

# TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 9

JUNE 2018

Issue 3

INDIGENIZING  
RECORDS  
IN THE ARCHIVES

CONTESTED  
EDUCATION  
A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

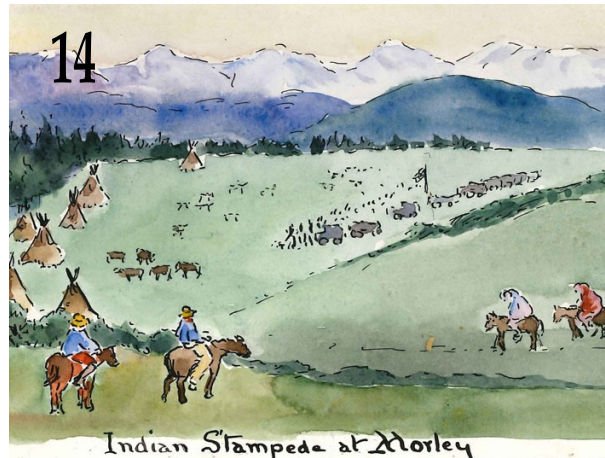


NATIONAL INDIGENOUS  
HISTORY MONTH

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

# IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Letter from the Editor
- 4 Take Note
- 5 Rupert's Land Colloquium  
at Grande Prairie Regional College
- 6 Indigenous History  
Committee  
A survey of records in SPRA's care
- 8 Mary Belcourt Davis  
This issue's featured fonds
- 10 Stories from our Sisters  
Changing Gender Roles in  
Indigenous Communities



- 11 Reconciliation through  
Transcription  
Learn about our volunteer projects
- 12 Contested Education  
A brief history of Indigenous education
- 14 Olwen's Own Words:  
Indigenous Settlements Across Canada
- 16 Canada 150  
George Dawson's 1879 Map &  
1939-1445 Hermit Lake Honor Scroll
- 18 Featured Photographs:  
Indigenous History in the  
South Peace
- 20 Flying Shot Lake School  
Stories from Peggy Mair

- 22 Archiveology:  
Indigenizing Records  
What does it mean to indigenize records  
and why are we doing it?

- 24 The Spirit of Stories  
Oral histories in the Archives



- 26 Welcome Sonya Cestra  
SPRA's New Archives Assistant

- 26 New at the Archives

- 27 Join Us Today

*Cover: Aboriginal teepees and wagons at the first Dominion Day Celebrations on the Grande Prairie, at Saskatoon Lake, 1910 (SPRA 2001.01.102)*

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

## A Publication of the South Peace Regional Archives

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

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# Letter from the Editor

Across the country this month, Canadians are celebrating the heritage, cultures, and outstanding achievements of Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The South Peace Regional Archives is proud to celebrate National Indigenous History Month and to bring you this special issue of *Telling Our Stories*.

Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the land we now call Canada, including the South Peace region. The South Peace Regional Archives is located on Treaty 8 territory, the traditional meeting ground and home for many Indigenous peoples. In this issue, we consider the Archives role in gathering and sharing historical records related to Indigenous individuals and communities.

The Indigenous History Committee is surveying our records in order to locate records that are often hidden in plain sight (page 6). Many of the articles in this issue utilize materials uncovered in the early stages of this survey. Learn about changing gender roles in Indigenous communities (page 10) and how our volunteers are helping us work towards reconciliation through transcription (page 11); experience a brief introduction to Indigenous education (page 12). Consider why and how we can Indigenize the Archives (page 22). Last, but not least, embrace the spirit of storytelling through oral histories (page 24).

In this issue of *Telling Our Stories*, we hope to expand our definition of “Our” stories. We hope you will join us in this journey— this issue is only its beginning.



*Above: Archives Cemetery Tours, 2017*

## Take Note

The Archives has many exciting events planned for the summer. We hope you will join us in celebrating our history!

Join us at the Grande Prairie Public Library at 6:30pm on **June 19th** as we commemorate **National Indigenous History Month**. Our summer student, Sonya, will be presenting at this event!

We are pleased to announce the return of our popular **Cemetery Walking Tours in July and August**. Watch the Archives Facebook page for dates and registration details.

On **Tuesdays/Thursdays in July and August**, we will be collaborating with the Grande Prairie Museum to offer **Heritage Hunters—Interactive Tours**. Spaces are limited and are filling fast, so call the museum to register soon! Museum: 780-830-7090.

Finally, this fall the Archives will be participating in a special collaborative event with the Grande Prairie Museum. Stay tuned for more information on **Village Folktales and Folklore in October**.

# Rupert's Land

Colloquium at  
Grande Prairie  
Regional College

Between May 16th –May 19th, the Centre for Rupert's Land Studies hosted its biennial colloquium at the Grande Prairie Regional College. Archives staff and volunteers attended the event.

The Centre for Rupert's Land Studies is a research and networking hub at The University of Winnipeg. It facilitates scholarly research and publishing on the human history of Rupert's Land (the area encompassed by the Hudson Bay watershed between 1670-1870). The biennial colloquium provides an opportunity for scholars, historians, archivists, and enthusiasts to gather and discuss a wide range of topics related to Indigenous peoples and the fur trade in Rupert's Land.



*Above: Map of Rupert's Land* Copyright ©  
Centre for Rupert's Land Studies at the University of Winnipeg

*Below: Colloquium attendees visited the Twelve Foot Davis Grave Site as part of an all-day bus tour of the South Peace area.*



*Image by Weldon Hiebert, Geography Department, University of Winnipeg* Map Base by Mountain High Maps

Several local history groups, including the South Peace Regional Archives, provided information to attendees at an ongoing display fair. Archivist Josephine Sallis also presented a paper on the records survey being completed by the Archives' Indigenous History Committee.

On Saturday, a group of attendees participated in an all-day bus tour to Historic Dunvegan and Peace River. David Leonard and Adele Boucher provided historical information on locations such as the Mackenzie Cairn Site, Twelve Foot Davis Grave Site, Shaftesbury Settlement, and St. Jean Baptiste Church.



# Indigenous History Committee

## A Survey of Records Held by the South Peace Regional Archives

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was officially established in 2008 in order to document the history and impacts of Indian residential schools in Canada. In 2015, the TRC released a summary report of its findings and 94 “Calls to Action” regarding reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Shortly thereafter, the South Peace Regional Archives established the Indigenous History Committee to address these Calls to Action.

Three of these Calls to Action specifically relate to archives. Calls 69 and 70 address Library and Archives Canada and the Association of Canadian Archivists’ work on national records and the development of archival theory and practice. Both these Calls to Action are relevant to the work we do at the South Peace Regional Archives; however, our current, ongoing project relates most directly to Call #77:

*We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the NC TRC to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the NC TRC.*

A preliminary search of the records revealed little. We have no collections specific to residential schools and, so far, only a few photographs. In fact, very few collections in our care are specific to Indigenous individuals, families, or communities. However, we discovered that material related to Indigenous history is scattered throughout many of the collections. This find expanded the scope of our search.

The goal of the survey is to identify as many records as possible that relate to Indigenous peoples in this region, not just records that provide evidence of residential schools. The residential school system is only one of the many historic injustices committed



Above: Crowd outside of the St. Francis Xavier Mission at Sturgeon Lake, 1911 (SPRA 2001.01.148)

against Indigenous peoples in Canada. The habit of “erasing” Indigenous peoples and communities from history by not including them in our documentation or by not recognizing their distinct identity when we do is an overlooked injustice. Indigenous peoples often appear only as a backdrop to our own personal or institutional stories. Although this exclusion is rarely intentional, the result is the same: archival collections that appear to lack any evidence documenting history of Indigenous peoples.

The first step of the Committee was to utilize digital

holdings available through Alberta on Record. This website is maintained by the Archives Society of Alberta and features selected digitized material from a number of archives and museums in the province. The SPRA currently has approximately 6,000 digitized images available online. This source is accessible and its images have powerful emotional impact. These images provide a strong preview of the possibilities of the work as we present our initial findings to the public.

We identified images and collections that might provide traces of Indigenous history using a variety of search terms, many of which are now considered derogatory or inappropriate: “Indian,” “Native,” “Nations.” To locate schools, we also searched “Residential,” “Mission,” and the names of all the residential schools in Alberta. To find families or specific communities, we searched known family names like “Calliou,” “Campbell,” and “Belcourt,” and identities: “Beaver,” “Cree,” and “Métis”. To date, we have located 186 images, only a handful of which are specifically related to residential schools.

The initial survey also identified 56 fonds where further information is most likely to be found. In context, 56 fonds out of nearly 700 contain material that documents Indigenous history; this constitutes less than 10% of records at the Archives. Of those

fonds, only six specifically relate to Indigenous peoples, including four family collections, one research collection, and one storytelling collection:

- SPRA 0023 Lubicon Lake Indian Nation Land Claim Research collection.
- SPRA 0167 Gathering Story: Native Storytellers fonds.
- SPRA 0179 Mary Belcourt Davis fonds.
- SPRA 0484 Davis, Hodgson, Coulter fonds.
- SPRA 0594 Stanley William Bird fonds.
- SPRA 0660 Kirkness - Steinhauer - Testawich Family fonds.

The research completed by the Committee is both promising and expanding. Two new volunteers are exploring new research pathways. One is reviewing the community history books to note Indigenous families in those texts so we can make Indigenous families more identifiable for researchers, by updating our current database or creating a new one. Another volunteer has embarked on an in-depth review of our descriptive finding aids using the information gathered from the initial survey. As well, the Archives Assistant (Student) Sonya Cestra, is reviewing our oral history collections to identify

traces of Indigenous history in the various recordings. You can learn more about her work on page 24.

Taken together, these research paths will help move the evidence of Indigenous history in this region from the backdrop of other people’s stories onto the mainstage of their own.



Left: A man is standing by the Province Of Alberta helicopter which flew to Kakwa Forestry Tower. Nearby are the Porcupine Forestry Cabin and Indian “house” graves. Ca. 1970 (SPRA 002.05.02.056)



# Featured Fonds: Mary Belcourt Davis



*Left: Louis Calliou and Annie Donald arrived in the Grande Prairie area in the late 1800s and settled around Flying Shot Lake. Photograph ca. 1920 (SPRA 179.01.01)*

Louis L'Iroquois (Calliou), was an expert canoe man, guide and hunter who came west with his brother Bernard to work for the Hudson Bay Company or the North-West Trading Company. The young Louis married Annie Donald, from Winnipeg, and their children were born in Edmonton, Stony Plain, Slave Lake and Lac St. Ann. Mary's mother, Betsy (Betsi) Calliou was born in Lac St. Ann ca. 1878. In the late 1800s the family moved to the Flying Shot Lake area. Later Betsy also lived at Sturgeon Lake.

Mary Belcourt spent her childhood at Flying Shot Lake and her teen years in the newly-formed town of Grande Prairie. She worked at the Donald Hotel and enjoyed going to dances throughout the south Peace with friends such as Liz LeClerc and cousins Jim, Mac and Henry Ferguson. They were the sons of St. Pierre Ferguson and Philomene Calliou, sister to Mary's father Louis Calliou. Another of St. Pierre's daughters, Mary, was married to DeWinter.

In 1930 Mary married Thomas Davis, and the couple had four children: Vera Kathleen, Harry Thomas (Ira), Evelyn Bertha and Norman Robert. When Mary was pregnant with Norman in the late 1930s, the couple moved to Edmonton where the two girls were placed in the O'Connell Institute and Ira was left in St. Mary's Boys Home. In 1939, Tom enlisted in the war and was gone six years. His family, together again, lived on the army pay in Edmonton near the downtown core.

Mary would often tell her children that it was better that no one knew they had "Indian" blood. When she would talk to friends in Cree, she would tell her grandchildren she was speaking French. Mary spent her last years living with her daughters and died in 1972.

## Custodial History

The photographs were preserved by Betsy Calliou and passed on to her daughter Mary on her death. When Mary died, they came in to the possession of her daughter Vera and were identified by her grand-daughter Cindy Desrosiers. Copies of the photographs and an oral history were donated to South Peace Regional Archives in 2005.

## Scope and Content

The fonds consists of copies of 43 photographs of the Calliou and Belcourt families and their descendants, and one oral history interview with Vera Davis Miles, daughter of Mary Belcourt Davis, and Cindy Desrosiers, daughter of Evelyn Davis. The interview tells the story of Mary Belcourt and her mother Betsy Calliou.



*Above: Mary Belcourt and Liz LeClerc, ca. 1920 (SPRA 179.02.05)*

*Left: Jim Ferguson, ca. 1940 (SPRA 179.04.03)*

*Below: Tom & Mary Davis and family, ca. 1942 (SPRA 179.03.05)*



**1920-2005. — 43 photographs. — 1 sound recording.**

## Biographical Sketch

Mary Belcourt Davis was born Mary Jane Belcourt in Slave Lake ca. 1900, the daughter of Betsy Calliou and the granddaughter of Louie Calliou and Annie Donald. She appears on the 1901 Census as living in the Grand Prairie area along with the Iroquois Metis families around Flying Shot Lake. Her age at that time is noted as "9", but is probably 9 months, as on the 1911 census her age is listed as 11 years. The same census shows her father as Pierre Belcourt and two siblings—Norman, aged 9, and Selina, aged 5.

Mary's grandfather, Louie Calliou, was an Iroquois-Cree Metis born in Edmonton ca. 1854. His father,

# Stories from our Sisters

## Changing Gender Roles in Indigenous Communities

Indigenous women traditionally played a central role within the family, within their government, and in spiritual ceremonies. They were in charge of domestic matters and thus were responsible for the early socialization of the children. Women were viewed as both life-givers and the caretakers of life.

Indigenous women and men were equal in power, had independence within their personal lives, and performed functions crucial to the survival of their communities. Gender roles allowed the family, the community, and society as a whole to be fed, clothed, have a home to sleep in, and a system of defence that could be called upon if necessary.

Until the federal government imposed the Indian Act, Indigenous women played a leading role in the decision-making process of their communities. The Indian Act created the chief and council system of local government, which denied women any vote in the new system as well as stripping them of any formal involvement in the political process.

European colonization, the loss of their land in the 19th century, and the loss of their traditional livelihood were some of the major economic factors that had the greatest impact on the traditional roles of women in Indigenous communities.

The strength that Indigenous peoples gain today from their traditional teachings and their cultures comes from centuries of oral tradition and Indigenous teachings, which emphasized the equality of woman and man and the balanced roles of both in the continuation of life.



Above: Wives and children of the Metis threshing crew at Tom Sheehan's farm. The babies are strapped into the traditional moss bags which took the place of diapers. 1933 (SPRA 002.01.06.23)

Bottom left: Two Cree women fleshing a moose hide, 1934 (SPRA 177.074)

Bottom right: A Beaver woman holding a baby with an older woman sitting beside her, ca. 1930 (SPRA 032.08.08.0458)



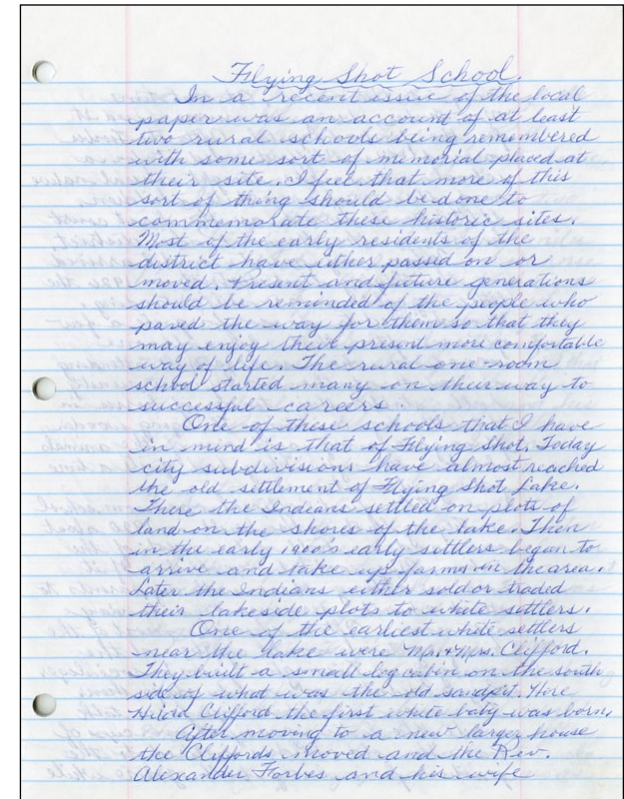
# Reconciliation through Transcription

The South Peace Regional Archives values equal access to the collections for all. Through digitization and transcription, we are able to make more of the materials in our care accessible to the public. How do we accomplish this task?

First, archival materials are identified for transcription; records may be selected due to their historical content, upcoming projects in the Archives, or volunteer interests. Archives staff retrieve and digitize the materials in order to make copies for volunteers. Transcription volunteers receive a brief orientation on the materials they are receiving before they are provided with digital or physical copies. Some of our recent projects have included a handwritten telegraph manual, a fur trade ledger, and the personal writings of Peggy Mair (see page 20).

Volunteers work at their own pace to transcribe the archival records. Transcription can be an extremely time-consuming activity, particularly when the original documents are hand-written or shared orally. Short projects, such as a handwritten letter or postcard, may be finished in a few hours. Larger projects may take weeks or months to complete. When finished, volunteers provide their transcriptions so that they can be reviewed by a staff member before being uploaded online, typically alongside the digitized copy of the original document. From start to finish, the transcription process typically takes several months.

These transcriptions make it easier for researchers to consult our records. They also make it easier for us to share the stories through our magazine and blog. The Archives' work with transcriptions may also become part of our journey towards reconciliation. The Indigenous History Committee is currently completing a survey of the Archives' collections in order to identify records related to Indigenous peoples (see page 6). One possible outcome of this survey may be locating



Above: "Flying Shot School": Part of Peggy Mair fonds, personal writings, SPRA 168.02 . Transcribed by Samantha Cabral.

materials for digitization and transcription.

By transcribing records related to Indigenous peoples, we can learn more about complex history of the South Peace area. We can also celebrate the numerous contributions that Indigenous peoples have made, and continue to make, in shaping the history of this region. Perhaps most importantly, we hope to take part in a national journey towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.



# Contested Education

## A Brief History of Indigenous Education

Indigenous peoples across North America utilized a wide variety of techniques to share traditional knowledge including: observation and practice, family and group socialization, oral teachings, and participation in community ceremonies and institutions. Education was a shared responsibility among parents, grandparents, members of the extended family, community elders, and members of the group's ceremonial organizations and societies. The children learned the values, beliefs, skills, and knowledge considered necessary for adult life. These techniques continue today, but three hundred and fifty years of a formal, European classroom-style of education has impacted their importance to many Indigenous peoples.

Starting in the early 1600s, colonial and federal governments began the long process of assimilation by establishing more or less permanent communities (reserves) and requiring Indigenous children to attend Catholic or Protestant church-run schools (residential schools). The principal goals of the schools were to Christianize and "civilize" Indigenous peoples. In the 1970s, the Canadian government began closing residential schools; the last one closed its doors in 1996.

*Right: Nuns and children outside the Catholic Mission at Sturgeon Lake, ca. 1914 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0822)*



In 1972 the Assembly of First Nations (formerly known as the National Indian Brotherhood) created a policy on Indigenous education titled "Indian Control of Indian Education." It was later adopted by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (formerly known as the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) as an unofficial education policy. This policy identified the importance of local community autonomy to improve education, the need for more Indigenous teachers, the development of relevant curricula and teaching resources in Indigenous schools, and the importance of language instruction and Indigenous values in Indigenous education.

In Alberta, current and future curriculums for Kindergarten to Grade 12 must include student learning outcomes specific to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives and experiences, as well as content on the significance of residential schools and treaties.

The Alberta government is implementing new curriculum to address the history of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit under revamped lesson plans. Lesson



*Above: Students and nuns at the Mission School at Peace River view the first automobile they've ever seen, December 1913 (SPRA 032.08.08.988, cropped)*

plans are being developed for Grade 1 to Grade 9 in English language arts, fine arts, science, and social studies. These will be available as resources for teachers to be used at the discretion of school jurisdictions, individual schools, and teachers.

The new K-4 curriculum will be infused with elements of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit history and culture in all subjects, as will later grades. Education minister David Eggen says the ongoing, comprehensive curriculum revamp will go beyond the discretionary lesson plans.

Aboriginal Studies 10-20-30 (Alberta Learning, 2002) enhances understanding of the diverse Aboriginal cultures within Alberta, Canada, and the world. The term "Aboriginal" refers to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. The goal of Aboriginal Studies is to shift thinking, understanding,

and knowledge of Indigenous peoples, the issues and challenges they face, and the contributions they have made to society.

Alberta's commitment to mandatory First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives and experiences in curriculum was reaffirmed on March 27, 2014, at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Edmonton.

*Right: Students in front of Flying School Lake School, 1918. The caption on the back of the photograph notes: "Flying Shot school & some of the pupils. The boy at the right is the only white one." The majority of students at the school were Metis. The writer of the caption is likely teacher Margaret McDonald. (SPRA 032.08.08.0939, cropped)*

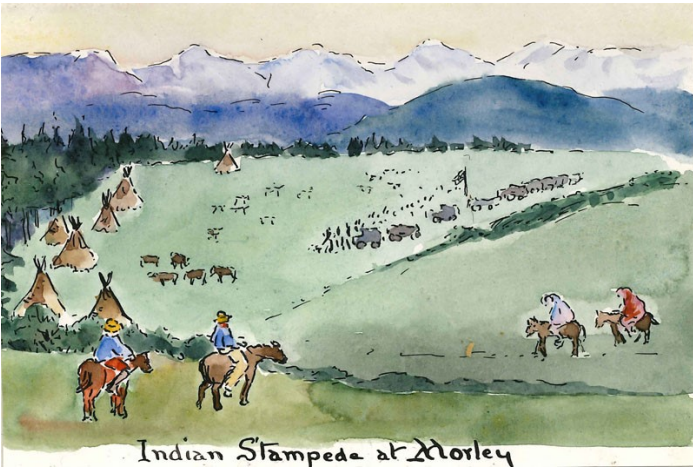




# Olwen's Own Words

## Indigenous Settlements Across Canada

In 1933, Olwen Sanger-Davies travelled from England to the Peace Country to visit her younger brother, Morgan, who lived just outside the town of Grande Prairie. Olwen documented her journey and time in the Peace Country in two scrapbooks, containing approximately 500 drawings and paintings. “Olwen’s Own Words” features excerpts and illustrations from these scrapbooks.



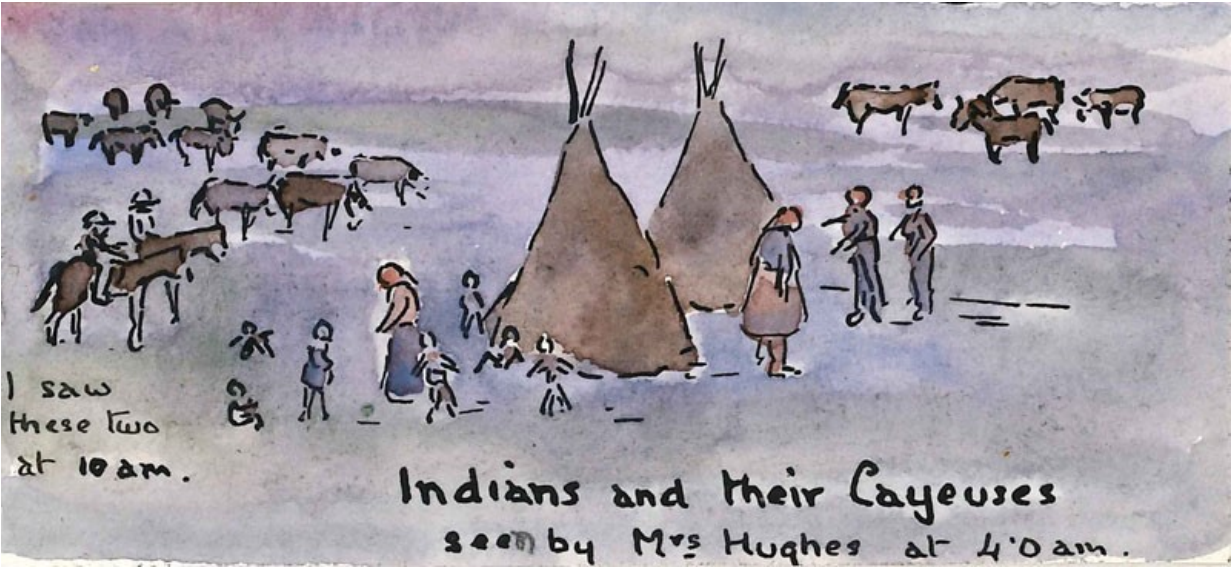
Below: “Indian Settlement at King Sunday School just over at 4:00 pm”



*Olwen's Scrapbook: A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933* can be purchased from the Archives for \$40.<sup>00</sup> + \$2.<sup>00</sup> GST. Cash and cheques are accepted. Limited quantities are available.

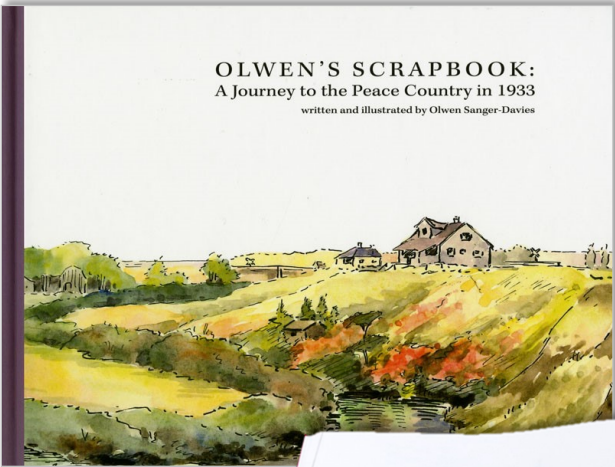
**Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup>**

*We caught the 2:15 train, and started on our way to Edmonton; leaving the mountains behind us. We got good views of Cascade Mt. and the Canmore Hoodoos. We saw innumerable picnic parties in weird places, and sports in others. At Morley the Indian settlement was having a special show - we had considered going, but the trains were impossible.*



**Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>**

*All through the night, we passed through the prairie (Mrs. Hughes saw an Indian encampment). When, after a crowded night, I looked out, we were in sight of the Rocky Mountains.*



**Purchase your copy of *Olwen's Scrapbook* today**

**ONLY \$40.00 +GST**  
while quantities last

**Don't miss out!**  
**Cash and cheques are accepted.**





# Canada 150: George Dawson's 1879 Travel Map & 1939-1945 Hermit Lake "For King and Country" Scroll

*The Canada 150 Project helps tell the story of the South Peace Region through ten documents selected from the Archives collection. Together, these records trace the history of the region starting in 1820. In this issue, we explore George Dawson's 1879 travel map and the 1939-1945 "For King & Country" Scroll from the Hermit Lake School Division.*

## George Dawson's 1879 Travel Map

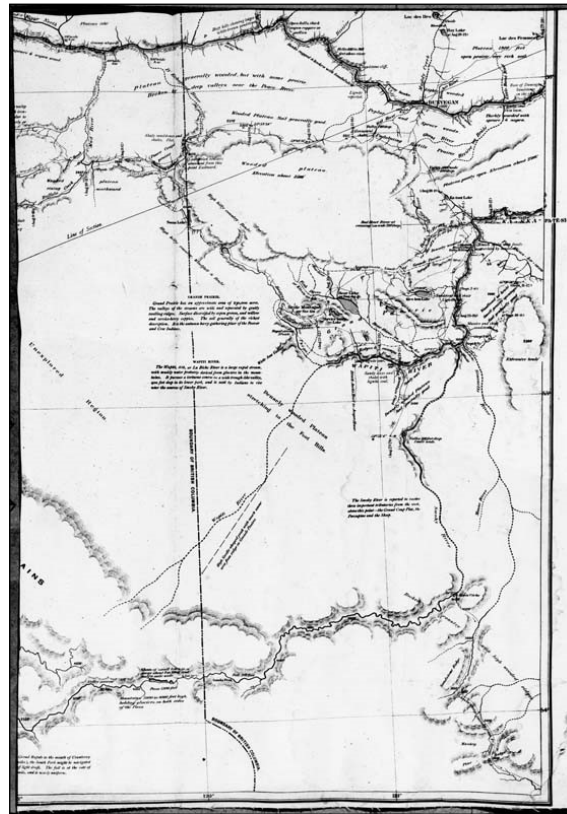
Maps like this one, created by the Geological Survey of Canada, were used to determine possible transportation routes into and around the new country. They recorded the geological structure of the area and assessed the mineral wealth and agricultural potential. They also served to establish the legitimacy of the new Canadian government in one of the uncharted north western regions of Canada. This portion of George Dawson's Survey map of 1879 documents the Peace Country area ten years after Confederation.

First established in 1842 by Great Britain, the Geological Survey of Canada's task was to locate and record the natural resources of the newly united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, particularly: coal, iron, and copper. This role quickly expanded to include soil composition, timber resources, transportation routes, and any other information that might aid in planning future resource development and settlement. In 1877, ten years after confederation, the GSC became a permanent branch of the Dominion Government. Two years later, Dawson was traveling the Peace Country.

Despite the already comprehensive survey requirements, Dawson made many notable contributions to the then current inventory of information about the less developed regions of Canada including the Indigenous inhabitants. Dawson recorded the trails the Indigenous peoples had created over the centuries as

they followed their seasonal hunting, gathering, and trade routes. The dash lines on the map indicate these trails. Besides trails, Dawson also noted land use by Indigenous peoples, such as berry picking areas, and their original names for many of the landmarks.

Like many items in our collections, this map, created as part of settler interest in the region, now serves as a potent reminder of the long history of Indigenous peoples in this area.



Above: a black and white copy of Dawson's map. Part of SPRA 503

## Hermit Lake "For King and Country" Scroll

Scrolls like this one from Hermit Lake were made available to School Districts and Churches during World War II, to remember and give honour to the men and women who had left the district to serve in the conflict. Designed by Group of Seven artist A.J. Casson when he was part of the War Records Committee, the ink and gouache template features the Royal Coat of Arms of Canada, a gilded sword and the inscription: "For King and Country, Members of Hermit Lake S. D. No. 3250 who have volunteered for active service with Canada's fighting forces." This scroll shows that two of the recruits died in the war.

The scroll seems to have been displayed permanently in the Hermit Lake School, even during its time as a community centre and after its move to the Grande Prairie Museum. It was recently removed from the school and transferred to the Archives for preservation.

At first sight, this document does not seem to have any particular relation to Indigenous history. As important as it is as a reminder of the service and sacrifice of young men and women, it is a list of names with no other context. However, for someone with some familiarity with the personal stories of the region, one name stands out: James Ferguson.

Listed tenth on the list, James was the son of St. Pierre Ferguson - the local Métis man who carried out the 1901 Census for this region – and Philomene Calliou, daughter of another local Métis family. James was one of many Indigenous soldiers who served during world war II, including two of his brothers, Malcolm and Henry. At least 3,000 First Nations men and women served during the Second World War. That number does not include Inuit Canadians or Métis, like Ferguson and his brothers. The government at the time only recorded First Nations' enrolment. Like countless others, Ferguson's Métis heritage is not recorded at either the national or local level. Left out of the record, it is officially "forgotten."



Above: The King and Country Scroll from Hermit Lake School. Part of SPRA 001.

This forgetting, in the bits and pieces of individual lives, leads to a larger memory loss about Indigenous peoples and communities across Canada. The Hermit Lake scroll is one example of how Indigenous peoples were very much a part of these communities but their collective role is forgotten in the larger narrative about settler and national actions.



# History in Photographs



*This issue's featured photographs showcase Indigenous history.*

*Facing page, top left: Two unidentified young Metis men, 1915 (SPRA 484.03.05)*

*Facing page, top right: "Two Cree families accompanied us on our trip. They killed our meat—moose, deer, bear, porcupine and skunk—and picked cranberries and blueberries for us. They pitched our tents and packed our horses. Last, but not least they were our guides." 1935 (SPRA 177.070)*

*Above: As a pack train gets organized, two native horsemen are mounted and ready to head out, 1942 (SPRA 291.05.02)*

*Right: An indigenous man and his dogsled team outside of McArthur's store in Sturgeon Heights, ca. 1935 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0272)*

*Below: Formal portrait of an indigenous family group from the Hobbema First Nations in Central Alberta, ca. 1915 (SPRA 1997.45.09, Fonds 52, Field's Studio Fonds)*



*Left: The Red Moose family was a prominent one in the Sturgeon Lake Settlement. (L-R): James Jones (father of Moses Muskua); Charlotte Red Moose Jones (daughter of Francis & Madeleine Red Moose); Moses "Muskua" (Big Bear) (possibly); Cazamere Red Moose "Old Gas"; and Lilouise Caliou Red Moose (Cazamere's wife) stand in front of a log cabin at Dog Eaten Prairie (which is located 22 miles south of Valleyview and perhaps 2 miles east) in the late 1930s. (SPRA 175.071.1)*



*Right: Private Arthur Hodgson, 1915 (SPRA 484.03.02)*

*Below: Indigenous camp on the Beaverlodge River, 1911 (SPRA 024.01.05.01)*





# Flying Shot Lake School

## Stories from Peggy Mair

In 1907, when surveyors arrived in the South Peace, the first community they surveyed was the Metis settlement at Flying Shot Lake. At that time, it was understood that the community had been established by Metis families and individuals who had travelled west during the 1800s, both as a result of the fur trade and conflicts in the Red River area. Despite knowledge of early Indigenous presence at Flying Shot Lake, locating written records on the area presents a challenge. Most records housed in the Archives were produced by non-Indigenous settlers and community members. These records provide a critical foundation for learning more about communities such as Flying Shot Lake.

Peggy Mair, a long-time resident and teacher from the South Peace area, expressed the enduring value of storytelling in her personal writings. In her “Flying Shot School” story, she remarked on her motivation for writing: “Most of the early residents of the district



Above: Flying Shot Lake Teacherage (SPRA 063.02.032.2)



Above: Plan of Flying Shot Lake Settlement in Township 71, Range 6, West of the Sixth Meridian in the Province of Alberta, produced by the Department of the Interior and compiled from official surveys by J.B. St. Cyr, DLS, on August 20, 1907. The plan shows lots, location of houses and stables, including the buildings of Harry & Maude Clifford on the west side of the lake (SPRA 0437.01.01)

have either passed on or moved. Present and future generations should be reminded of the people who paved the way for them so that they may enjoy their present more comfortable way of life.” It was this motivation that led Peggy to donate her personal records to the Archives in 2004 and 2005.

Peggy’s family lived in the Flying Shot Lake District briefly during her childhood; she would later return to Flying Shot Lake as a teacher in the school house. Peggy wrote: “Today city subdivisions have almost reached the old settlement of Flying Shot Lake. There the Indians settled on plots of land on the shores of the lake. Then in the early 1900’s early settlers began to arrive and take up farms in the area. Later the Indians either sold or traded their lakeside plots to

the white settlers.”

Peggy’s story does not clearly express where the Indigenous peoples relocated to after the lakeside plots were sold to white settlers. Surviving historical records suggest that many Metis families remained in the Flying Shot Lake area, although others relocated further west to Saskatoon Lake and Kelly Lake.

The first school building was an old Metis cabin. On the beginning of the school, Peggy recalled: “After the Forbes moved Mrs. Clifford used it for a school where she taught several native and three or four white children... The first official one room school in Flying Shot was built in 1920 about one and a half miles west of the cabin. My earliest recollection of it was walking there with my parents to attend church services on a Sunday afternoon.”

During Peggy’s early years as a student, a teacherage was built in the school yard for Mr. Foy and his wife. “Besides the teacherage there was a log barn for our horses. At lunch break the first chore was to go to the barn and feed our horses their lunch of oats that we carried to school in a cotton sugar bag. The barn was also an excellent place to play anti-i-over at recess and noon hour. There was no fancy playground or sports equipment.”

Despite its modest beginnings, the school continued to grow. By 1943, the school was enlarged to accommodate forty-five students, most of whom had Metis heritage. In addition to her teaching duties, Peggy was responsible for maintaining the buildings and grounds of the school. It was expected that the students of the school would also assist in keeping it tidy. According to Peggy, “those kids made good use of all their free time to spruce up the school grounds. At some time maple, carragana and lilac bushes had been planted around three sides of the yard. They had been left unattended and were choked with grass and weeds. Each child adopted a bush and took care of it by keeping it clear of grass and weeds and digging about it...They created a pleasing entrance at the gate with an arrangement of large rocks which they painted white.”

For many years, the school acted as a social center in the community: “to raise money for the Junior Red Cross the older children decided to put on a one act play called Wild Cat Willie Gets Brain Fever. They were so interested that the kids from grade five up would go home after school, do their chores and then walk back to the school to practise their play. After play practice they’d play ball, have a snack and go home. The play was a great success both financially [sic] and socially.”

Peggy left Flying Shot school in the summer of 1945. Soon after that a new school, Lucky Tree, was built west of Flying Shot; “Children in that area would attend that new school. To save the children living east of Flying Shot from having to travel so far it was decided to move the school about a mile and a half east. It was situated on a piece of land donated by Mr. Howes.” Enrollment at the Flying Shot Lake School declined steadily until 1956, when the school closed and the remaining students were bussed to the new Harry Balfour school.

*Special thanks to Samantha Cabral, who transcribed Peggy Mair’s personal writings. Articles such as this one would not be possible without the help of our dedicated transcription volunteers. To learn more about their work, see page 11.*

Below: Peggy Mair’s first class at Flying Shot Lake, 1944 (SPRA 168.01.03)



# Archiveology: Indigenizing Records

The South Peace Regional Archives is currently on a path to Indigenize the records in our care. What do we mean when we say we are Indigenizing the records and why are we doing it?

Indigenizing the records is about serving the Indigenous members of our community better by recognizing their unique and shared contributions to developing this region. It is also about recognizing their right to a form of record-keeping that recognizes their ways of knowing the world and sharing and preserving their history. This is a process with many pathways on the journey to reconciling the Archive with its Indigenous and colonial past. It is one that ultimately, will make the SPRA better for everyone in the community. The pathways we will take are: our survey into the records; building balance in content and perspectives; and building relationships of mutual respect with the Indigenous communities in the South Peace Region. There are more pathways to follow in the future but these three paths will form the foundation of our Indigenization journey.

This process is already underway with our survey into the records, a survey that has expanded to include locating Indigenous stories in the community history books. You can read about the survey in the article on page six. The survey forms a starting point for our journey. An important observation we have made at this point is that it appears that less than ten per cent of our records document Indigenous peoples and communities. This seems like a very small amount for

people who have been living here for thousands of years. In contrast, over ninety percent of the records document settler communities who have been here for just over one hundred years. The disparity is a stark reminder of the work we need to do on the next pathway: balance in content and perspectives.

This current issue is one example of how we are working at that step. In some articles, staff write about specific Indigenous records and communities. In others, we look at well-known documents from an Indigenous perspective. But making the records and the content they contain more visible is only part of that balance. Accessibility is an ever-present concern for all records. Archivists champion free and open-access to records, while being aware that Indigenous communities often have



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

protocols over knowledge that limit their access. This question of access is not difficult to reconcile with western European beliefs as we already have protocols that allow or require us to restrict certain records to certain people at certain times. Indigenizing this process simply means recognizing Indigenous protocols and incorporating them for the appropriate Indigenous records, such as oral storytelling, traditional knowledge, ceremonies, and in some cases, burial grounds.

We must also look to how we arrange, describe, and preserve the records in our care. Part of striving toward balance may require us to rethink how we title collections and items. Other archives (for example, the City of Edmonton Archives) have implemented protocols such as re-titling records with more appropriate language while retaining the original title in the arrangement notes so they remain available. This process would allow us to preserve the history of the record while making it accessible in a culturally respectful manner. Additionally, in the same way that we create special storage for negatives and fragile items, we may need to explore special storage that will recognize and respect spiritual and cultural practices, relevant to certain Indigenous records.

Besides striving for balance with the records we currently hold, we also need to acquire more records created by and about Indigenous organizations, families, and individuals. This goal is somewhat ironic; Canadian institutions have a poor record for documenting and respecting Indigenous perspectives in how we care for, provide access to, and present Indigenous records. The privileging of written documents has been very problematic for largely oral cultures, with much of their history neglected, forgotten, or passed off as “myths and legends.” The balance needs to shift toward the Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing in order for us to be taken seriously when we reach out for more of their stories in the future. It will be difficult for us, however, to provide real balance if the current imbalance of representation within the record persists. The third pathway will hopefully provide an

avenue for greater Indigenous representation in the Archives in the future.

The South Peace Regional Archives is embarked on a path toward building relationships of mutual respect between the Archive and the Indigenous communities within the South Peace. The South Peace Regional Archives Society established the Indigenous History Committee late last year in response to the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Actions. Our meetings have been few while the survey process has been underway and is largely comprised of board, SPRA, and museum staff but we have begun our outreach efforts. Members have been attending community functions such as the pop-up beading group for *Walking With Our Sisters*, Indigenous art exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, and the blanket exercise and the Indigenous History class held at the Grande Prairie Library

The purpose of the committee is to encourage meaningful consultation as we look for ways to improve and adapt our archival practices to ensure we are respecting the needs of the communities we serve. We hope the committee and the community members who join with us, will help us explore and develop new models for shared stewardship of the records we currently hold and for records we may receive in the future.

Indigenization opens up our understanding of what it means to tell our stories and the role of an archives in the storytelling process. We may like to talk about how we research, analyze, and disseminate historical information. Some of us write hefty papers and books on the topic and drag out weighty intellectual phrases and methodologies. But what we are really doing is telling our stories. Indigenization is about not only revealing Indigenous records buried in the Archive. It is about recognizing and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and sharing stories where appropriate. It is also about building a stronger relationship between communities through the Archive and the stories we share with each other however we chose to share them.



# The Spirit of Stories

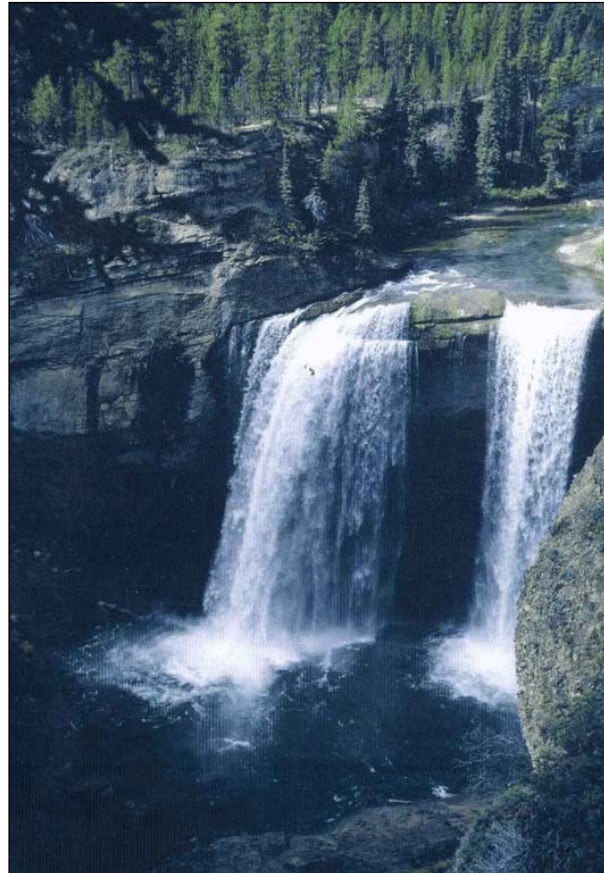
## Oral Histories in the Archives

*Sonya Cestra is a second-year Anthropology student from the University of British Columbia. As part of her summer coop work term at the Archives, she has been reviewing oral history collections to identify traces of Indigenous history in the various recordings.*

Indigenous peoples have accumulated and passed down knowledge through the art of storytelling since time immemorial. These stories can be historical and communicate information about the past. However, for those communities that have non-linear understandings of time, they are also continuous and can be used to show how the ancestors walk among us. At the same time, stories can be sacred and explain how the world came to be created. Important shared cultural knowledge is embedded in these stories that explore the land and why all the beings living on it look and operate in the ways they do.

Other times, stories can be personal to a family or community and serve to forge or strengthen relationships, while also maintaining a genealogical record of where someone has come from. While we recognize that storytelling is a compelling and effective channel to learn more about Indigenous cultures, we must also recognize that stories can be owned. Some individuals and communities maintain that these stories must be kept private in order to sustain their spiritual power.

Unfortunately, many of the stories that inform Indigenous communities have been lost as a result of various colonial practices, including the era of residential schools. For many communities, oral histories were (and continue to be) passed down from grandparents to their grandchildren; the separation of families by colonial government forces such as the residential school system disrupted this process. Despite these challenges, Indigenous peoples have remained resilient and maintained



*Above: Kakwa Falls from above the falls, 1975 (SPRA 256.03.53)*

communities that are both alive and vibrant.

Indigenous peoples document their history in a variety of complex ways that often differ from those we may encounter in the Archives. However, we can identify traces of the lives of Indigenous peoples from the Peace Region through archival records. One of the South Peace Regional Archives' ongoing initiatives in

response to the TRC's "Calls to Action" involves documenting all the records that hold information about the Indigenous peoples and communities of the region. While some materials are sourced directly from Indigenous peoples, more often than not the archival records contain second-hand accounts of their lives from European settlers and their descendants.

In my research, I listened to the Kakwa/Two Lakes Oral Histories collection (Fonds 133). This collection includes audio recordings of interviews with people who had lived and travelled in the Kakwa/Two Lakes region, conducted by author Jim Nelson. It was during my listening that I encountered Adam Kenney.

The community books and newspaper clippings housed in the Archives reference library provide some information on Adam Kenney's life. Adam was the son of Margaret and Henry Kenney (who may have originally had the surname Iskoty before being renamed "Henry Kenney" by an interpreter at Lac St. Anne). According to a "Pipeline profile" featured in the *Edmonton Journal* in 1971, Adam had "French, Iroquois, Soto, and Stony Indian blood in his veins." He left behind his wife, Annie, along with his several children and grandchildren after his death on June 25th, 1983. Exploring the collections of oral history

*Left: Kakwa Falls situated on Kakwa River, a tributary to the Smoky/Peace River system. These falls are in sharp contrast to the heavily forested landscape. Ca. 1975 (SPRA 189.18)*



*Left: Two Lakes Forestry Cabin. Forestry Cabin at Two Lakes in 1977. (SPRA 256.03.55)*

records, personal stories appear from people who knew Adam and ubiquitously remember him as a well-respected guide and medicine man. Although written archival materials are useful, they cannot capture the nostalgia in Michael Ryan's voice when he recalls the time that Adam brought Annie to Stoney Creek (where the Ryan's lived) for their honeymoon when Michael was about five years old.

We can also learn from humorous anecdotes in stories like the ones in David Schenk's retelling of his days as a ranger and the first mountain fire he fought in 1961. Adam Kenney and two of his sons were among the 87 members of a local crew gathered to assist the rangers with the fire. In his interview, Schenk recalls a moment where he saw Adam (who he remembers to have been religious) standing in front of a wall of fire with his bible out "making peace for everything, making peace for [them] all."

Moving forward, it will be important to have autonomy for Indigenous peoples within the archives. These individuals and communities should be able to tell their own stories in a manner that aligns with their cultural values. One of the ways we hope to achieve this is by promoting the creation and use of oral history materials.

# Welcome Sonya Cestra

## SPRA's new Archives Assistant (Student)

Sonya Cestra is a second year Anthropology student at UBC and the most recent member of the Archives' team. Welcome, Sonya!

Sonya is completing a four-month coop term this summer in order to learn more about the cultural heritage sector, and gain practical experience in the Archives. She will be working with Archives staff and volunteers on projects related to the Indigenous History Committee, processing records, and engaging with the public through presentations and tours.

Sonya has related experience working as a Customer Service Assistant at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as well as volunteering at Kortright Conservation Centre and Writers Exchange.



## New at the Archives

### Thank You Donors!

The Peace River Museum, Archives & Mackenzie Centre recently donated a glass display case to the Archives. The case will be used to showcase new acquisitions of archival material in the office.

Other notable donations include a family photograph album from Ross Sutherland, a collection of books from David Leonard, and an original painting by artist Vicki Hotte— completed at the AGM.

We appreciate all our donors. Their contributions ensure the lasting success of the South Peace Regional Archives.

## Tell Us Your Story

SPRA is currently accepting submissions for the next themed issue of *Telling Our Stories*:

### Fish & Wildlife

Share your stories (max 350 words), artefacts, and photographs related to fishing, hunting, and trapping and you could be included in our next issue of *Telling Our Stories*.

Contact: [director@southpeacearchives.org](mailto:director@southpeacearchives.org)

**Deadline for consideration: 31 July 2018.**

## South Peace Regional Archives Society

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