening primroses were growing wild, and quantities of tiger-lilies.

Purchase your
copy of Olwen's
Scrapbook today

ONLY \$40.00 +GST
while quantities last



Limited copies!
Cash and cheques
are accepted.

The Moosehill Fire

The following article, written by guest contributor Jeff Henricks, describes a devastating wildfire that claimed the lives of two local men on 4 May 1944.

Different sources refer to this event as the Moosehill Fire and the Sanborn Mill Fire. **Note: This story contains frightening scenes and graphic descriptions of injuries. It may not be suitable for all readers.**

The winter of 1943-44 was one that had been very dry. Only light precipitation was obtained during the months immediately prior to the winter season, therefore, there was little reserve moisture in the subsoils. .. Generally, it was a mild, snow free winter.

On May 2, 1944, several fires were burning north of Grande Prairie Alberta in the tinder dry forest. Finding firefighters was difficult due to the war, as a manpower shortage existed, especially ones with experience. Typically, the men hired were in their late 50s - 60s, or had just turned 18 and not yet been recruited for the war effort.

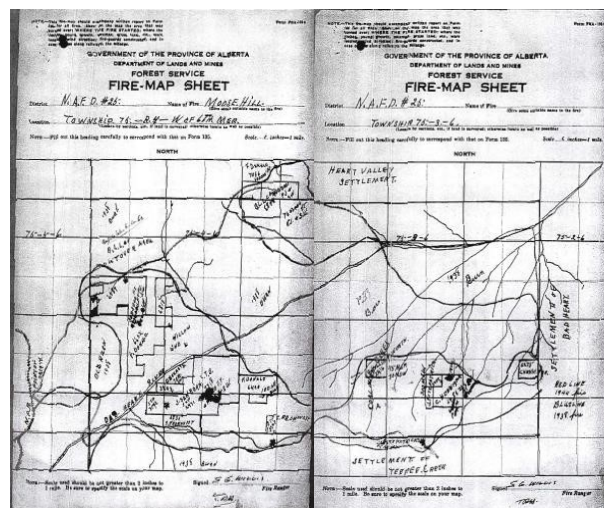
On the morning of May 4, 1944, Alberta Forest Ranger Trix Willis from Sexsmith, hired a crew of six firefighters to protect a nearby sawmill from the fires. The men would also action the south flank of the fire from that bush camp located approximately six miles east of the community of Webster.

The crew of firefighters were picked up by Sawmill owner Jess Sandborn. They included Raphael Klein 18, Wilfred Derocher 19, and Stanley Krzyczkowski 20. These three were all friends from school. Upon arriving at the millsite at approximately 9am, the young

men settled into camp. By 10am, the winds had picked up and smoke was now billowing towards them.

“The wind...it hit the mill about 10 o’clock, maybe less. Everybody didn’t know what to do -- and it was getting darker, darker -- and the wind, started coming up and that wind was unbelievable. Well a hundred mile an hour wind, it come up so fast -- without warning -- inside of two hours, inside of three hours, I was stuck in the fire.” Stanley Krzyczkowski

At the millsite, another 10 people were there working. The mill owner sent his hired hand, Sam Badger, on horseback west towards the smoke to see how far or where the fire was from camp. Within a two hours, Sam came racing back, the flames now above him in the trees. He raced into camp, and quickly the millsite was surrounded by flames. The thick smoke, and in-



Above: Fire-Map Sheet from the Alberta Forest Service.

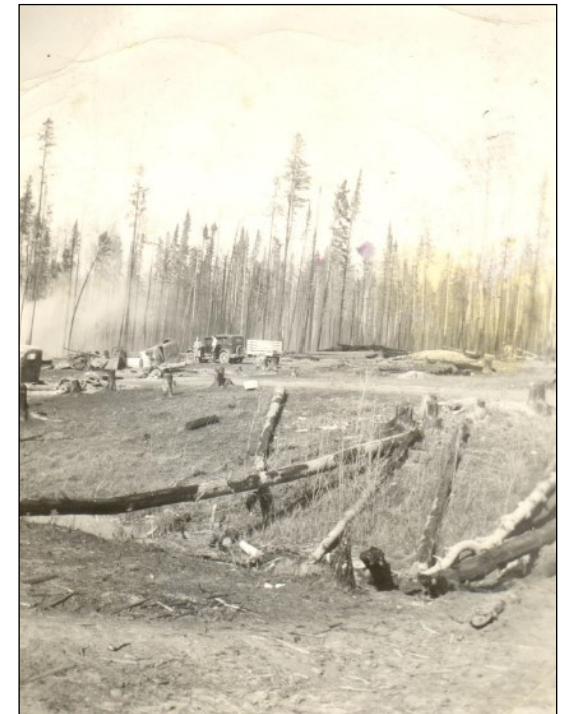
tense heat made escape an impossibility. The small force did their best to extinguish the flames now threatening the buildings and sawmill.

It was quickly realized: all would be lost. It was now time to protect ones selves. With no where to go, the radiant heat was now starting to burn them alive, those within range were told by Sanborn to head to the dam. The dam made from boulders and mud was located in an intermittent creek. It was approximately 10 m wide and 1 m deep. Its primary function was to provide water to the steam engine that ran the mill and supply water for the horses in the bush.

There were approximately 16 people at the camp that day. The three young firefighters were working on extinguishing the cook shack with water buckets a short distance south from the dam. In the commotion, they became separated from the others, and at the time, thought they were all alone at the millsite.

As things deteriorated, Raphael Klein, Wilfred Derocher and Stanley Krzyczkowski took a few minutes to decide on their options. There were only two: stay and likely burn to death; or run through the flames to safety, surely not too far away. “We’ll be dead heroes!” Raphael Klein half jokingly said. “Well... let’s go!” replied Stanley.

Nearly impossible to see, Stanley—the older of the three young men—made a run to the west. Having gone only 10 m from the edge of the millsite with the intense heat burning against their bare skin and flames all around them, Raphael Klein slipped on his footing, and slammed his head against a tree stump. He was knocked out and onto the forest floor covered with logging slash and burning debris engulfing the fuels around them. Stanley Krzyczkowski—who was well ahead—looked back through the smoke and flames to see Wilfred Derocher stop and return back



Above: This is a photo of remains of the Sanborne mill site looking NE. In the foreground can be seen the dammed up intermittent creek in which the other lives were saved. It can be seen to the middle left of the photo. May 1944, Photo courtesy of N Klein .

to the lifeless body of Raphael Klein, now laying face down on the ground. Stanley Krzyczkowski attempted to go back, but was stopped by the flames. He too was now burning alive, and to go back would mean certain death, if he made it back.

Stanley Krzyczkowski carried on in a westward direction knowing, the two men were now gone. He continued through the flames for several hundred meters until he found unburnt forest. By then, he had received third degree burns to his face, hands and lower arms. His hands so badly burned, bones protruded through the burnt skin.

Continued on page 18



Above: Edmonton Journal front page. May 5, 1944

Finally, by early evening, Stanley Krzyczkowski arrived at the small community of Webster. He knocked on the door of a local railway employee and explained the fire situation to them. When asked if people were dead, he responded with a yes.

He was rushed from Webster to Grande Prairie that evening, stopping in Sexsmith along the way to be treated by the local doctor. Stanley would spend the next 3 months in Grande Prairie hospital recovering from his burns.

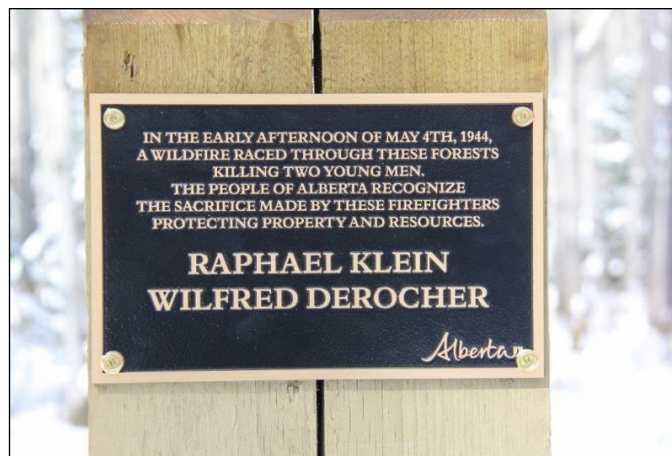
Meanwhile, back at the mill site, Jess Sanborn, his wife, fellow workers and remaining government firefighters, huddled low amongst the water. Covering themselves in mud and only peaking out enough to breathe. Their exposed flesh burning from the radiant heat and flames that burnt amongst the trees and mill site. By early evening, things had subsided enough that the group were able to leave the murky water they had been trapped in for the last three hours or more.

The group gathered themselves, took a head count and knew right away they were missing the three young men. Thinking the boys may have escaped, they made their way south through 200 m of smoldering vegetation and finally the fire's edge, then continued south until coming across a logging trail that would lead them back to Webster.

Once the authorities had learned of Stanley's plight, it was realized that evening that two of the men were missing. It was reported the following morning in the Edmonton Journal that at least one was dead and one was missing.

The next morning, a search party was established by the RCMP and the local family.

Raphael's father Joe Klein, and his daughter Iris, would make the heartbreaking discovery near the camp. As Wilfred had gone back to help Raphael, he did his best to shield Raphael from the heat and flames. In those final moments, Wilfred selflessly surrendered his life in hopes of saving Raphael's, and in the end was only able to provide the comfort that neither would die alone.



Above: Memorial plaque at site of Moosehill Fire, installed 4 May 2019. Photograph supplied by Pat Wearmouth.

Commemorating The Moosehill Fire

In May 2019, exactly 75 years after the Moosehill fire, representatives from Alberta Forestry travelled to the site of the disaster to install a memorial plaque during a commemoration ceremony. Forrest Barrett read the story of the fire, written by Jeff Henricks, as the plaque was installed. Forester and Archives volunteer Pat Wearmouth provided the following account of the commemoration event:

There was a small ceremony at the site. Forrest Barrett read the story of the fire and the two boys that died that day. The mill site remains were examined, although there is not much left. The entire area was about 8 acres in size. It is covered in trees that grew up after the fire. Most are aspen and black poplar, which at age 75 years are beginning to fall apart and create windfall in the area.

A recent snowfall masked a lot of what was probably on, or buried in, the ground. We did see the location of the horse barn and the cook shack. Also obvious is the very small creek which had been dammed to provide water for the horses and the steam engine that ran the mill. Remains of several old vehicles, which appeared to be trucks, were seen.

Additional information that came out in discussion of the times— Trix Willis, the ranger, later became the town constable in Sexsmith and is buried in the Emerson Trail



cemetery. Stanley [Krzyczkowski] spent most of his life in High Level and area working in construction. He had been rejected for WWII military service because of a heart condition. The war limited the availability of people to fight fire and thus Willis had little choice but to take younger people than would probably go today.

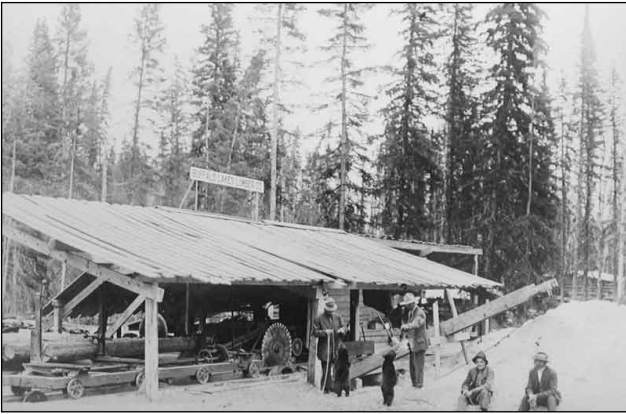
Above: Forrest Barrett reads the story of the fire as written by Jeff Henricks. Photograph supplied by Pat Wearmouth.

Below: Alberta Forestry representatives present were, from left to right: Kari Matechuk, Forrest Barrett, Owen Spencer, Wally Born, Mike Kingsbury, Jeff Henricks (project leader). Photograph supplied by Pat Wearmouth, cropped.



Forests & Forestry

This issue's featured photographs highlight forestry images from the Archives. Do you have a favourite photograph? Let us know on Facebook!



Above: First sawmill of Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co., taken about 1913 north of Buffalo Lake, with Jim Evans, Mr. Caddy and Mr. Ferguson? as crew. This sawmill was started in 1912. Cropped. (SPRA 2001.01.169)

Right: Three men pose with wood and equipment at a lumber camp, ca. 1940 (SPRA 483.01.40-06)

Below left: P. Kelly's Camp C.N.P. Lumber Co. Gallaway, ca. 1920 (SPRA 476.01.01.13)

Below right: Two men logging, ca. 1930 (SPRA 175.043.07)



P. Kelly's Camp C.N.P. Lbr. Co.



Above left: "Irish" O'Brien, Clarence Raison, Gerald Carveth, and ? at Mile 17 (near Webster) of the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia railway. The men are standing under a sign for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co. Ltd. 1922 (SPRA 032.08.08.908)

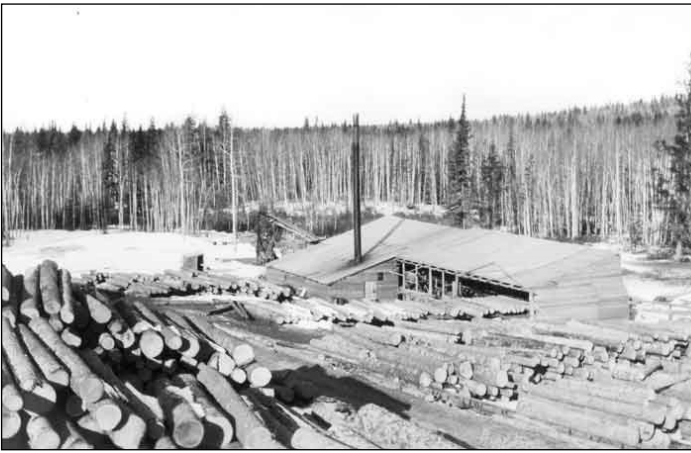
Above right: Lea Hodgson wearing goggles and pushing lumber into the mill, ca. 1930. Cropped. (SPRA 630.05.12)



Left: Pete Fortin and assistant rolling logs on rollway at McCrae Lumber Camp at Assineau, near Faust, Alberta, 1947 (SPRA 173.02.12)

Below left: Sawmill and log stacks in the yard of the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co. in the Burnt Hills, ca. 1940. (SPRA 1970.66.01b)

Below right: Eugene Plant bringing in a load of logs to the McCrae Lumber Company at Assineau, near Faust, Alberta. 1947 (SPRA 173.02.10)



Lost Without Them

Forestry Maps in the Archives

Originally created to plan and carry out field operations, historical forestry maps also provide a history of vegetation in the region. Two holdings at the South Peace Regional Archives contain almost 750 forestry maps between them: SPRA 615 Canadian Forest Products, Grande Prairie Division; and SPRA 2016.043 Weyerhaeuser Co., Grande Prairie Division.

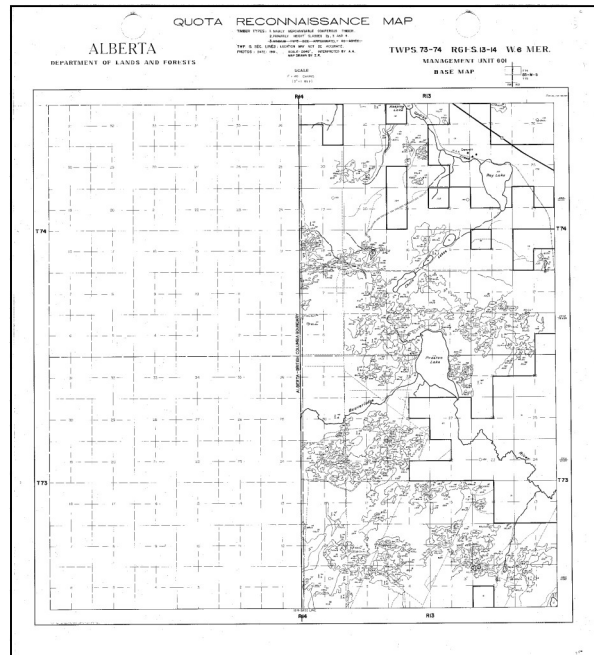
Many of these maps were originally created by the Alberta Government. The Second World War and the building boom that followed increased demand for lumber and wood products. The lack of knowledge about the extent of the provincial forest led to fears that the timber supply might be depleted. In response, the government launched the Forest Inventory starting in 1949 with the Phase I or Broad Scale inventory. This was followed by Phase II in 1956 and Phase III in 1970. All of these maps, and information about the mapping projects, are available through Alberta Access Map Product Series: www.alberta.ca/natural-resource-geo-spatial-data-maps.aspx

The value of the physical maps in our two holdings is within the notations that were often added by the companies that used them. These notes are specific to the forestry industry in this region: notably, harvesting and reforestation activities. Many of these maps were created from orthophotos, aerial photography which combines multiple photographs into one large sheet. These sheets, and the maps created from them, would be printed and stored on Mylar. From these, forestry staff would print paper maps and photographs that they carried into the field.

There are also a number of forestry maps scattered throughout our holdings, for example: SPRA 503 Map and Blueprints collection; SPRA 002 Beth Sheehan fonds; and SPRA 050 Grande Prairie Board of Trade & Chamber of Commerce fonds. Many of these also include notations about fire towers, campsites, forestry roads, and airstrips.

Like most records found in the archives, forestry maps have a new life and purpose beyond the intent of their original creators. They are important for helping us understand the history of the land itself, without which, we could have no history ourselves.

Below: An example of one of the large scale maps available online through Alberta Natural Resources. This one shows Beaverlodge in the bottom left of the drawn area.



Loggers Sports

Grande Prairie Loggers' Sports Association

In 1973, the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce was searching for ways to promote the city as the “Timber Capital” of Alberta. They approached locally based forest industries and allied companies to put together a timber show to run in conjunction with Muskoseepi Days. The first timber show was held that summer in 1973, with several local competitors.

In 1974, the Logging Sports Committee began negotiations with the County of Grande Prairie Agricultural Society to hold the show in conjunction with the County Fair. As a result of the 1975 show, the committee was accepted into the Canadian Loggers' Sports Association (CANLOG) and became part of a Canada-wide competition circuit. The local Association began to construct a logger's sports park— complete with a log house facility, birling pond and climbing poles— and, by 1976, competitors came from as far away as Australia.

From 1976 to the early 1990s, the event continued to be a part of the annual fair at Evergreen Park. However, the association whose job it was to organize the show was having difficulty attracting new members. The Grande Prairie Loggers Sports Association folded in 1994; that year, the last Loggers' Sports Show was held in Grande Prairie.

Right: Still from 1986 Grande Prairie Logging Sports. This video cassette shows various events, competitions, demonstrations and entertainment at the 1986 event. (SPRA 1998.22.03c) The still featured here shows a “birling” demonstration: a game wherein each player attempts to balance on a floating log while each rotate it with their feet.

Fonds 042: Grande Prairie Loggers Sports Association fonds consists of the rules and regulations of the Loggers' Sports Association, programs of the yearly events, photographs, news clippings and a video of the 1986 competition. These records were donated to the Grande Prairie Museum by Laura Partlow and Martha Head and later transferred to the South Peace Regional Archives.

Right: The front cover of a 1982 souvenir program for the Alberta Lumberjack Championships, hosted in Grande Prairie. (From SPRA 042)



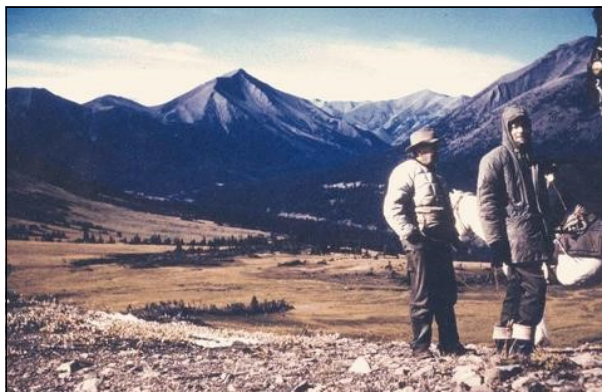
More than Logging...

Forestry Records in the Dave Schenk Collection

David “Dave” Edson Schenk, born in Grande Prairie on 3 November 1931, seemed set to follow in his father’s footsteps as a locomotive man. Francis Schenk, an American immigrant, spent over 40 years with the rail before retiring in 1964. Dave got his start in rail with the Northern Alberta Railway as a watchman and locomotive fireman, living at home until 1956.

In April of that year, Dave moved to Grande Prairie to work for the Alberta Forest Service as an Assistant Ranger. His “office” was the entire forest region surrounding Grande Prairie. In the summer of 1957, he was promoted to District Ranger at Woking, and in December 1958 he transferred to the South Wapiti District. Dave retired at Edson, where he worked for the Land Management Department of the Alberta Forest Service, in 1987.

Dave’s story is part of the Schenk family fonds, which includes records related to Grande Prairie and the



Above: Dave Schenk and Henry McCullough near the B.C. border, 1961 Part of forestry work was to monitor game hunting during regular “game patrols.” (SPRA 0256.03.31)

local military (series 1), railway (series 2), and forestry (series 3: Dave Schenk collection). The Dave Schenk collection includes photographs of forestry road work, forestry cabins and film tours, tower sites, ranger stations, fire fighting, and game patrol.

Several recent small unprocessed accruals (additional donations) from Dave include his daily journals from 1966 to 1987. These journals, with their sparse but consistent entries, document his daily rounds of inspections and travel. The accruals also include several Alberta Fire Control service books, seizure records related to hunting, and forestry textbooks.

These records demonstrate that the forestry industry includes more than just logging. It is a complex, multifaceted industry. We are grateful to Dave Schenk for providing the region with this diverse resource and — through his archival donations — enhancing our understanding our local forestry industry.



Above: Fire fighting crew brought into the South Wapiti Forest District by Doug Clarkson (in plaid). Part of forestry work was fire control. 1961. (SPRA 0256.03.28)

Thank You, Archives Supporters!

The South Peace Regional Archives appreciates financial contributions of all sizes. This issue, we would like to recognize three special contributions to the Archives’ mission of gathering, preserving, and sharing local history.



Above: Ed Hall, President of the Grande Prairie & District Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society, presents a cheque to Alyssa Currie, Executive Director for the purchase of a new archival scanner.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the AGS: Grande Prairie & District

The South Peace Regional Archives is very grateful for the financial support provided by the Alberta Genealogical Society: Grande Prairie & District Branch

The donation was used to purchase a new professional-grade scanner: the Epson Expression 12000XL. The scanner conforms to preservation standards and provides exceptional digital reproductions. Thanks to the AGS: Grande Prairie & District Branch, this technology upgrade will allow for improved preservation and access of the Archives’ collections as we increase our reproduction requests and community outreach opportunities.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the Bear Creek Funeral Home

The South Peace Regional Archives would like to express its appreciation for a generous donation provided by Bear Creek Funeral Home

This fall, Bear Creek Funeral Home hosted “Grande Prairie Ghost Stories” in support of the Archives. The event showcased spooky stories— some fictional, some fact— from the community’s history as well as themed snacks and refreshments. The proceeds of this fundraising event will support the Archives ongoing operations. Stay tuned for details of this year’s event and more spooky stories— coming October 2020!



Above: Eunice Friesen, Owner of Bear Creek Funeral Home, presents a cheque to Jan Shields, President of the Board of Directors to support Archives operations.

Thank You, Archives Supporters!

We would like to gratefully acknowledge

Mrs. Norine Stirling

The South Peace Regional Archives and Future Planning Committee would like to express our gratitude to Mrs. Norine Stirling for her generous contribution to the Archive's building fund.

The Archives current facility and offsite storage are almost full to capacity. With support from our regional partners, businesses, and individuals, our mission is to establish a secure and purpose-centred Archives facility. Thank you for your support.

Join Our Team

The Archives is currently accepting applications for the position of Archives Assistant (Student) .

- Engage in hands-on training in the Archives
- Liaise with the Indigenous History Committee
- Assist with educational programs and events
- Conduct research using archival resources
- Assist through the records donation process
- Process archival materials for consultation
- Write articles for *Telling Our Stories*
- Network with professionals in the heritage field

Visit www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/Careers for eligibility criteria and application information. This position is contingent on funding from the Young Canada Works Program.



New at the Archives

The last few months have seen some small but notable donations from local residents.

Local photographer Randy Vanderveen donated recorded interviews from his veteran research project conducted in commemoration of VE Day. That project led to the creation of VE70, a display donated to the Grande Prairie Museum and regularly displayed at the Grande Prairie Legion on Remembrance Day.

Researcher and heritage advocate Wanda Zenner brought in six Royal Canadian Legion Alberta-NWT Command Military Service Recognition Books. These books contain youth poems and artwork, articles, and brief biographies of veterans of conflict. These are a wonderful addition to our library and a research resource for our Soldiers' Memorial.



2019 Legion Military Service Recognition Book

Shelley McDonald donated almost tens years worth of mail-in Sunday School booklets. These booklets originally belonged to her mother, Jean Cameron nee Scorgie. These booklets would have played an important role for rural children in the region.

These are only a few examples of local people supporting our commitment to telling the stories that need to be told about the South Peace region. We'd love to make yours one of them.

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I would like more information about becoming a: _____ volunteer _____ board member

Select your membership:

Yearly membership: receive communications to stay informed about issues and happenings at the Archives, get involved in the society, attend meetings, vote on issues, and run for office.

Lifetime membership: receive all of the benefits of a regular membership, without the hassle of yearly renewal, and know that your membership could have a greater immediate impact. Lifetime members will also receive an official donation receipt for income tax purposes.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

Lifetime Membership
\$500.00/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
Director@southpeacearchives.org

Eco-option: I would like to receive a digital subscription to *Telling Our Stories*; I will receive an email link to a full-color copy of each issue. By selecting a digital subscription, I understand that I am opting out of receiving paper issues of *Telling Our Stories*.

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