

# TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 12

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Issue 3

REFLECTING ON

## SPORTS HISTORY

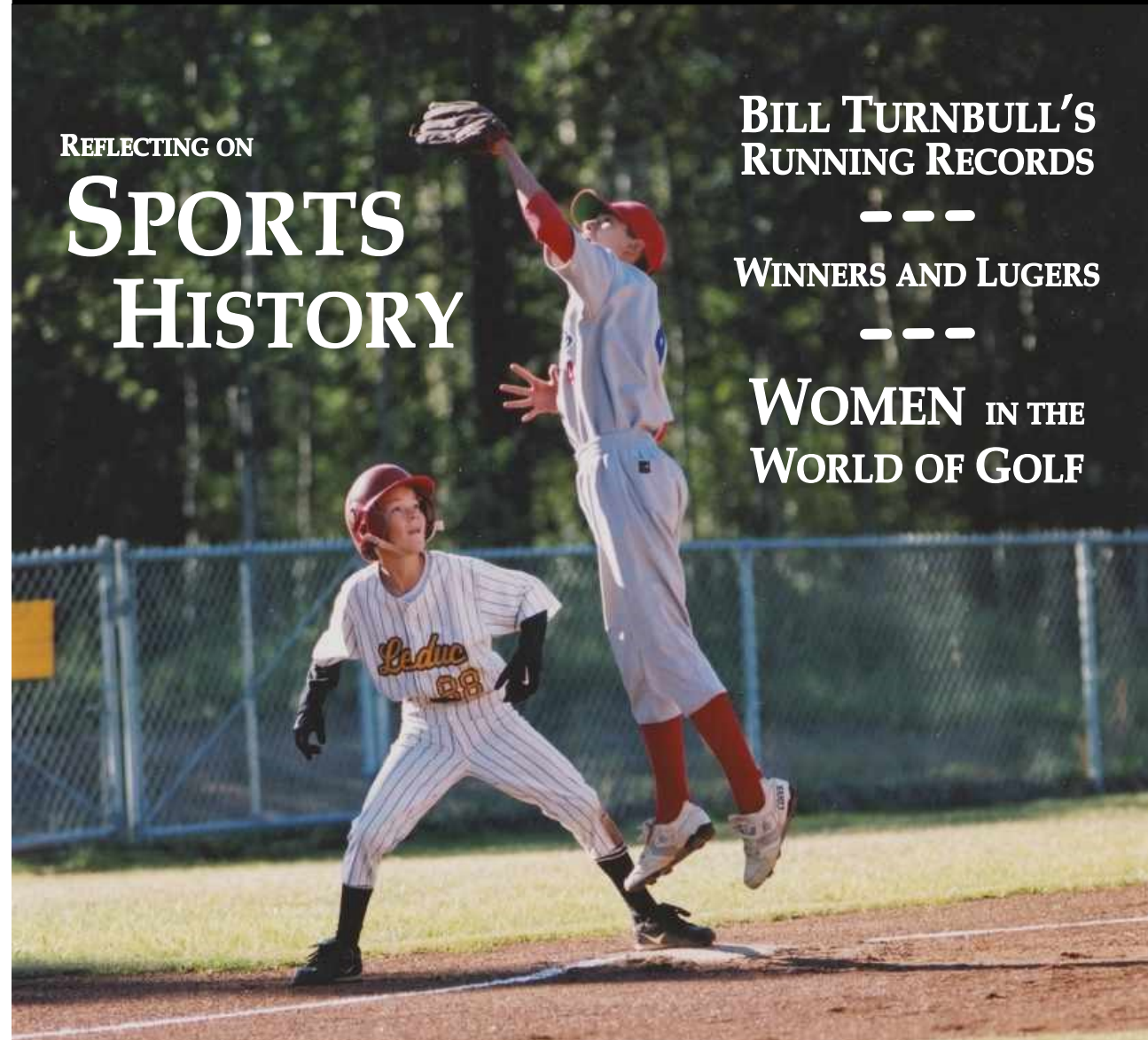
BILL TURNBULL'S  
RUNNING RECORDS

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WINNERS AND LUGERS

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WOMEN IN THE  
WORLD OF GOLF



A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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Cover: Scene from a baseball game between the Okotoks Dodgers and the Leduc Pirates during the Baseball Alberta Pee Wee 'AA' Provincial Championship, July 28, 2000 (SPRA 190.02.01.2001.035)

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

Summer has arrived and we are taking this time to reflect on our region's sports history. South Peace residents have long used sports as a means of social connection and entertainment. This issue of *Telling Our Stories* covers a range of topics: from running to rodeos; from baseball games to boxing champs; from luge tracks to ladies' golf. This issue marks the return of recreation activities in the South Peace and we hope that inspires you to get active!

This issue also marks my last as editor of *Telling Our Stories*, as I am leaving my role as Executive Director. I want to take this opportunity to offer my deepest thanks and appreciation to the Archives and all our supporters. My time with this organization has not only been a valuable learning experience, but also a great pleasure. The people of the Archives — the staff, board, volunteers, members, and supporters — are our greatest asset and it has been a privilege to work with each and every one of you.

My departure does not mark the end of *Telling Our Stories*, but a new chapter for this publication. The staff, volunteers, and guest contributors have always been the true talent behind the magazine and will continue to bring the historical records of the South Peace to life in future issues. I trust that you too, readers, will continue to support the Archives by subscribing and sharing *Telling Our Stories*.



Alyssa Currie  
SPRA Executive Director

## Take Note: SPRA and COVID-19

Although we had hoped to reopen this spring, under the current provincial health requirements, the South Peace Regional Archives must remain closed. We will continue to serve the community remotely until public health measures allow, and the Archives can safely reopen to public visitors.

### We are looking forward to welcoming you back!

To stay informed about reopening plans, follow the Archives blog or Facebook page. A reopening notice will also be emailed to all members and circulated in the next magazine. In the meantime, we encourage you to utilize our many online resources and contact the Archives staff if you require research assistance.

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## 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.

Introducing

# Close Contact at the Archives

The South Peace Regional Archives is pleased to announce the launch of our newest virtual exhibition: *Close Contact at the Archives*. This multimedia experience, which is enjoyable from the comfort of your own home, highlights the ongoing work at the Archives during the pandemic closure to preserve our local heritage. Close Contact features archival film, textual records, photographs, and oral histories.

*Close Contact* emphasizes the value of community partnerships and preserving our collective heritage, even while we maintain our social distance. Through this virtual exhibition, we hope to provide a glimpse behind-the-scenes of day-to-day life in the South Peace Regional Archives and the often-invisible labor that goes into making our local history accessible for the public. This exhibit will connect the public to the frequently unseen work done in an Archive; processing collections, assisting researchers, work towards Reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and more.

*Close Contact* is dedicated to all those in the South Peace who have been impacted by the current pandemic, and past pandemics in our history.

Right: Photograph from Herman Klukas' period as ranger in Wood Buffalo Park. Description on back reads: "The cabin at Pine Lake in course of construction. Mr. McDougal, Warden & Mrs. Klukas." N.W.T. & Yukon Branch, Department of the Interior, Photo No. 101. (SPRA 635.01.07)

Explore topics such as:

**Reclaiming Their Stories**

**The Volunteer Touch**

**Getting Social**

**Reel History**

**Pandemic Parallels**

**Women in the War**

**A Grande Tribute**

**A Marathon, Not a Sprint**

**Virtual Visits**

**Raising the Archives**

**Reflection & Recovery**



[www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/close-contact](http://www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/close-contact)

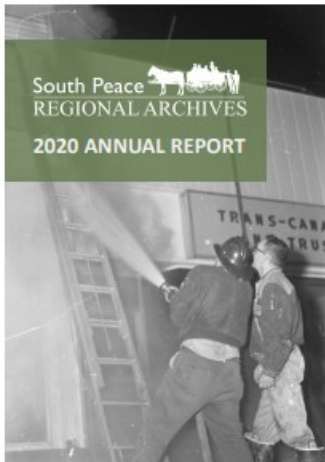
# Highlights from the AGM

Thank you to all members of the South Peace Regional Archives Society who participated in the Archives' virtual Annual General Meeting! The meeting was originally planned for March, but postponed until April due to extenuating circumstances. In total, 22 members cast their votes, either by zoom or ballot.

The 2020 Annual Report documents the accomplishments and projects of the Archives in the past year, including the impacts of the pandemic on our organization. During the AGM, the membership elected two new Directors: Alice Sims and Kristen Smith. We thank all new and returning Board Members for their service. Leita Askew was recognized for reaching 2500+ hours of volunteer service since 2009.

For full details of the AGM including voting results, visit [www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/2021AGM](http://www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/2021AGM).

The Archives also presented the annual Beth Sheehan Award, which recognizes individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the goals of the organization. This year, Grace Wideman was recognized for her contributions.



Left: The 2020 Annual Report of the South Peace Regional Archives



Above: Grace Wideman with her Beth Sheehan Award

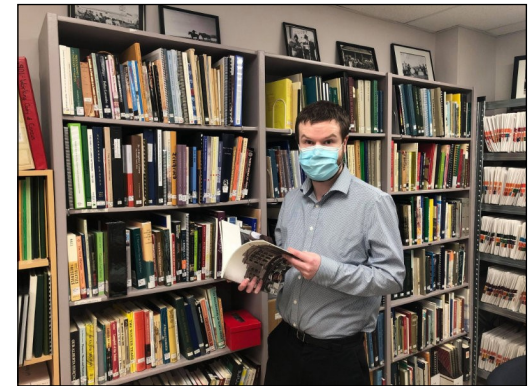
## Beth Sheehan Award

Grace Wideman has been an avid supporter of the South Peace Regional Archives since 2014. Her involvement began with the donation of archival records related to the community of Hythe; over the years, she has made multiple donations of records related to the County of Grande Prairie and her own family's history. Since 2015, she has contributed nearly 300 hours of volunteer service to the Archives, compiling materials for the personal reference files, completing transcriptions, and assisting with special events. In 2016, she served as a member of the Hythe Homecoming Committee, collecting and scanning over 300 photographs and textual records, which were later donated to the Archives. In 2017, Grace joined the Archives Board of Directors for a three year term. Her continued involvement as a volunteer for the Archives supports our work in the County of Grande Prairie and other communities.

# Welcome (and Farewell) Alec!

In April, the Archives hosted Alec Moreau, a Library Information Technology student with SAIT, for a three week practicum placement. According to Alec, "I chose SPRA for one of my practicums because archives and archival work interests me and I wanted to experience and learn about it firsthand. The fact they were local and quite close was a nice added bonus."

Alec was introduced to a variety of archives-related tasks, including: filing, indexing, reappraisal, adding items to the online store, writing blog posts, tracking and use of user metrics for the website and Facebook, digitizing and processing photographs, research requests, using and searching databases, processing materials, and outreach. The practicum placement provided a hands-on learning experience as well as course credit towards Alec's diploma. Although his time with the Archives was brief, he was a valuable addition to our team!



Above: Practicum student Alec Moreau in the Archives reference library. One of Alec's practicum tasks was learning about the unique challenges of maintaining a reference library in an Archives. He indexed and shelved 26 new books for the library.

# Welcome Back Kaydence!



Above: Archives Assistant Kaydence Redding, processing the Hines-Sutherland Family album (Fonds 679). This album was donated in 2018 and will soon be available for public consultation. Stay tuned on the Archives social media to see a selection of digitized photographs from the album.

We are pleased to announce that Kaydence Redding will be rejoining our team as the Archives Assistant this summer. Her position is once again made possible by Young Canada Works.

Kaydence's experience working in the Archives last summer inspired her to switch fields of study and she is currently completing a Bachelor's degree in Honors History at the University of Alberta. In a few years after her graduation from University, Kaydence hopes to pursue a Masters of Archival Studies!

Kaydence is excited to gain additional experience in the Archives and learn more about working in the cultural heritage sector this summer. She will be working on content for Telling Our Stories, projects related to the Indigenous History Committee, and continuing her work on the #ThrowbackThursday social media campaign that began last year.

# Bill Turnbull's Running Records

This February, we finally finished processing the Bill Turnbull fonds (664). Records in this fonds were donated by Bill Turnbull in 2013, 2014, and 2016. Processing began in 2017 but due to various circumstances, halted completely in 2018. We started processing these records once again in July 2020. In total, we spent approximately 770 hours processing these records in order to make them accessible to the public.

The Bill Turnbull fonds spans the years 1959-2002 and includes 1.7m of textual records, 4752 photographs, and 1488 negatives. If you're interested in learning about the history of the running and track & field scene in Grande Prairie, the Bill Turnbull fonds is an amazing resource for you.

Bill Turnbull was an educator and photographer in Grande Prairie through the 1970s and up to the early 2000s. Turnbull moved to Grande Prairie in 1966 to



Above: Wapiti Striders Team, 1986 (SPRA 0664.07.09.02)

teach at Montrose Junior High where he taught for 13 years. He also taught for 3 years at Alexander Forbes School, and 13 years at Crystal Park. He primarily taught Physical Education, Outdoor Education, Health, and Computer Literacy.

Bill was not only involved in the track & field and running world through his career as a Physical Education teacher, but also through his outside interests. Turnbull was one of the members of the old Grande Prairie Legion Track & Field club who helped found the Wapiti Striders Road Running Club. He not only helped found this club but was also a member of

Left: Zenon Smiechowski running in the 100m, 1973 (SPRA 0664.08.02.10.17)



100m Zenon Smiechowski

the Executive Committee. The Wapiti Striders was primarily established to bring a team to the Jasper-Banff Relay. They were one of the original nine teams to participate in that race, and participated every year except one.

The Wapiti Striders Road Running Club organized several local runs including: the Brian Harms Memorial 10 Mile, The Daily Herald Tribune Press Run, and the Beaverlodge to Grande Prairie Marathon. Turnbull's role in these events was as the Race Director.

The Bill Turnbull fonds consists of records that were primarily generated from Bill's work as an educator, running enthusiast, and coach. They include photographs, slides, correspondence, race results, memberships lists, meeting minutes, financials, route maps, newspaper clippings, event planning information, event programs, pamphlets, and application forms.

Amongst many other records this fonds contains records related to the Wapiti Striders Road Running Club including photographs from races they organized and races they participated in. These records document not only the racers at these events, but also the many supporters and volunteers that helped make them happen.

Right: Four Snowshoers, 1974 (SPRA 0664.01.25.04)



Above: Runners at NWASAA, Oct. 1977 (SPRA 0664.02.11.01)

The fonds also includes photographs of many school and community events that Bill attended: from school outdoor education trips which include activities such as snowshoeing; from school sporting events like basketball, volleyball, and soccer; from Cross Country and Track & Field events like the Alberta Summer Games, Provincial Championships, Road Runs, and Christmas Fun Runs; and, finally, from Grande Prairie events such as the Hot Air Balloon Races, the Grande Prairie Stompede, and Canada Day celebrations.

The Bill Turnbull fonds offers a wealth of information about sports and education in Grande Prairie. We hope you enjoy looking at a selection of digitized images from this fonds. More photographs are available to view online at Alberta on Record and — hopefully one day soon — in person in the Archives reading room!

Turn to page 10 for more photographs

# Processing Archival Records: It's a Marathon, not a Sprint

## *This issue's Archiveology*

Processing is an incredibly important part of my job as an Archivist; it's also incredibly time-consuming. This issue's Archiveology is dedicated to discussing this vital function of an archives. Processing is the act of preparing archival materials for use by researchers and members of the public. Records are not available to view until they have been processed.

There are three distinct parts of processing: arrangement, re-housing, and description. The first thing I do when processing an accession is look through all of the records and write copious notes about what types of records there are and how they are arranged. After I've looked through all the records, I have to decide how the records should be arranged.

Arrangement is the process of organizing materials in a way that facilitates their use by the public. This process includes physically moving records into their new order. Sometimes, the records are in an organized order when they are donated. In this case, the Archivist does minimal arranging. Other times, when the original order isn't clear, the Archivist has to create an entirely new order for the records. As part of this process, each and every photograph receives a unique item number.

Next in the process is re-housing. All of the records are placed in new acid-free folders, photographs are placed in protective sleeves, and staples are removed and replaced with archival safe fasteners.

The last component of processing is description. A description represents the contents and context of a fonds. It records the type and quantity of the records. This information is entered into our database. After all this is done, I create a finding aid to put on our website and Alberta on Record. The finding aid helps users discover what records they would like to see.

As you can see, processing archival records requires a large time commitment. A single fonds may take hundreds of hours to process. At the Archives, we have a processing backlog of 5 years. This means that it takes roughly 5 years for records to be processed after they have been donated. During the pandemic, we have

been able to dedicate more time to this essential task. In 2020 we finished processing an accrual to the Schenk family fonds (256) and the Vader-Grimm family fonds (676). Already in 2021, we have completed processing the Bill Turnbull fonds (664), the Colleen Stewart fonds (690), and an accrual to the Teepee Creek Stampede fonds (389). Stay tuned to see what fonds our staff process next!

*Right: Terry Smith in Lead, 1984 (SPRA 0664.02.26.01)*



*Above: Robyn Williams holding baby Tanner's hands. Tanner is wearing his dad's race bib (Bruce Williams). 1989. (SPRA 664.07.11.30)*

*Below: Brian Harms with Richmond Hill (SPRA 0664.05.04.12)*



*Above: Race start area (SPRA 0664.06.09.02)*



*Above: Connie Gray, Dean Beaton, and Kim Jeffery in starting blocks (SPRA 0664.08.02.01.077)*

*Below: Irwin the Vaultor (SPRA 0664.08.02.08.05)*



# Baseball

## The Definitive Bat-and-Ball Game for Albertans

*Daniel Randell is a recent History graduate from Ambrose University. Daniel utilized the Archives' reference files and newspaper collections to research his undergraduate thesis, "Cricket: A Case Study in Alberta's Sporting History." Daniel's thesis examines the rise and fall of cricket in Canada between 1885-1915 and offers an explanation as to why baseball came to overtake its English counterpart. Although his research focusses primarily on Calgary and Edmonton, it also examines Grande Prairie to illustrate the rise of baseball's popularity. The following excerpts from his thesis are shared with his permission.*

Baseball started off in the prairies in a similar manner to cricket, with challenge matches, cups, and eventually tournaments, but the American game differed in that scheduled league play was organised and sustained much earlier than cricket. The Southern Alberta Baseball League for instance, was successfully established in 1904, with a scheduled forty games to be played from Victoria Day all the way to September.

This is a packed calendar of matches, much more akin to the professional sports leagues of the twenty-first century, and an accomplishment cricket was unable to achieve prior to the First World War....

Grande Prairie was first incorporated as a village in 1914—just prior to the outbreak of the First World War—but a thorough search of the city's newspaper archives yielded no trace of cricket ever having been played in the northern Alberta settlement. Conversely, much evidence exists for the presence of baseball in Grande Prairie, stemming all the way back to before the village's incorporation. For example, an article in the Grande Prairie Herald from April 8, 1913, writes that various settlements in the area will be involved in league play that summer, and there is a call for proper baseball diamonds to be built for the occasion. Members of the league listed in the article include Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Lake Saskatoon, and others. The following year, a packed schedule of matches was planned for the "Twilight Baseball

League", with no less than thirty games running from May 16 to September 5.

*Left: The Deep Creek baseball team in June 1914, part of the Twilight League. Front row, left to right: Hugh Boyd, Pat Carveth (short stop), Lyman Johnston (3rd base), Rupert Carveth (pitcher), Rae Hegler (catcher), and Eric Anderson (pitcher). Back row: Neil Vance (2nd base), Boody Sprague (1st base), Cecil Johnston (manager), Wes Bentley, and Wylie Sawyer. (SPRA 032.08.08.0762)*



Grande Prairie was playing baseball in a league capacity even before the town was incorporated, and a proper baseball diamond would be erected by the time it had become a village. Yet no cricket pitch would be found there until the late twentieth century, following an influx of immigrants from cricketing countries like England and India. This serves to indicate how, by the dawn of the First World War, cricket had given way to baseball to the extent that a newer settlement in Alberta like Grande Prairie would play the American game only, rather than the British bat-and-ball game which previous generations of Albertans had enjoyed. By this point in Alberta's history, baseball was king, and cricket had ceased to dominate the sporting landscape, only managing to hang on in the cities where it had been firmly established decades before, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton....

In conclusion, cricket in late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century Alberta failed to modernise and adapt the way baseball did. Perhaps its English aristocratic roots were too deeply ingrained, but the American game proved itself perfectly adaptable to a Canadian context, whereas cricket did not. Cricket was the transplanted game of the British upper class and was never modified to any great extent to appeal to players or spectators in Alberta. As Cooper says, "It remained reminiscent of England," and never "assimilated" to Canadian culture. Cricket clubs remained exclusive, favouring a particular demographic in terms of membership, ultimately failing to include the great swathes of new Albertans who belonged to the working class. Additionally, the style of the game remained largely unchanged from its eighteenth century format even up to the beginning of the twentieth century. This meant that cricket functioned primarily as a leisurely pastime with little concern for a rigid schedule, concerning itself more with the game's

Twilight Baseball League	
Schedule For Season 1914.	
May 16th	At LAKE SASKATOON—Beaver Lodge vs. Deep Creek
23rd	BEAVER LODGE—Lake Saskatoon vs. Beaver Lodge
30th	LAKE SASKATOON—Lake Saskatoon vs. Buffalo Lakes
June 6th	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Kleskun Lake vs. Beaver Lodge
13th	LAKE SASKATOON—Buffalo Lakes vs. Kleskun Lake
20th	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Beaver Lodge vs. Deep Creek
27th	BUFFALO LAKES—Lake Saskatoon vs. Buffalo Lakes
July 4th	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Deep Creek vs. Grande Prairie
11th	BUFFALO LAKES—Beaver Lodge vs. Buffalo Lakes
18th	LAKE SASKATOON—Grande Prairie vs. Lake Saskatoon
25th	DEEP CREEK—Grande Prairie vs. Deep Creek
Aug. 1st	LAKE SASKATOON—Deep Creek vs. Lake Saskatoon
8th	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Beaver Lodge vs. Grande Prairie
15th	LAKE SASKATOON—Buffalo Lakes vs. Deep Creek
22nd	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Lake Saskatoon vs. Buffalo Lakes
29th	BEAVER LODGE—Buffalo Lakes vs. Beaver Lodge
Sept. 5th	GRANDE PRAIRIE—Grande Prairie vs. Kleskun Lake

*Above: The Twilight Baseball League's 1914 season schedule. Grande Prairie Herald, 19 May 1914*

function as a social event, leaving its potential as an audience entertainer largely untapped. Lastly, cricket failed to professionalise, when all other sports started to move in this direction by the turn of the century.

Competing with other summer sports hindered membership potential, but baseball's eagerness to commercialise absolutely killed cricket, just as baseball began to see revenue potential faster than any other summer pastime in Alberta and take advantage of its potential to entertain the masses. This saw baseball take a massive leap over cricket, establishing itself as the definitive bat-and-ball game for Albertans.

It is obvious that cricket has a rich history in Alberta, but it's exclusivity, leisurely pace, apathy towards appealing to crowds, and staunch adherence to the amateur ideal ultimately doomed the sport's success in Alberta. The sport has a brief history here in this province, and though amid recent waves of immigration the English game has seen some resurgence, baseball remains the only bat-and-ball game for the majority of Albertans to this day.

# Olwen's Own Words:

## Summer Sports

In 1933, Olwen Sanger-Davies travelled from East Sussex, England to the Peace Country to visit her younger brother, Morgan. Olwen documented her visit in two personal scrapbooks, containing approximately 500 drawings and paintings. "Olwen's Own Words" features excerpts and illustrations from these scrapbooks.



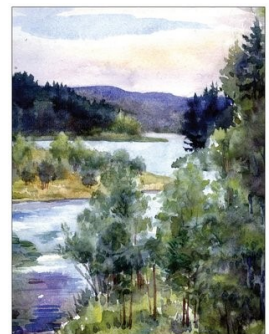
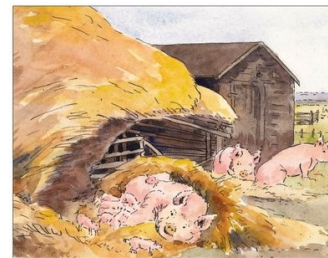
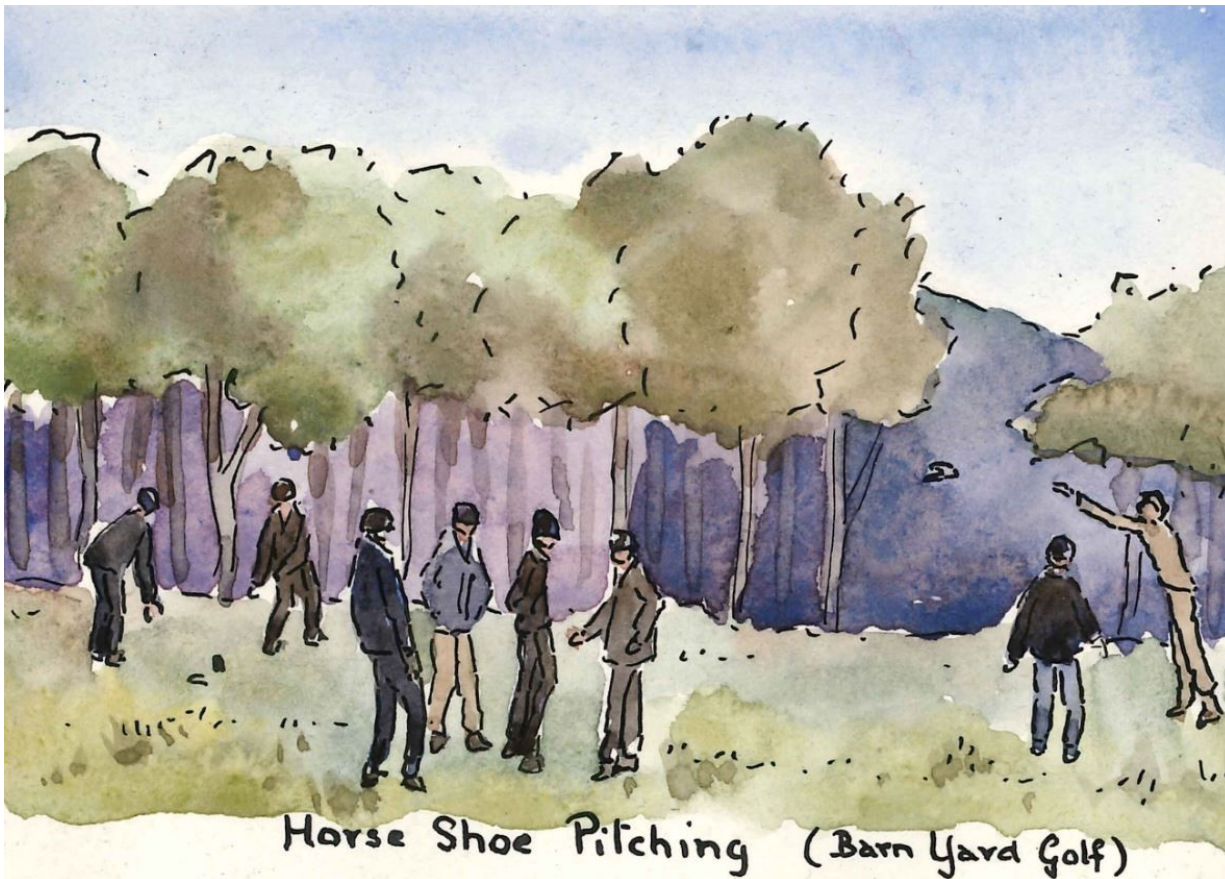
Saturday, July 1st

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.

**Available Now!**

**Olwen's Card Collection**

**\$10.00** Price Includes GST  
Curbside pick-up available



This beautiful collection of blank notecards features six of Olwen's watercolour paintings. Each set includes 6 cards ( 5½ x 4¼ inches) and white envelopes. Limited quantities are available.



# Winners and Lugers



Above: Luge competitor at Alberta Winter Games, held in Grande Prairie in 1980. (SPRA 190.02.01.1609.31)

Have you ever had the urge to hop on a small sled and rocket down an icy slope? If you have, you wouldn't be the first Peace Country resident to try it. As far back as the late 1970's, locals have been practicing luge: an exhilarating winter sport that involves a sled, a wintery hill, gravity, and a lot of bravery. The SPRA "Sledding" reference file includes news clippings related to luge, bobsled, and other sliding sports.

Henry Pirker, born in Austria, was an avid luger. He and his children were so passionate that they competed in the sport and, in 1979, had a naterbahn track, or natural luge track, built on the eastern banks of the Smoky River on the old Ron Moody homestead. This was the first luge track constructed in western Canada. In the mid 1980's, the family built a small chalet, which Ernie Moody hauled to his lease land at the top of the Smoky River Valley. The shack served as a welcome reprieve from the icy wind lugers faced as they hurtled down the track. In the early 1980's,

the Pirker family helped found the Grande Prairie Luge Association; where Henry served as President.

As the sport gained popularity, a second track was built at Nitehawk park, on the banks of the Wapiti River. In 1983 or 1984, Henry Pirker was hosting a clinic at Nitehawk, while Judy Carlson was skiing. On a whim, Judy asked if she could give the sport a try. A few weeks later, Carlson was competing at the Alberta Winter Games. That summer, she attended a training camp in Calgary, where she was invited to the Canadian National Luge Teams training camp in Ottawa. Later that year, she went to Germany for a 6 week tour of Europe. Carlson went on to make the Canadian National Luge Team, and was in the running for the 1988 Olympic team. However, a knee injury ended her dream of competing in the Olympics. Several newspaper articles indicate that she may have been a forerunner, or tester of the Olympic track, and was supposed to have carried the Olympic torch down Highway 2 near Wetaskiwin.

Henry Pirker didn't just demonstrate the sport, he also coached the Canadian National Luge Team at the world championship in Italy in 1985, including his son Mark. That same year, one of the local luge tracks was upgraded, and the Grande Prairie Luge Association accumulated more gold medals than any another association in Alberta. Several of these medals were won by the Pirker family, and the Daily Herald Tribune declared lugging a "family affair." The sport had picked up a lot of steam, and in 1986, Grande Prairie hosted the North West Championships and the Zone Competition for Alberta Mini Olympics. We have few records

of the Grande Prairie Luge Association after 1987, so it is not clear what became of the group. However, in 1989, Spring Lake hosted the North West Alberta Winter Games Luge Competition north of Hythe. A year later, the South Peace Luge & Bobsled Association was formed from the remains of the defunct Grande Prairie Sliding Club. In 2007, Grande Prairie hosted the Natural Track Luge World Championship at Nitehawk, where at least 15 nations competed.

The Smoky River luge track fell into disrepair and was eventually abandoned. But, until recently, local residents could still experience luge on the natural track at Nitehawk Year-Round Adventure Park. A devastating landslide in the spring of 2020 resulted in the destruction of the track and a temporary halt to the sport in the area.

The South Peace Regional Archives has very few records of lugging, and fewer still after 1990. Do you have any records documenting the sport in our region? Contact the Archives to discuss donating them!



This article was written by former Archives Outreach Intern, Alia Kolodychuk. This position was made possible by an Access to Holdings Grant from the Archives Society of Alberta.

Above: The Smoky River luge track. Image created via GPS and Google Earth.

Right: The Smoky River luge track, March 2021. Photograph by Alia Kolodychuk.

Right: Daily Herald Tribune, 27 November 1990. (From SPRA Reference Files, 510.26.089)



## Visiting the Smoky River Luge Track

The Smoky River luge track, located near Moody's Crossing campground, is now a hiking trail. To visit the site from Grande Prairie, travel east on Highway 43 for 41 km. After crossing the Smoky River, turn right on Township Road 721A and keep right at the fork to Township 722A. Park in the day use area and follow the trail under the bridges. The bottom of the track is located a short distance (~500m) from the parking lot. The track is connected to a short but fairly steep trail that loops back down towards the river.



# Prairie Sports

Dr. Carlisle once heard someone say of summertime leisure in the South Peace: "Oh, we play baseball that day." However, as these photographs show, local residents enjoyed diverse range of sports throughout the year. We hope you enjoy them!

*Right: Full length studio portrait of man in hockey uniform and skates. Possibly Francis (Fran) Donald, son of Frank Donald. Ca. 1925 (SPRA 2002.54.24, Fonds 052)*

*Below: Several players from opposing teams involved in a soccer game. Spectators and visible in the background. 1970 (SPRA 190.02.01.0353.15)*



*Above: A large crowd watching an outdoor girls' game of basketball at Valhalla, ca. 1925 (SPRA 630.08.016)*

*Right: Kyre Livelton landing a 137 foot ski jump at Bear Creek as spectators watch, ca. 1920 (SPRA 1969.59.317)*

*Below: Composite of individual portraits from the Ladies Basketball Champions in 1928: Naomi Boyd; "Bert" Kenney; Gertrude Graban; Eleanor Kenney; Irene Squires; Eunice Dandy; Emile Watson. (SPRA 1990.25.1a )*



*Above: Sister Mary Elizabeth of the Cross (Yvette Campeau) in her customary habit but also with a large baseball mitt, on the ball field behind St. Joseph's School. On the back a note simply says, "Our Star Outfielder," ca. 1940 (SPRA 50.08.02.001b)*

*Left: Baseball game at the Grande Prairie Fair Grounds, ca. 1920 (SPRA 1969.59.375)*



# Reflecting on Sports History

The following transcription is from the Betty Welter fonds (Fonds 129, Series 4: Writing Portfolio). The Archives has recently added several new transcriptions to the website, thanks to the help of volunteer Suzanne Dunn. Betty's writing portfolio includes a submission to the Clem and Muriel Collins Millennium Contest in 2000, called "A Personal Recollection of Life in the Grande Prairie Area, 1939 to 2000." The following excerpt, from the "Sports" section of the article, has been abridged for inclusion in Telling Our Stories.

In 1939 Grande Prairie had one natural ice skating rink and curling rink side by side. We attended numerous hockey games, skating performances and carnivals in that drafty cold, crack filled old building. Weather always seemed to turn warm whenever a hockey tournament or bonspiel was scheduled. I can remember some games being played on pretty wet sloppy ice. In 20 the winter of 1947/48 the roof fell in on this old building after a very heavy snowfall so we had no covered rink at all. Max Henning and Bill Bes-

sent told me they had a temporary natural ice rink at the airport in an unused hanger and played all their hockey games there in 1949 and 1950.

The Kinsmen Club spearheaded a new Memorial Arena being built on 99 Ave, and started in 1949. This arena was still using natural ice, and was mostly built by volunteer labor and many donations of time, building materials and money. Max Henning tells me they poured huge six feet square pilings of cement for supports. This cement was mixed outside and wheeled in by volunteers with wheel barrows via a gang plank over a thirty hour continuous pouring event. Many men in the community volunteered during this cement pouring marathon including my late husband, Jack. There were no augers to transport cement to wherever needed – it was truly man power. The main surface was poured a few days later by the same method. This covered rink was a great improvement and used for many activities. The 'rink rats' scraped the ice with wide wooden boards be-

tween periods, this was quite a coveted position and never short of volunteer boys. The artificial ice was installed some ten years later and now the chinooks didn't affect hockey playoffs or bonspiel finals. This also saw the early version of a zamboni to scrape and spray the ice, the rink rats were now unemployed. This arena served the area for

*Left: Hockey team practicing on one of the outdoor rinks in the Bear Creek Valley, ca. 1950 (SPRA 1969.59.318)*



years and was eventually knocked down and a curling rink took over the space....

There were always outdoor rinks on any available empty lot where needed around town. The youngsters certainly enjoyed these free sports and many a budding hockey player was born there. Two regular sized outdoor rinks were built in the Bear Creek Flats and the Minor Hockey Association was formed in 1959. In 1960 it consisted of 221 players on 17 teams, membership was \$1.00 and equipment rather poor to say the least. Temperature is usually 10 degrees colder on a creek or river and these children from mites to bantams played in many degrees below zero F weather. Ice space was still short for many junior teams so a natural ice rink was started in the huge barn at the old fair grounds in the 1970s – now Crystal Park School area. Dozens of boys spent many happy hours there in organized games from pee wees to juniors.

In 1999 Grande Prairie's population was now 34,000 and the G.P.M.H.A. had 750 children registered in 47 teams – again how we have grown. Registration fees vary with different groups starting at about \$100.00 a player.

Ball diamonds, tennis courts, basket ball courts sprang up all over town when and wherever needed. A lawn bowling green was installed in Muskoseepie [sic] park a few years ago. In 1939 we had one golf course and club house situated on Richmond Hill. In 1999 the golfers have access to nine courses in our area.

In the 1940s a ski-jump was built where the log pile is now situated on the west side of the city.

*Right: Two couples playing tennis on an early Grande Prairie tennis court, ca. 1920 (SPRA 1969.59.372)*

Years later a larger ski hill with a lovely club house was built on the south bank of the Wapiti River. They have a lift, snow making machines, lunch room and give lessons.

A few years ago part of the old 'nuisance grounds' in south Grande Prairie were reclaimed and now contain several ball diamonds, campground, concession booth and children's play area. In 1998 an indoor soccer facility was established and is booked solidly all winter long and is a very welcome sports addition to our city.

In the early 1950s an outdoor swimming pool was built, again spearheaded by the Kinsmen, where the Telus Building now stands. This certainly was a popular and well used facility all summer long. Red Cross swimming lessons were established for all ages.

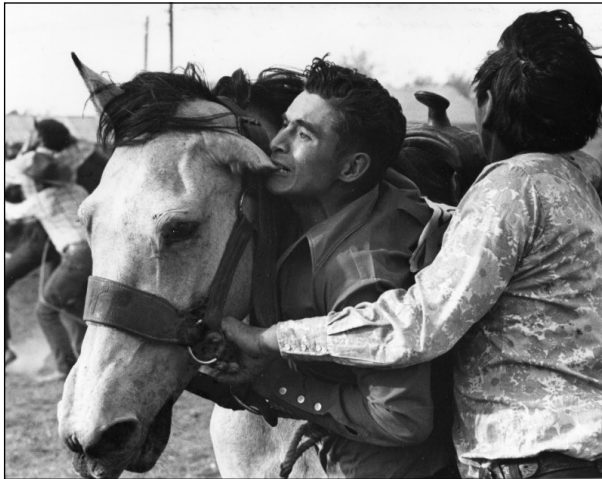
A larger, better equipped outdoor pool was later built in the Muskoseepie Park Area and is still used from May to September each year. In the mid 1970s a full sized heated covered pool was built complete with diving boards, dressing rooms and wading pool beside it in the Recreation Center. Lessons and aerobics are available here for all ages year long.

*To read more stories from Betty Welter, visit: [www.southpeacearchives.org/betty-welter-fonds](http://www.southpeacearchives.org/betty-welter-fonds) or the Archives blog series "Cooking with Betty."*



# Saddle Up!

## Good Times at Teepee Creek



Left: At the Teepee Creek Stampede: "It doesn't taste like roast beef but it works, as you can tell by the placid look on the horse's face. Jerry Chalifoux is the fellow with the bulldog clamp." (From SPRA 2009.32.13)

Born from the tradition of community picnics and sports days, many small town rodeos flourished as a place for socialization and entertainment alike. The Teepee Creek Stampede is one such success story. Starting around 1917 as a family style picnic lunch, with ball games, tug of war, and races, the Teepee Creek Stampede grew into a world class western sporting event. Fundamental to its success were the many Indigenous athletes including Baptiste Campbell, Harvey Derocher, Norman Gauthier, Edna Gouchey, Johnny "Bottle" Chalifoux, and Ray LaGlace.

Ray LaGlace was born and raised at Horse Lake, and started riding calves at 12 years old at Teepee Creek in 1946. At 15, he advanced to saddle broncs, and in 1959, 1960, and 1962 placed in the top section. The

first year there was bull riding, Ted Rycroft bet Ray \$15 to ride the beast, to which Ray said "Make it \$25 and I'll try it". Ted agreed, and Ray held on for dear life while the bull tried his best to unseat his rider. Ray won the twenty five bucks. Not only did Ray compete at local stampedes and rodeos, but also rode on the pro circuit for a time; competing in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Yellowstone Park, and Washington.

In 1961, riding the former Teepee Creek Terror in Grande Prairie, Ray broke his leg. A year later, he broke his back, and crushed his ribs and neck. His doctor told him to take a few years off from riding, but that didn't keep him away from the sport. Although he didn't compete, he judged for a few years, and in 1965 was paid \$30 to be the judge at the Stampede. The boys called him "Hawkeye Ray" because he was so observant. He later returned to the sport and, in 1978, won the Saddle Bronc Championship at the Doe River Old Timer's Rodeo.

The Teepee Creek Stampede Association fonds consists of 23 photographs and 324 photograph negatives showing different events at the Teepee Creek Stampede (SPRA 389). The Archives' reference files also includes a subseries on the Teepee Creek rodeo (SPRA 510.26.075).

*This article was written by Alia Kolodychuk, former Archives Outreach Intern at the South Peace Regional Archives. This position was made possible by an Access to Holdings Grant from the Archives Society of Alberta.*

# Willie or Won't He?

## Using the Surname Reference Files

Willie de Wit is one of Canada's most accomplished and successful heavyweight boxers. Some of his most notable achievements include winning gold at the 1982 Commonwealth Games, claiming the world amateur heavyweight title in 1983 and 1984, and winning silver in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Willie de Wit's success has always been a source of pride for our region and we imagine most of our readers are familiar with his story.

But did you know that Willie de Wit and former Daily-Herald Tribune sports writer Mike Beaudin collaborated on a biography about the Boxing champion in 1984, cleverly titled *Willie de Wit: The Lord of the Ring?* Or that, despite their whole-hearted and unremitting support, Willie's family were never fans of the



Above: De Wit Wedding announcement, Daily Herald-Tribune, March 27, 1989 (SPRA Surname reference files, de Wit file)



Above: News story about upcoming tournament, Daily Herald-Tribune, n.d. (SPRA Surname reference files, de Wit file)

sport of boxing? Both of these interesting anecdotes, as well as information about Willie's boxing career, can be found in the South Peace Regional Archives Surname Reference Files! The Surname Reference Files contain wedding announcements, birth announcements, newspaper articles, obituaries, memorials, interviews, and transcripts pertaining to families and individuals in the South Peace region.

The Archives website ([www.southpeacearchives.org](http://www.southpeacearchives.org)) offers a complete index of these files (Click Research> Search Databases> Search Our Online Databases> Search Surname Database). This tool, and our other online databases, are immensely helpful in completing research from home during the pandemic. Do you see an item listed that you would like to consult? We offer curbside pickup and digital reproductions!

# Women in the World of Golf

## Examining the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club Fonds

As the grass gets greener, days get longer, and the sun gets warmer we know that many people are excited to be hitting the greens for a round of golf. The history of golf in the South Peace is visible through many records within the South Peace Regional Archives collection, but perhaps the most detailed account comes from the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club Fonds (554). These records were donated by the Ladies of the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club and contains, among other records, 17 impressive scrapbooks filled with news clippings about the Ladies tournaments and tournament winners, the Club's fundraising and volunteering activities, as well as clippings from a golfing news column that appeared in the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune.

Golf has been a tradition enjoyed by South Peace residents since the 1920s, although according to golfer R.H. Watcher (who was interviewed by historian Isabel Campbell in 1967), Grande Prairie's first golf course was more weed than it was green. Watcher's interview was featured in a news article written by



Right: Ladies of the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club scrapbook cover (2010.44.2\_C)

Campbell and is now part of the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club Fonds.

In this interview, Watcher recalled visiting the first golf course, where the weeds would grow so thick throughout the late spring and summer that he once "lost [his] golf bag among the goldenrod and yarrow and took a day to find it." In 1929 the first formal golf course, the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club, opened with 39 members who paid a fee of \$25 each and a board of seven directors. The golf course was located on top of Richmond Hill and featured a clubhouse complete with a fieldstone fireplace. There are many photographs of this clubhouse featured in the SPRA collection.

As early as 1932, Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club was home to a Ladies Club (also referred to as the Ladies Association). Despite the presence of a Ladies

Left: Golfers at the Grande Prairie [Richmond Hill] Golf course on July 16, 1960. (SPRA 2005.061.05.5)



Left: Page from Ladies Club 1968-72 scrapbook showing various news clippings (SPRA 2010.44.2\_5v)

Club, the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club board of directors did not have any female members throughout the 1930s and 1940s, according to their records. In 1953, Mrs. W.L. Caldwell became the first woman to join the board, serving as the only female member until Mrs. Ina Fee joined her in 1956. The "Ladies of the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club" were regularly covered in local newspapers, and many of these news stories were preserved by the Ladies Club in their scrapbooks.

By the mid-1960s the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club board of directors began work on a new golf course and purchased 160 acres south-east of Grande Prairie (twice the size of the old course). The new course, named the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club, opened in 1967 with a new clubhouse opening the following year. The Ladies Club was re-named the Ladies of the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club following the opening of the new course. News coverage on the activities of the Ladies Club continued throughout the late 1960s onwards. Some interesting news clippings preserved in the Ladies Club scrapbooks include one 1969 news article announcing the

first women-only tournament held at the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club. A few years later in 1972, the Herald-Tribune announces the "first-ever commercial ladies golf league in the city" and highlights one team, the Honey Bees, who were participating in the league. The creation of a new tournament and commercial league for women-only provided new opportunities for greater amounts of women to participate in the sport and shows the increasing popularity of golf among women in the South Peace at this time. The Ladies Club scrapbooks documents the activities of the Ladies of Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club until the early 2000s. The scrapbooks provide a great insight into the growth of the sport throughout the South Peace, especially in regards to the strides women made to be included and accepted in the world of golf.

Right: Page from Ladies Club 1968-72 scrapbook. The Honey Bees are featured in the top left (SPRA 2010.44.2\_15r)



first women-only tournament held at the Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club. A few years later in 1972, the Herald-Tribune announces the "first-ever commercial ladies golf league in the city" and highlights one team, the Honey Bees, who were participating in the league. The creation of a new tournament and commercial league for women-only provided new opportunities for greater amounts of women to participate in the sport and shows the increasing popularity of golf among women in the South Peace at this time. The Ladies Club scrapbooks documents the activities of the Ladies of Grande Prairie Golf and Country Club until the early 2000s. The scrapbooks provide a great insight into the growth of the sport throughout the South Peace, especially in regards to the strides women made to be included and accepted in the world of golf.

## New at the Archives

The beginning of 2021 has flown by here at the Archives. We have been joined by several contract staff members who have assisted us with various projects: an Archives Outreach Intern created an online exhibit; an Archives Technician joined us to work on our Indigenous Records project; a practicum student spent three weeks with us learning all about archives; and our Archives Assistant joined us for the summer. We spent some of her first week assembling new archival shelving.



Most of our time has been spent completing our Indigenous Records project, which is made possible by funding from Library and Archives Canada. The purpose of this project is to identify records that contain Indigenous content, re-describe that material, and digitize approximately 300 items. In order to locate Indigenous-related records, we first had to re-appraise 70 fonds, 56 of which were previously identified by our Indigenous History Committee for review. We have described or re-described 368 individual items. Lastly, we have digitized 321 items. The digitized records include photographs, negatives, and textual records.

## Now Hiring: Executive Director

The Board of Directors is inviting applications for the position of Executive Director of the South Peace Regional Archives. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors of the South Peace Regional Archives Society, and works with Archives staff and volunteers to help the organization achieve its purpose and financial objectives. The position acts as a “face of the Archives” while also managing the day-to-day operations of the organization. Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Report to the South Peace Regional Archives Society Board and its committees, assisting with the development of their strategic plan, and ensuring its successful implementation
- Work with municipal funding partners, granting agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure that their objects in supporting the archives are met
- Act as the “face of the archives,” representing the organization in all external communications
- Manage a work environment that attracts, retains, and motivates a diverse team of 3-5 staff and 10-20 volunteers to meet the Archives’ objectives
- Oversee all financial administration and annual operating budget, including completing applications for operational municipal funding and project-based grants

To see the full job posting and description, visit:

[www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/Careers](http://www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/Careers)

## South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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I wish to donate to the  
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**Please pay by cash or cheque to:**  
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Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB. T8V 3A8  
Phone: 780-830-5105  
Fax: 780-831-7371  
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