

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 10

JUNE 2019

Issue 3

LANDSCAPING
ADVICE FROM
W.D. ALBRIGHT

DIGGING UP
FLOWERS
IN THE ARCHIVES

DEBOLT:
COMMUNITY IN BLOOM

SOUTH PEACE
IN BLOOM

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Letter from the Editor
- 4 Take Note
- 5 Future Planning
- 5 Welcome Danielle
SPRA's new Archives Assistant (Student)
- 6 The Wisdom of the People
Living on the Land
- 7 Natural & Artificial Records
This issue's "Archiveology"
- 8 Landscaping the Home
Grounds
Advice from W.D. Albright



- 10 Cyril Clarke
The Peony Man
- 11 Beaverlodge Plant Nursery
Flower Matching Game
- 12 Digging Up Flowers
in the Archives
- 14 Olwen's Own Words
Wildflowers
- 16 Pansies in the Peace
South Peace Horticultural Society Fonds
- 18 Pressing Concerns
Flower Specimens in Archival Records
- 19 DeBolt: Community in
Bloom
DeBolt Beautification Society fonds

- 10 Gardens of the South Peace
This issue's featured photographs
- 22 The Buzz on Beekeeping
Beekeeping Records in the Archives
- 24 Cooking Up Memories
Recipes from the Reference Library



- 25 Honouring Local History
2019 Beth Sheehan Award Recipients
- 26 New at the Archives
Discover our most recent material
- 27 Join Us Today
Membership application form

Cover: A woman (possibly Germaine Hamel or Gertrude Wallace) with lily seedlings, 1967 (SPRA 383.01.06.209)

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.

SPRA Board

- Jan Shields, President
- Gail Prette, Vice-President and Treasurer
- Duff Crerar, Secretary
- Wade Pilat, City of Grande Prairie
- Peter Harris, County of Grande Prairie
- Shawn Acton, M.D. of Greenview
- Stan Bzowy, M.D. of Spirit River
- Meg Archer, Director
- Tina Dale, Director
- Eleanor Dalen Whitling, Director
- Garry Dixon, Director
- Maxine Maxwell, Director
- Gail Schau, Director
- Daryl White, Director
- Grace Wideman, Director

SPRA Staff

- Executive Director Alyssa Currie
- Archivist Josephine Sallis
- Administrative Assistant Teresa Dyck
- Archives Assistant Danielle Pierson

Mailing Address

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

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

Letter from the Editor

As summer approaches, we are celebrating the South Peace in bloom. This issue of *Telling Our Stories* considers our ongoing relationship with plant life and horticulture. Plants and flowers offer more than simple aesthetic value; they provide food and comfort in an often challenging climate. Horticulture allows us to shape and make use of the natural environment that surrounds us. Understanding its historic context allows us to improve as we move forward.

Records of plant life can be found throughout the South Peace: read landscaping advice from Beaverlodge (p 8); admire the best peonies from Teepee Creek (p 10); appreciate the blooms in DeBolt (p 19). Find horticulture enthusiasts (p 16) and cook up recipes made from local plants (p 24). Traditional plant knowledge helped our earliest inhabitants “live on the land” (p 6); now, innovative honeybee research is advancing our the agricultural future (p 22).

Don't want to get your hands dirty? Perhaps you are interested in digging up flower records here at the Archives (p 12) or learning the difference between natural and artificial records (p 7). Maybe you wonder how we preserve flower specimens in archival records (p 18). Each topic is ripe for the picking.

Archives staff, volunteers, and guest contributors have tended to this issue like a much loved garden. As always, we appreciate their continued support; *Telling Our Stories* would not be possible without it.



Alyssa Currie

SPRA Executive Director

Take Note

Annual Cemetery Walking Tours

Join us at the Grande Prairie Cemetery for the **Annual Cemetery Walking Tours**, July 11th and August 1st, 7-8:30pm. We will explore the cemetery on foot and learn about some of the interesting people who built our community. Call the Archives to register.

National Indigenous History Month

Interested in learning about Indigenous heritage? Join us for **Culture Bites lecture** at the Grande Prairie Public Library, June 25th at 6:30pm. Danielle will be presenting her research with the Indigenous reference files. Then, join the **Indigenous History Committee** on the last Wednesday of each month at the Archives, from 10:30am-12pm.

Grande Cache 50th Anniversary

The community of Grande Cache will be celebrating its **50th Anniversary** June 28th—July 1st with a variety of free public events and festivities.

Territory Acknowledgement

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

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

Future Planning

On March 15th, Carmen Haakstad facilitated an educational and thought-provoking workshop titled:

“The ART and science of FUNd Raising.”

Carmen shared knowledge gained from professional training and over 40 years of hands-on experience fundraising in our community. Archives staff, board members, volunteers, and invited guests considered the long-term vision of our organization and discussed possible measures for reaching it.

We thank all guests for their attendance and thoughtful contributions.



We would like to gratefully acknowledge

Carmen Haakstad

for facilitating this workshop for the Archives. Thank you Carmen!

Welcome Danielle SPRA's new Archives Assistant (Student)

Danielle Pierson is a Cultural Studies student at Okanagan College and the newest member of the Archives team. She will be working with us for four months to learn more about the cultural heritage sector and gain practical experience in the Archives.

Danielle's Cultural Studies degree focuses on global justice issues, like colonization or decolonization; gaining an intercultural understanding; as well as analyzing social practices and their effects on race, ethnicity, class, nationality, gender, and power.

Her previous experience volunteering for Troyanda Society of Ukrainian Culture and Heritage emphasized the importance of preserving culture and heritage to share it with others. She is very excited to work at SPRA this summer! Welcome, Danielle.



The Wisdom of the People: Living on the Land

The following article was contributed by Duff Crerar. Duff serves on the Archives Society Board of Directors and Indigenous History Committee.

After the Second World War, among those who came to the Peace were Bradford Angier and his new wife, Verna. They pioneered the book genre of wilderness survival manuals, along with Eric Collier (*Three Against the Wilderness*), and Calvin Rustrum. Living in an old prospector's cabin near Hudson's Hope, they were taken under the wings of Hudson's Bay Company men, retired Mounted Policemen, trappers and, of course, the Indigenous community. Eventually the building of the W.A.C. Dam forced them to relocate to California but, in 1972 they returned. Angier was best known for *How to Stay Alive in the Woods* (Originally, *Living off the Country*). A copy of this book has recently been added to the Archive's reference library.

Angier recalled the Lost Cabin Creek tragedy, where prospectors near Findlay Rapids starved while surrounded by traditional foods, a tragic result of not learning from the local people. Beaver, or *amisk*, by the way, he found especially tasty, especially on Birch spaghetti, the cambium inner bark, carefully harvested, or the inner bark of the lodgepole pine and poplar. Mushrooms, he cautioned, were another story. Beginners, get help! Birch syrup, made like Maple syrup, had been in use back in 1899, when O.C. Edwards came north with the Treaty 8 Commission. Angier identified it as a survival food. He also pointed out the value of fat, especially in Peace Country

winters. He pointed out how Indigenous people taught the Hudson's Bay Company and the Mounted Police to make the most of game (without risking "rabbit starvation", a condition caused by over-dependence on rabbit kills).

What was especially interesting was the food not on hooves or paws. Rose hips were well known, but other members of the raspberry family, and their young shoots and leaves, made useful survival foods. Tart High bush cranberry is an acquired taste, though in winter the berries melt in your mouth. The rest of the year, one has to be careful, though, to be sure you are not sharing the bushes with bruin! Other herbs and plants added to the survivalists' larder included dandelions, wild clovers, purslane, pigweed, plantain, nettles (use gloves!) and mustard, miner's lettuce and Horsetail (for beginners, or *nechako*, best to have an Indigenous guide for a first trip!).

Angier died in 1997, just before his 50th anniversary. While his writings show the attitudes and sometimes limitations of his times, there was no doubt that his success came from how well he took in the traditional lore of the Indigenous people of the Peace. It is important to honour those who know the land, and its fruits, and learn from them, as these men did, to respect, and thrive in the wild.



Above: *How To Stay Alive in the Woods*

Natural and Artificial Records *Archiveology*

Native, or natural, plants are those which grow on their own, while domesticated plants are cultivated for a particular purpose. It is beneficial for gardeners to combine both types of plants in their gardens. Archives are much the same.

In the same way the some plants developed naturally to suit their environment, certain kinds of documents develop over the course of our daily lives to help us function – identity documents, bills, and grocery lists. Legal papers, school report cards, and meeting minutes are all created and completed to help us effectively manage our day-to-day activities. These 'naturally' occurring documents are intended for use in an immediate (archivally speaking) time-period.

Some documents, however, are created "artificially," with the future in mind. Not the immediate future like traffic tickets, wills, and pre-nups. Instead, these records are intended for those we may never meet. Published materials, research collections, and recorded oral histories fall into this category. They are created to tell a particular story to a specific audience (descendants or future researchers). These "artificial" documents are created to speak to the future. They may play a part in making history come alive in the present, but that goal seems secondary to the main goal: to make history.

In some archival circles, artificially created documents were once considered somewhat suspect. There is an agenda to these documents. Can you trust an author with an agenda? Well, you can trust that they are relating the world as they see it. Perhaps some future

researcher may question some of the facts of their narrative, but their views and opinions have value for understanding how they relate to their environment.

Archives organize the naturally created records that come our way into *fonds*. Fonds are a body of records created or accumulated by an organization, family, or individual during their regular activities (not to be confused with our records numbering system, also called fonds). When we received artificially created records, we organize them into *collections*. A collection is a group of materials assembled from a variety of sources. Fonds may contain collections and collections may contain naturally occurring materials.

In some cases, we may group naturally-occurring records into artificial collections. At the South Peace Regional Archives, this includes our Paper Artefacts collection, Photograph collection, and Story collection. We do this with items that come individually with little context at the time, or that we create ourselves, such as the Story collection.

Much like a garden produces best with a variety of plant material, Archives better serve the public with a wide variety of records. A rich harvest of historical records, both natural and artificial, are ready for any researcher at the South Peace Regional Archives.



Above: Floral sketch by Olaf Vekved, 1906 (SPRA Fonds 547)

Landscaping the Home Grounds

Advice from W.D. Albright

William Donald (W.D.) Albright arrived in Beaverlodge in 1913 and filed on homestead with his wife and children. Albright established the Beaverlodge Dominion Experimental Sub-station in 1917 and committed decades to researching the suitability of crops in the area. He frequently toured the Peace River country, promoting his research through public lectures and social visits. On 9 August 1935, Albright addressed the Grande Prairie District Women's Institute Convention with a lecture titled: Landscaping the Home Grounds.

A Modest Frame for a Modest Home

The grounds should, in landscaping, be regarded as the frame of the picture; the house as the subject to be framed; therefore, the house itself should be designed to suit the region in which it is built, and usually in the country it will be best if it rather hugs the landscape instead of standing up bold and assertive...

Coming, however, to the question of the grounds themselves, we may say that for somewhat different reasons these also should be moderate in extent. It will soon be found by one attempting to make lawns, to plant trees, to grow flowers and shrubbery in a cold, semi-arid climate, that more work is required to obtain a given result than in more temperate climates with ample rainfall or perhaps with a hose of water to be played at will. If too much is attempted neglect is almost certain to follow...

Far better to attempt a little and do it well. When in doubt how large to make the lawn or how extensive the grounds, err on the safe side....

Plan, Criticize and Revise

The second point I would emphasize with all the force at my command is pre-planning.... It is easier to change a drawing than to transplant a tree, and set-back is avoided....

Having ascertained the probable hardiness, size, blooming habits and other characteristics of the material to be used, draw a plan of the grounds to scale with buildings, both house and out-buildings, accurately placed, then using initial letters, pencil in the position of the different things it is proposed to use, commencing with the windbreak. Study this plan, pondering it day by day. Take it outdoors and try to visualize the future effect. Some things occur when looking at the grounds that do not strike one equally from mere study of a paper plan. Show the plan to your friends and to any experienced gardeners who may come along, and finally submit it for criticism to some source of public information....



Above: A flowerbed in August, 1922 (W. D. Albright fonds, SPRA 0362.02.08.013)

Take Advantage of Natural Features

It is a first principle in landscaping to take advantage of natural features. Is there a creek running past the place which may be fitted into the scheme of things? Is there a depression where a sunken garden may be created and made to succeed? Is there a rolling swell on which the house itself is situated? Is there an attractive vista in this direction or that? Let these things be studied and made the most of. Man's highest art in landscaping is not to violate Nature but to utilize her; to study natural features and make the most of them....

Preserve Vistas

If there is a good view to be had from the home by all means preserve it. Cosiness and shelter are extremely desirable but so is vista. Usually the two can be combined, though most easily if the choice view is not in the direction of the prevailing winds....

Utilize the Native Species

Time and experience emphasize the wisdom of relying heavily upon the native species, which are native because they have resisted the climatic vicissitudes, the diseases and insects to which our region is heir. What they have endured in the wild they will endure still better in most cases when properly planted and cared for. Use them as the main reliance and add variety by working in the exotic or introduced species in positions where they will not spoil the general effect if they fail. A very fine home may be had in the North by employing the natives alone. The fragrant, leafy balm of Gilead, the spiral white spruce, the lodge pole pine, the tremulous white poplar, the frond-leaved tamarack, the fruitful Saskatoon, the chokecherry, pin cherry, snowberry, wild honeysuckle, the native mountain ash, the Pembina and other suitable kinds are noted in mimeographs of adapted perennials to be had free for the asking...



Above: Spruce ready to be lowered into a new hole, 1941 (W. D. Albright fonds, SPRA 0362.02.08.153)

How to Get the Men Interested

And now we come to the greatest problem of all – how to get Friend Husband interested; for without his co-operation landscaping is uphill work for a housewife. Here let me whisper a few secrets not to be told out of meeting.

First of all take an interest in his work. Husband and wife are supposed to draw in double harness. Too often the one hangs back in the breeching while the other pulls on the tugs... The wife concerns herself with the children, the garden and the household, leaving the stock and the field problems to her husband. So their interests grow apart and co-operation becomes more difficult to enlist....

Get him, too, to visit attractive homes. Even get him to visit the Experimental Station but do not tell him I said this or the recipe may lack some of its effect. It won't lose all... Let us hope for the best.

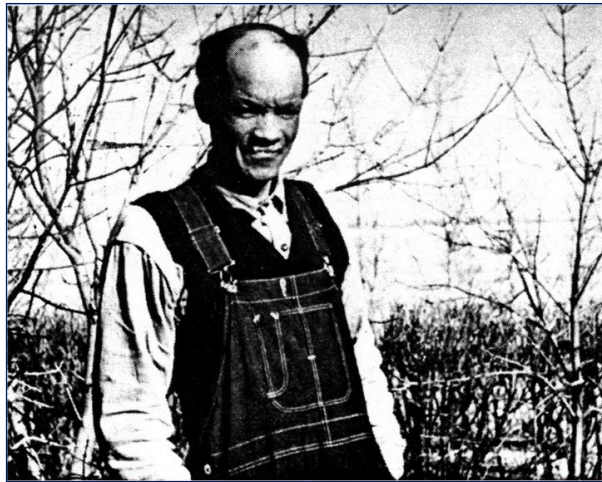
Albright's full lecture, and others (Fonds 362.01) are available for consultation in the Archives reading room. Special thanks to volunteer Gail Prette for her transcription of this lecture.

Cyril Clarke: The Peony Man

Cyril was born August 6, 1882 on St. Vincent's Island in the West Indies. His father was an Anglican minister and his mother West Indian. According to our sources, Cyril attended university in England, possibly in Oxford. About 1910, he immigrated to Canada and when World War I broke out, he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He spoke several languages and served as an interpreter in France. Cyril was awarded the Military Medal on August 16, 1917 for bravery in the field, as well as the Distinguished Conduct Medal on February 21, 1919. He received a gunshot wound to his right arm in August of 1918.

After the war, Mr. Clarke took a Soldier's Settlement Grant in the Teepee Creek area (SE 31-73-3-W6). He soon discovered that farming aggravated his asthma and began concentrating on growing vegetables and flowers instead. As a black, highly educated, lifelong bachelor, and non-farmer, Cyril was not the norm at Teepee Creek.

Below: Irene Wallace beside the Peony Border at the Beaverlodge Research Station, 1976. Many of Cyril's peonies were moved to the research station when he retired. (SPRA 383.01.07.067)



Above: Cyril Mervyn Clarke. From Wagon Trails Grown Over, Sexsmith to the Smoky Historical Society (1980), p. 993.

Cyril soon began specializing in peonies, about which he was passionate. The conservative estimate is that Mr. Clarke tested about 2000 cultivars over his thirty years of collecting. He was a regular contributor to the American Peony Society bulletin and a leading authority on peony hybrids.

As he aged, Cyril began to lose his sight and his friends persuaded him to move closer to Grande Prairie. They packed up his peonies and sent them to various homes. Collections went to the Beaverlodge Research Station and the Devonian Botanic Garden near Edmonton; his records and 921 specimens were donated to the Department of Horticulture at the University of Alberta. The university grounds are still beautified with Cyril's peonies.

Mr. Clarke retired on Dr. Gurth O'Brien's land, where he had a garden spot of good, well-cultivated soil beside O'Brien Lake. Mr. Clarke passed away at his home on December 20, 1952, at the age of 70 years.

Sources: Wagon Trails Grown Over, World War I service file, Canadian Peony Society website

Beaverlodge Plant Nursery Flower Matching

John Wallace settled in the South Peace in 1944 and eventually established the Beaverlodge Nursery. Test your flower identification ability with these slides from his collection (John and Irene Wallace fonds).



- ① Katja Lily
- ② Rose Beauty Aster
- ③ Kakwa Rose
- ④ Begonia

Solutions on page 26

Digging Up Flowers in the Archives

It is surprising what we can dig up in the archival record. Intent on preserving human past, we have also accumulated a wealth of evidence for the natural past— including plant life in the South Peace Region.

The reference files can offer great items in perhaps unexpected places, such as the Autumn 1969 edition of the *Alberta Historical Review* in the Indigenous History file. “Uses of Native Plants by the Blackfoot Indians,” explores Blackfoot culture and also provides

evidence about the types of plants growing in the region, including *Amelanchier alnifolia*, *Achillea millefolium*, and *Petalostemon purpureum*.

Tourism brochures often contain images and descriptions of plants and their habitats. Two recent finds from our reference files, “Kleskun Hill: A Discovery Guide” printed in 2002, and “Saskatoon Mountain: A Discovery Guide” printed in 2005 include images and descriptions locations of natural plants, offering a record for researchers of the future.

Plants provide the backdrop of many family recordings like *Peace Country Scenes, 1963*, in

J. O. Watson fonds (SPRA 569) and the many films in Billy Woods fonds (SPRA 475) . Scattered throughout

our recorded oral histories is more evidence of plants from the past. Lulu Allen, speaking in 1990 about her family’s move to the South Peace remembered, “I will never forget the sight of the Peace River hills, the high hills. They were just covered with tiger lilies. The whole hill would look red with the tiger lilies.” (SPRA 001.09.01) Dave Turner, born on the Edson Trail in 1911, told interviewers that his ranching family moved to the South Peace because, “... at that time,

there was lots of Carl Pea Vine and Bruch growing here. That is why he came up here, in count of the feed for the cattle. But, once that was gone, it never came back.” (SPRA 001.09.01)

We of course have an abundance of photographs throughout the holdings depicting plant life, both as the subject of the photograph and as the backdrop. Mary Belcourt Davis fonds (SPRA 179) provides an example of family photographs featuring lush gardens as a backdrop while Bill Pratt Photograph collection (SPRA 107) is an example of one person’s work deliberately recording the landscape around him.

Most of us are familiar with W. D. Albright’s beautiful slides and his agricultural and horticultural work. He

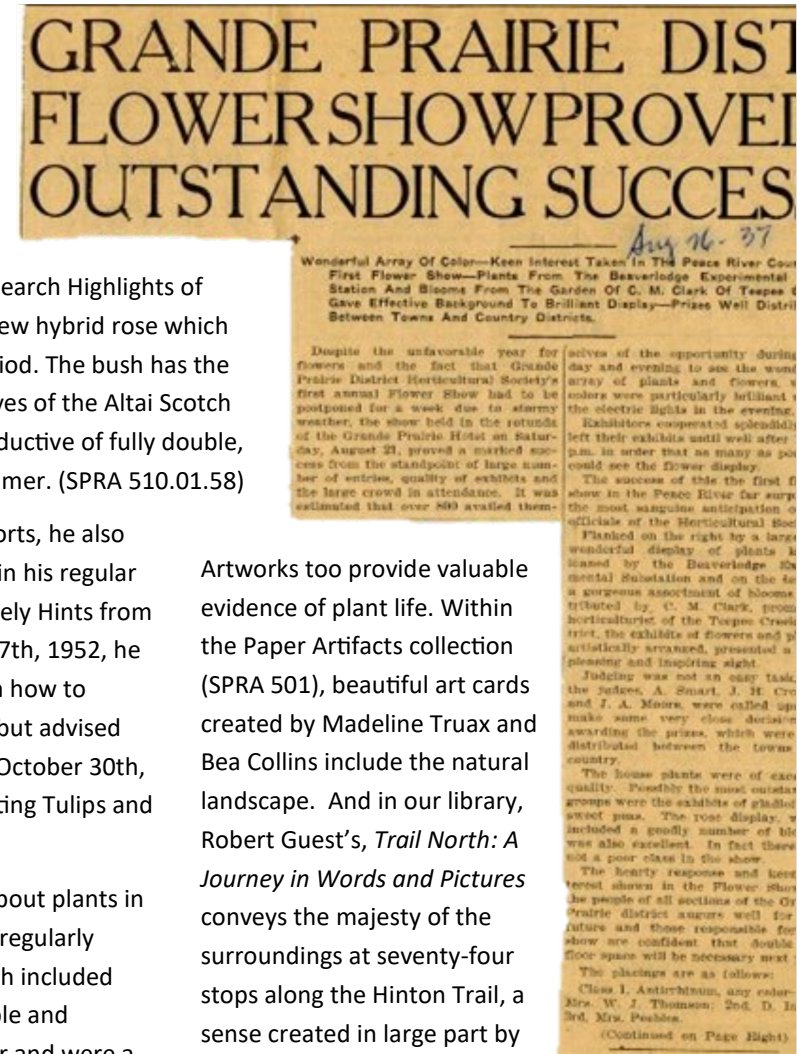
Right: From *Grande Prairie Herald*, August 16, 1937. (Agriculture Reference Series, SPRA 510.01.17)

was also a prolific producer of words. His annual reports discussed various plants in detail and frequently referenced ornamental flowers. In “Research Highlights of 1955” he wrote that the Haidee is, “a new hybrid rose which has proved hardy over a three-year period. The bush has the vigorous habit and small, attractive leaves of the Altai Scotch rose, one of its parents, and is very productive of fully double, soft pink, fragrant blossoms in mid-summer. (SPRA 510.01.58)

While Albright was busy producing reports, he also responded to queries about gardening in his regular *The Grande Prairie Herald* column “Timely Hints from the Beaverlodge Station”. September 27th, 1952, he advised Mrs. M. McG., of Tofield, AB on how to procure seeds for Buffalo-Berry Hedge but advised they did not fruit well in the north. On October 30th, 1941, he provided instructions for planting Tulips and Daffodils to Mrs. G.S., of Demmit, AB.

Albright was not the only one writing about plants in the newspapers. The local newspapers regularly posted the results of Annual Fairs, which included categories for home gardens, both edible and ornamental. Garden tours were popular and were a regular feature in the summer. Trends in plant popularity emerge through these articles.

George Dawson’s 1879 Survey Map of the region notes that on the Grande Prairie, “The surface is diversified by aspen groves, and willow and service-berry coppice.” City planning guides and maps, while not referencing specific planting, do indicate green spaces. This kind of information is important for understanding the value that communities place on the presence of plants within the urban landscape.



Center: Vera Kathleen Davis as a toddler in her mother’s garden at the Grande Prairie home of Mary and Tom Davis. (SPRA 0179.03.01)

Artworks too provide valuable evidence of plant life. Within the Paper Artifacts collection (SPRA 501), beautiful art cards created by Madeline Truax and Bea Collins include the natural landscape. And in our library, Robert Guest’s, *Trail North: A Journey in Words and Pictures* conveys the majesty of the surroundings at seventy-four stops along the Hinton Trail, a sense created in large part by the rugged plant life. Isabel Perry’s tribute book, *Euphemia McNaught: Pioneer Artist of the Peace*, contains multiple images of McNaught’s artwork, much of it focused on landscape. Her work is a record of the abundant plant life in the region.

These examples only scratch the surface of what is lying in wait at the Archives for intrepid researchers intent on unearthing the history of the plant life in the South Peace Region. Interested in learning more? Come dig in!

Olwen's Own Words: Wildflowers

In 1933, Olwen Sanger-Davies travelled from England to the Peace River Country, to visit her younger brother, Morgan. 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.

***Olwen's Scrapbook: A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933* can be purchased from the Archives for \$40⁰⁰ + \$2⁰⁰ GST. Cash and cheques are accepted.**

Thursday, July 20th

We had a lovely drive down to the Wapiti River, six miles south of Grande Prairie... The roads wind about, and the trees are tall as there is enough water. Blue wild larkspur and evening primroses were growing wild, and quantities of tiger lilies.

Wildflowers of Banff and neighborhood, June 20th to July 1st, 1933.

Wild flowers of the District found in July and August.



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

ONLY \$40.00 +GST
while quantities last



Limited copies!
Cash and cheques
are accepted.

Pansies in the Peace

South Peace Horticultural Society Fonds



Above: South Peace Horticultural Society embroidered crest, designed by Irene Percy (SPRA 021.01.01)

In 1969, Jim Kluyt, Yvonne McAllister and Mary Orchuk made up the first executive of the South Peace Horticulture Society. The Society began hosting a spring and fall flower show but later combined them into one Annual Flower Show. In 1987, the Society disbanded. The South Peace Horticultural Society fonds (fonds 021) contains photos of the flower shows, the award winners and prizes, their correspondence with other Horticulture societies, a hardy vegetable project, news clippings, executive records, and even a machine-embroidered crest.

In 1975, the Society adopted the pansy as its symbol, after the Grande Prairie City Council rejected the suggestion that the pansy should be the flower emblem of the city. They then held a nine-month-

long artwork competition, open to the public, to create a crest for the Society. The winner, Irene Percy, won a cash prize of \$10 and a copy of the machine-embroidered crest. Their records contain five of the eleven entries as well as the final machine embroidered crest. A poem titled “The Friendly Flower,” signed by Doris Dinzey, accompanies the crest submissions. The poem describes the creation of the pansy and its meaning;

“He smiled, “They look so friendly there,
I’m sure that they would please
The loneliest and saddest heart;
They shall be called “Heart’s-ease.”
Though people call them pansies now,
Their sweet, appealing faces
Still charm the hearts of visitors
In parks and public places.”

The Society’s main projects were their flower shows. In 1970, they hosted both a fall and spring show; every other year, they hosted one: The Tulip and Spring Flower Show. In the early years of the Flower Show, the first place winner in every class won \$1 and the second place winner in every class won \$0.50. They had fifty different classes in four sections: cut flowers, arrangements, houseplants, and for children. Later shows fluctuated between ten and forty different classes. The cut flowers section included classes like “five pansies – any variety” and “three cut peonies – one colour, one variety” while the

arrangements section included classes like “Honeymoon – going away corsage for a June bride” and “Tea Time – arrangement in teacup sitting in saucer.” The house plant section included a variety of classes such as “Cactus plants” and “African Violets.”

This fonds includes lists of all show classes and most winners, from 1970 to 1987. Most of the prizes consisted of vases, but some were cash, like the \$10 Hudson’s Bay award that went to Mrs. R J Cameron in the multiple-crown African Violet class in 1971. Each year, the Grand Aggregate winner— the exhibitor who collected the most points— won a trophy; in 1971 Yvonne MacAlister won the Grand Aggregate with fifteen points collected in eight classes. The collection also includes all of the posters, rules, and entry booklets from each flower show.



Above: Cactus and succulent entries in the 1976 Annual Flower Show (SPRA 021.01.07)



Above: First place Tea Time entry in the 1974 Annual Flower Show (SPRA 021.01.07)

In addition to these shows, the Society worked on a variety of projects, from co-sponsored evening landscaping classes to a hardy vegetable project completed in cooperation with John G.N. Davidson, Ph.D. from the Beaverlodge Research Station. The goal of the project was to compile a list of vegetables, perennials, trees, shrubs, and annuals that are “hardy and productive” in the Peace region. The South Peace society sent letters to other horticulture clubs in the area requesting their assistance in compiling the list of hardy plants; they also attached a list of the plants their club had success with growing. Some of the plants included on this list were Mary Washington asparagus, Ruby Red lettuce, and Cherry Belle radish. The South Peace Horticulture Society fonds include five lists from individuals and clubs sent back to the Society detailing other hardy plants to assist with the research.

These records show years of enthusiasm and passion for horticulture in the South Peace area. It was obvious through these documents that the South Peace Horticulture Society provided a unique opportunity for community members: an environment to socialize and learn about horticulture through arrangement demonstrations, meetings, classes, and events.

Pressing Concerns

Archival records contain traces of the past, in more ways than one. The practice of pressing flowers as a form of scientific study or art has existed for centuries. In Archives, these organic materials can offer both a pleasant surprise and preservation challenge.

By the time they arrive in the Archives, most pressed flowers are extremely delicate and at risk of deterioration. Rarely, they may pose additional risks to accompanying documents by staining paper, retaining moisture, or even harbouring pests. Therefore, in some cases, we remove these specimens to be stored separately from the original document. Each collection is assessed by our Archivist and handled on an case-by-case basis to ensure its preservation.

When Olwen Sanger-Davies documented her journey from England to the South Peace in 1933, she collected plant specimens and placed them alongside her notes, photographs, and paintings. Climbing Sulphur Mountain in Banff, Olwen wrote: “up & up we wound getting marvelous peeps of the valleys & finding various new flowers, green orchids & a small pink lady slipper orchid, & also nice bits of the Rocky Mountains.” She included three pressed flowers, demonstrating the species she encountered.

In the case of Olwen’s scrapbooks, all pressed flowers were removed for preservation. First, a digitization specialist carefully scanned each page of the scrapbooks, maintaining the flowers in their original position. Then our Archivist gently removed each specimen, marking their location with pencil to document

Flower Specimens in Archival Records



Above: Two scanned excerpts from Olwen Sanger-Davies’ scrapbook, 22 June 1933, containing (top) “Small pink lady slipper orchid” and (bottom) “Green Orchid” and “Pasque Flower” near Sulphur Mountain, Banff, AB

the removal. The flowers are now stored in acid free envelopes, labelled with their original location. Archival-quality scans ensure future users can view the scrapbooks in their original form, while separation ensures their mutual preservation.

Despite the challenges they pose, pressed flowers are a valuable addition to archival records. They can mark a moment of engagement between records, their creators, and users. They can contribute to a historical record of vegetation in a specific location. They can be admired for their beauty and studied for their botanical knowledge. Pressed flowers are treasures for future generations to discover.

DeBolt: Community in Bloom

DeBolt Beautification Society fonds

The DeBolt Beautification Society (fonds 638) was established in 1997 with the goal of enhancing and beautifying the Hamlet of DeBolt. They undertook a variety of tasks including: cleaning up the DeBolt Creek Banks and vacant lots, planting trees, preparing flower beds and hanging baskets, creating hiking trails, creating a park, and applying for funding.

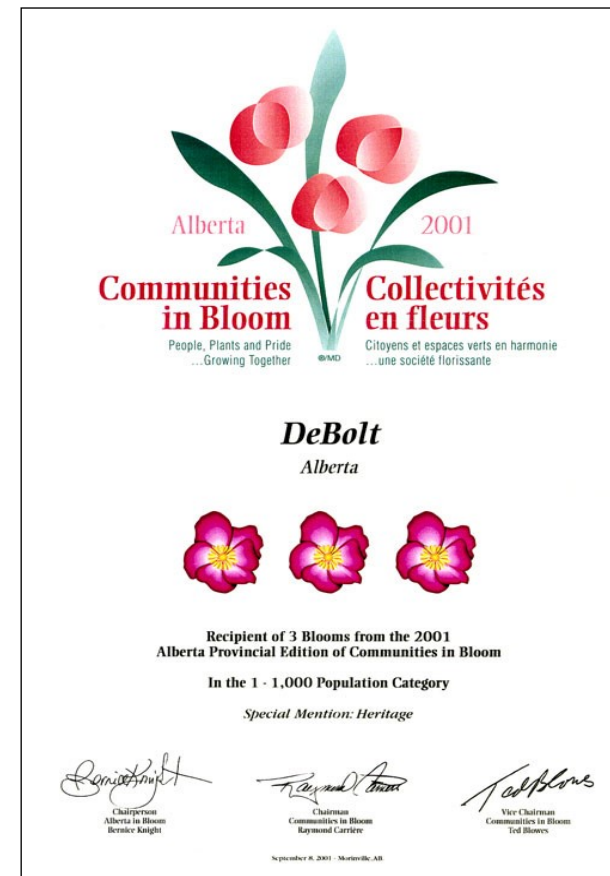
The Society first applied to take part in Canada’s Communities in Bloom program in 1997. This national non-profit organization is “committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus on enhancing green spaces in communities.” Unfortunately, DeBolt’s application arrived after the deadline and they were invited to apply again the following year. In 2001, they were awarded three blooms by the Alberta Provincial Edition of Communities in Bloom.

DeBolt received a special mention in the Heritage category of evaluation, scoring 82 out of 100 possible points, with the following praises from the judges:

“What a wonderfully alive community. The enthusiasm and welcome were refreshing. Your community has worked well in all areas with many outstanding features...”

“Your community stands out in its heritage development and its programs for the future. The museum area is a masterpiece...”

“...Not one, not two, not three, but four books on the



Above: Alberta Communities in Bloom Certificate for DeBolt, 2001 (SPRA 638.04)

history of your town and M.D. What an incredible effort from this community.”

In 2008 the DeBolt Beautification Society dissolved, having met most of their goals. Their organizational records were later donated to the Archives by Fran Moore, on behalf of the Society.

Gardens of the South Peace



Top: John Wallace posing with a red peony, 1976 (SPRA 383. 01.07.065)



Center left: Home & Garden Tour group shown in one of the gardens they visited, 2001 (SPRA 190.02.01.1496.04)

Center right: Beth Sheehan's garden included peonies grown by C.M. Clarke from Teepee Creek, 1951-1964. (SPRA 002.01.03.120)



Left: "B. L. 1936 - H. S. Flower Beds in front of greenhouse. Sweet Alyssum bordering beds of Harbinger Salvia in foreground, Dwarf Bedding Aster circular beds and Pink Gem Petunia immediately in front of Crimson Bedder Nicotiana, African Orange Daisies flanking dirt walk on extreme left. Photo Aug. 25. Photo by W. D. Albright." (SPRA 032.08.08.0303)



Above: Floral sketch by Olaf Vekved, 1906 (SPRA Fonds 547)

Right: Kay and Marie, children of Beatrice and Herman Trelle, with their arms full of Asters from the flower garden, 1928 (SPRA 193.02.05.43-3b/2006.07.02)



Below: The garden at the Clough home at Sturgeon Lake. Mr. Sutcliffe was the gardener who was also a forest ranger. (SPRA 175.028.04)



The Buzz on Beekeeping

The Archives are buzzing with information about bees! Both archival collections and reference files include a bounty of information about beekeeping (apiculture) in the South Peace. The W.D. Albright fonds (fonds 362) contains references and photographs on early hives at the Beaverlodge Experimental Sub-Station (later, Station and then, Farm) and more broadly in the region. The Beekeeping reference file (Agriculture Subseries 510.01.14) contains dozens of clippings dating from 1975 to present day that document local beekeepers (apiculturists), honey producers, and researchers.

Bees and apiculture play a key role in agriculture, especially in the South Peace area. As settlers cleared land and planted crops, some used beekeeping to supplement, and even ensure, their food security. Bees support pollination of a variety of crops. In turn, forage crops such as alfalfa, clover, and canola provide rich nectar for honey bees. When tended properly, a small hive would produce honey that could be sold, traded, and eaten during the off-seasons.



Above: *Weighing colony, 1926. Honey weighed every day at Beaverlodge. Mr. G. Neely, Apiarist. Photograph taken by W. D. Albright. (SPRA 362.02.03.04, cropped)*

fied several early beekeepers: E.D. Prevost of Wanhams, H. Hartley of Hythe, Cunningham of Grande Prairie and Rio Grande, Frank Guthrie of Grande Prairie, Gordon Hamilton of Clairmont, and “others whose names may have escaped us.” By the 1950s, local beekeepers maintained as many as 5,000 colonies in the region. In its heyday, the Peace River area claimed to be one of Canada’s biggest and best honey districts, producing about 40 percent of Alberta’s honey. For twenty years, local beekeepers and honey producers experienced widespread success.

Liquid Gold

The Beaverlodge Experimental Sub-Station began keeping bees in 1922. Besides those at the Sub-Station, W.D. Albright identified several early beekeepers: E.D. Prevost of Wanhams, H. Hartley of Hythe, Cunningham of Grande Prairie and Rio Grande, Frank Guthrie of Grande Prairie, Gordon Hamilton of Clairmont, and “others whose names may have escaped us.”

Local forage crops such as alfalfa, clover, and canola provide rich nectar.

1922

The Beaverlodge Experimental Sub-Station began keeping bees in 1922.

The Beekeeping reference file also documents the steady decline of Peace River honey production, beginning in the 1970s. As modern farm machinery began transforming agriculture, bees and beekeepers struggled to adapt. In 1991, the Herald-Tribune reported that local honey production had declined by 60 percent in the past decade; honey prices, import bans on US bees, and weather were all blamed for the losses (Herald-Tribune, 15 November 1991). Meanwhile, the public was increasingly aware of the importance of bees.

In 2012, the Beaverlodge Research Farm opened the Honeybee Diagnostic Centre— Canada’s first national honeybee diagnostic centre. The Centre was created as a partnership between Grande Prairie Regional College and Agriculture and AgriFood Canada, focussing on honeybee mortality rates and causes.

Beekeeping remains popular in the South Peace. In 2015, the Grande Prairie Beekeeper Club was formed to encourage sharing knowledge and experience amongst local hobbyists. In 2018, bee enthusiasts gathered at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm for the 65th Annual Beekeepers’ Field Day. The same year, the National Honeybee Diagnostic Centre received operational funding for another 5 years.

Bees and archives have more in common than you might think. The collections at the South Peace Regional Archives document the history of flowers, yes, but also essential food production in our area: 97 years of beekeeping in the South Peace! Like bees, archives are a valuable resource for ensuring the prosperity of future generations. And, like bees, Archives must be managed and cared for to ensure their long term success.

1950s -1970s

The Peace region produced about 40 percent of Alberta’s honey.

Field Day

Bee enthusiasts gather each year for the Annual Beekeepers Field Day, hosted at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm since 1953.

Research

In 2012, the Beaverlodge Research Farm opened the Honeybee Diagnostic Centre— Canada’s first national honeybee diagnostic centre.

Archives

The collections at the Archives document the history of essential food production in our area. Archives, like bees, are important!

Below: “Foster and Crossley with hives, 1934” Photograph by W.D. Albright (SPRA 362.02.03.06)



Cooking Up Memories

Recipes from the Reference Library

The Archive's Reference Library includes numerous local and heritage-based cookbooks. One of these includes recipes using local plants: Cooking Up Memories: Elder's Caring Shelter. The recipes were recorded by local Elders and coordinated by Lennie McDonald, on behalf of the Elder's Caring Shelter.

The following recipes appear originally in Cooking Up Memories: Elder's Caring Shelter. They have been shared with permission from the Shelter.

High Bush Cranberry Catsup

Cook together until soft: 1 lb chopped onions, 4 lbs high bush cranberries, and 2 cups water.

Put through sieve. Add 2 cups each of vinegar, white sugar, and dark brown sugar. Add 1 tbsp. each of ground cloves, cinnamon, allspice, salt and add 1 tsp pepper. Boil until thick and then pour into hot sterilized jars.

Saskatoon Jelly

3 ¹/₂ cups juice (about 3 ¹/₂ qt berries)
1/2 cup lemon juice 7 ¹/₂ cups sugar
1 bottle of Certo

Simmer berries with ¹/₂ cup of water for 15 minutes. Squeeze out juice. Bring juice, sugar, and lemon to a rolling boil. Add Certo. Boil for 1 minute. Let stand for 5-10 minutes. Skim and put in jars.

Right: A few remaining berries of a heavy crop of white saskatoons, August 24, 1939 (SPRA 362.02.08.146)

Remedies for what ails you...

Traditional native medicines are always used in conjunction with ceremony and prayer. Medicine people are trained to know which herbs are useful for certain conditions and they also know how to identify herbs growing in the wild....

Rose Hip Extract

Gather rose hips, chill; remove blossoms, ends, stems, and leaves. Wash quickly. Boil 1 ¹/₂ cups water per cup of rose hips for 15 minutes—be sure to put a cover on. Mash or run through a meat grinder. Let stand in pottery container for 24 hours. Strain off extract, bring to rolling boil, add 2 tbsp lemon juice per pint, and pour into jars and seal. You can freeze as well.



Honouring Local History: 2019 Beth Sheehan Award Recipients

The Archives presented the annual Beth Sheehan South Peace Archives Award at the Annual General Meeting of the Society. The Beth Sheehan Award recognizes individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the goals of gathering, preserving, and sharing the history of the South Peace region. Recipients of the award become Honorary Members of the South Peace Regional Archives Society.

Beth Sheehan was a local historian and dedicated philanthropist. Before the South Peace Regional Archives was established, Beth maintained an archives in her home and supported those researching the history of the area.

Beaverlodge Area Cultural Society

In 2018, the Beaverlodge Area Cultural Society donated over 20 boxes of archival materials, amounting to one of the most significant material donations of the year. The collection documents the community and culture of the Beaverlodge area, including textual records, maps, pamphlets and over 1000 photographs. It includes records from under-represented groups in the County of Grande Prairie, particularly artists. The Albright photographs add to the richness of the Albright fonds and the school registers augment our growing collections related to education. Shortly after the records were donated, the community of Beaverlodge was inundated by floodwaters, including the location where the records were previously stored.



Mathew Wozniak

Mathew Wozniak has been an avid supporter of the Archives since 2007: as a donor, advocate, volunteer, and magazine contributor. From 2007-2015, Mathew donated several accruals to the Wozniak family fonds. These records document the family's immigration from Poland during the interwar period and settlement in the Wanham area. His volunteer involvement at the Archives began in 2012, with the transcription and translation of his family's records from Polish. Since then, he has contributed over 600 hours to the Archives doing transcription and translation work. His stories have appeared in numerous Archives publications, including recent magazines. Mathew Wozniak continues to contribute to the Archives cause.

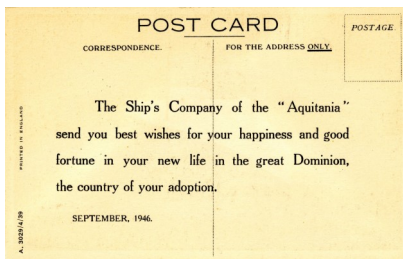
Honorable Mention: Edson Trail Historical Society

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The reference library has expanded once again with several additions of community history books and historical texts including: *Dunvegan Post Journals 1806 and 1808*, donated by David Leonard; *Where Happiness Dwells: A History of the Dane-Zaa First Nations*, donated by Grande Prairie Museum Curator, Charles Taws; and *Alberta Women's Institutes Yesterday: A Pictorial History of Agriculture in Alberta*, donated by Gwen Hagerman.

In 2007, the Archives carried out the War Brides Oral History Project. Eighteen women shared their stories about moving to the Peace River area to join their new husbands after the war. One of those war brides was Gretha Gerow. Now, thanks to her son Paul, we have a collection of letters, postcards, and immigration papers documenting her exciting journey to her new home. Many of the personal letters are from Gretha's mother in Holland. One day, we hope to have these letters translated from Dutch so they are more accessible to researchers.

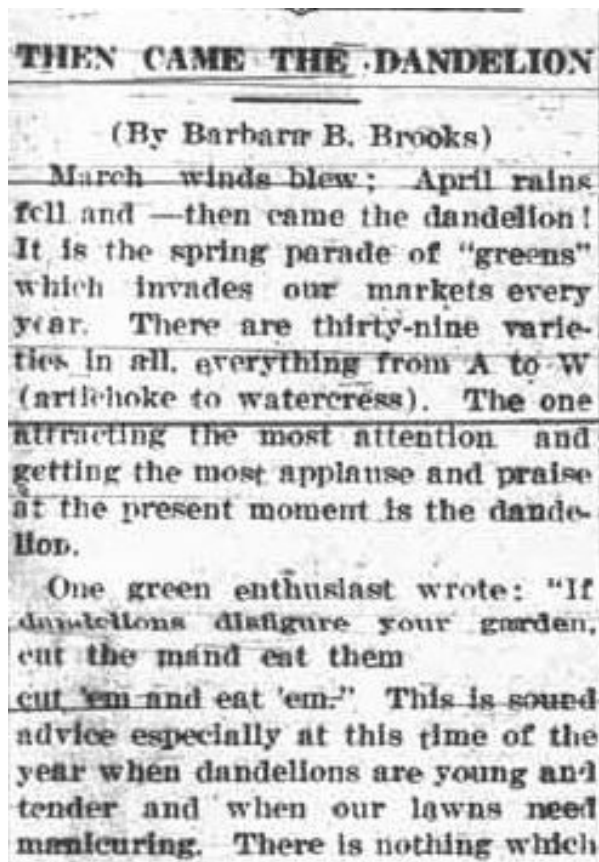


Above: Postcard given to war brides and their children, front and back view (SPRA 2019.023).

We are grateful for all donations of archival materials.

Grande Prairie Herald, 27 May 1932

To view the full "Then Came the Dandelion" article, visit the Archives' blog post, "If You Can't Beat 'Em, Eat 'Em" published 28 May 2015.



Page 19: Flower Matching Solutions

A,4: Irene Hamel with begonias at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm, 1967 (SPRA 383.01.06.302)

B,3: Kakwa rose, one of John Wallace's cultivars, at the Beaverlodge Nursery in July 1983 (SPRA 383.01.10.050)

C,1: A Katja lily, one of John Wallace's cultivars, 1984 (SPRA 383.01.06.132)

D,2: Rose Beauty aster, one of John Wallace's cultivars, at the Beaverlodge Nursery, 1963 (SPRA 383.01.10.001)

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

Select your membership:

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

Lifetime membership: receive all of the benefits of a regular membership, without the hassle of yearly renewal, and know that your membership could have a greater immediate impact.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

Lifetime Membership
\$500.00/person _____

I wish to donate to the
South Peace Regional Archives _____

Total Membership and Donation _____

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

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

Thank you for supporting



www.southpeacearchives.org

