

TELLING OUR STORIES



Volume 8

JUNE 2017: SESQUICENTENNIAL ISSUE

Issue 3

a publication of South Peace Regional Archives

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Take Note

Friends of the Archives

Charity Golf
Tournament

August 11, 2017
Morningview Golf Club

Alaska Highway Road Show

Featuring Kathy Jessup, Bill Dolan,
& Allison Tubman

on the 75th Anniversary of the
Alaska Highway
7:00 p.m. Thursday, July 6, 2017
in the Grande Prairie Museum
Community Room
Tickets \$10.00 Cash Only, in
advance and at the door



June 1, 2017

Dear Members and Supporters;

I can hardly believe this is Issue 3, Volume 8 of "Telling Our Stories," and my last as the editor. The years have flown by.

The purpose of our newsletter was to "Tell the Stories" which people were bringing in to the Archives in the form of photographs, memories, documents, and entire collections. It seemed a shame that they would have to wait for someone to be interested in that family or community or topic as a research topic before they were made public.

And so the Archives staff, who appreciated the people they researched and the stories they uncovered while preserving and processing the records, decided to put together this little magazine.

The deal was that we would use collections which we had already done the work on so that writing the newsletter would not be a burden on any one staff.

Now, eight years later, there are more ways you can find stories from the South Peace on our website. The years have changed the publication as well.

We decided to throw in a little education, and the "What Archives Do" column was born. Then our members began to write articles especially for "Telling Our Stories." This added a whole new dimension which continues in this issue with Karen Burgess' story, "Expo '67 Safari."

Our volunteers were doing such interesting work, that we had to include their articles, such as Kaylee Dyck's on Vimy Ridge, and Pat Wearmouth's article on George Dawson's Exploratory Tour of the area in 1879, with corresponding photographs for today. This was something I had always dreamed of doing, and I am so thrilled that a better mapper than I has accomplished it.

I retire at the end of June and will be replaced by Alyssa Currie, who is introduced on page 27. Thanks again for all your support. It's been a blast!

Sincerely,
Mary Nutting

TELLING OUR STORIES

Published by South Peace Regional Archives Society

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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.

Cover photograph Richmond Avenue, Grande Prairie, ca. 1930 (SPRA 1969.59.476)

150th Anniversary of Canada

When the Dominion of Canada was formed in 1867, the government in Ottawa knew this area as Rupert's Land, the commercial territory of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was occupied mainly by Indigenous groups such as the original Beaver People, and the Cree who had come into the area with the Fur Trade.

Three years after Confederation, the Government of Canada paid \$1,500,000 to the HBC and took over responsibility of the land, which then became known as the Northwest Territories.

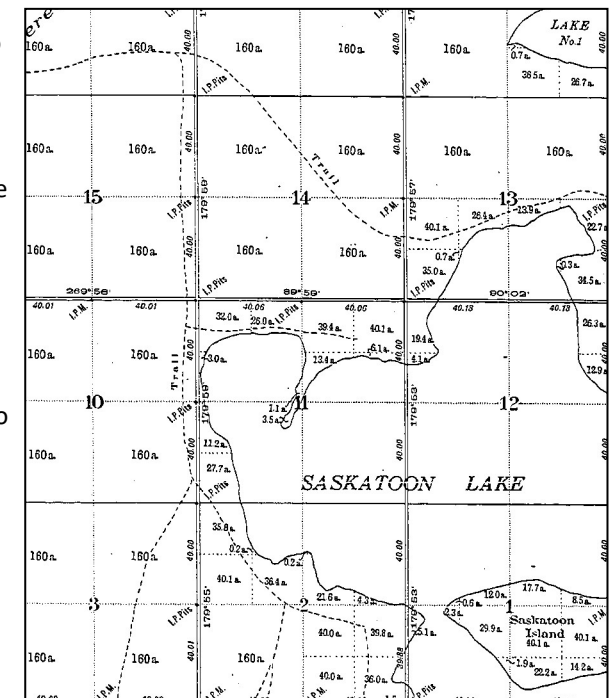
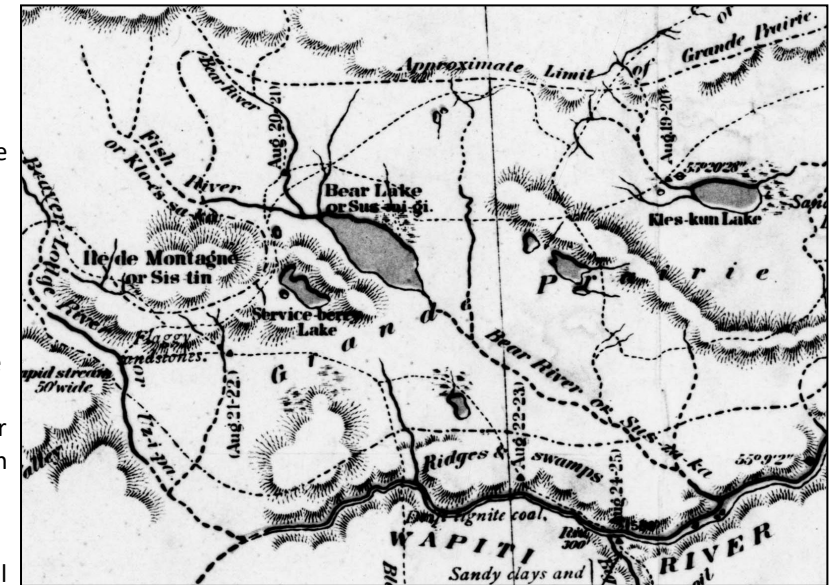
Over the next decade, the Geological Survey of Canada surveyed and mapped much of Western Canada. Their purpose was to record the geological structure of the area and to assess the mineral wealth and agricultural potential.

As they mapped, they included the trails the Indigenous peoples had created as they followed seasonal and trade routes over the centuries.

These trails are also recorded on the Dominion Land Surveys which surveyed the land into sections and quarters available for settlement, as seen on this 1909 survey of Township 72, Range 8 around Saskatoon Lake.

This is one of the resources Indigenous groups can use to document the history of their communities, and it is a very limited snapshot of what the Peace Country looked like 150 years ago.

Maps: top right, section of the 1879 Geological Survey map created by George Dawson and the Geological Survey of Canada. Bottom right, section of a 1909 map created by Dominion Land Surveyor Walter McFarlane.



Featured Fonds: Kirkness-Steinhauer-Testawich Family Fonds

Kirkness – Steinhauer – Testawich Family fonds. — 1905-2007. — .5 cm of textual records. — 31 photographs.

Kirkness Family

James Kirkness was born in the Birsay Parish of Orkney Island, Scotland in 1837. He was the sixth child and third son of Robert and Christiana (nee Sinclair) who were married in 1827 in Harray Parish. He grew up in a farming and fishing community and was listed as a farmer in the 1861 Scottish census. He entered the Hudson's Bay Company service in 1864 at the age of 27 years, taking the path of many Orkney men. After an eventful voyage on the Prince of Wales from Stromness, he landed at York Factory, Canada.

Steinhauer Family

The Ojibway minister, Henry Bird Steinhauer, was the first Steinhauer in his family. Born c. 1818 in Ontario near the present day Rama Indian Reserve, Sowengisik [Shauwanegezchick] was the oldest son of Bigwind and Mary Kachenooting. The young Sowengisik converted to Methodism during a mass baptism conducted by William Case and Peter Jones in 1828. It was at this time that he adopted the surname Steinhauer, the surname of the American who sponsored his education. He attended the Grape Island School from 1829-1832 and the Cazenovia Seminary in Cazenovia, NY from 1832-1835. Following that, he taught for two years at the Credit River mission on Lake Ontario. He studied at the Upper Canada Academy in Cobourg, Ontario starting in 1836. Despite taking a year off to teach at the Alderville mission school in Northumberland County, Steinhauer graduated in 1839 at the head of his class. Steinhauer started missionary work at Lac La Pluie before moving to Norway House. There he met his future wife, Jessie Joyful [Erasmus?](Seeseeb Mamanuwartum). Jessie was born in 1818 to a Swampy Cree family. Jessie was considered a strong woman with a sphere of influence separate from her

husband's. She and Steinhauer married on 5 August 1846 and went on to have eleven children together: William (who died in infancy); Abigail (married John McDougall); Eliza Ann; Samuel; Arthur; Sarah Jane (b. 1855, Norway House); Evangeline; Egerton (became a missionary); Robert (became a missionary); Morley; and Augustine.

Steinhauer travelled to England with Egerton Ryerson to raise awareness of missionary work in the West. He returned to begin work at Whitefish Lake in what would become Alberta. In his later years, Steinhauer became more involved in addressing issues related to First Nations people. He never changed his religious beliefs or discontinued his religious work as he asserted his First Nations identity. Steinhauer died 30 December 1884 from influenza. Jessie died in 1910 at the age of 92.

Henry and Jessie's daughter, Sarah Jane, married James Kirkness c. 1873 or 1874.

Kirkness-Steinhauer Family

James Kirkness married Sarah Jane Steinhauer, daughter of the prominent Ojibway Methodist minister, Henry Bird Steinhauer, sometime during 1873 or 1874.

Up until 1882, while James still worked for the HBC, their first five children, Henry James (1873), John (1875), William (1878), Robert (1880), and George (1882), were born. In 1882, James and Sarah moved to their River Lot 26 and began homesteading. They cleared and cultivated the land, growing crops like potatoes and raising chickens. These were not auspicious years for the family. While three more children were born here – Mary Jane (1885), Edith (1887, m. John Heron approx. 1920), and Charles (1890) – five died. John, William, Robert, and George died in May 1886 during a diphtheria outbreak. Mary Jane died the next year.

In 1890, James acquired the land titles for River Lot 26 (now part of Virginia Park) and also for two westerly chains of River Lot 24 (now part of Cromdale). James and Sarah moved the family to Fort Dunvegan where he, Sarah, and oldest son Henry, worked for the HBC as

labourers and stockkeepers in the White Mountain area. During the three years they lived there, son Samuel and daughter Jessie were born (1891 and 1893 respectively). Sadly, they both died during this period – Samuel in 1892 and Jessie in 1893. Of all their children, only Henry, Edith and Charles would live to adulthood. James and Sarah returned to their Edmonton river lots with Edith and Charles in 1893. Henry stayed behind at Dunvegan and later homesteaded in the area.

James and Sarah together and separately after James' death in 1911, sold portions of their property to the City of Edmonton. Developments at East End Park and Virginia Park, and the Premier Coal Mining Co. (1924-1936) were all part of their original holdings. Sarah died in 1929 and was remembered fondly as one of the "oldest of the old-timers."

Testawich Family

Mary Louise Testawich was born 20 April 1878 at Egg Lake. Her parents were listed as Francois Tastawitz (Metis) and Joseph Iskewais (Indian) on her Metis scrip application. She may have been related to the Testawich family from the Peace River area. The headman, Duncan Testawich, who was one of the signatories to Treaty 8 in 1899, was likely a grandson of Francois Tustawitz, an Iroquois who had come to Peace River with George Simpson in 1828. Despite his Iroquois ancestry, Duncan Testawich was identified as Cree and a leader of the Cree people in the Treaty 8 documents.

Kirkness-Steinhauer-Testawich Family

Henry Kirkness, the oldest surviving son of James and Sarah Kirkness, continued in his father's family tradition, working several years for the HBC at Dunvegan, trapping and working as an interpreter for the local Cree and Beaver people. He remained there in 1893 after his parents and younger siblings returned to Edmonton. On 1 November 1897 at Dunvegan, he married Mary Louise Testawich. They had nine children together while farming in the Spirit River area: Flora (1898-1913), Helen

Marie (Mary Ellen) (1901-1937, married to Claude Watkins), Annie (1904-?, married to Zaccheus Jackson), Sara Jane (1906-1991; married to Howard Pegg), Edmond Charles (1907-1909), Gordon Maxwell (1909-1976), Wilfred Richard (1911-1912), Robert Hector (1915-2001), and Edith Elsie (1918-2007). All their children were registered as being of Cree ancestry on the 1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Sadly, Louise died from the flu in 1918, along with her cousin, Joseph Testawich.

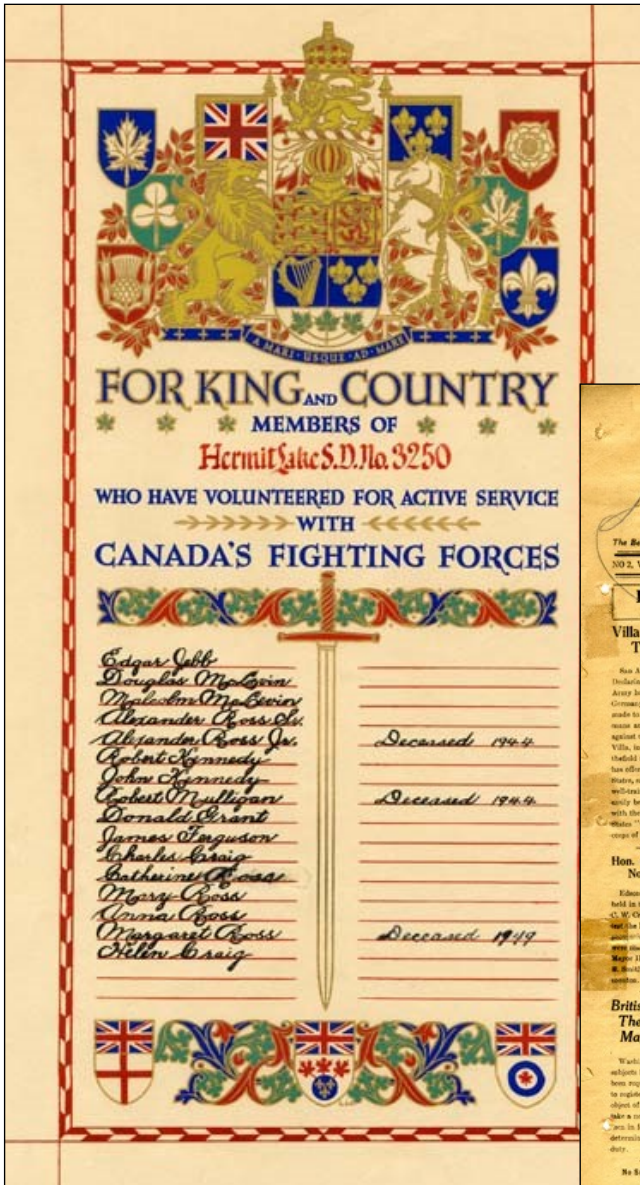
Henry later married Joseph Testawich's widow, Genevieve (La Petre) and in 1926, they sold the farm and, along with Henry's daughter Helen and her husband, established a stopping place at Moose Creek, SE 6-79-11. Moose Creek was renamed Gordondale in 1933 after Henry and Louise's son Gordon. The homestead and stopping place provided a respite for travelers going to and from the Spirit River and points west. The Kirkness place was large enough to handle dances and town meetings, including a meeting held in 1940 to determine if Gordondale should have a cemetery. Henry died of cancer in 1941 and was buried in that cemetery.

Of his and Louise's surviving children, Gordon remained in Gordondale until his death in 1976. Hector lived in a cabin near the highway in Gordondale. Annie married Zaccheus Jackson and lived in Ashmont, AB. Sara Jane (Jean) married Howard Pegg and moved to farm at Blueberry Mountain. Edith moved to Edmonton. All Henry's children are now deceased.

Kirkness School in Edmonton is named in honour of Henry's father, James Kirkness. Ralph Steinhauer, former Lieutenant Governor for Alberta, is the great-grandson of Henry Bird Steinhauer.

Left: Henry (b. 1873) is seated and his brother Charles (b. 1890) is standing, 1905 (SPRA 660.01.01)





Left: This "For King and Country" scroll, honouring men and women from the school who served in the war, hung in the Hermit Lake School for years before it was donated to the South Peace Regional Archives.

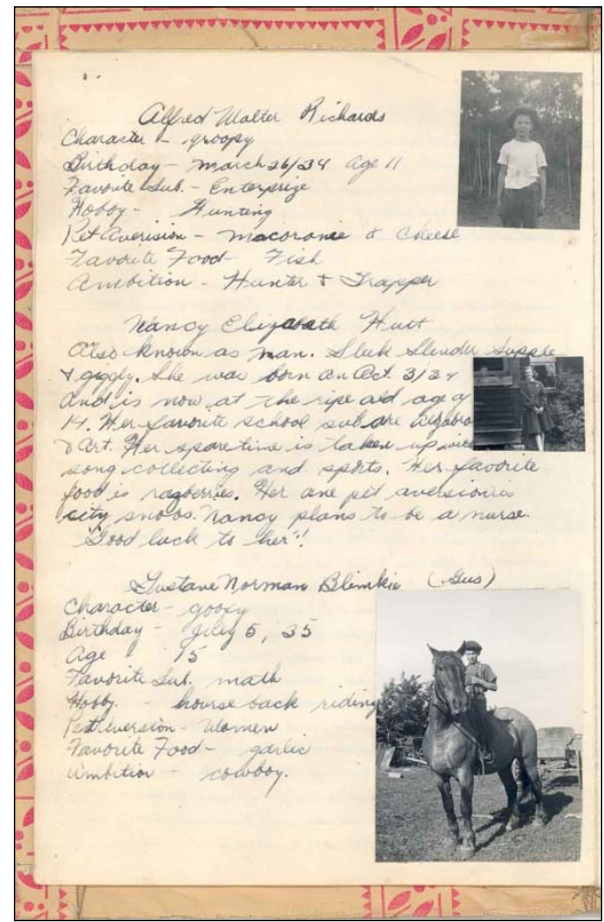
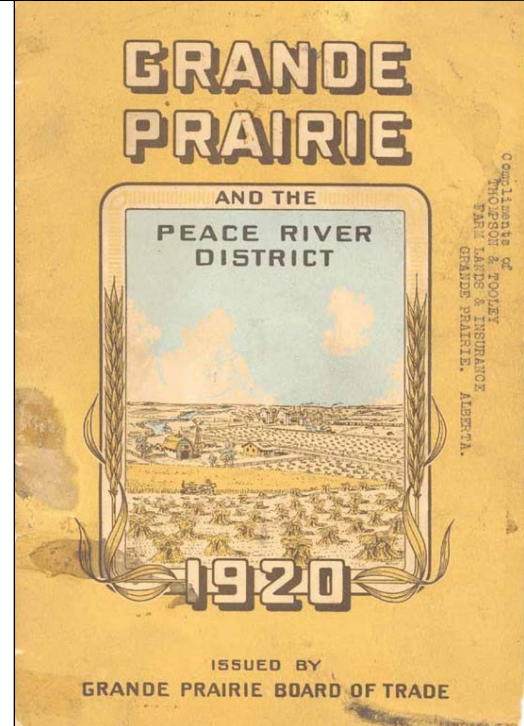
Below: The short-lived Lake Saskatoon Journal covered everything from social notes to grain prices to federal politics and the overseas conflict.



Left: In the Harry Tuffill photograph album, we see the history of Canada and the Peace Region played out in one family's life.

Below left: Playing a part in the larger immigration goals of the federal and provincial government, the Grande Prairie Board of Trade produced this 1920 booklet to encourage immigration to the region.

Below: Phyllis Stewart's 1959 Five Mile Creek School Yearbook provides insight into the large role played by small one-room schoolhouses during the developing years of settler communities in the Peace Country and across Canada.



A Lumberjack Remembers

By Phil Nilsson

Our serial this year will feature excerpts from A Lumberjack Remembers, written by Phil Nilsson. Phil is the grandson of Peter and Johanna Nilsson, who emigrated from Sweden in 1906. Phil was born on March 8, 1920 in Battle Lake, Alberta to Peter and Johanna's son Nils Hjalmar and his wife Harriet. This excerpt tells about various encounters Phil had with wildlife during his career as a lumberjack.

One of the most interesting experiences I had during these times was the first fall trip into the Big Mountain timber berth each year. This trip was to see how the camp and mill had fared throughout the summer. In those days there was no summer road into the area, so the only people who had access to it were people with pack horse outfits. The weather and wild animals, especially bears and pack rats, were the damage doers to the camp. We left all our cots, mattresses, kitchen and dining room equipment in the buildings, packed into large handmade wooden boxes. We fastened all the doors open on the buildings so the bears could get in.

One of the first years there, we didn't do this but left the doors locked, and the bears ripped the boards and paper off the outside of the buildings they were trying to enter, as high as they could reach. What a mess they made! If there were boards nailed on the inside of the studding, they couldn't get in because they weren't intelligent enough to push them all in, all they could do was pull. Most of our buildings didn't have boards on the inside of the studs, so when they got a hole big enough to go in they quit tearing the boards off. The few buildings that had boards on the inside were the ones with the most damage.

Even with the doors fastened open, the bears would usually destroy some of the steel meshed windowlite we used for windows instead of glass. If the windowlite had cotton mesh in it, they would completely destroy that. It seemed they didn't like the steel mesh and the empty gallon tin cans we

would leave all over the kitchen for them to make noise with, which scared them away. Once the bush foreman for Imperial Lumber was going through our camp; he walked into our cookhouse and a bear was in there. The bear was so scared he ran for and jumped through the only glass window we had in the kitchen, taking out all the glass and cross pieces in the window on the way out.

Because of the swampy condition of the timber berth, we always had to walk the last three miles into the camp. There were always bears along this three mile stretch, and one of these times I confronted seven in that distance. It was their normal summer habitat, and the wild raspberries in old slashing along the way was one of their favorite fall delicacies, which they made their main diet, it seemed. I never carried a gun, only a short-handled lightweight axe. I always made noise as I walked along so they would know something else other than themselves was in the bush. Even with the noise-making, they were as close as thirty feet from me before they ran away, sometimes.

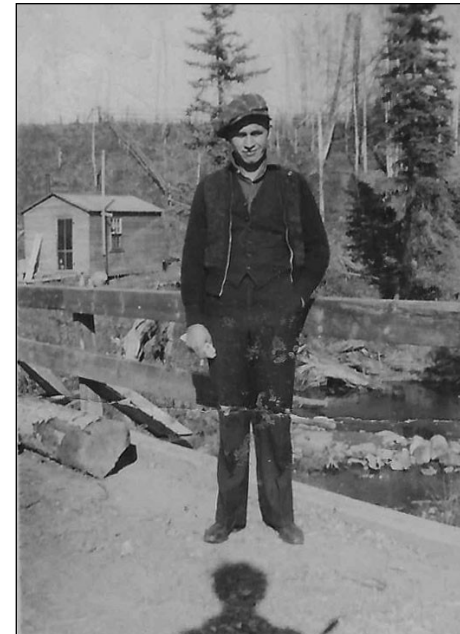
One fall I made this trip with Forrest Piper, Gus Rochon, and a fellow from Stephen's Sawmill. We, on these first trips, were always confronted with quite a few fallen trees across the road, which we either had to winch out of the road or cut them out with a saw or axe. On this particular trip, we stopped to clear some of these windfalls out of the haul road, just a few miles south of the Wapiti River. As we got out of the jeep, we noticed a fairly good sized brown bear with a cub. She noticed us right away, the cub scampered up a tall pine tree, and Forrest got his rifle out of the jeep as the bear came running towards us.

We had stopped right at a windfall, and Forrest knelt down to steady his aim on the windfall. The bear kept coming right at us and was within twenty feet of us when Forrest pulled the trigger, hitting the bear in the chest, just under the neck. For the purpose of hunting partridge, I had taken my single shot shotgun

along. Forrest had told me to be ready with the shotgun in case he missed. Was I ever glad when I saw he had hit the bear, which turned and ran back towards the area it had come from. It tried to run up over a bulldozed pile of trees, but fell backwards down into the road. We dressed the bear out for Gus, who liked bear meat, and found that the rifle shot had split the bear's heart wide open. This shows how tough these animals are, because it ran about two hundred yards with its heart split open before it died.

One of the later winters of this period, our fallers fell trees into an area of windfalls with large upturned roots. In these upturned roots a black bear had made its den. These trees woke the bear up enough that it came out of the den and was roaming around the bush. We knew this was a dangerous situation for our crew, so the bear was shot. When we were skidding the trees out of that area, our chokermen found the bear's den, and to their surprise there were three very young cubs in it. These cubs were gathered up and taken to the washroom in the men's bunkhouse, where they built them a pen. The whole crew became interested in these cubs and in giving them the care required to keep them alive.

This care meant that they had to be fed. Beer bottles were filled with milk, fitted with nipples, and the bears were well fed. There was no shortage of volunteers who were willing to look after them. It wasn't a surprise at all in the evening to find them on a crew member's bunk, being played with. They were indeed playful, and as they grew they became quite rough. Because of their roughness, before spring breakup, the men built stanchions to fasten their necks in while feeding them. This same winter, the Toronto Star Weekly had a big write-up on the black bears of Canada.



Left: Phil Nilsson at Drader's Mill, prior to moving to Grande Prairie (photo courtesy of Fay Brederson)

This article became a textbook, so to speak, for all the crew. I never saw an instance in all my years in the bush where so much interest was generated in the habitat, eating habits, hibernation, and reproduction of any wild animal. It was all very interesting.

When spring breakup came the bears were taken to Grande Prairie by various crew members. I'm not sure, but it seems to me in recollection that one was given to the American soldiers at the Saskatoon Mountain base as a mascot, another was sent to a zoo, and the third was kept by the Lloyd Hansen family, well into the summer. Lloyd and Vera were building their house at the time, and it was common to see this cub climb the open studdings in these unfinished rooms, sleep in the crib with Darrel, who was a young baby at the time. It never seemed to be rough with the baby, but with others it got to be too rough, and was very destructive in many other ways, especially curtains. Lloyd finally had to get rid of it, and gave it to the Forestry Service people to look after, if my memory is correct.

Over the summers, the pack rats also frequented our buildings. They were hardly ever seen up close, and my own sighting of them was always at a distance. They were honest thieves of anything that was the right size for them to carry away. Whenever they came to take something away, they always brought a large leaf off some shrub that grew in the area, and left the leaf in the area where they picked up whatever they were taking. Those leaves made quite a mess in a building over the summer. It was common in the fall to find table forks, spoons, tin cups, nails, bolts, and the like, stranded all over the yard surrounding the camp and the mill. Other than this, they were harmless and clean.

Expo '67 Safari

By Karen Burgess

In the fall of 1966, Edwin Genge, a teacher from the Barrie, Ontario high school area, organized Elmvale Expeditions Ltd., a plan that would allow grades 9-12 students from all over Canada to experience Expo '67 in Montreal. They were offering seven nights' accommodation in a student village, all twenty-one meals, a passport and transport to Expo grounds for seven days, all for \$55. We just had to figure out how to get there.

I was teaching at Montrose Junior High School at the time and this seemed too good to miss, but I needed to get some staff interested in going along as supervisors too. I received some tentative promises but our principal, Walter Warren, said, "Go ahead." So I did. Students were definitely interested. We had to become a registered group and open a bank account to collect money so "Expo Safari" was born and by January the group was able to send \$205 as a first deposit for thirty-eight members. We tried some group fund raisers with poor success so students were encouraged to save their allowance, get babysitting jobs, etc. – basically earn their own money. Besides the \$55, we each needed \$57 for the CNR's special round trip fare on the day coach from Edmonton to Montreal, money for a bus trip to Edmonton and back, money for food on route, and extra spending.

But the students had six months to save their money so that didn't really become an issue for them. What I was more concerned about was their adherence to the rule the school put into place which was that students who signed up had to be on their best behavior for the remainder of the school year and prove themselves absolutely trustworthy.

We met once a month and went over the latest details from the Elmvale group. I often had an eerie feeling that this could all collapse if they didn't get their required registrations. Genge had originally planned for 100,000 students over the summer but

had only 10,000 registered by the deadline of December 31, 1966 and nearly half of those were from Alberta.

By the time summer came we had thirty-eight students (more boys than girls) divided into twelve groups of three or four, each group with a supervisor. Supervisors consisted of four teachers: Mr. Geary, Mrs. Neufeld and her husband Orville, Maxine Olson, and myself. Parent supervisors were Mr. and Mrs. Henche, and high school student supervisors included Susan Swanson, Linda Clark, Sigrid Hartman, Tom Belford, Kevin Zutter, and Jergen Kaut. After a few last minute shuffles and drop outs, we divided students into groups headed by a supervisor who was responsible for keeping track of his or her group.

As near as I can remember, our train left Edmonton late on August 13 so we probably spent that day on the bus getting to Edmonton. My only memory of leaving on the bus was standing in the bus doorway doing the last count and Mr. Wigelsworth appearing at the door with something to hand me. It was a container of aspirin, so I asked, "Is this for Don?" He said, "No, this is for you." It was my first realization that parents might be concerned about me too and I thanked him.

Excitement waned a bit with the long (four days, three nights) train journey. Most of us had never been on a train ride before and certainly never on such a long journey. Everyone spent days in the day coach, with supervisors having a reprieve one night by being able to sleep in a berth (two to a berth). We were disappointed that the food available to us was provided by a small canteen with limited expensive choices so when we got to a northern Ontario stop and the conductor said we could get out for ten minutes and visit the small store next to the platform, we were grateful. Just to get fresh air was a treat. When the students filed back into the train car most had hands full of snacks and pop but one exception struck me. One of the girls was loaded down with a

loaf of bread, a jar of peanut butter, and a container of fresh wild blueberries. I asked her what her plan was but I soon found out. She and her helpers created peanut butter and blueberry sandwiches and sold them to the rest of us. She sold out very quickly. That gave me a confidence boost, knowing that imaginative (and fun) survival skills were at hand. I still remind her of these skills.

Another highlight I remember came a day or so later as the train approached the city of Montreal. It was evening and none of us knew what we were seeing out the windows until Mervin Edgecombe (a brilliant kid but often a loner because of his exceptional vocabulary) came into his own and started to excitedly describe some of the buildings and features we were able to see. No one questioned him as we all knew he had likely studied a map of the city in detail. To see him for once commanding the admiring attention of his classmates and adults as we all peered into the evening city lights made that long journey end on a high note for me.

For the next four or five days we explored the wonderful world of Expo '67, took a day bus trip midweek to Ottawa and visited the parliament buildings, lost and found a couple of students, tried to mend blisters, and tried to keep spirits from flagging from fatigue.

The trip remains one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching years, and proved to me beyond a doubt that we all learn when we experience



and that the lessons are surprising, powerful, and enduring.

I would like to hear from any participants who may still be around and willing to add some of their memories to this story. My email address is karen.1@telus.net.

Student list with supervisors in CAPITALS The supervisors with no Mr. or Mrs. attached were high school students (grade 11 or 12) who we recruited as we didn't have enough teachers or parents.

SUSAN SWANSTON – Gloria Morrell, Moira Cook, Cynthia Robideau

LINDA CLARK – Alice Chugg, Susan Paul, Marg McCuaig (yes, this is who you think it might be)

SIGRID HARTMAN – Sonja Hencke, Annette Luckey, Sylvia Gerry

MRS. HELEN NEUFELD – Laurie Newall, Ruth Stredulinsky, Trina Johnson

MRS. HENCKE – Bonny Brown, Nancy Sarver, Joanne Dorscheid,

MISS SORENSEN – Karen Rogers, Bette-Jean Douglas

TOM BELFORD – Russell Stashko, Ralph Vigen, Jack Littleton

KEVIN ZUTTER – Mervin Edgecombe, Don Edgecombe, Dave Arnell, Alec Wales

JERGEN KAUT – Allen Randall, Sandy Bruce, Bruce Cranston, Richard Kulhawe

MR. NEUFELD – Rick Stojan, Don Wigelsworth, Brian Leathem, Brian Hanson

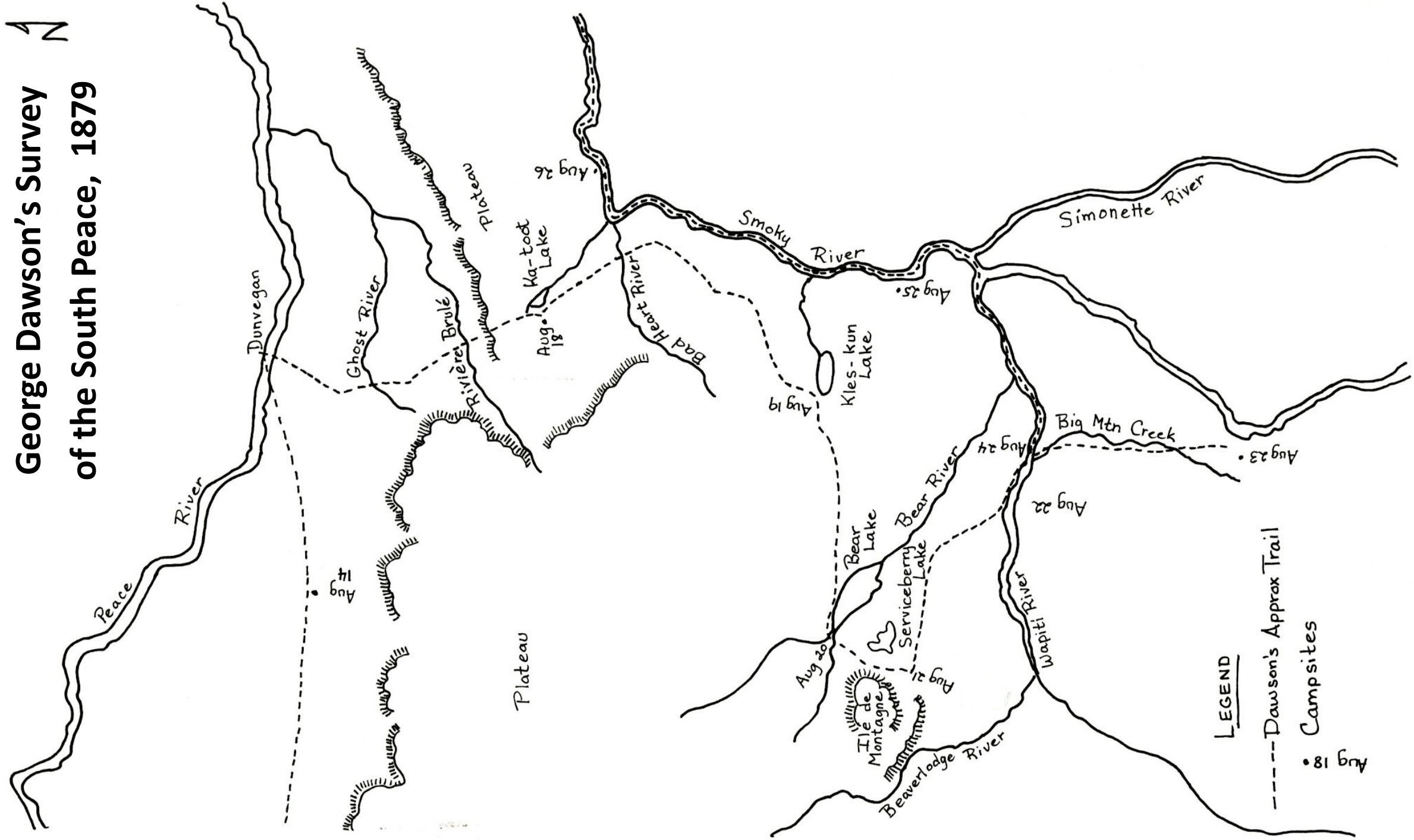
MR. GEARY – Don Drysdale, Ross Adam, Jimmie Dumont

MR. HENCKE – David Stredulinsky, George Belford, Wayne Hodges, Don Lilge

MRS. OLSON – a last minute addition taking the place of a student who dropped.

Left: Expo '67 Safari group photo (Courtesy of Karen Burgess, SPRA Fonds 640)

George Dawson's Survey of the South Peace, 1879



LEGEND

--- Dawson's Approx Trail

• Campsites

George Dawson Surveys the South Peace

By Pat Wearmouth

August 16, 1879 - Having now reached a well beaten trail, we made a journey of twenty one miles and camped on the south bank of the Peace River opposite the Hudson Bay post of Dunvegan. Passed through open poplar woods for a few miles after leaving morning camp till the whole country became open and prairie-like, with poplar and willow coppices in the hollows; the surface gently rolling or undulating and covered with luxuriant grass and wild pea, and gay with Asters, Erigerons, and Solidgos. (asters, fleabane, and goldenrod).

From little hills an extensive view of similar prairie opens to the southeast while to the southward it is bounded at a distance of about twelve miles by the edge of a low wooded ridge or plateau. No mountains or high hills can be seen on any bearing.

About ten miles from the edge of the Peace River, the trail enters a belt of poplar woodland with small meadows.

Emerging at last upon a beautiful rounded grassy promontory, the great Unjigah or Peace River is discovered in a broad tranquil stream in a valley two to three miles wide and eight hundred feet deep.



View of Dunvegan over the Peace River.

This excerpt is from the journals of George Mercer Dawson. His name may be familiar to South Peace residents as Dawson Creek, BC and Dawson City, Yukon are named after him. Dawson was employed by the Geological Survey of Canada in the late 19th century, and in August of 1879 was travelling through the area.

His task was related to the building of the transcontinental railway which had been promised as a condition of BC joining the fledgling country of Canada. BC did so in 1871, and surveys to determine the best route and the Pacific terminating point were carried on from then until 1878. At one time there were seven routes in contention. By the beginning of 1879, Chief Engineer Sanford Fleming had determined that the route should terminate at Vancouver and arrive via the "Fertile Belt" on the north edge of the prairies, the Yellowhead Pass, and the Fraser Canyon.

However, as a final check, Fleming directed his surveyors to assess the Pine and Peace River passes to the north. Unless they showed significant advantages, he would proceed with the more southerly route. George Dawson joined the survey project and was responsible for determining whether the country they would pass through contained sufficient natural resources to create payloads for a railway.

Sanford Fleming is also known as the man who brought the world the Standard Time system we now use. Up until the mid-1800s, people set their local clocks by the sun at the noon position. This worked when people did not travel far or fast. But as distances increased with railway travel, this uncoordinated time became an issue. Passengers often missed their train, and train crews were at risk of collision because of so many local times. Fleming did not invent Standard Time, but he advocated for it until it was adopted. The system divides the Earth into 24 time zones, each being one hour earlier as you

move east to west. People in each time zone then had the same time which led to much less confusion.

Dawson's journals continue: *In April, I went West for the Survey. The immediate object of the season's exploration was to obtain all possible information as to the physical features and economic importance of the region from the Pacific coast through seventeen degrees of longitude to Edmonton on the upper part of the Saskatchewan River. For a great part of this distance, however, the exploration was necessarily limited to a single line of traverse. I was charged to determine to what extent the said traverse offered advantages, and disadvantages, for the passage of the unreeling line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Several surveying gentlemen connected with the railway were associated with me in the field.*

Although Dawson refers to the "Canadian Pacific Railway," it is not the private company that we know today, but rather a first enterprise of that name. It was created by Montreal businessmen to obtain the contract to build the transcontinental railway. The company eventually became mired in political scandal, economic mismanagement, and poor construction progress. The current Canadian Pacific Railway company was formed in 1881 to take over the completion of the line.

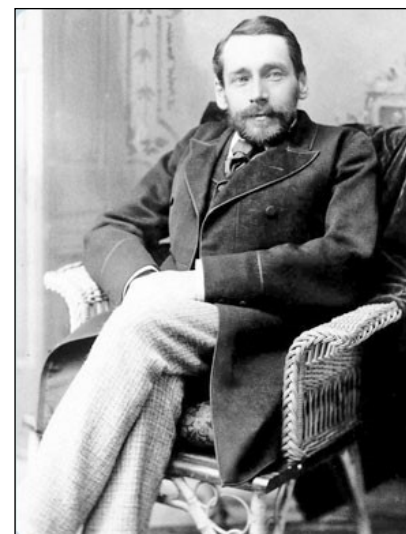
Dawson was well suited to the job, both in training and in temperament. He was born in Nova Scotia in 1849 to parents of Scottish extraction. His father John William was a university administrator and geologist at Dalhousie University and later at McGill in Montreal. This exposure to academia and particularly the natural sciences no doubt influenced George in his choice of career. He eventually graduated from the London School of Mines in England in 1872. Although he won several academic honors and was offered work in Britain, he returned to Canada to begin a

Right & top right: George Dawson



lifelong career of geology and exploration.

He did so under some physical handicap. At age 11, George had been diagnosed with Potts disease, a condition that caused his spine to curve and his growth to stop. George spent his teen years as a semi invalid, often bedridden, and arrived at adulthood as a hunchback with a height of 4 feet, 11 inches. But throughout, he remained steadfast in his desire to learn about the natural world and to pursue a career that allowed him to explore and work outdoors. Throughout his life he was known to tackle every task with energy and enthusiasm and this attitude served him well.



When Dawson arrived at Dunvegan in mid-August, he had already been travelling for several months, assessing resources as he went. He left the mouth of the Skeena River near Prince Rupert on May 8, travelled by canoe and then pack train through to the Pine Pass, and then onward to the Pouce Coupe Prairie and Dunvegan. Arriving there on August 16, he immediately organized two smaller parties to assess the Peace Country. One party was instructed to go north as far as possible in the time remaining. Dawson left on Monday, August 18,

and proceeded to the south. He was accompanied by native packers, a [Metis] guide, and pack and riding horses.

Several trails run southward from Dunvegan toward Grande Prairie and the head waters of the Smoky River, and the Indians travel through in this direction to Jasper House on the upper Athabasca. Many little hunting trails and dim tracks ramify from the main trail in all directions, in conducting us among which our guide was of great service as long as we confined ourselves to the part of the country with which he was familiar.

Readers will recognize these trails as connecting to the Hinton Trail which ran from the Grande Prairie to Hinton and on to Jasper. Originally an Aboriginal travel and trading trail, it was used for recreational horse packing in the mid-20th century, and eventually was largely overlaid by resource roads and Highway 40. Bob Guest's book, *Trail North*, describes the trail and its stories.

At eight and half miles from Dunvegan the Ghost or Dead River is crossed, at sixteen miles the Brule River.

The Ghost River, known today as the Spirit River, is crossed by Highway 2 about five kilometers north of Rycroft. The Brule, the Burnt or Saddle River of today is twelve kilometers south of Rycroft.

Dawson would have been travelling to the east of the present highway.



Above: Saddle Hills

A short distance beyond the Riviere Brule, the trail begins gradually to ascend a broad ridge gaining an elevation of about two hundred feet above that of the prairie, and passing at the same time into a wooded country. For about six and a half miles before reaching the northern margin of the Grande Prairie, the woods become dense, consisting of aspen, alder, cottonwood, and birch, with an occasional spruce.

Dawson was crossing the Saddle Hills to the east of the current Highway 2. He notes that the soils on the prairie to the north are fertile black loam and that as he ascends the soils become coarser and show the occasional boulders.

At twenty-two miles from Dunvegan Katoot Lake, about a mile in length is reached. It drains south-eastward to the Bad Heart or Ma-atz-i-ti-e-si-pi of the Cree, which six miles farther on is crossed. This has a valley two hundred feet deep and about half a mile wide. It flows to the Smoky River.

Kakut Lake, as it is spelled now, was the end of the first day of travel for Dawson's party. The lake is currently a popular camping and fishing spot north and east of Woking.

After crossing the Bad Heart River, Dawson continued to the south, and stopped the next night near Kleskun Lake.

Kleskun Lake is evidently shallow and surrounded about its lower or eastern end by extensive marshes, producing fine natural hay. The slopes along its northern side are particularly noted for affording good pasturage for horses. Ducks, geese,



Above: Kakut Lake

cranes, and other similar birds are exceedingly numerous about Kleskun Lake in the autumn.

The fine hay that Dawson mentioned later became the reason a settler named Morton Emerson built the first stretch of the Emerson Trail. It ran from the lake, where hay was loaded onto wagons or sleighs, west to his farm near Sexsmith in the Pine Creek district.

In 1918, Kleskun Lake was purchased from the government by a private company, drained, and



Above: Kleskun Lake

turned into a large cattle ranch. Some local residents were unhappy with this, particularly returning soldiers from WWI, who found their traditional hay supplies gone. After some initial success, the ranch was foreclosed, subdivided and auctioned off in 1927; all except for the lake bottom which became communal pasture again. The waterfowl situation came full circle, as there is now a Ducks Unlimited project on the lake.

By now, Dawson was well onto the Grande Prairie and was assessing for agriculture crop potential as well as other resources. He turned west and travelled to the north of Bear Lake.

The so-called Grande Prairie is a tract of country about forty miles in extreme length in a northeast and southwest direction, and where widest over twenty miles in width. It has an area of about 230,000 acres, and is included between the southern slopes of the ridge above mentioned, the Smoky, the Wapiti, and the Beaver Lodge Rivers. It is drained by the Kleskun

stream flowing eastward to the Smoky River, by the Bear River which crosses it from northwest to southeast, and at its western extremity by the Beaver Lodge. Kleskun and Bear Lakes, about three and six miles in length respectively, besides many smaller sheets of water, occur on the prairie.

Dawson is describing the size of the Grande Prairie as he saw it in 1879. Subsequent land clearing by settlers has enlarged the area that might be taken for original prairie, but in fact, was wooded when he saw it.

The surface of Grande Prairie is not monotonously undulating like that described to the north, but may rather be characterized as forming a series of gently sloping ridges or swells between the various river and stream courses which are here not found to cut deep gorge-like valleys. Much of the country is park like with groves of poplar, while extensive tracts are quite open or with coppices along the stream valleys only.

Toward the edges the prairie very often blends almost imperceptibly with the woodland. The Amalanchier or service berry (saskatoon) is exceedingly abundant, and here bears larger and finer fruit than I have seen elsewhere. On 20th August the berries were overripe except in shaded places and the Indian berry harvest was over. Both Cree and Beaver often come long distances for berry gathering at Grande Prairie, and having secured and dried sufficient quantity of fruit, scatter again in small bands into more remote parts for the autumn hunt.

Although he does not mention it in his text, Dawson must have been aware that an island in Saskatoon Lake, shown as Service Berry Lake on his map, was certainly one place known for saskatoons. A walk through the trail system of present day Saskatoon Island Provincial Park will quickly confirm the presence of acres of the berry bush.

The soil of Grande Prairie is almost everywhere exceedingly fertile, and is often for miles together of deep rich loam which it would be impossible to surpass in excellence. The low ridges sometimes show

rather light soil with an admixture of sand or gravel and a few boulders, but a very small proportion of the surface is unfavorable for cultivation. Buffalo trails still score the sod in all directions, and are deeply hollowed out where a number converge at the crossing of a river or lake or some such place. The saucer shaped 'wallows' of the buffalo and scattered bones are also numerous, though the animal is now no more seen here. The Indians state that the extinction of the buffalo was not entirely due to the introduction of fire-arms and the active hunting carried out for the supply of the Hudson Bay forts, but that all remaining were killed many years ago by an excessively severe winter when the snow was over the buffalos' backs.

Dawson's mention of the extinction of the buffalo echoes that of another Scottish Canadian from fifty years earlier. Colin Campbell, the Chief Trader for the Hudson Bay at Dunvegan, noted in his 1829-30 journals that the extremely severe winter had been very hard on the buffalo, and some thought that this had been the primary cause of the extinction. Dawson does go on to mention that a very small herd had been seen on the Pouce Coupe prairie in 1879. The numbers, though, would have been insufficient for the herd to survive.

Dawson stopped the night of August 20 near the present site of the Scenic Heights Cemetery, where Emerson Trail crosses the Wembley-LaGlace highway. From this viewpoint, he would have observed Bear Lake, and in the far distance, the future site of the City of Grande Prairie. Bear Lake, like Kleskun Lake, was surrounded by grass that would provide future settlers with hay crops.

The valley of the Bear River, Su-za-ka of the Beavers, for some miles west of the lake, is, for country in a state of nature, singularly beautiful. Two and a half miles from the lake, the river flows in a trough like depression five hundred feet wide and thirty to forty feet below the general level of the wide valley. The stream at the time of our visit was thirty feet across by two deep, rapid and rather difficult

to ford on account of its steep soft banks. Klo-es-sa-ka or Fish Creek, a rapid stream ten feet wide by six inches deep, coming from the westward, joins Bear River a short distance above the lake.

Both Fish and Bear Creek (as known now) are crossed on the Wembley-LaGlace Highway, near Township Roads 730 and 735 respectively. Just to the west of the highway and off 735 to the north is the site of the first fur trade post on the Grande Prairie. It was an outpost of Dunvegan and was erected 1880. It was situated there because several Native "pitching trails" (trails upon which camps were moved as the seasons progressed) met there. The building now sits on the Grande Prairie Museum grounds.

South of these streams is the Isle de Montagne or Sistine of the Beavers, a wooded flat-topped hill rising about five hundred feet above the river valleys, and probably an outlier of an old higher plateau. The Beaver Lodge River or Uz-i-pa passes to the southwest of the Isle de Montagne, flowing southeastward to the Wapiti. It occupies the bottom of a valley two to three miles wide, with gently sloping banks. It was about thirty feet wide by six inches deep where rapid and flows in a trough cut eighty feet deep in the bottom of the wide valley. The northeastern slopes valley is open prairie, but to the south and west the eye ranges over a great extent of wooded country. This is in fact the edge of the Grande Prairie in this direction.

Dawson camped south of Saskatoon Mountain on the night of August 21, and the next day he and his party rode south and east to the Wapiti River. They arrived



Above: Saskatoon Mountain

on the banks of the Wapiti somewhere in the vicinity of the present day Highway 40 Bridge.

The Wapiti River, Elk River, or Riviere la Biche, which may be considered as bounding the Grande Prairie Country to the south, joins the Smoky River. In August it was found to be about three hundred feet wide and so rapid and deep as to require caution in fording. The valley of the Wapiti averages perhaps a mile in width and is depressed about four hundred feet below the plateau bordering it. Along the west bank of that portion of it examined, the country for some miles back is sandy and poor, with ridges and mossy swamps (an apt description that holds for that area, the Dunes, today). The northern slopes of the valley itself in its lower part are irregular, with sandy and gravelly ridges covered with scattered trees and scanty herbage.

After stopping for the night of August 22, Dawson and party rode south.

A traverse was made south of the Wapiti, between the stream and the Smoky, for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the country. Seen from the high points of the Grande Prairie this district forms part of a wide nearly level or gently undulating wooded region, which stretches to the distant foot hills of the Rocky Mountains. On the traverse above mentioned the country was found to be generally lightly wooded with poplar and coniferous trees, though dense belts of spruce, in which the trees are sometimes of large size, also occur. The surface is undulating and the soil – especially near the Wapiti – is light. At least half the surface, however, would, if cleared, be well adapted for agriculture.

The dense belts of spruce trees that Dawson refers to played a key role in the development of the forest industry in the South Peace area. Although many forest fires occurred after Dawson's visit, a considerable amount of this spruce survived into the next century. In 1912, Walter MacFarlane, the Dominion Land Surveyor who subdivided the Grande Prairie for settlement, mapped a boundary around these spruce stands. The various blocks bounded are

known in forestry as the 1800 Timber Berth. Numerous early and mid-20th century sawmills logged in these blocks for their timber supply, and timber harvest continues there to the present day.

On reaching the bank of the Smoky River – which we did on the trail followed in the latitude 54°24'4" – we hoped to find a small canoe which we assured had been left there by a hunting party in the spring, and in which I wished to descend the Smoky River to the Peace to examine any rock sections which might occur. Being unsuccessful in our search, and wishing not to lose the time necessary to make a canoe ourselves, we waited till noon to ascertain the latitude above given, and then travelled back fifteen miles to the crossing of the Wapiti, where we had already found a small cottonwood canoe 'cached.' Directing the packer with our guide and one Indian to return at once to Dunvegan, and after obtaining fresh animals there to go on to the mouth of the Smoky to meet us. I got the little canoe above mentioned launched and with two British Columbia Indians set out to descend the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers to the Peace. We arrived at the Peace River safely on the evening of August 28, after a voyage following the course of the river, one hundred and twenty miles.

Dawson travelled as far south as a bend in the Smoky which lies about three miles north of the Canfor Bridge over that river. He then turned back, and the next day, launched the small canoe from the mouth of Big Mountain Creek which is the site of the Canfor Bridge that crosses the Wapiti. As he travelled downriver, he observed places where coal seams in the river bank had caught fire. The haze this created in the valley is the reason for the name of the river. He also remarked on numerous examples of river bank slumping, a problem that continues to plague road builders in the Peace Country to this day.

As planned, Dawson met the horses at the mouth of the Smoky River and proceeded back to Dunvegan. Here he spent four days with one of the railway surveyors preparing a preliminary map and report on the natural resources of the country and its engineering challenges. On September 5 he left

Canada Day Through the Years

Dunvegan, went down the Peace and up the Smoky to the mouth of the Wapiti River. Here he turned south-eastward, thus leaving the South Peace area.

In the three weeks he spent, Dawson and his party had travelled approximately four hundred fifty miles as the crow flies, and many more on the trails and rivers that made their way across the landscape. He continued with his assessment surveys all the way to Edmonton, where he joined an overland cart and later sleigh brigade that took him nine hundred miles to Winnipeg and the railway east, arriving December 2.

Sanford Fleming received the preliminary reports that fall. Despite Dawson's and the railway surveyor's favourable reports on the potential of railway passage and payloads, Fleming decided on the Yellowhead Pass option. However, the issues of the original Canadian Pacific mentioned above came to a head about the same time. The government decided to turn the enterprise over to the private sector. The new Canadian Pacific Railway Company was incorporated in 1881 with new investors and new management (Cornelius Van Horne) at the helm. They chose the newly discovered Rogers Pass (1881) route which allowed the railway to be built to the south of the Pine, Peace, and Yellowhead Passes. The South Peace would have to wait until 1915 (arriving in Spirit River), and 1916 (arriving in Grande Prairie) for its railway.

George Dawson continued his employment with the Geological Survey of Canada into the 1900s. In some years, he was able lead survey parties in BC and the Yukon, but his office responsibilities increased as the years progressed. In 1895 he was appointed as the Director of the Survey, the duties of which he had been performing unofficially whenever the previous Director was absent.

Still in this employ, Dawson died in 1901 quite suddenly after coming down with acute bronchitis. His death was widely mourned and newspapers and scientific journals were filled with the highest of praise.

Perhaps the most telling praise, though, came from the men he had worked alongside in Canada's northwest. A friend wrote in BC's Mining Journal:

"His readiness to share all work, and laugh at every hardship, was the reason for his extraordinary popularity with Indians, who are not eloquent in their praise of white men. I have it from the lips of Indians that the Doctor was not only 'Skookum,' but he was a 'Skookum Tumtum'; to translate, "Was not only a strong enduring man, but a cheery, brave man, ready to endure all things and suffer all things, saying nothing, or making a merry jest of what some travelers might call dangerous hardships." (Chalmers, page 143).

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Right: Women's Institute members riding on their Dominion Day Parade float, July 1, 1926 (SPRA 371.05.03.01)



Left: A parade of students in honour of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, July 1, 1927 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0591)

Below: Settlers are standing near Teepees and tents at Saskatoon Lake celebrating the first Dominion Day Celebration on the Grande Prairie, July 1, 1910 (SPRA 2001.01.101)



With Canada's sesquicentennial just around the corner, we're sharing some of our favorite images of Canada Day in the past - right back to 1910, the first Dominion Day celebrations on the prairie.

Vimy Ridge: Peace Country Stories

By Kaylee Dyck

April 9 – 12, 1917

*Across the summit of the ridge
The Maple Leaf battalions pour
They've carried it in glorious war –
How great has been the privilege.*

(excerpt from The Canadian Machine Gunner, a World War I trench newspaper)

This year, in 2017, Canada will be celebrating its 150th birthday. But for quite some time after confederation, our country was still hiding in the shadow of Great Britain. The Great War, despite its atrocities, was the event that allowed Canada to emerge as a nation and gain the respect, and even awe, of the rest of the world. As Brigadier General Ross so famously said when speaking of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, "It was Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade. I thought then... that in those few minutes, I witnessed the birth of a nation."

In October of 1916, Canadian battalions began arriving in the Vimy sector in northern France, and by December, all four Canadian divisions (100,000 men) were gathered together in one place for the first time in the war. Months of reconnaissance, planning, and digging lay ahead of the men. **Private George Wesley Bass**, a South Peace man, spent those six months leading up to the battle working with the Canadian

Engineers, laboring in the extensive maze of underground tunnels. These tunnels would be exploded at 'zero hour,' and men would pour out of them onto the battlefield. Subterranean subways were also built to transport supplies and wounded soldiers. When going over the top on April 13, 1917, Private Bass was wounded in his side and his arm.

The notorious Vimy Ridge is an escarpment approximately seven kilometers in length. It rises gradually on the western side, and drops more quickly on the eastern side. With an elevation of 145 meters above the Douai Plains, the ridge provides an unobstructed view for tens of kilometers in every direction – which explains why the British and French had tried (and failed) to capture it numerous times earlier in the war.

The attack on the ridge was originally planned for April 8, but because of poor weather it was postponed until April 9, 1917 (Easter Monday) at 5:30am. General Arthur Currie, in command of the 1st Canadian Division, had these words to say to the troops headed into battle: "... To those who fall I say: You will not die, but step into immortality. Your mothers will not lament your fate, but will be proud to have borne such sons. Your name will be revered forever and ever by your grateful country...". General Currie was promoted to commander of the Canadian Corps shortly after the battle, a tribute to its great success.

By nightfall on April 10, the only objective not taken was 'the Pimple.' Many different roles must be played for a battle to be so decisively won. One such role was mopping up, the duty of the 49th Battalion, of which many men from the South Peace were a part. Mop-up parties were responsible for following assault parties in order to kill any remaining defenders. They also cared for wounded men on the battlefield and performed other more 'lowly' tasks. **David Barr** was a private in the 49th Battalion and was

WW1 Troops Sitting in a Trench, 1916 (SPRA 194.02)



killed on the first day of the battle, April 9. Following the battle, his battalion received many telegrams and messages of thanks for their enormous and crucial contribution during the attack.

Of the 100,000 Canadians involved in the battle, 3,598 were killed and 7,004 were wounded by the time the last objective was reached on April 12. Some men, like **Private Benjamin Gray** of DeBolt, were wounded so severely that they were sent home for the duration of the war (Private Gray lost his arm due to an injury sustained at Vimy Ridge). His Majesty King George V said to Field Marshall Douglas Haig, "Canada will be proud that the taking of Vimy Ridge has fallen to the lot of her troops." And I do not doubt that the folks here in the South Peace region felt that pride every bit as keenly as the rest of the nation, even as they waited for their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons to return.

It is said that when having learned of the victory at Vimy Ridge, a French soldier declared "C'est impossible!" but upon learning it was the Canadians who had won, he exclaimed "Ah! Les Canadiens! C'est possible!"

That is our legacy.

Sources:

for biographies of George Bass, David Barr, and Benjamin Gray, visit the South Peace Soldiers Memorial

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SPRA Society News



New Executive Director

We are excited to introduce Alyssa Currie, who will be taking over the Executive Director's position on July 3.

Alyssa is a "Peace Riverite" who grew up in Dawson Creek. She attended the University of Northern BC where she obtained a degree in English and History, and then went on to the University of Victoria, where she is just finishing her Masters of Arts.

She has experience working in the Pouce Coupe Museum, Library & Archives Canada, and as a student recruiter at the University of Victoria.

Olwen Sanger-Davies Diaries

SPRA is the grateful recipient of an Arts & Culture grant from the City of Grande Prairie, and a 150th Anniversary Grant from the County of Grande Prairie to digitize two volumes of a 1933 diary. This diary contains about 500 watercolour paintings and ink drawings of scenes in the City and County, as well as a trip across Canada by train. If anyone is interested in being a sponsor for the printing of these diaries, please give Mary a call at 780-830-5105.

Archive-ology: What Is an Archivist?

By Josephine Sallis

Recently, I attended a comedy show and the comic asked me what I do for a living. “I’m an archivist,” I said. He was already moving toward his next victim as he set up his joke so he had to take a step back toward me to ask, “An archi-what?” It took him three times to say it right. Maybe that was part of the joke but it’s a joke I hear a lot. So what is an archivist? Like most people, we are defined by what we do. What we do is care for records of enduring value. So what does that mean?

Mostly it means arranging and describing records, which means organizing them, labeling them, and creating finding aids to let people know what is in the record and how to find items of interest. Most of us do much more than that.

An archivist is not a librarian but sometimes we do librarian things like catalogue books, and create programming. We are not curators but these days, we create displays, both online and onsite, to highlight holdings. We are not conservators either but in smaller archives we are generally the ones who carry out conservation activities on our holdings, with the assistance and advice of knowledgeable professionals. We may not break rock like an archaeologist, but digging through the records can be exhausting and we are just as likely to discover some long lost treasure.

Activist archiving is big these days. We care about social issues and continually look for ways in which documentary heritage can inform social issues and help to right or at least mitigate wrongs. You might be surprised to know there are some anarchists among us as well. My non-anarchist leanings tell me that government records are the most important records because they reveal the basic structure of the society people live in. The anarchist in me says that governments have a vested interest in looking good

and that you need local archives with personal stories to shed light on the details of how governments affect people. Archives are about order, but we also create disorder when the records dispel myths and reveal uncomfortable truths. It is not always pretty but it is always necessary.

Archival work can be imprecise and an archivist has to be able to accept that the maligned mantra of “that’s good enough” often does apply. We do not like it much. We are a nitpicky bunch. We want every document and photograph organized. All the birth, marriage, and graduation dates clearly identified. Usually, we are packing boxes and writing finding aids knowing there was more to be said about a particular set of records. But it is time to move on. There are more records to arrange, donors to meet, insects to identify, biographies to research, legislation to learn, shelves to dust, files to order, hygrometers to re-calibrate, emails to answer, documents to repair, volunteers to direct, students to mentor, tapes to rewind, negatives to freeze, blogs to post, websites to update, photos to label, boxes to build, questions to answer, articles to read, articles to write, and meetings to chair.

Like many professionals, we are committed to life-long learning. We have to be. If you are an archivist in a science library, say hello to biology, geology, or astronomy. If you work in an arts museum you better get to know Rembrandt, Carr, and Oonark. Maybe you work in a local museum. Be prepared to socialize and travel as you learn the details of your community’s history. And you might as well take up genealogy while you are at it. Not to mention all the fun electronic and social media developments we need to follow. It takes a lot of varied work to maintain that documentary junction between past, present, and future.

Yes, I said future. Futurist is not technically part of the

job description but we continually try to imagine what the needs of the future may be. When we look at an old document, we do not consider only where it has been. We plan its future journey. We look to the past to understand the documents and their role in our present, but we also peer a hundred years into the future to develop our theories, policies, and practices in order to preserve these precious items for future generations.

As you can see, an archivist is a jack-of-all-trades. The trades we ply depend on our institution and the records in our care. Some lean more heavily on theory and legislation, some more to conservation and digital technologies, and some to research and writing. All the trades come into play over the course of our working lives. Because of this, most of us are in a near constant state of being out of our comfort zone. Oddly, we become comfortable with that. This is in part thanks to doses of alone time arranging and describing the records. It is also thanks to those moments a researcher makes a surprising discovery or a donor recognizes that their precious documents will have a home with us. When other duties make us feel a little bit less of an archivist, working with the records and seeing how that work serves people reminds us of who we are and why we chose this work. This is what we mean when we say an archivist is someone who cares for records of enduring value.

Below: Archivist Josephine Sallis at work



Friends of the Archives News



Friends President, Charlie Penson, presenting a cheque for \$25,000 to Jan Shields, president of the South Peace Regional Archives Society at the Annual General Meeting of both Societies on April 8, 2017.

The cheque represented funds raised by the Friends for the building fund in 2015-2016.

Don't Forget!

We are organizing a Charity Golf Tournament at the Morningview Golf Course east of Sexsmith on Friday, August 11, 2017. Contact us to be a Sponsor or sign up a team!

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The holdings 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.

Here are a few of our recent donations:

Nora Webb fonds
ca. 1900-1980
By Alice Sims

Hanna's Seeds (Clairmont Elevator) records
1971-1976

Canor, Big Horn & Meadowville School Reunion Records
Sexsmith Blackshop fonds accrual
Emmanuel Church records
*By
Sexsmith & District Museum Society*

Seeds of the Earth and Alberta's New Democrats
1988
By Norm & Marg Dyck

Arnold Family Photographs
By Wendy Kennedy

Grimm, Vader, & Scott Family fonds
ca.1800s to 1980
By Ray Grimm and Nora Grimm

Diaries of Jim & Eva Somerville
1925-1971
By Danny Somerville

McGinnis Family History
By Gail Prette

Congratulations!



**Congratulations to
Leslie Gordon,
former Archivist at SPRA,
on her appointment to the
Yellowknife Heritage
Committee!**

**Wishing you lots of success,
Leslie!**

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