

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 2, Issue 3, June 1, 2011

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Election fun from days gone by. Losing candidate Harry Adair, in payment of an election bet, prepares to wheelbarrow William Innes in the Sports Day parade down Grande Prairie's main street on July 2, 1917. This photograph is from the Kirstien family fonds, and Ernest Kirstien is the fourth band member from the left, wearing a white shirt. SPRA 2009.95.02

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June 1, 2011

Dear Members & Supporters;

Our theme for this newsletter is the trails which brought immigrants and settlers into the Peace Country. Since each issue also emphasizes one area of our mandate, this time it is the County of Grande Prairie.

2011 is the 100th anniversary of the Edson Trail. We have included a list of the anniversary events as well as a sample of an Edson Trail diary on page 16.

Joseph Tomshak, from Poland, was one of those who came in over the Edson Trail. We recently received a collection of photographs from his daughter, Jenny Croken, and this is our featured photo collection.

It was, however, only one of the routes into this area. The earliest immigrants, the Metis, came in over pack trails such as the Hinton Trail. To illustrate this group, an interview of Julia Campbell, done in 1955 by Margaret Loggie of Fairview, is on page 14.

Jim Somerville, from central Canada, arrived over the Long Trail as a member of Walter McFarlane's survey crew. Like many of his co-workers, he was so impressed by the land that he stayed for the rest of his life. He is our "featured fonds" from the archives.

Harry Adair started up from Montana in 1906 and also came over the Long Trail, but took three years to do so. He eventually sold his substantial ranch to a group of Mennonite farmers from Russia. A document and photographs illustrating this story are on page 12.

The Long Trail was used even after the Edson Trail was built. On page 15, a page of poetry, by Misses Baird and Drynan, illustrates travel on the trail in 1914.

As a public archives, our mandate is to collect from all of the different groups and individuals who settled in the south Peace, as Leslie's column on page 17 explains. This is one of the things we need help with from our members, and the other is just across the page.

Thanks to all for supporting a regional archives through your membership and interest.

Sincerely,

Mary Nutting, Archivist

TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY

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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.

Help Us Solve A Mystery

Have any of our readers heard of, or do they remember a Prisoner of War Camp or Work Camp south of Grande Prairie during World War II?

This article started with a query from Bill Scott, writer of "Potpourri" for the *Daily Herald-Tribune*. On March 30, I received the following e-mail:

"Good morning Mary and crew. I have a puzzler for you: Paul Galway mentioned to me a week ago that there used to be a prisoner of war camp (his words) on the site of the present-day Canfor sawmill on Wapiti Road or down that way somewhere. News to me. This week I met up with Bill Gorrie, a WW2 vet and longtime resident, and asked him. He agreed. I checked websites and came up with lists of POW and internment camps for both wars -- for Italians, Ukrainians, Germans and Japanese -- and nowhere is there anything even remotely close to Grande Prairie. Have you ever heard of anything like this?"

I had heard this rumour before, but (perhaps because I wasn't listening properly) I thought it was south of the Wapiti River. I dismissed it as a local legend because we were so isolated from the actual fighting up here in the Peace Country.

Then, on April 8th, another e-mail from Bill:

"I just talked to Bill Bessent about the rumoured 'POW camp' along Wapiti Road and he said there was a work camp, not POWs as such, who were brought in on the NAR to work there... where Canfor's sawmill is located... He recalls that Cliff Wright used to meet groups of Germans getting off the train. This was post-war so maybe it was some kind of settlement procedure or integration program?"

Perhaps, Bill suggested, this information quest was fodder for our newsletter. I agree—does this ring a bell with any of our readers? Can you help us solve this question of history?

Edson Trail Anniversary Events



Breakneck Hill on the Edson Trail. SPRA 132.01

Edson Trail Map Book

Peace Country Historical Society
Available from your local museum,
the County of Grande Prairie office,
or contact Janet Peterson, PCHS secretary at
780-354-3634 or jlscreations@telus.net

"Discovering the Trail" Exhibition
Heritage Discovery Centre
Open from May to September

Edson Trail Rock Cairn
Official Opening: June 12, 2011
Kleskun Hill Park

Edson Trail Stories
The untold stories, 100 years of progress, and
celebrating the trail
Order from Fran Moore (780-957-3957)
Publication date: October 2011

Edson Trail Ride
Riding the Trail 100 years later, July 9-22, 2011

Edson Trail Family Celebration
Evergreen Park, July 23, 2011
Order your tickets for dinner in advance
from Diane Delaney, 780-532-6272

Jim Somerville fonds

Jim Somerville fonds. – 1905-1968. – 3 cm textual records. – 63 photographs. – 6 postcards.

Biographical Sketch

James "Jim" Somerville was born in Hawksville, Ontario in 1882. In 1900 he moved west to Manitoba, and later continued on to the community of Viking, in Southern Alberta, where he homesteaded from 1904 to 1910. From this base, Jim worked for many survey crews going into the Peace Country. The first trip, in 1904, was into the Grande Prairie area with surveyor J.B. St.Cyr. A year later he was the packer in charge of the horse train for Henry Selby's survey crew when they re-surveyed the sixth meridian from the 18th base line to Peace River. The crew came back via the Grande Prairie and Bezanson, and re-surveyed the eighteenth baseline from west of the sixth to Valleyview.

From 1909 to 1911 Jim worked in Walter McFarlane's crew which was surveying out sections and quarter sections in anticipation of settlement. In 1910 McFarlane's crew surveyed the Rio Grande area, and in 1911 the Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek and Rolla districts. In 1911 Jim filed on a homestead on the southmost of the Buffalo Lakes and became a permanent resident.

Jim married Eva Woolston in 1927. Eva was born in Sandy, England in 1894, and had served in World War I as a nurse for St. John's Ambulance. She was visiting a friend (Mrs. Brebucks) in Canada when she met Jim. She had a lovely voice and sang for community events as well as for the soldiers during World War II. Eva and Jim had two children: Daniel and Rosemary (Smith). They lived on their Buffalo Lakes farm until Jim died in 1971. Eva passed away three years later in 1974.

LIVE STOCK AND POULTRY DIVISION CANADA PRODUCTION SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
407 Bowley-Henry Building,
Edmonton, Alberta,
October 29th, 1948.

Dear Mr. Somerville:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 28th re the boar "Stoni-Crik 9B -337723" which is on loan to the Buffalo Lakes Swine Improvement Association.

In view of the fact that you state that you would not recommend this boar as a breeder, we are prepared to sell him for salvage at a price of \$20.00 to anyone who may be interested in your district. For this purpose we are enclosing our regular Boar Sale Form in triplicate which we would ask the purchaser to kindly sign returning the white and blue copies to this office and retaining the yellow form for his records.

When returning the Boar Sale Form it will be necessary for the purchaser to mail a Postal Money Order for \$20.00 made out to the Receiver General of Canada.

Your cooperation in the above matter would be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,
N. Curtis
N. Curtis,
District Fieldman.

James Somerville, Secretary,
Buffalo Lakes Swine Imp. Assn.,
ALCO LAKES, Alberta.

BOAR SALE FORM

I hereby certify that I bought of N. Curtis representing the Dominion Department of Agriculture "Stoni-Crik 9B -337723" SCH 99

Yorkshire for the sum of \$20.00 delivered at BUFFALO LAKES, Alberta in good physical condition

October 29th, 1948 October 29th, 1948

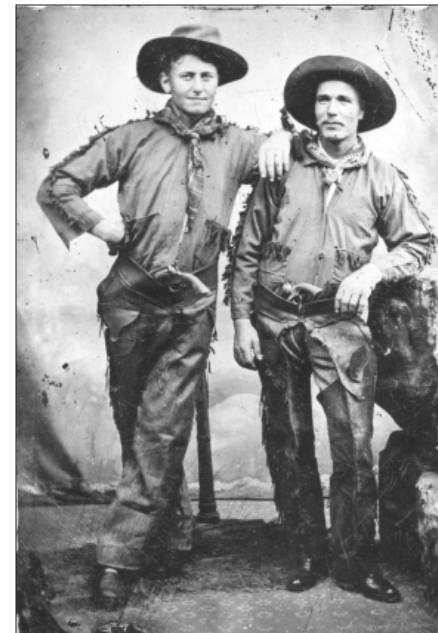
Scope and content

The Jim Somerville collection follows his career as a surveyor in the Peace region, and his life as a homesteader. The first series of photographs is from Henry Selby's 1905 survey of the 20th base line west of the fifth meridian. The photographs show the environment of the area east of the Smoky River, the activities of his survey crew, and the life of a surveyor. There are also several photographs of buildings in Grouard and stopping places in the area. From 1909 to 1911 Jim Somerville worked as a packer in Walter McFarlane's survey crew. The photographs from this series show the environment of the land which was surveyed and the life of the surveyors at work. The regions which were covered stretch from Edmonton to Fort St. John, B.C. The last series of photographs show Jim's life as a homesteader in southern Alberta and the Peace Country.

An accrual of paper records include a Riley & McCormick cowboy equipment catalogue (1925); 6 small booklets recording activities and purchases (1912-1948) including a bank book (1926-1944) and a 1927 diary; land tax documents(1920-1932); a notice of caveat (1949); gasoline ration coupons (1943); correspondence concerning the Buffalo Lakes Swine Improvement Association; a letter from J.B. Oliver; 4 personal cards; assorted financial records (1913-1948); and a Buffalo Lakes newspaper article.

Custodial History

Copies of the original photographs were deposited in South Peace Regional Archives by Jim's son, Dan Somerville, in 2005. An accrual of paper artefacts was added in 2009.



Below left, cowboy Jim Somerville and a friend pose for a formal photograph. SPRA 178.03.01; bottom center, a survey crew on the bank of a river. SPRA 178.02.06; and right, Jim and Eva Somerville in Vancouver in 1968. SPRA 178.03.10

Memories and Photos of Jenny (Tomshak) Croken

The photographs on these two pages were recently donated by Jennie Croken. A few of her memories, recorded in 2008, are included.

I was born on a homestead, just north of Clairmont. Both of my parents were Polish immigrants, so that was the language I spoke.

When Dad came here, like many people, he had no money. But, he always said; "I had my ten fingers." After filing his homestead in 1911, he walked back to Edson to work on the Edson Trail. During this time, he was told he had to go back to his homestead and build a shack, and break so many acres, in order to keep his homestead. After doing this, he walked back to Edson again to work on the Trail.

Dad and Mama married in 1915. Mama had to make her dress and she borrowed her sister's wedding ring for the ceremony and then gave it back. Mama made dinner for Dad while he cleaned the barn. Some honeymoon!

We always had a big garden in order to feed the ten



Above, Joseph Tomshak and a friend from the Polish community of Webster. Below, Main Street Grande Prairie celebrating peacetime after the end of World War I. SPRA 112.02.08, 26



Above, a crowd awaits the arrival of Earl and Lady Bessborough, Canada's Governor-General, in 1933. Below, Tomshak's tame Trumpeter Swans being fed by Gertrude Charters, editor of the Herald-Tribune, and the Tomshak family in 1948. SPRA 112.02.17,18

of us. We also had a root cellar where vegetables were kept until the next crop. There was always a big barrel of saur-kraut for the winter and I remember being scrubbed up, put in a white dress and I then tramped the shredded cabbage while salt was spread between the layers.

I think my Dad, Joseph Tomshak, should be credited for providing Grande Prairie with the Trumpeter Swan symbol, which was adopted after Grande Prairie reached city status. In 1948, my brothers discovered three abandoned cygnets at Ferguson Lake, near Clairmont, which the



RCMP allowed them to keep. They were raised by one of our domestic hens. The young swans grew and did not leave even for the winter. Dad fed them wheat and Mom baked bread which they liked and they had a slough, so they were content. In the spring while looking for water, they were out on the road and one was accidentally killed by a car. The body was preserved by a taxidermist, kept by Dad and then when he retired to Grande Prairie, it was put in the museum. The remaining two swans lived on the farm for 10 years, attracting many visitors and publicity. Visitors came from England, the USA and Canada. One swan was a pet that Dad called Tom. When there were visitors, Tom would open

the kitchen door with his beak and walk in, greeting guests by looking over their shoulders while they were eating and looking for handouts. When Dad would drive to Clairmont or Grande Prairie, 40 pound Tom and the other swan would fly overhead until Dad was parked. They then would fly down and guard the parked car. No one ever came near his car. The city accepted the stuffed swan for its crest. When Dad retired, Tom was sent to Delta, Manitoba. Not long after, Dad had word that Tom had laid an egg, so Dad had the wrong gender. The other swan was sent to Edmonton.

Explore the History of the Kleskun Hills

For your tour of the Kleskun Hills area, take Highway 43 east from Grande Prairie and turn north on Rge Rd 51. The first farm on your right is the historic Cochrane house and barn.

Robert and Jennie Cochrane came over the Long Trail via Peace River in 1910. Mr. Cochrane was active in the first agricultural society, the Peace River Grain Club, and the Peace River Co-operative Seed Growers. In 1932 he was recognized as the Timothy King of the Empire, having supplied seed houses with more timothy grass seed than any other individual in the British Commonwealth. He was also the World Wheat King in 1955. His hobbies were geology and paleontology, and he collected thousands of prehistoric fossils and bones found in the Kleskun Hills. This house was built around 1930.

As you head north, the road climbs, then dips down towards the Kleskun Lake basin. Turn east on Twp Rd 730. On your left is all that remains of Kleskun Lake. When settlement in the area began around 1910, the lake in spring covered a large portion of this basin and was home to thousands of migratory birds and many thousands of muskrats. Trapping the muskrats provided a winter income for the settlers. As the water receded in the summer, it was replaced by slough hay, which in the fall was harvested by the settlers for miles around.

About 1917, the Kleskun Lake Ranching Co. was formed and acquired the right to drain the lake under the Reclamation Act, with the stated purpose of growing food for the war effort. Dredging equipment was brought in and huge drainage ditches soon crisscrossed the basin. With the end of the war it became an enormous ranch with about 2500 head of cattle and four ranch sites, but by 1927 the ranch was bankrupt. The land was sold and the stock and equipment auctioned off. The damage had been done, however, and the lake was gone.

For a closer look at the lake, turn north on Rge Rd 43 and go to the end of the road. A dilapidated fence on the east side of the road is all that remains of the community pasture that was established in 1962 after a bid to re-create the lake failed. At its height, in 1975, 2700 cattle and 1300 sheep were cared for in the grazing reserve. This was also the site of the south camp of the earlier Kleskun Lake Ranching Co.

Leaving the lake, back-track on Rge Rd 43 and Twp Rd 730 to Rge Rd 44. Turn south and continue 1 ½ miles to Twp Rd 724A. Kleskun Hill School was here, on the northwest corner of the intersection. The school opened in a tent in the spring of 1916 and a school house was finished that summer. The school was the meeting place for this community with such activities as the Literary Club debates, the annual Christmas Concert, and the traditional box socials and card parties. After World War I a teacherage was added to the site, which also contained a barn and the usual outhouses.

Turning east on 724A will take you along the back side of the Kleskun Hills. Now a buffalo farm exists at the bottom of the hills, but in the days of the wild buffalo, this area was significant. The continual summer shade provided by these hills made it a good place for the First Nations to cache buffalo fat to preserve it without it becoming rancid. On the ridge above there was a buffalo jump. In her story about the Kleskun Lake Ranch in [Smoky River to Grande Prairie](#), Jean Rycroft states that “A buffalo run was constructed in the Kleskun Hills. A pen was built at the foot of a high cutbank near the fat cache and leading funnelwise to the top of the bank above the pen two fences were built far from out on the plains... the buffalo herd goes tearing upwind, into the out-stretched funnel over the cliff. There they are killed at leisure and meat cut up in strips to dry in the sun” (p. 512). The dried meat was mixed with berries and the cached fat to make pemmican.

For those accustomed to visiting Kleskun Hills Park, this back road is an unusual view of the hills and the undulating land with a few scattered boulders (erratics left behind by glaciers?) visible. Bird nesting boxes on many of the fenceposts attest to the work of the Trumpeter Swan Naturalists who work in the Park.

When you reach the T-intersection, turn north on Rge Rd 41, then east on Twp Rd 730. You are now in the original lake catchment area. Where there was once abundant slough hay, there is now an expanse of red and gold willow. About ½ mile east you climb a small embankment which has the appearance of a lake shore.

Continue east to Rge Rd 34 and turn south. To the east, willow and bush obscure Stark Lake. Just south of this lake was another called Calliou Lake. This was later drained and the land used for the Bezanson Greenhouses. The Calliou Stopping Place, as the largest home in the area, was often the scene of dances and community gatherings. It was also where classes for East Kleskun School were taught when the district was established in 1916, before the school was built.

About where you reach Twp Rd 725, you cross where the Edson Trail ran from Calliou Lake and angled west past the East Kleskun Hall and School, the Kleskun Hill Post Office and south of the Kleskun Hills. Follow the trail by turning west on Twp Rd 725 to Rge Rd 35, then south to Twp Rd 724, then west again to Rge Rd 41.

You are now at the dot on the map identified as Kleskun Hill, because on the southwest corner of the intersection was the Kleskun Hill Post Office in the George Tempest House. This building is now in the Heritage Village at the Grande Prairie Museum.

Going west from this intersection will lead you into Kleskun Hill Park, an unusual land formation and 65 hectares of natural area. In the 1950s, this was the site of geological picnics which drew crowds of up to 2000 people to hear speakers talk about paleontology and the geology of the area,

but the site is more historic than that. A marked trail will lead you to where one of the last battles of the Beaver Indians is commemorated by two burial mounds.

Kleskun Hill Museum is open from June 1st to September 1st. You can climb Dinosaur and Garret Hill for a view of the surrounding country or tour the buildings in the Heritage Village. These include the Turner Barn built in 1928; the Hubert Manning house, 1914; the Wasyl Bill Griko home, 1929; the original East Kleskun School, barn and out-buildings; the first post office and the 1947 “Our Lady of Perpetual Help” Roman Catholic Church. You can also view some original wagon ruts made by the early settlers travelling along the Edson Trail. The Kleskun Hills have plants that grow nowhere else in the area, and there are more than 160 species of flowering plants, including cacti.

This year, the Edson Trail Cairn will be unveiled on June 12th in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Edson Trail. The cairn is made of rocks from various homesteads, inscribed with the names of individuals and families who came over the Edson Trail.

Leaving Kleskun Hill Park, go south on Rge Rd 41 and turn back towards Grande Prairie on Highway 43. You will pass three historical signs on the way back to Cochrane’s corner. Stop and read about *The Kleskun Hills*, *The Grande Prairie*, and the *Grasslands of the Grande Prairie*. This last sign is in front of the Cochrane home and a portion of undisturbed prairie which preserves species native to the prairie grasslands in this area that have been otherwise destroyed by cultivation.

Resources:

[Smoky River to Grande Prairie](#)

[www.discoverthepeace.com](#)

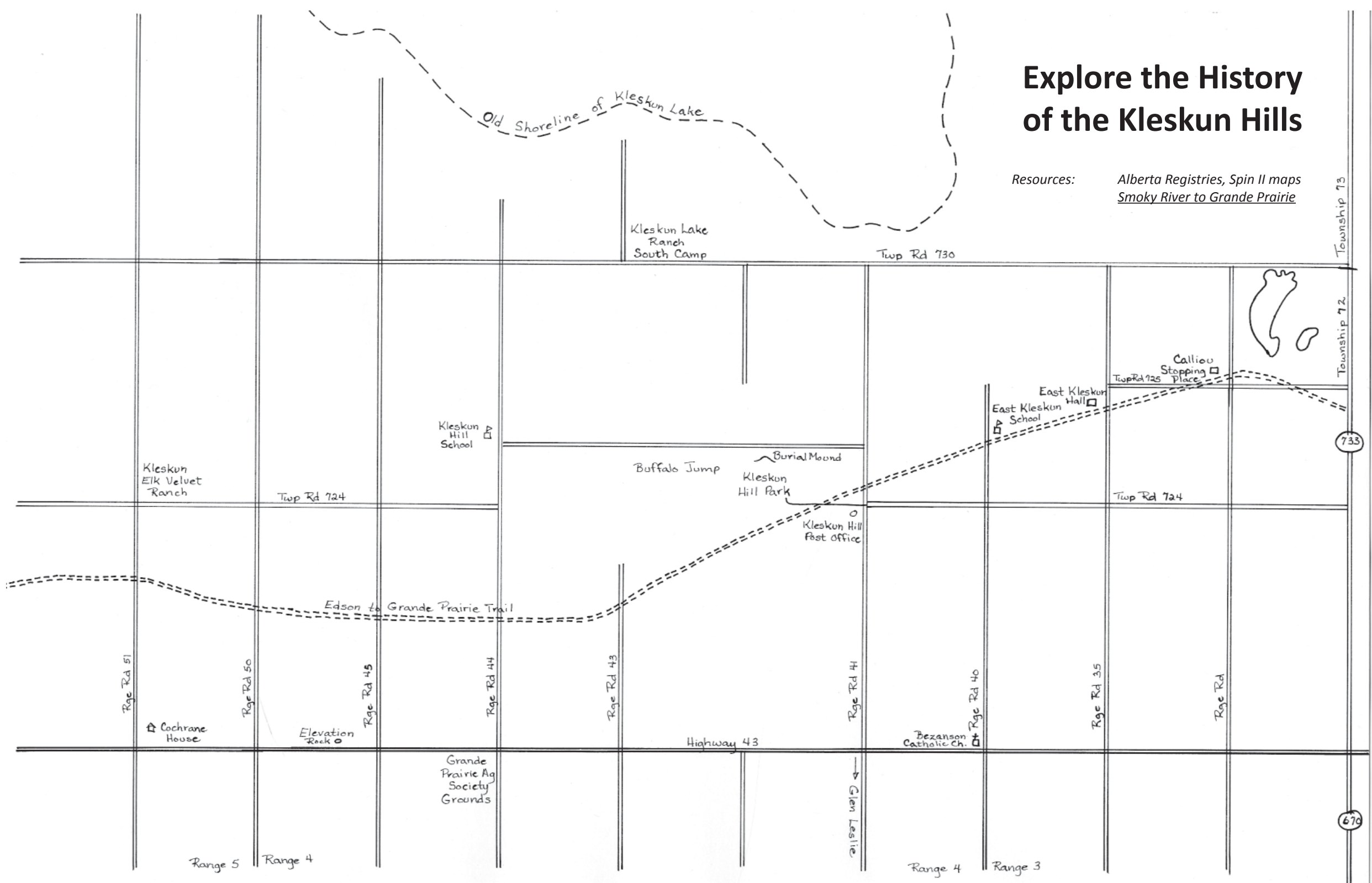
[South Peace Regional Archives](#)

Robert Cochrane fonds 268

*Grande Prairie School Division No. 14
fonds 063*

Explore the History of the Kleskun Hills

Resources: *Alberta Registries, Spin II maps
Smoky River to Grande Prairie*



The Adair Ranch and the Gossen Family



Barn on the Adair Ranch, Circa 1930



In 1930, when the Adair Ranch was sold to John Gossen and his group of fellow Mennonites, the home site had the houses and barn seen above. SPRA 2011.95.01, 02

In 1906, Harry Adair left Montana with 700 head of horses. He was headed for the Peace Country, accompanied by his wife Tessie, 11 year-old daughter Gertrude, Tessie's sister Ina, and two or three cowboys. That summer they made it as far as Stettler and stopped for the winter. There, some of the horses were sold to pay for expenses.

In the spring of 1907 they resumed the trek, now with about 500 horses, over the Long Trail via Atha-

basca Landing and along the north shore of Slave Lake. Again, some horses had to be sold, and many more were lost to swamp fever. They eventually arrived at Grouard, where they spent the second winter.

Finally the group reached the grande prairie in 1909 and wintered the horses off the north shore of Bear Lake that winter. In 1910, Harry filed on a homestead and the party accumulated 10 more quarters by purchased South African Scrip.

By 1915, all the land had been proved up and the ranch was a huge success. They built the home site of the ranch on the NW 5-73-8-W6.

According to David Leonard in The Last Great West, this site contained "six log houses and a central 18' x 36' dwelling..., one bunkhouse, one storehouse, one blacksmith shop, two cattlepens, 14 granaries, and one large 36' x 50' barn." That year the Adairs were able to ship "19,000 bushels of grain to Edmonton... by hauling it down to Goodwin's Crossing and barging it down the Smoky River to Pruden's Crossing (Watino), where the E, D & BC had just arrived." (p. 572)

In 1926, Adair began to make arrangements to sell the land to a group of Mennonite immigrants, one of which was John Gossen. The Adairs returned to the United States. The final agreement, the first sheet of which is seen overpage, was concluded in 1930.

Johann Jacob Gossen and his wife Helena (nee Friesen) left their home in Landskrone, Molotschna, South Russia, and travelled to Acme, Alberta in 1925. In 1926 they arrived in the Peace Country with their six children and by 1930 were resident on what had been the Adair Ranch. near Wembley.

2231.

THIS AGREEMENT made in duplicate the 1st day of August, A.D.
1930.

BETWEEN:

ADAIR RANCHING COMPANY LIMITED,
a body corporate duly incorporated
under the laws of the Province of
Alberta, (hereinafter called the
"VENDOR",

Of the First Part.

and -

JOHN GOSSEN, of the Village of
Wembley, in the Province of Alberta,
Farmer, (hereinafter called the
"PURCHASER",

Of the Second part.

Recital
clauses

1. WHEREAS by an Agreement in writing dated the 1st day of March, A.D. 1926, the party of the First part agreed to sell to Cornelius Toews, Gerhard Jacob Weins, Jacob Epp, John Gossen, Abraham Funk, Abraham Kathler, Abraham Friesen, Jacob Franz, Jacob Berg, Henry Sukkau, Jacob D. Nickel, Herman Wall, John Goerzen, Peter Friesen and A. Regier, and the Purchasers agreed to purchase all and singular those certain parcels or tracts of land and premises lying and being in the Province of Alberta, and being composed of the North Half and South West quarter of Section Three (3), all of Section Four (4), all of Section Five (5), the North Half and South East Quarter of Section Six (6), all of Section Eight (8), the South Half of Section Nine (9), all in Township Seventy-three (73), Range Eight (8), West of the Sixth Meridian, and the East Half of Section Thirty-two (32), in Township Seventy-two (72), Range Eight (8), West of the Sixth

Legal
description.

Julia Campbell, the Hinton Trail

Alexis and Julia Campbell came into the south Peace over what was later known as the Hinton Trail about 1885. The following transcript of an interview with her was done by Margaret Loggie for the Peace River Research Project commissioned by the Glenbow Museum and Archives in 1955.

Interview with Mrs. Alexis Campbell, Grande Prairie, July 1955

Mrs. Campbell (nee Julia Gouchier) is at least ninety-seven and perhaps one hundred and two years old. Born in St. Albert, she is of French and Indian descent. About seventy years ago she came to the Prairie with her husband and their eldest son, Malcolm. They rode horseback to Jasper and then took the Indian pack trail from Grand Cache over Nose Mountain to the Red Willow district.

Many Beaver and Cree Indians were living on the Prairie. One of the Beaver chiefs, Old Man Settler (perhaps Satla: see Interview with Hugh Allen and Selby McAusland), had eight wives. Another chief was named Davis. Among the first half-breeds in the district were William Calliou and Betis Besa (who died in 1954 at more than one hundred years of age). The Beaver Indians have left the Prairie now: some are at Horse Lake, near Lymburn; some at Ft. St. John.

Angus McLean was the first Hudson's Bay trader whom Mrs. Campbell remembers. Barter was the basis of business transactions. To buy a gun the Indians had to pile skins to the height of the gun. A big marten bought a cup of tea leaves.

The Campbells came to trap, but made their headquarters where the brick yard is now [site of Southview IGA], south of Grande Prairie town. They built a log house with mud fireplace and had a bit of a garden which Mr. Campbell spaded by hand. Their diet was mainly meat and berries. Flour was almost non-existent, although they brought a little brown flour by dog team from near Edmonton.

Seventeen children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. Many of them are living in the Grande Prairie district. Mr. Campbell died several years ago.

About seven buffalo still were on the Prairie when Mrs. Campbell first came to live there. She remembers that one of the first winters the ground was under six or seven feet of snow: probably the buffalo perished that season.

Below, photograph taken by Margaret Loggie at the time she did this interview with Julia Gouchier Campbell. It shows Julia with her brother Louis Gouchier near Grande Prairie. (Glenbow Archives NA-1271-3). Julia died in 1958 at the age of 105.



Traveling the Long Trail

Nurse Baird, who arrived in the Grande Prairie area in 1910 to help with the new Presbyterian Mission hospital, made a journey out over the Long Trail in 1914. Her companion was Miss Drynan. As they journeyed, they recorded their trip in poetic form, a sample of which can be seen on the right.

This booklet and its accompanying photographs can be viewed on www.southpeacearchives.org by clicking on Alberta InWord on the right-hand side of the page and typing "Meditations" in the search box. The booklet is 10 pages and a limited edition: No. 17 of 75 booklets printed.

*Strawberries, blueberries, all on friendship based;
Supper over, horses fed and nothing further to dread,
We spread out our bed rolls and hie us to bed.*

*At peep of day, we'er up and away,
A bad piece of road, and we must not delay,
We'll over the bumps come what may,
Bear Head is our goal ere we rest to-day.*

*What with bacon, roast and appetizing pie,
And scores of biscuits that made the butter fly;
All added to the travellers many snaks,
And contributed by the fair wife of he who guided
"the blacks".*

*We didn't think the roads at all bad,
Till we saw a poor team whipped with a gad,
Both young men so hearty and hale,
Didn't have sense to pry with a rail.*

*We were lucky the whole way through,
Could claim accident to nothing but a shoe;
They say it is easy to roll off a log,
And Miss D. will agree this is true;
She took a short glide, a skid and a slide,
And down she went into the slough;
To leave her in such a plight would never do,
So to the rescue flew two.*

*One pried from behind and the other before,
And soon she was on terra firma once more.*

Meditations while Migrating

- By -
Misses Baird and Drynan on the
occasion of their trip from Grande
Prairie to Edmonton, October 22,
nineteen hundred and fourteen.



Privately Printed, December,
M C M X I V
Edmonton, Alberta



Traveling the Edson Trail

In 1911, at the ages of 60 and 59, William and Priscilla Gilmour came to the Peace Country with their grown sons, George and Ernest, to take advantage of low-priced homestead land. They traveled by train from Port Robinson to Edson, where they bought horses, wagon and supplies, then spent

four months on the trail, arriving on September 12, 1911. They settled on SW 22-71-8-W6, just north of where the Wembley elevators now stand. Mrs. Gilmour kept a diary of the trip and the first few months on the homestead. Below is one page of the diary and a transcript of the same.

again on a little creek this side of stopping place. and pitched tent again. Camp 4 - 27th made about 8 miles this day also had a big hail storm 27 started again. but got stuck several times and had to unload but managed to make 8 miles this time. and had to pitch our tent again in among the evergreens a thick bush near a creek. after getting settled and supper over. Grandpa went out to see what the road was like. George had taken the horses out to eat grass and Ernie took a walk across the creek near the tent and sat down on a log after a while he heard a slight noise behind him. He saw a bear coming towards him he soon ran for the tent.

Camp 3. 26th. Started on our journey again and made 8 more miles today, which brought us to the Frenchmans stopping place about 20 miles from Edson and pitched our tent again on a little creek this side of stopping place.

Camp 4. 27th. Made about 8 miles this day, also had a big hail storm. Started again but got stuck several times and had to unload but managed to make 2 miles this time and had to pitch our tent again in among the evergreens a thick bush near a creek. After getting settled and supper over Grandpa went out to see what the road was like. George had taken the horses out to eat grass and Ernie took a walk across the creek near the tent and sat down on a log. After a while he heard a slight noise behind him. He saw a bear coming towards him. He soon ran for the tent...

If you would like to know what happened to Ernie and the bear, you can read more of this diary on www.southpeacearchives.org by clicking on the link to "Alberta InWord" on the left side of the home page and entering "Gilmour" into the search box.

What Archives Do and Why We Do It

by Leslie Pearson, B Sc, MAS

Author's Note: I hope I haven't frightened anyone away with last issue's extremely long column. As we have yet to receive any burning questions about archives, here's another column on something that just might interest you – our collections mandate. OK, I know it doesn't sound all that interesting (and certainly not as riveting as last issue's article on digitization), but bear with me.

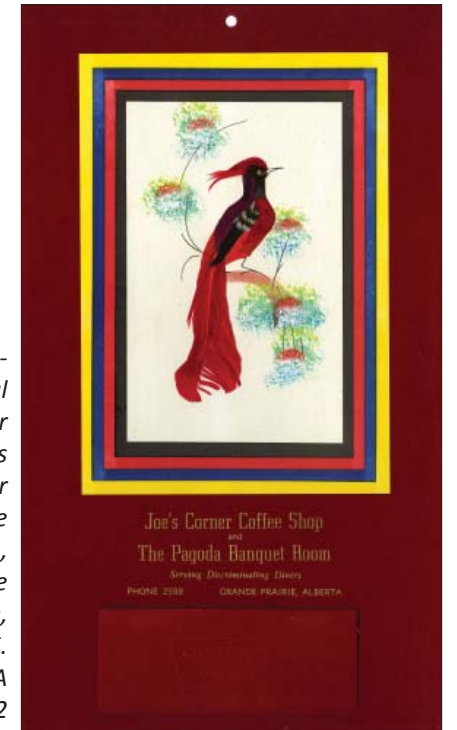
South Peace Regional Archives is what is called a "total archives." This means we collect material not only from the local governments which are our funding partners, but also from individual people, organizations, businesses, etc. that fall within our territory. Our aim is to form as complete a picture as possible of the past by preserving records from all sections of the community. If we only kept the official records, much of our history would be lost.

Being a "total archives" also means that we collect material on all kinds of media. We are not just a paper archives. Our holdings also include photographs, negatives, slides, film, video tapes, audio cassette tapes, reel-to-reel tapes, computer disks and files, maps, blueprints and architectural plans,



Ukrainian Dance Group from Greenway School, ca. 1940. SPRA 2004.37.02

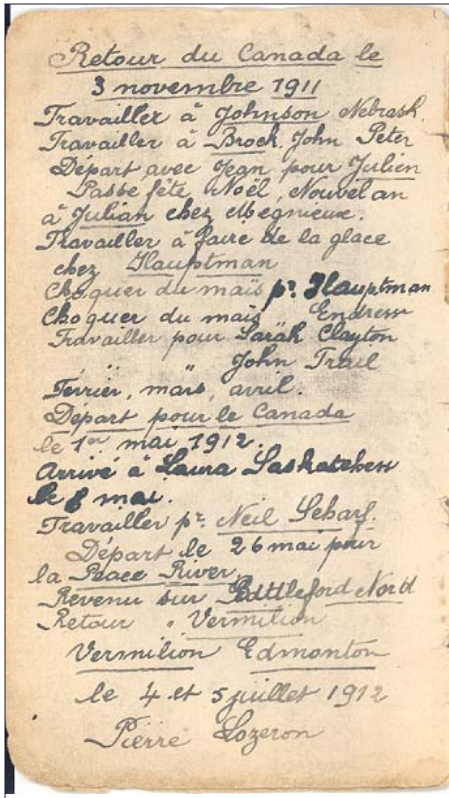
A promotional calendar from Joe's Corner Coffee Shop, Grande Prairie, ca. 1956. SPRA 116.07.02



and drawings and sketches – basically anything that is able to document or record information. This doesn't mean that we take any material, it still needs to have a good local connection, but being a total archives gives us the freedom to accept much more than just paper, again widening the view of history we are able to preserve.

I think I've probably mentioned before that Archives are dependent on donations (and I don't mean financial donations, although we gladly accept those too!). Archives only have what people choose to give us. So although our mandate is very broad, we often find gaps in our actual holdings.

Sometimes donors feel that their lives or activities were not important enough to be included in the



Left, a page from Jean and Pierre Lozeron's diary of immigration from Switzerland to Canada, 1911. SPRA 006.01.01.04

Above, Paul Wyniandi shows the Schenk children his rat root, a highly regarded native medicinal plant root, ca. 1975. SPRA 256.03.50

ly occurs because, for whatever reason, the records are never offered to us.

So the question is, how can we change this? How can we ensure that the picture of the past that we as an Archives are preserving is as complete as possible? You, our donors and supporters, have a big role to play. Have you been hesitant to bring your records in because you've never had a mayor in your family? Hesitate no longer. Without the records of farmers, garbage collectors, doctors, teachers, etc. we are missing a vital piece of the puzzle. Are you or do you know someone from a cultural background traditionally neglected by Archives (i.e. non-British)? Delay no more. You have access to people that the Archives may not. Talk to them and encourage them to donate their records to the Archives. What we collect now has a great impact on how our past will be perceived in the future. Please help the Archives, by your donations of material and advocacy in the community, to ensure that the records we acquire and preserve cover as broad a cross-section of our community as possible.

Archives. This is absolutely untrue! The broader the cross-section of records we acquire, the more complete picture we have. In the eyes of the Archives, everyday people are just as important as the "great names" who made newspaper headlines. Feelings of unworthiness are apparent even within families. Often we will come across a family biography where the story focuses on the man's life and the names of a wife and children are barely mentioned. A family's records need to include evidence of the actions and activities of all of its members.

Sometimes entire cultural groups are missing. This area of Alberta was built by First Nations people and immigrants from a vast number of countries and cultural backgrounds, but that is not always the picture we see if we look at the records in the Archives. It is not our intention to exclude any social or cultural group from the Archives, but it frequent-

Society and Member News

An Addition to the Bear Creek Map

An e-mail from Bill Scott gave me another location to put on the "Explore the History of Bear Creek" map in the last edition of this newsletter. Grande Prairie's first golf course was laid out along Bear Creek in 1923, "with the clubhouse spotted on the stubb offshoot of 102 Street at 90 Avenue", as Bill described in a September 2005 "Potpourri" column in the *Daily Herald-Tribune*.

"The town course's nine holes, laid out between today's 92 and 86 Avenues in what is now the Swanavon neighbourhood, were squeezed into between 30 and 40 acres, depending if they played down into the Bear Creek valley at the bottom of Suicide Hill. It was a tight, but not impossible fit.

"It was a nasty little beast. There are mentions in newspaper accounts of innumerable aspens, tall weeds, thick underbrush and dense rough. That's not even counting the item from a June 1923 town council meeting unearthed for me by Audrey Cerny at City Hall that the site was "infested with grasshoppers".

A Few of Our Recent Acquisitions

Adair Ranch Sales Agreement and Photographs
Donald Norrie

Herman Trelle family fonds
Mae Trelle

Home Expense Ledgers, 1958-1963
Estate of Anita Blimkie

Grace Longson Diaries
Dalton Longson

Photos of Elmworth, North Sexsmith Schools
Marion Hill

Ray Boyer story and photographs
Ray Boyer

Dahl family papers and photographs
Bill & Josie Dahl

John & Noel McNaught fonds
Kathy Pfau

On another matter related to war history...

Does anyone have photographs of the housing at the Grande Prairie airport during and after the war? I recall a series of two-story duplexes along the airport road which were still there in the 1960s and possibly the 70s. Presumably they were part of the U.S. Air Force group which was based at the airport during the war. The Archives is interested in stories, documents and photographs from people or organizations associated with the Air Base.

Grande Prairie Municipal Cemetery Tour

Join SPRA staff on a guided walk through the Grande Prairie Cemetery and discover the rich and interesting history of Grande Prairie and area through the lives and stories of its people.
7:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 10th, or 7:00 p.m. Saturday, August 20th.
Call the Archives at 780-830-5105 before August 8, 2011 to register (limit of 20 participants).

**South Peace Regional Archives Society
Membership Application Form**

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Interested in being involved as a _____ volunteer _____ board member

There are two types of membership:

Full memberships are for individuals who want to be involved in the society, allowing them to attend meetings, vote on issues and run for office.

Associate memberships are for individuals who want to receive communications from the society to keep them updated on happenings at the Archives, but not attend meetings.

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: 831-7371
E-mail: spra@telus.net