

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 13

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Issue 3

ADVENTURES IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

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EXPLORING THE
SOUTH PEACE



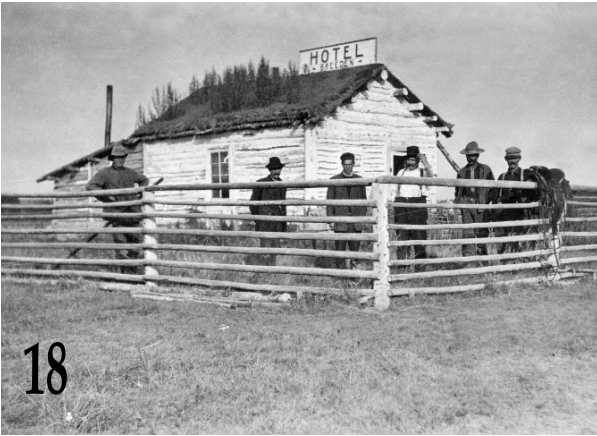
A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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Cover: Jim, David, Mary Jean, and Mate stand overlooking the Dunvegan Crossing. The caption below the photograph reads "Above Peace River." 1944. (SPRA 399.03.07)

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

In previous issues of *Telling Our Stories* we have brought you far flung adventures of people travelling the globe. But until now, we have largely overlooked the fact that tourism also occurs a little closer to home. Whether it be a day trip or an extended vacation, the South Peace Region has always had a lot to offer visitors and locals alike. That is why in this issue of *Telling Our Stories* the SPRA would like to invite you to explore some of the adventures to be had in our own backyard.

To start us off, take a quick look at the journey the South Peace Regional Archives has taken this year with our “AGM Highlights” and join us in welcoming some new adventurers to the region. Take a trip with some locals in “On the Road Again” and “Never Tasted Such Fish” and be sure to see the sights with this month’s featured photographs in “Local Adventures.” Tired from your travels? Then take a quick rest with some local hotels in “The Home of Hospitality” and learn about trials and tribulations of the tourism industry in “Stay a While, Why Don’t You?”

I would like to thank all of the staff, volunteers, and of course, you, our readers for coming on this *Telling Our Stories* journey with us. With summer approaching, I hope this issue will inspire you to have your own adventures in the South Peace. And, as always, be sure to document everything so that one day it can be your story we tell!

Ellyn Vandekerkhove
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note: Cemetery Tours

This summer will see the return of the Archives’ much loved cemetery tours. Join us as we explore the Grande Prairie Cemetery and learn about the lives of the people who have come before.

Tuesday, July 19, 7:00 PM
Wednesday, July 20, 7:00 PM
Tuesday, August 9, 7:00 PM
Wednesday, August 10, 7:00 PM

Check out our website and follow us on Facebook for more details.

Summer Research Hours

We will be open **by appointment only**
Tuesday –Friday, 10:00am—4:00pm

To **book your appointment** contact the South Peace Regional Archives at **780-830-5105** or book online at:

<https://southpeacearchives.org/book-a-research-appointment/>

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.

AGM Highlights

Thank you to all members of the South Peace Regional Archives Society who attended the Archives’ Annual General Meeting on Saturday, March 26!

2021 was a year of transition at the South Peace Regional Archives. The annual report highlighted several major transitions from the past year, including changes in the Archives staff and preparations for the upcoming move to the Archives’ new home in Centre 2000.

The South Peace Regional Archives would not exist without thoughtful archival donations from members of the community. We received 36 new accessions in 2021, which include approximately 3.57 metres of textual records, 1290 photographs, 25 library books, 92 architectural drawings, 5 video/audio recordings, and 24 watercolour paintings of buildings that were designed by a local architect. Both our archivist and our summer student processed numerous fonds and accruals, making more records available for researchers to access in our reading room.

During the AGM, the membership elected a new director, Douglas Morris. We thank all our board members for their ongoing service.

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

Kaylee has been a volunteer at the South Peace Regional Archives since 2016 and has worked a total of



Above: Kaylee Dyck (left) receiving the Beth Sheehan Award

1338.5 hours. She has worked tirelessly to preserve the history of soldiers through the South Peace Soldiers’ Memorial project. Kaylee’s work focuses specifically on the World War I soldiers. She completed the World War I section of the South Peace Soldiers’ Memorial in March of 2022.

Kaylee has contributed not only her time but also her own funds to support the memorial. She sponsored the addition of an “in military service while proving up” search function to the Peace Country Land Settlement Database. This search function resulted in the addition of hundreds of veterans to the South Peace Soldiers’ Memorial. In addition to her work on the Memorial, Kaylee has also worked to increase awareness of World War I history as a frequent guest contributor to the *Telling Our Stories* magazine.

Welcome Candice

SPRA's New Archivist

This spring has brought several changes to the SPRA's staff team. We are excited to introduce our new archivist, Candice Laycraft, and our two archives assistants (students), Patrick Macaulay and Taci Trudeau.

Hello, my name is Candice Laycraft. I grew up in the hamlet of Flatbush and have made the Edmonton area my home for more than a decade. I am very excited to have this opportunity to explore the north-central part of Alberta and learn more about this region's history. I hold a Master of Library and Information Studies from the University of Alberta, where I focused on archival course work. I expanded this knowledge by completing the Archive Society of Alberta's Archive Institute course as well as being a practicum student at the City of Edmonton Archive.

Since completing my degree, I have worked with community theater records created by Workshop West Playwrights' Theater as well as Northern Light Theater. These experiences taught me the value of community archiving and ignited a passion for representing diverse voices within our collective histories. I also hold the Vice President seat on the Friends of the Provincial Archive of Alberta's board. As well, I am helping plan the RavenWood Music Festival, taking place in June.

My interest in history started early, while hearing stories of my maternal grandparents' lives, including their time in the Royal Canadian Air Force, where they met. I followed this passion into post-secondary

schooling by majoring in History and minoring in Sociology in my undergraduate studies. I was especially intrigued by social history or the stories of everyday people, particularly women. I studied topics including post World War II cookbooks and Alberta internment camps, in which my paternal grandfather was briefly placed. History, for me, is most interesting and valuable when I can make personal connections with the past. I am hoping that I can convey this passion to others in the South Peace region as the new archivist.



Welcome Patrick & Taci

My name is Patrick Macaulay, and the mysterious pull of the South Peace Regional Archives has recently drawn me over a thousand kilometers across the country, from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Grande Prairie. I have come here knowing little about the region or its history, but now that I am physically surrounded with information about South Peace, I am sure I'll become an expert in no time. My work at the Archives is part of the Arts Co-op program at the University of Manitoba, where I am currently pursuing an Honours History degree. I also wouldn't be here were it not for funding by the Young Canada Works program, so give them a round of applause. Taci and I will be working on a number of different projects throughout the summer, including arranging archival displays for the Grande Prairie Museum and preparing guided tours of the City of Grande Prairie Cemetery. What I am most excited for, though, is writing articles for the next few issues of *Telling Our Stories*—and hopefully, you'll all enjoy reading them!



My name is Taci Trudeau and I am very excited to be welcomed as an Archives Assistant with the South Peace Regional Archives this summer. I have experience working in heritage and community positions during the summertime, though this will be my first time working with archives directly.

I am currently completing a bachelor's degree in History and Psychology at MacEwan University. Once I graduate from my program, I hope to begin a Master's degree in Archival and Library Studies. I have always had an interest in history and I am looking forward to being hands on with my learning, I also hope to learn much more about my hometown and the community surrounding it. I am most excited to create future content for *Telling Our Stories*, to use the archives to aid others in research, and to work alongside the Archivist to discover how to process and preserve records.

On the Road Again

Family Vacations with the Carlisles

Despite what was no doubt a busy medical practice in Grande Prairie in the 1940s, Dr. Andrew Murray Carlisle made time to explore the region with his wife Jean and their three children, Jim, Mary Jean, and David. Of the nearly 400 photographs in the Carlisle family album, over 150 show them on a diverse range of excursions, including picnics at the Wapiti and Lake Saskatoon, camping trips to the Monkman Pass, and road trips through the Rockies.

In the summers of 1940 and 1941, the Carlisle family loaded up a train of wagons and packhorses to cross the Monkman Pass, led by experienced pack outfitters Bert and Jean Dalglish. Photographs like the one above show the family camping at various spots along the trail, and on the first trip they also appear to have spent a few days in a lodge at Kinuseo Falls. Everyone contributed to camp life; Murray is



seen washing dishes, Jean Dalglish is portrayed making candy in the tent on a rainy day, and everyone caught fish for dinner. In one photograph, Mary Jean is cleaning a fish; according to the caption on the reverse, cleaning one's own catch was a camp rule. Although Jean Carlisle seems to have been the designated photographer in most cases, as is often true for wives and mothers on family vaca-

Above: Mary Jean, Jean, Jim, David, and Murray Carlisle in front of their tent on their second Monkman Pass trip, July 1941. (SPRA 399.09.52)

Left: Murray Carlisle, his brother Dave Carlisle, Jim (with Mate), Mary Jean, Dave's wife Bonnie Carlisle, and David Carlisle on a picnic at the Wapiti River. The caption below the photograph reads "Family picnic at the Wapiti with Aunt Bonnie & Uncle Dave." 1943. (SPRA 399.13.09)



Left: David, Jim, Mary Jean, and Murray Carlisle sitting in front of a log cabin at Slave Lake. Mate is sitting at Murray's feet and Jim is playing a musical instrument. The caption below the photograph reads "our cabin at Slave Lake." 1944. (SPRA 399.03.03)

Below: Murray, Mary Jean, David, and Jim pose at Honeymoon Lake. The caption below the photograph reads "Honeymoon Lake." 1945. (399.04.27)

David saying "Hope you are taking good care of Mate for me." Later

tions, she appears in several photographs including the family portrait at left.

The Carlisles also seem to have enjoyed many day trips to local sites. Fishing at the Wapiti and swimming at Lake Saskatoon appear to have been some of their favorite summer activities, often in the company of family friends including the Harrises, O'Briens, and Fawcetts. In the summer of 1943, Murray's brother Dave and his wife Bonnie traveled from Peterborough, Ontario to visit the Carlisles and together they traveled around the South Peace; they are seen picnicking at the Wapiti on the facing page.

In the summer of 1944, the Carlisles, accompanied by Jim's dog Mate, spent a vacation in a cabin at Slave Lake. In true Carlisle fashion, they appear to have spent much of their time in the water, whether swimming or boating and possibly fishing as well. The photograph above shows Jim in swimwear, and there is clothing hanging outside the cabin, likely drying in the sun after an afternoon swim.

Jim Carlisle participated in the Banff School of Fine Arts in the summer of 1945. He appears to have gone on his own initially as the family album contains a postcard from Jim addressed to his younger brother

photographs show that David and the rest of the Carlisle family joined Jim for a road trip through Jasper and Banff, visiting such popular destinations as Athabasca Falls, Lake Louise, the Columbia Icefield, and the Sunwapta Canyon.



Life's a Journey, & So Are Archives

This issue's Archiveology

Archival collections are shaped by a number of factors. These include methodologies, institutional mandates, best practices, contexts, and individual professional decisions. One methodology developed in Canada, that took root in the 1980s, was that of total archives. This particular collection strategy emphasizes the acquisition of both private and public records existing in a variety of media types, such as photos, audio-visual recordings, cartographic materials, and so on. The implementation of total archives has greatly influenced many repositories, including the South Peace Regional Archives, which has the mandate to preserve and share municipal, organizational, and personal records from the Peace River district of Alberta.

While the acquisition of institutional records is fairly straightforward, collecting records from individuals is more complex. Humans are multifaceted, with people often filling multiple roles and living in different places throughout their lives. In some cases, individuals who greatly contributed to the Peace River area originate from elsewhere. Their records, even those created outside of this geographical region, are still important to the SPRA. This relevance was poetically summed up by SPRA Executive Director Ellyn Vandekerkhove when she wrote that “we try to show the total lived experiences of people in our region, but those experiences don’t start and stop at our boundaries. Where people have been is part of who they are. Whether that is just down the road or across the world and that all gets added to the fabric of our community, so that has archival value for us.” Her insights point to the importance of archives preserving the records created during travel as well as those belonging to immigrants. An example of this is the Lunseth Family fonds (SPRA Fonds 297), which charts their travels from

Norway to the United States and eventually to the Peace County. In each locale, the Lunseths would have drawn upon the experiences and ideas they brought with them to influence their new home. This remains true today with waves of newcomers continuing to shape this jurisdictional landscape. Modern examples include the Filipino and East Asian commu-



Above: Mali Hjelseth’s parents and siblings in Molde, Norway: Anna, Knut, Ingeborg, Ragna, Mr. Hjelseth, Ole, ___, Ingeborg (mother of Mali). Ca. 1910 (SPRA 0297.01.01)

Right: Postcard showing the Grande Prairie Mail Horses passing Edson Fire Hall, ca. 1915 (SPRA 0297.05.04)

Below: Tom and Mary Davis with their children, Vera, Ira, Evelyn and Norman, accompanied by Stella Belcourt, ca. 1940 (SPRA 179.03.04)

nities as well as those from other provinces. The diversity that is evident in our modern communities deserves recognition and remembrance. Moving forward, the SPRA has an opportunity to reach out to different communities within the Peace County and collect their records, an important aspect of total archiving practices.



Acquiring records that originated outside of the region also allows current community members to make connections with the past. This is particularly relevant when conducting genealogical research or the tracing of an individual’s ancestral heritage through historical records. The Mary Belcourt Davis fonds (SPRA Fonds 179), for example, follow the life of a Metis woman with strong familial ties to the area. Born in Slave Lake, she grew up near Grande Prairie and eventually raised her family in Edmonton. These records would provide her descendants with information about their family tree as well as insights into the role of the Northwest Company and residential schools in the lives of the First Nations and Metis.

People of all nations often want to feel connected to their family, their communities, and their past. Archives play an important role in this by collecting records created by all sectors of society and making them accessible to everyone. By embodying the ideal of total archives, the SPRA can continue acquiring information that originates outside of the region and adding nuance to tales of travel and settlement from the past.

Olwen's Own Words:

Exploring the Rocky Mountains

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.



Wednesday, June 21st

A fine morning, so we went for the Day Motor Trip starting at 9:00. It was a lovely drive, first past Vermilion Lake [at left], where we saw beaver dams and were nearly run into by a mountain sheep and his two friends.

Then on to Johnston's Canyon and Cave, to which we walked about two miles.

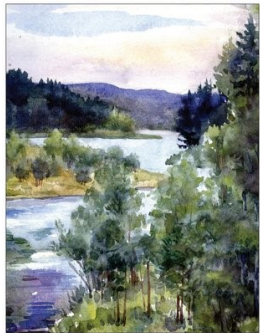
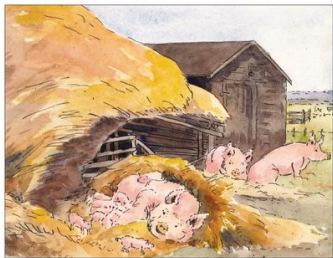
The drive on to Lake Louise gave us glorious views of

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snow mountains. When we got there at 12:00 it was very hot and sunny; we just saw the lake, and I got this outline for the sketch. Then we went to the Y.W.C.A Chalet [bottom right on facing page] for lunch.

Soon after leaving Lake Louise we saw a young moose paddling, and got a snap and sketch of him.



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.

Stay a While, Why Don't You?

Drawing Tourists to the South Peace

This article was contributed by Patrick Macaulay. This summer, Patrick is working as an Archives Assistant (Student) at the South Peace Regional Archives.

The bulk of this issue has focused on inhabitants of the South Peace and their excursions within the region. Surely, though, this beautiful place must have attracted at least some people from elsewhere on the planet. But the area isn't widely known as a tourist mecca—after all, even most Canadians would find it somewhat out of the way. The historical challenge of bringing visitors to the South Peace would thus rely on increasing the region's accessibility and promoting its unique attractions—attractions interesting enough to either warrant a long voyage or to simply entice passersby to stay here a while.

In a 1938 edition of Grande Prairie's *Northern Tribune*, journalist M.C. Wright pointed to the Peace River Country's inaccessibility as an obstacle to tourism and lauded the (ultimately doomed) Monkman Pass Highway project as a solution. "With this highway com-

pleted," he wrote, "this vast country would become a happy land for summer holiday makers." Wright identified two main draws of the Peace River Country: the region's natural beauty and its suitability for sport hunting. Both of these activities, ironically, depend on a relative absence of humanity. The sparseness and isolation of the region, which made a thriving tourist trade difficult to establish, also happened to be an intrinsic part of its appeal. The area's hunting prospects, for instance, brought a group of four Americans from Jackson, Michigan to the South Peace, as a 1932 *Northern Tribune* article described. Parking their private car in Grande Prairie for two weeks, they shot geese on the property of "Scotty" Smith, guided by local resident Dan Wishart. They considered it "the best [shooting] they had ever experienced, though some of them had shot over game preserves in the British Isles and noted hunting grounds of the United States and Canada," and they planned to come back to the area someday. In the South Peace, they could experience the excitement of the Canadian wilderness without giving up the comforts of civilization.

For most travelers, though, the South Peace was more of a waypoint than a final destination. In 1967, tourist receptionist Maureen Ockhert of Grande Prairie told the *Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune* that "Most tourists are Americans en route to Alaska," and a 1976 survey by the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce found that tourists stayed in the city for an

Left: Welcome sign for the campsite at Grande Prairie's Bear Creek Reservoir, where some Alaska-bound motorists would stop to stay the night. One Quebecois tourist (of the same era) called the campsite "groovy." 1966 (SPRA 190.02.01.0128.01)



Right: Apparently, this is Bluesky. However, the residents of Fleming, Saskatchewan say it's their town on the bill. "We're going to have to put a sign up for all you poor misguided Albertan souls who think Bluesky's on the back of the old \$1 bill," said Rick Hamm, a town councilor of Fleming. This version of the Canadian dollar bill was printed from 1954 to 1973. It is no longer legal tender. (Daily Herald-Tribune, July 28, 1992)



average of only one day. While these vacationers brought plenty of business to the region, they never stayed long, and the South Peace was still largely left out of Alberta's huge tourism industry.

But how could the region access that lucrative business? With the Rocky Mountains hogging the spotlight, the South Peace would have a hard time promoting itself solely as a nature getaway. A 1981 editorial titled "Getting in on the Action" in the *Herald-Tribune* argued that Grande Prairie, removed from the enticements of Rockies or the Pacific Ocean, would have to rely on manmade attractions, perhaps organizing "something along the lines of the Klondike Days in Edmonton, the Stampede in Calgary, [or] the drama festivals in Stratford." Something similar was accomplished on at least one occasion, when Grande Prairie held the 1995 Canada Games, but the city never truly got its own annual mega-event. However, the editorial also eagerly anticipated a new highway, the 40, which would connect Grande Prairie to Jasper, and which was "expected to bring hordes of travelers easier access to the Peace Country." Unlike the Monkman Pass Highway, the 40 actually ended up being built. This development might partially explain why in 1989, the Grande Prairie Tourist Information Booth stayed open an extra month due to high demand. What's more, a number of people who had only been passing through, according to booth operator Alan Drysdale, enjoyed the city enough to

camp in the area overnight.

Smaller towns along the region's highways, meanwhile, fought to have visitors spend any time (and money) there at all. In Bluesky in 1994, members of the local community club proposed "building 'the world's largest dollar bill' as a tourist attraction," wrote John Eamon in the *Herald-Tribune*, based on locals' claims that Bluesky was once depicted on the back of Canada's \$1 note. Another *Herald-Tribune* article from 1993 described how a decommissioned oil rig had just been set up beside Highway 43 on the edge of Fox Creek with plans in place to sculpt the surrounding area into a simulated drilling site and to build an interpretive centre based on the drilling industry. In the end, like the Monkman Pass Highway, Bluesky and Fox Creek's projects never came to fruition.

The fight to attract tourists to the South Peace was a difficult one, and many projects which could have helped went belly-up. This doesn't mean that tourism was non-existent, though—some vacationers specifically came to South Peace for its wilderness, while plenty of Americans flowed through Grande Prairie every year as they drove to Alaska. Even though some ambitious tourist attractions never materialized, don't be disappointed. You can still stop in Beaverlodge to take photos with the world's largest beaver, or visit Falher to see the world's largest bee.

Local Adventures

You don't always need to travel far to enjoy a change of scenery and a change of pace! Enjoy these scenes from favorite destinations around the South Peace and the Rockies.

Below: Beth and Everett Sheehan on their honeymoon in Banff in 1943. (SPRA 002.01.03.29a)

Bottom left: "Since days of the Pioneers, Lake Saskatoon, 14 miles west of Grande Prairie, has been the summer playground for thousands of Peace River residents. NW 115". Ca. 1950. (SPRA 032.08.08.0984)



Above: Kleskun Hill, the hill known as Garrett Hill showing interesting strata of the land formation, ca. 1950 (SPRA 483.01.13-02)

Below: Forrest Falk's car pulled off onto the side of the road on a trip from Grande Prairie to Pouce Coupe, B.C., 1925 (SPRA 1991.03.002, Fonds 049)



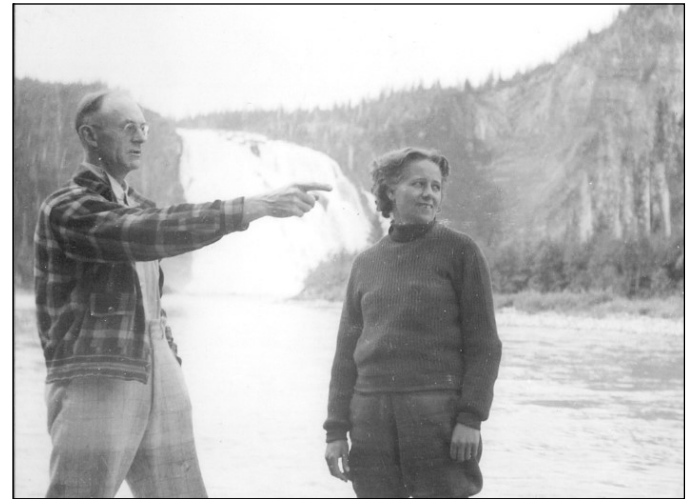
Above: The Entrance Sign at Keillar's Resort on Sturgeon Lake in the late 1940s or early 1950s, located at the top of the hill next to the Kerr property. The building was used by the Dept. of Indian Affairs to distribute food rations to elderly people or others who were in need. (SPRA 175.030.8)



Top right: A truck is seen crossing a stream. The sign on the box of the truck reads, "Kinuseo Falls or Bust". The truck is likely Arnold Christianson's. 1938. (SPRA 483.01.38-05)

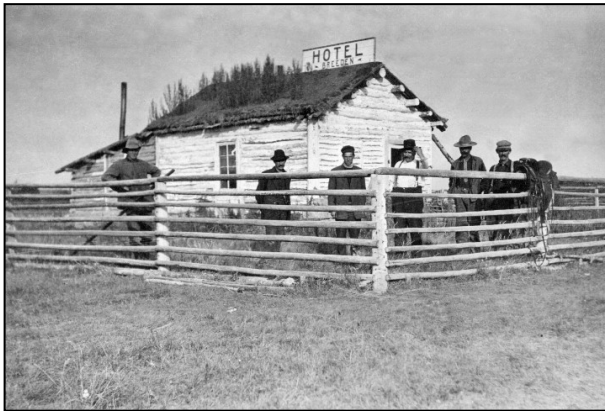
Above: Bob Krantz and Beatrice Trelle at Kinuseo Falls, 1937 (SPRA 2003.51.13, Fonds 154)

Left: Camping at the Kerr Resort in 1956. (SPRA 175.027.7)



The Home of Hospitality

Early Hotels on the Prairie



This article was contributed by Taci Trudeau. This summer, Taci is working as an Archives Assistant (Student) at the South Peace Regional Archives.

For those taking extensive travels across Canada, Grande Prairie has served as a pleasant stopping place for decades; many choosing to even stick around and start their roots here in the Peace region. Throughout the early 1900s, many settlers dreamed of travelling to the area to purchase land. Several accounts within *Pioneers of the Peace* estimate that groups may have set out daily towards the Grande Prairie area, some individuals even declaring that they would sell the shirt off their own back to obtain the land so sought after. Due to this boom in popularity, the region became a valued resting place throughout pioneers' travels; as such, one of the first businesses established where Grande Prairie now stands was a hotel.

Breeden Hotel, soon after its creation in 1909, was a well-known and popular stopping place for travelers

Left: Blacksmith George Breeden's one room log cabin near his shop overlooking Bear Creek offered food and rest for settlers and their teams. Ca. 1910. (SPRA 2006.036.01).

and prospective settlers alike. In today's eyes, referring to George Breeden's log cabin as a "hotel" may seem questionable, but in a time of great population fluctuation, his cabin was a hotspot for weary travelers. In *Pioneers of the Peace*, settlers describe Breeden's hotel as one of only two or three buildings within the area; a log cabin or small shack, depending on who was asked, with a sod roof that had a sign at the top with "Hotel Breeden" printed on its face. The cabin was easily remembered by those who rested there for the meals prepared by George Breeden, who was well-known for his cooking ability. Many accounts find travelers bringing their game to the hotel for Breeden to cook a fantastic meal. Less positively, many recalled of Breeden's habit of turning in first and waking as early as 4:00 am. In a single room

Below: A postcard photo of the Salmond Hotel in Grande Prairie, ca. 1913 (SPRA 043.01.01)



Left: The Salmond Hotel staff in front of the hotel. Staff members include Alf Leichman, Helga Forsythe, Emma Sinclair, Caroline Sinclair, Billy Salmond, Alex Wishart, A. D. McEachern, William Scorgie, and Bud Faye. The caption on the back states: "what do you think of our hotel crew Slightly mixed in color but good sports – Just the same". 1915 (SPRA 0032.08.08.0559)

many settlers significant in the future of the Grande Prairie area, such as our first pharmacist and drug store owner, Dr. Shaw.

cabin, this often meant all residents were also woken at such early hours, much to their dismay.

In 1911, a young man by the name of William "Billy" Salmond traveled to Grande Prairie as a cook for a survey group; upon arrival, he was quickly hired as a cook at the Breeden hotel. George Breeden soon found himself yearning to see what the region had to offer. Having found great promise in Salmonds' work ethic, he sold the hotel to young Billy Salmond in the same year. Those who stayed at the Breeden Hotel following George's retirement accounted that Salmond played every role expertly: maid, cook, manager, and even dishwasher. In 1912, Billy decided that Grande Prairie needed better accommodations for travelers, and by the end of the year had built a two-story hotel building in what is now downtown Grande Prairie. This new hotel was named the Salmond Hotel and known to many as the very first true hotel in the city. It included 14 guest rooms on the second floor, with a kitchen, dining room, and office on the ground floor. Billy hired a full crew for the hotel and ultimately offered services to

Right: The Empire Hotel in Fairview, as it appeared c. 1920, with surrounding buildings. (SPRA 1969.59.597)



It did not take long for the hospitality bug to continue spreading throughout the South Peace region, as many other hotels began opening around the city centre. A popular hotel in Fairview was the Empire Hotel, built and owned by Mr. and Mrs. Squires in 1913. It was intended to become improved lodgings compared to the Salmond Hotel, as a three-story building with 40 rooms for patrons. In 1935, Beaverlodge also received the welcome addition of a hotel, named the Goyne Hotel after its proprietor John B. Goyne. The hotel was two-stories high with fifteen rooms to accommodate travelers. In the following years, hotels began to come and go at a steady pace; and even today the Grande Prairie area includes a number of resting places, welcoming any weary traveler and introducing them to what the beautiful South Peace region has to offer.

Never Tasted Such Fish!

The Road to One Island Lake

Lea Hodgson came to Hythe with his parents and sister in 1929, and together with his father John started a lumber mill operating on the banks of the Kaskatinaw (Cutbank) River. He was well known to be an avid fisherman, and what follows is an account of his part in the development of what is today One Island Lake. The author is unknown. Hodgson Family Fonds, SPRA 630.06.

Please note that this is a transcription of a historical document which mentions Indigenous persons using terminology that is outdated and offensive.

The key to this discovery was handed to him by an Indian trapper. During the years Lea was involved with the lumber mill operation, this native trapper stopped frequently and told Lea of a lake; a lake only few hours distant, a lake that could be found by following the moccasin trail, a beautiful lake of clean as crystal water, with a good beach, a lake surrounded by tall pine trees, a lake full of rainbow trout.

Lea was so involved in the lumber business that although he half believed the story of his Indian

friend, he postponed his search for this lake.

Then, one summer day he set out with son Jim. They followed an old pack train in search of the unnamed lake. After a long period of traveling through difficult terrain, Lea only wished the Indian's trap line would lead them directly there. After hours of fruitless searching, he and son Jim finally stumbled upon the lake. The Indian was right. There was a lake and as far as Lea knew, it was yet undiscovered by white man.

Lea returned in haste to Hythe to tell his fellow adventurers, Bill Oakford and Art Pearson, that the Indian tale of the lake was indeed true! He and Jim had found the lake... a trout Utopia in the forest west of the Cutbank. With glowing words, Lea described his find. In the middle of the lake was an island. Lea told how he had waded out from shore to hip depth—the water was so clear he could see every stone and bits of moss at the bottom—even the fish were clearly discernible. In fact, he thought he was looking into an ornamental fish bowl. The three made plans for an excursion to the lake beyond the Cutbank the following weekend. With no identifiable trail Lea only hoped he could find it again. He did! Bill Oakford and Art Pearson were as impressed as he was. They were in a seventh heaven! They cast their lines and were successful in catching a dozen rainbow trout. The three men came away with the realization that

Left: A tractor and a wagon as well there is a man adding brush to a burning pile, with another man looking on. The H.O.P. Lake wagon is also in the photo. This could be part of the road-building that took place by the Hythe families to access One Island Lake. n.d. (SPRA 630.06.01)



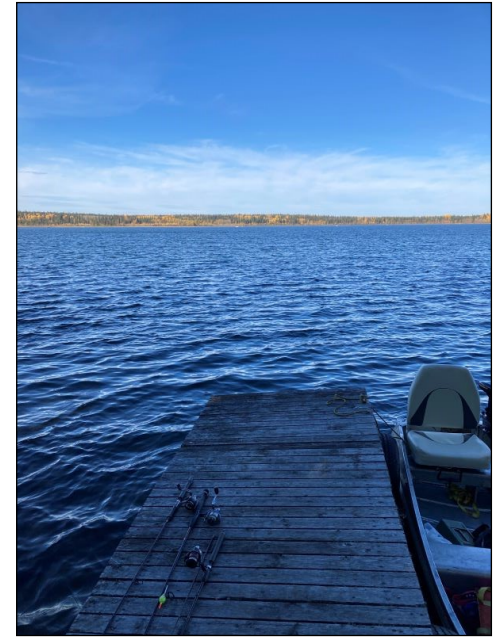
they seldom would enjoy this hideaway unless they put a road in. Their jumping-off-point was Anton Tolways—the last settler west of Lymburn. From then on they would have to circle slough and muskeg, knock over trees, bridge water runs. It took every weekend all that summer to even get a tractor trail in to the lake. At some places it was necessary to resort to the heavy and tiresome job of corduroying a base.

Up to this point, anything they couldn't transport on a tractor, they needs must carry in. Jake Gass became a fourth musketeer in their road building endeavors. They now decided they needed a trailer to hook behind the tractor. Lea set about to build it. His shop was behind Beaver Lumber, his material—odds and ends of planking and leftover lumber. Another week went into construction of this and finally on a Saturday evening he transported the trailer over to the Pearson lot for painting. Art agreed to perform this task. Lea still laughs when he tells of the wonder that met his eyes the following Monday! The cart was beautifully painted and hitched behind the equally artistically

painted Fordson Tractor. Big, bold, black letters identified its owners ... H O P—Hodgson Oakford Pearson—H.O.P. How about that for a name for the lake? H.O.P. Lake. Soon everyone far and near, were hearing many a tall fishing tale about “H.O.P. Lake.”

The road building program continued on for the following two or three years. Old discarded bridge timber, an unusual County culvert, anything they could beg or borrow! Needless to say these honorable gentlemen did not resort to stealing. They simply confiscated all material needed...

...One weekend the three fishermen were en route over their private trail into H.O.P. Lake. When they reached the Cutbank River, their Land Rover had a flat. Lea agreed to work on the tire when Bill and son Glenn Oakford walked in to the lake to fish. Some time later a car with a Dawson Creek license arrived on the scene. The passengers included an unidentified man and two lads, ages 12 and 14. This



*Above: One Island Lake, October 2020.
Courtesy of Teresa Dyck*

party set about doing some fishing in the Cutbank River. After some time Lea walked over to the man and inquired, “How's fishing?” The man responded that “it was pretty good.” At least so he thought until Bill and Glenn appeared on the scene, returning from Hop Lake, carrying their catch of rainbow trout. When Lea looked again, the man and boys were speeding back to Dawson Creek, British Columbia. The secret was out!...

...In Lea's words, “It's still a beautiful lake, good fishing! We have our cabins, cottages and trailers at the lake edge. It's not like the olds days but we enjoy going there. Our best years were those when we worked so hard to build the road. At the end of that road was a beautiful lake. We could row out, drop our line, make a catch, come back to the campfire on the shore, fry our fish, have a good feed and relax.” Lea concludes every story with the words, “You have never tasted such fish!”

New at the Archives

In the past few months, we have had the opportunity to invest in some new furnishings for our reading room, including new library shelves, filing shelves, and tables (all pictured below). The new brushed steel shelving is safer for housing our reference collection, as painted wood can be damaging to paper. Our new wheeled tables are easy to move around the office to accommodate the diverse requirements of our staff, volunteers, and researchers. These new furnishings will enhance the safety and accessibility of our space, as well as increase our capacity for our ever expanding collection of reference materials.



Archives staff have begun working on a database conversion project. All the data in our Access database, including descriptions of archival records and information about the origin and location of the records, is being transferred to an Access to Memory (AtoM) database. AtoM is designed to be used by archives and museums for collections management and will greatly improve database searchability.

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