

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 3, Issue 3, June 1, 2012

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Inside This Issue:

Letter from the Editor	p 2
Contact Information	p 2
Memory in Archives	p 3
Mary Belcourt Davis fonds	p 4
Davis-Hodgson-Coulter Mystery	p 6
Explore our Aboriginal Place Names	p 8
First Nations Documents at SPRA	p 12
Angie Crerar's Story	p 13
What Archives Do and Why	p 16
<i>by Leslie Pearson</i>	
New in the Archives Library	p 19
Society & Member News	p 20
Membership Application	p 20



Above, Julienne Campbell and her brother Louis Gouchier, taken in 1955 when she was interviewed by Glenbow Archives (Glenbow Archives NA 1271-3). Julienne was daughter to Metis healer Joseph Gouchier of Lac Ste Anne. Alexis and Julienne Campbell came into the south Peace with the Gouchier family about 1885; they are recognised as being one of the first Metis groups on the grande prairie. Julienne died in 1958 at the estimated age of 109. Her grave in the Grande Prairie Cemetery (identified but not marked) is one of the stops on the SPRA Cemetery Tour on June 13th (see page 20).

*Don't Miss the
National Aboriginal Day
Celebrations on
Sunday, June 24th in
Muskoseepi Park
from 1:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Everyone is Welcome!*

June 1, 2012

Dear Members & Supporters;

It has been a busy quarter from March to June. Our Annual General Meeting was held on March 12th, with a good attendance of about 40 people. You will find a photograph of the new board on page 20.

Please join me in welcoming new board members Jan Shields and Lane Borstad. They are already involved on Executive and Promotions Committees and their expertise is much appreciated.

Along with the good news comes some bad. In April we learned that the National Archival Development Program, which includes all of the funding that comes to individual archives across Canada from the federal government, was completely eliminated by Library and Archives Canada. The provincial councils are pursuing options to have the funding re-instated.

For this archives it means we will need to find other funds for any special projects such as the archival surveys we conducted in the M.D. of Greenview and the Central Peace; and for preservation projects such as the digitization of archival film.

On to more exciting things, June is National Aboriginal month, and so the theme of this newsletter is Aboriginal history and collections at SPRA. The term "Aboriginal" covers three distinct groups: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. For our area, we focus on First Nations and Metis collections.

SPRA does not have a lot of records in this category, but we have featured a few of them in this newsletter. We invite you to explore more of them on our website at www.southpeacearchives.org by choosing the ANA Database on the right side of the page, then "topic" from the drop box beside "names" and typing "First Nations" into the search box. We also invite comments, stories and contributions on this topic for future newsletters.

We hope you enjoy exploring the First Nations and Metis roots of the south Peace!

Sincerely,

Mary Nutting, Archivist

TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY
South Peace Regional Archives Society

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The purpose of the SPRA Society is to promote and encourage the appreciation and study of the history of the south Peace River Country by acquiring, preserving and making accessible to the public, records in any format which reflect the history of this area.

Archive and Memory

At the end of May, Archives staff attended the bi-annual conference of the Archives Society of Alberta in Calgary. The theme this year was "Memory in Archive, Archive of Memory". Speakers talked about the relationship between Archives and Memory, and the many ways we incorporate memory in Archives.

The memories most often preserved in Archives are the oral histories which give us a picture of the past when there are no documents or photographs to tell the story. We have a number of oral history collections in the Archives, some of them dealing with First Nations and Metis, such as the Kakwa Oral History collection authored by Jim Nelson and produced by Alberta Parks. Other collections include European pioneers, soldiers, and war brides.

Even if we have documentation, however, recording our memories gives a different take on history. We will recall our memories—how we saw events, what we felt, the emotions it conjures up even today—in a way which does not often make it down on paper.

Sometimes memory is the only record of the real truth of what was happening even if the event was documented. If the record is in the cold, matter-of-fact language of an official record, it could be an oral history that gives the records life and tells what it was like to live through that time. Of course we know that memory is not always accurate, but that's okay. Sometimes in memory, the details are changed to protect our psyche, our very soul, and allow us to continue on in life.

We all use oral history. In our culinary traditions, or the way we teach our children manners or how to treat others, we pass down the oral tradition we ourselves received from our parents/mentors.

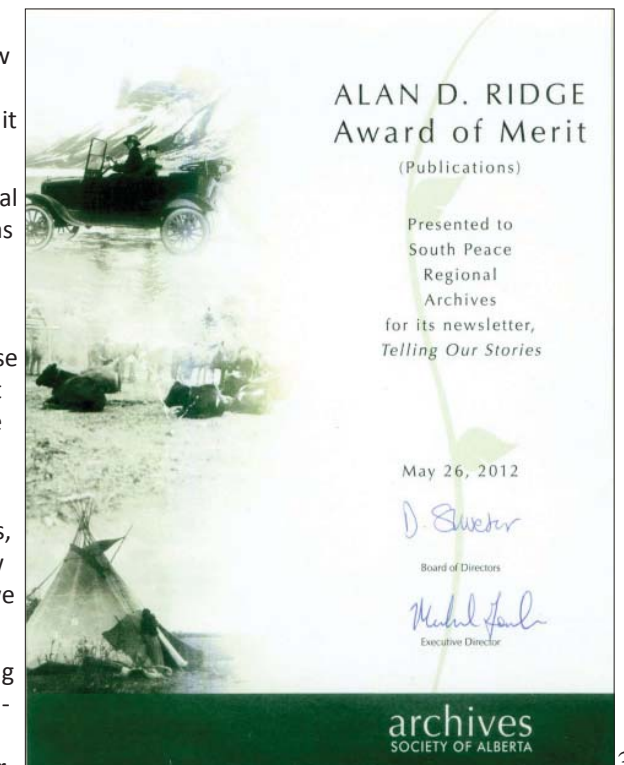
In Archives, we include oral history as something of fundamental value, along with the official documents, family photographs, survey and development plans, scrapbooks of organizations. Together

these records create a more complete picture of our area and our community.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Verne Harris, who has worked with Nelson Mandela in South Africa. He talked about the nature of memory, forgetting, and archives; and the relationship of both to the cause of social justice. The question of social justice and archives is another factor to consider as we examine the kinds of Aboriginal records that are or are not in the Archives.

The last session of the conference, "I Remember, Therefore I Am", was given by noted archival theorist Terry Cook, and reinforced the inclusive nature of memory. It is our memory that gives us our identity, that makes us who we are.

And, oh yes, SPRA got an Alan D. Ridge Award!



Mary Belcourt Davis fonds

Mary Belcourt Davis fonds. -- 1920-2005. -- 43 photographs. -- 1 sound recording.

Biographical Sketch

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

Mary's grandfather, Louis Callihoo, was an Iroquois-Cree born in Edmonton ca. 1854. His father, Louis L'Iroquois (Callihoo), was an expert canoe man, guide, and hunter who came west with his brother Bernard to work for the Hudson Bay Company or the North-West Trading Company. The young Louis married Annie Donald, from Winnipeg, and their children were born in Edmonton, Stony Plain, Slave Lake and Lac Ste. Anne. Mary's mother, Betsy (Betsi) Callihoo was born in Lac Ste. Anne ca. 1878. In the late 1800s the family moved to the Flying Shot Lake area. Later Betsy also lived at Sturgeon Lake.

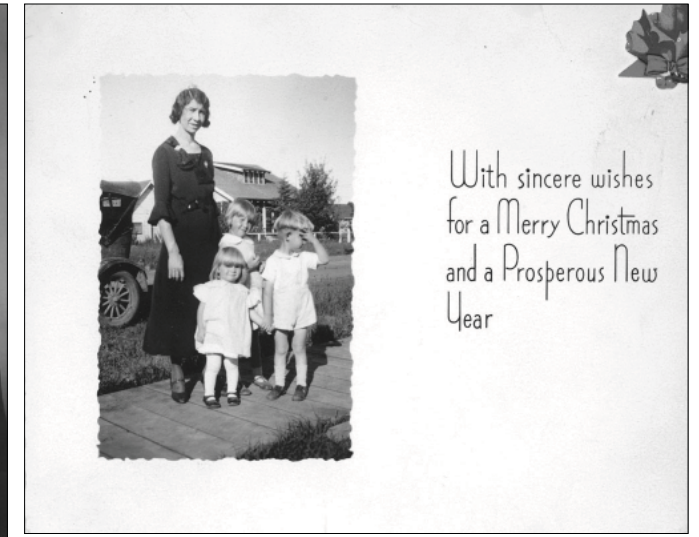
Mary Belcourt spent her childhood at Flying Shot Lake and her teen years in the newly-formed town of Grande Prairie. She worked at the Donald Hotel and enjoyed going to dances throughout the south Peace with friends such as Liz LeClerc and Jim and Mac Ferguson. In 1930 she married Thomas Davis, and the couple had four children: Vera Kathleen, Harry Thomas (Ira), Evelyn Bertha and Norman Robert. When Mary was pregnant with Norman in the late 1930s, the couple moved to Edmonton where the two girls were placed in the O'Connell Institute and Ira was left in St. Mary's Boys Home.

In 1939, Tom enlisted in the war and was gone six years. His family, together again, lived on the army pay in Edmonton near the downtown core.

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

Custodial History

The family photographs now in the archives were preserved by Betsy Callihoo and passed on to her daughter Mary on her death. When Mary died,



Photographs from the Mary Belcourt Davis fonds include Betsy Callihoo (overpage), Mary Belcourt and friend Liz LeClerc (above); a Christmas Card from the Davis family ca. 1937 (above right), and a photo with Tom on leave during World War II. SPRA 179.01.02, 179.02.05, 179.03.05 and 179.03.07.



they came in to the possession of her daughter Vera and were identified by her grand-daughter Cindy Desrosiers. Copies of the photographs and an oral history were donated to South Peace Regional Archives in 2005.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of copies of 43 photographs of the Callihoo and Belcourt families and their descendants, and one oral history interview.

The Belcourt-Davis Interview was recorded on May 26, 2005 with Vera Miles, daughter of Mary

Belcourt Davis, and Cindy Desrosiers, daughter of Eleanor Davis. grand-daughter. It covers Cindy's research into the lives of Louis Callihoo and Annie Donald and the Iroquois-Cree group at Flying Shot Lake; Vera's memories of her grandmother, Betsy Callihoo from when she spent summers with her at Sturgeon Lake; and Cindy's stories about her grandmother Mary Belcourt-Davis.

All photographs and a more complete description of the audio file from the Mary Belcourt Davis fonds can be viewed on www.southpeacearchives.org. Choose ANA Database and type "Belcourt" into the search box.

The Mystery of the Davis-Hodgson-Coulter fonds

One of the most interesting collections donated to the archives in 2011 was brought in by Charles and Carol Cairns. In the 1960s, they had purchased land from Robert & Ruby Coulter and in an abandoned log cabin, discovered a small collection of documents and photographs. Now they have donated them to this archives.

The documents include an 1820 Will from John Davis; land deeds from the early 1900s belonging to his grandson William; three WWI portraits of soldiers identified as the Hodgson boys; a dance card for the 50th Anniversary of MLA Edward Hay and his wife; and a series of early photographs from St. Andrews, Manitoba. What does this collection have to do with the Peace Country?

Research revealed that the collection represented two, perhaps three, Metis families who had descended from three English men who had arrived, around the turn of the nineteenth century, in what was then Rupert's Land to work for the Hudson's Bay Company.

The story starts in 1774, when John Hodgson, son of Ephraim Hodgson from London, England, entered service with the Hudson's Bay Company at the age of 12. He was sent to Rupert's Land (later Canada) because he had a good education in mathematics, and would be useful for "taking the Distance of Places and making Plans" (HBC Staff Biography). In 1781, John was joined at Ft. Albany by a young Robert Goodwin, and in 1801 John Davis, also from England, joined the HBC.

Two of the three men took "country wives" (i.e. First Nations women) as partners. This was a common practice in the fur trade because it gave the trader negotiating power and protection as well as a partner who was skilled in surviving the wilds of Canada. John Hodgson married Matisse or Cree, and Robert Goodwin married Moostigoosh, daughter

of Puckwanesh. John Davis married a woman identified only as Nancy/Anne, who was possibly Metis.

In the next two generations, the three families became strongly inter-related. Robert Goodwin's daughter Caroline married John Hodgson's son James. John and Nancy Davis' daughter Catherine married John Hodgson the third, a grandson of John and his first wife.

As the generations followed, some descendants chose to identify with their European heritage, others with the Metis. One of the Davis daughters, Lucie, married into Louis Riel's family. John and Catherine's son Albert and his family are found on the 1901 census as living in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, where a major battle of the Riel Rebellion was fought in 1885. Census records are not always reliable for First Nations and Metis and we cannot trace Albert from St. Andrews Manitoba, where he was born, to Duck Lake.

This small collection opens the door to many personal stories such as:

1. The Metis son of Robert Goodwin, William Adolphus Barmby Goodwin, who at eight years of age is taken to England to be educated, is integrated into the family he is entrusted to, and never receives the inheritance his father intended.
2. The Metis daughter of John Davis, Matilda Davis, who is taken to England for an education (also at the age of eight), and returns to start a school for girls at St. Andrews, Manitoba. The records of this school listed "the Campbell girls from the grande prairie" among its attendees. Built of stone beside its matching church, "Oakfield" still stands today as an historical site.
3. The Metis grandsons of John Hodgson, William, Arthur, and Llewelyn who enlisted in World War I. William died overseas.

"In my hands," I think, "I am holding the history of the Metis from the shores of Hudson's Bay to the Spirit River Settlement."

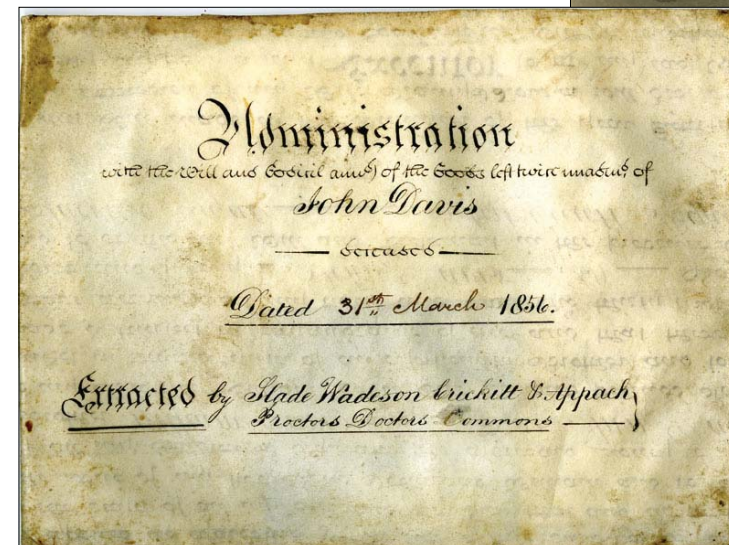
One final document in the collection was a mortgage agreement signed by Robert Coulter, revealing that the Coulters had had to mortgage their horse and cow to survive the Great Depression.

Although all of these families—Goodwin, Hodgson, Davis and Coulter—are listed in the genealogy of Bill Buchanan, we have been unable to discover the connection between Robert and Ruby Coulter and the others. How all of these documents came to be preserved together in the Coulter home we do not know. If anyone can help us solve this mystery, we would appreciate it.

Selected photographs and documents from this collection can be viewed through our website, www.southpeacearchives.org. Click on the ANA Database line on the right side of the page, type "Hodgson" into the search box, and choose the Davis-Hodgson-Coulter fonds. The biography is there and a description of the collection. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and choose "view photographs", "view documents", or the finding aid link for individual family biographies and item descriptions.



Above, full-length army portrait of Private William Hodgson, son of Albert Hodgson, who enlisted with the 53rd Battalion, Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces in World War I. He died overseas. SPRA 484.03.01



Left, an 1856 copy of the Last Will and Testament of John Davis, dated 1820, in which he expresses concern about the execution of his will in favour of his wife Nancy and their children. The entire text of the will can be read on-line.

Explore the Aboriginal History of our Place Names

The influence of the Beaver, Cree and Iroquois First Nations and the early Metis fur traders can still be seen on modern maps of the south Peace River Country of Alberta. Many of the current names of lakes, rivers and areas are simply translations of names which were originally Aboriginal. These original names were often descriptive in nature, e.g. the name for Valleyview (known in early 20th century as Red Willow) was “the place where Red Willow grows”. If the original name was prettier than it’s English translation, that name was often retained, e.g. Winagami instead of its translation, “Stinking Lake.”

Current Name	Old Map Name(s)	Origin	Meaning
Bear River	muskwa seepi sus-za-ka	Cree Beaver	river where bears come to get water/fish/berries
Bear Lake	sus-qui-gi	Cree	beaver lake where the bears gather
Bad Heart River	missipi	Cree	refers to the “bad heart”, the narrow canyon through which the turbulent river flows
Beaverlodge River	uz-i-pa	Beaver	river that has beaver lodges along it
Burnt River	riviere brule	French	river flowing through an area burned over by forest fires
Fish River	klo-es-sa-ka	Beaver	
Flying Shot Lake	ka-nawaata-hiket	Cree	ducks and geese may be shot while flying between the two parts of the lake
Grande Prairie	la grande prairie	French	the big prairie
Iroquois Lake	nat-sho-e	Cree	frequented by Iroquois people
Kakut Lake	ka-koot	Beaver/Cree	
Kleskun Lake	kles-kun	Beaver	white mud
Kimiwan Lake	kimiwan	Cree	rain lake
Ksituan River	saskatchewan	Cree	swift current
LaGlance Lake		Beaver	where Chief LaGlance and his band had their winter camp
Puskwaskau River	pus-kwas-ka-mon	Cree	short grass
Peace River	un-ja-ga thu-tci-kah chin-ch-ago	Beaver Sekani Slavey	large river great water beautiful river
	riviere de brochet	French	river where the northern pike fish live
Saskatoon Lake	mus-sa-kwat-sa-ka-gun gets-i-mi-ne	Cree Beaver	fruit of the tree of many branches
Saskatoon Mountain	sis-tin ile de montagne	French	mountain island
Spirit River	chepi-sepi	Cree	ghost river
Wapiti River	wapiti	Cree	refers to the elk which were in the area
Winagami Lake	wee-nah-ka-me	Cree	stinking lake or dirty water lake
8 Valleyview	migh-ko-po-wer	Cree	where the red willow grows

Our tour through Peace Country history today is truly an “armchair tour” as we fly over the south Peace to view some aboriginal historical sites. Since I am not an anthropologist, I will not try to differentiate between different groups who lived in the area, and simply view them all as “First Nations.”

We will start our tour in one of my favourite places, the top of Saskatoon Mountain. On one of our earliest maps it is identified as “Ile de Montagne” or “Mountain Island”. Perhaps that name has come down from millennia past. [Peace Past Project](#) tells us that “*The Saskatoon Mountain site would have been among the first ice-free landscapes in the region and Saskatoon Hill would have been an island in Glacial Lake Peace at the 12,000 year horizon.*”

A brief archaeological survey on the south-west slope of Saskatoon Mountain revealed a 9,500 year-old hearth, containing mostly plant seeds and plant remains. The conclusion was that the “*site was used for short periods of time, possibly as a game spotting site. The views to the south and west would have allowed long distance plotting of game movement in the surrounding grasslands.*” If you have ever stood on that slope, you will see what the author of [Peace Past Project](#) means.

From the top of the mountain we can probably see as far as the Horse Lake Indian Reserve. When Treaty 8 was signed in 1899, the residents of “the grande prairie” didn’t sign on--after all, they had the whole of that northern prairie for their hunting and gathering life. When it was settled, they realized that the Europeans actually claimed land as their own and fenced it so others could not use it. They settled for the Horse Lake Reserve in 1921.

Moving eastward, fly in your imagination over Saskatoon Lake, where some of the first recorded celebrations combining aboriginal and European nations took place in 1910. Here the Grande Prairie Fair pitted the excellent horsemanship of Metis and First Nations against the new settlers. On some of the early maps it is called “Service Berry Lake”, but it is a variation of one of the Cree words, Misaskatoomina, which has stuck.

Below you, the trails of the nomadic peoples crossed the land in all directions. Those trails were used by the explorers, surveyors and early settlers when they arrived, and sometimes formed the route for the roads we use today.

From Saskatoon Lake, one of the trails led to ka-nawaata-hiket, or Flying Shot Lake, which was the first surveyed settlement in the area, created for a group of Iroquois Cree from Lac Ste. Anne.

Continuing east we arrive at the Kleskun Hills, identified by oral tradition as a sacred place for First Nations. In the park a trail leads to two burial mounds north of the hills believed to mark the graves of Beaver people killed in a battle with the incoming Cree. Nearby is the sloping hill once used as a buffalo jump, with the shaded north face providing a fat cache after the kill.

Farther east is Sturgeon Lake, a favoured fishing and hunting base for the First Nations. The first fur trade post was founded here by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1877, and by 1879, when George Dawson came through the area via a well-known Indian trail across the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers, a settlement had been established. Sturgeon Lake Indian Reserve #154 was created beside the Lake after the signing of Treaty 8.

Flying north and west now, we pass over the Birch Hills, where a large cache of stone tools was discovered, and over to the Spirit River Settlement, which began as a First Nations meeting place at the junction of two important trading routes: the east trail to Moberly Lake and the north-south trail from Dunvegan to Lake Saskatoon. Some of the early residents of the Spirit River Settlement were Metis who worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company, with names like Kirkness, Ferguson, Hodgson, Bedson and Johnston.

Dunvegan. The northern border of today’s tour is the Peace River, the biggest and most famous landmark. It is said to be the dividing line for the territories of the warring Cree and Beaver Nations, but that may be a European interpretation, for the aboriginal words on early maps describe its appearance: large, great and beautiful.

These are only of a few of the major sites where we can find our First Nations history. As with the names, they are scattered over the country. Also scattered over the land was the physical evidence, which can be seen in many museums and personal collections across the Peace River Country.

Sources: [Peace Past Project](#)
[Chepi Sepe](#)
[Smoky River to Grande Prairie](#)

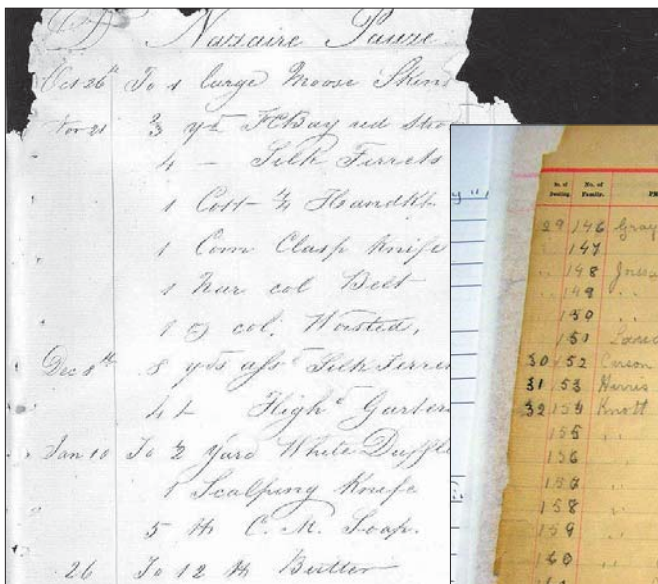
Explore the Aboriginal History of our Place Names

Resources: *Alberta Place Names*
1897 George Dawson Map
Hand-drawn map by SPRA volunteer, Sharon Brooks



Documents from Aboriginal Communities

Documents related to the First Nations and Metis communities in the south Peace are not common, and often they are written by the Europeans who required the documents for their own records. These records can, however, be used to find more information about the First Nations and Metis communities. On the left is a page from an 1834 Hudson's Bay Company ledger for Nazaire Pauze, detailing his credits and debits at the Hudson's Bay Company Store. at Dunvegan. The complete ledger can be found on-line at www.southpeacearchives.org by choosing the link "Alberta InWord" and entering "fur trade" as the search term.



On the right is a page of the working copy of the 1901 Census taken by St. Pierre Ferguson, a descendant of a Hudson's Bay Employee and his First Nations wife. St. Pierre spent several months traveling around the Peace Country on horseback taking details of families in each place. This census covered all of north-western Alberta, then called the Athabaska district of the Unorganized Territories.

Sinks Family Name
POPULATION BY NAMES

No. of Family	No. of Family	NAME OF EACH PERSON IN THE FAMILY	Sex	Color	Relationship to Head of Family	Place, Married, Widowed, Divorced	Age at last Census	PLACE OF BIRTH
29	146	Gray Alice	M	R	Daughter	M	22	Dunvegan
	147	Maria Ann	F	R	Mother	M	17	Vermillion
	148	Jessie Mary	M	R	Sister	M	28	Grand Prairie
	149	Maria	F	R	Mother	M	23	Dunvegan
	150	Louise	M	R	Son	S	1	P.R.
	151	Louise Joseph	M	W	Daughter	S	2	Vermillion
30	52	Conan William	M	W	Daughter	S	40	Ontario
31	53	Harriet John	M	W	Daughter	S	31	Manitoba
32	54	Knott John Charles	M	R	Mother	M	44	Winnipeg
	155	Julia	F	R	Mother	M	41	Jasper House
	156	John Henry	M	R	Son	S	18	Jasper House
	157	Willie	M	R	Son	S	16	Dunvegan
	158	Willie	M	R	Son	S	14	Dunvegan
	159	Albert	M	R	Son	S	12	Dunvegan
	160	Philip	M	R	Son	S	10	Dunvegan
	161	Walter	M	R	Son	S	8	Dunvegan
	162	Edward	M	R	Son	S	6	Stare Lake
	163	Charles Andrew	M	R	Son	S	4	P.R. Living
	164	Francis	M	R	Son	S	4 months	P.R.
33	165	Johnston Murdoch	M	R	Daughter	S	45	Vermillion
34	166	McKester Henry	M	R	Mother	M	52	Dunvegan
	167	Marquette	F	R	Mother	M	50	Jasper House
	168	Betty	F	R	Daughter	S	23	Dunvegan
	169	Henry George	M	R	Son	S	20	Jasper House
	170	Walter John	M	R	Sister	M	26	Dunvegan
	171	John	M	R	Mother	M	19	Ball River
	172	McKester Francis	M	R	Sister	M	28	P.R. Lgd
	173	Betty	F	R	Mother	M	30	P.R. Lgd
	174	Betty	F	R	Daughter	S	4	P.R. Lgd
	175	Jean Baptiste	M	R	Son	S	3	P.R. Lgd

Angie Crerar's Story

Editor's Note: This story is taken from an interview of Angie done by the Archives in 2008 for the City's 50th Anniversary.

Angie Crerar moved to Grande Prairie in 1966, a decision which for a single mother with eight children was very difficult, but one that she will never regret. "It was," she says now, "the best choice I ever made in my life."

When I first moved here in 1966, I had eight children and newly divorced. I think, to be really down-to-earth and really honest, I grew up in Grande Prairie. I'm a residential school survivor, and I had many, many problems when I first came here. But the people of Grande Prairie supported me and made it possible for me to take some life skills courses, and to deal with the trials of being a single parent.

One of the first courses she took, and the one she feels many people would benefit from, was a self-appreciation course.

For my own self-image, I had to come back out of the mode of the residential school, so in order to do that, I had to take a lot of life skills programs. So, I took self-appreciation because the way I was treated in those terrible years, was that you were never appreciated, you were never loved, your were never hugged, and you got no praise whatever. I never heard anybody, in those eight years I was there, "You did a good job". It was

always "down" you, so that you had no self-esteem at all. Very depressing years, as a matter of fact. But the upbringing of my mother and dad is what saved me. Cause my life was so different before my mother passed away when I was ten and we were put in the convent. Before that I had a happy, happy childhood. My parents were always there, very loving and very supportive. They were my role models, and even though they're passed away—my mother many, many years, my dad thirty years after my mom—their teachings I live by, I teach my children, and I bring into the community.

In the residential school they took away our identity. You know, I was a number, and the only time they ever called me by name, I was in trouble. Then it was "Angeline, venez ici, tout de suite", and we knew, right away! Identity is very important for our aboriginal people. So many people have struggled over the years. Our identity—what's our



Above, students at Saint Joseph's Mission and convent at Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories, where Angie attended school. SPRA 2009.17.12



Saint Joseph's Mission at Fort Resolution, showing students dressed for a hospital play. Angie is dressed as the nun. SPRA 2009.17.13.

identity? They say, "I'm not good enough" because that's how they treated you. They always said, "No, your way is wrong, you've got to go our way. You'll never get anywhere the way.... You're savages." The only time I've ever been called savage was in a residential school. I've never been called that anywhere else, ever, ever! And to me it's degrading. They made me feel ashamed. And it took me many years to overcome that. No way, I am a person. I have my own pride. Most of all, I have my own identity, and God help me if I let myself down. I will never give anyone the power to take my identity away again.

Angie is fourth generation Metis and very proud that she has great-grandchildren who are now seventh generation Metis.

My grand-father was a Hudson's Bay factor, and

my dad was a Special Constable and interpreter, and a carpenter—a jack of all trades. What they taught us was that the Metis way of life would never be easy. But through the hard work and dedication of proving who you are... because we were unwanted, nobody wanted us. The aboriginals didn't want us because we had non-aboriginal blood, and vice-versa, so we had to create a world of our own. And my dad always said, that some day we would have our own nation, our own flag, our own anthem and our own by-laws, and we would be a nation to be proud of. But it would take a lot of years. The year that the Metis got incorporated was the year that my dad passed away. I was so sorry he didn't see it, but his teaching has helped me to really believe that hard work achieves dreams.

Angie has been a volunteer at the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre for almost 30 years. She pours herself into volunteering because when she first arrived in Grande Prairie from Yellowknife, she needed a lot of help. Although she cannot pay back the people who have helped her along the way, she repays them by helping others and finds it very rewarding.

I first became involved with the Friendship Centre through a great friend of mine, Dorothy Walker. She was involved with the Friendship Center and she came to me and said, "Angie, come and see what it's like..." And I went and I met some beautiful, beautiful people. Ruth St Arneault was our co-coordinator then, and she was awesome! The love, you could feel the warmth of this lady, and she was telling me what a struggle it was and it was just new then—not many years—only three staff at the time then. So, I said, O.K., I'll give it a try, and I never looked back because I knew that that's where I wanted to be and that I had an opportunity to share some of the things I had learned, and not only that, experiences that may help others. It's been a wonderful, rewarding 29 years, and I hope to make it to 30. I challenged the youth at our last election and told them to beat my record, and I got a few of them that accepted the challenge.

I think the greatest challenge is funding. We had no funding, and Dwight Logan came forward and offered us some space and sponsored us for our activities. I will always be grateful to him because he gave us our start, all the Logans did, because they believed what we were doing.

For her work with the Friendship Centre, Mrs. Crerar has received three major awards.

The awards I share with many, many, many people in Grande Prairie. Some of them have passed on, some of them have re-located, but their contribution to the community is very important and always should be mentioned. Over the years I have worked with so many people in all different agencies, and not only have I learnt so much from them, but also the fact that they're willing to give of their time is so precious because when you do that you are the heart of the community. The involvement and the awards I share with everybody. In 2005 I got the Aboriginal Woman Lifetime Achievement Award and the Provincial Centennial Award for volunteering, and in 2007 I got the Governor General's Caring Award; that was for building the Elder's Caring Shelter, which was so needed in our community. There was nothing for the aboriginal elders, so after the Friendship Centre had done a survey of the needs of aboriginal people, that was one that was lacking. So, I got a hold of it, and with the help of many, many people—Weyerhaeuser, Ainsworth, Talisman, Salvation Army, the Army & Navy, the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region Six to mention a few that have always, always been there. And that was a very good example of people pulling together to realize something very necessary in our community. It's really thriving, it's full, and they're continually doing drives, fund-raising. I'm really proud of the fact that our aboriginal elders have a place to go to now.

In Angie's experience, it has always been the people of Grande Prairie who are the community's greatest asset.



Angie receives the Governor General's Caring Award from Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong at a ceremony in Grande Prairie. The award was for her work with the building of the Elder's Caring Shelter in Grande Prairie. SPRA 2009.17.05.

I think the most important thing is the people. The people that want a better life, the people that came here for a reason. The people that said, "I want a secure, happy life for my children, and what am I going to do towards it?" So they start—many, many people start by volunteering, it's what you see in the future for your children. How can you make life better? So you find yourself getting involved, and it spreads because your children see that, so they're going to follow. They're going to say, "Well, my parents did this, I can do this," and the first thing you know, not only do you grow with the community, you grow within yourself, because giving is part of growing, and I know a lot of people here in Grande Prairie gave their best. And that's what makes Grande Prairie so special—is the people.

What Archives Do and Why We Do It

by Leslie Pearson, B Sc, MAS

Author's Note: No further requests from readers. I should have known two in a row was too good to be true! So, you're stuck with an issue we frequently encounter and which Mary thought would connect nicely to the rest of this edition of the newsletter.

A key part of the work that goes on at the Archives is what we call "processing". Once records arrive at the Archives, we need to prepare them for use by researchers. Processing is divided into a few different activities: appraisal (deciding what will be kept), arrangement (organizing the material), rehousing (placing the records in acid-free materials), and description (writing about the content and the context of the material). This article is going to focus on a specific part of the "description" phase.

Archivists create an intellectual guide to the records, outlining what we have and allowing us to locate it quickly. As an Archives operating in Canada, we follow a descriptive standard called the *Canadian Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*. This ensures that the way description is carried out and the kind of information and the basic format in which it is provided to researchers is consistent all across the country, allowing researchers to better know what to expect and facilitating the sharing of archival descriptions in provincial and national catalogues online.

What kind of information is required? I mentioned earlier that description includes writing about the content and the context of the material. To provide the contextual information necessary to understand the records, we write a biography or administrative history of each records-creator. We also describe the content of the records: title, dates, types of records, how much material and its physical qualities, how the records are structured and arranged, how they passed from their original creator to the Archives (and any intervening custodians), what the records contain, what activities

they reflect, and identification numbers (assigned by the Archives). At the end of the descriptive process we add topic and subject headings, like agriculture, transportation, politics, etc., to allow researchers to browse descriptions by topic.

Archives describe records on a variety of levels, based on how the records are arranged. The most detailed level of description is the item-level. For most of the material that arrives at the Archives, item-level description is not necessary or is too time-consuming for the benefit it gives. If we spent time describing every single sheet of paper that we took in, very little of it would ever be available for use! However, for things like photographs, item-level description becomes crucial. Put yourself in the shoes of a researcher. If you were looking for a photograph of your grandfather, which description would be more helpful: "15 photographs of pioneers in the Spirit River area" or individual descriptions of the same 15 photographs identified with names and details provided for each?

For photographs we provide very specific information on the title of the photograph, its physical size, colour, the type of image (photograph, negative, slide, etc.), creator's name, date it was taken, and a description of its content. Each photograph is also assigned an identification number which indicates where it fits in the collection or fonds it is part of and the holdings of the Archives in general.

Sounds fairly straightforward, doesn't it? The challenging part comes, however, when we are presented with a box full of photographs with no information. Who or what is in the photograph? What are they doing? When was it taken? Where was it taken? Why? Your guess is as good as ours. How can we assist the researchers of the future to find what they need when we don't even have basic information available to us? It's frustrating, both for us as archivists and for the researchers themselves.

"Do you have a photograph of my grandfather?" "I don't know, look through this box of 50 photos and see if you recognize him."

Sometimes having no information about a photograph is enough of an argument for it not to be kept. We had an example of this not too long ago. A woman brought in a black and white photograph of a horse-drawn cart outside of a building. The person in the cart was not identified. The location of the photograph was not given. We didn't recognize the person or the building shown. She knew the family had been in southern Alberta before moving north and thought it might have been taken there, but wasn't certain. In the absence of any other information, we declined to keep the photograph.

When photographs arrive unidentified, the Archives is not necessarily out of options and may decide to keep them despite the lack of descriptive detail. An example of this occurred when a donation of studio portraits of Aboriginal people arrived. We were eager to keep the photographs because of their content, but without identification they were less useful that they could be. We knew nothing about the photographs, not even who the photographer was, until a similar photograph arrived in another donation with the name of the photographer

Upper right, Mike Dion Buffalo (Cree name "Chopiwi"), ca. 1915. One of the photographs identified by members of Hobbema First Nation in central Alberta. SPRA 1997.45.01.

Right, this family portrait is from the same collection, therefore likely also from Hobbema, but still has not been identified. SPRA 1997.45.09.



marked. With this information, we were able to deduce that the photographs may have originated in Ponoka since the photographer had had a studio there before moving to Grande Prairie. An archivist in the school at Hobbema was contacted for help and, as a result of assistance from members of the community, several people in the images were identified. However, we are not always so fortunate in being able to identify images and people retroactively.

So why am I telling you this? Part of the responsibility lies with you as donors or potential donors. Sometimes only you know the full story behind a photograph. Only you may be able to identify those obscure 2nd cousins in the back of the family album. Now obviously you will have some historic family photographs in your collections that you will have no clue about. There may be nothing you can do about that. But there are many photographs that you will be able to identify properly. Please share the information you do have. Even if you are not planning to donate your photographs to an archives, proper identification and descriptions will be appreciated by you and your family in the future. Do it now, before you forget! If you take a photograph, don't just set it aside and forget about it. If it's important enough to keep, it's important enough to keep well, and this includes being properly identified. Record the names of the people in the photograph and how they are related. Write down the date it was taken and who the photographer was. Make note of the event or occasion it was taken at and where that event took place. It may be possible to piece some of this together in the future, but it is a time-consuming and frustrating process that can easily be avoided if basic information is recorded at the time. And don't assume that by telling your children or grandchildren the story behind a photograph that you are off the hook. I've been on the receiving end of several stories and am ashamed to say, I can't remember them now. Don't rely on memory, yours or theirs; document it.

How? This is a little trickier. There are a variety of ways to document photographs with pros and cons to each. If you write a description on a separate

sheet of paper or on the page next to the photograph in an album, there is always the risk that the photograph could become separated from its description. You could write it on the back instead. If you do this, please do not use a ballpoint pen. In order to get through the resinous coating on the backs of photographs (particularly modern photographs from the 1960s onward), you have to press extremely hard. Very frequently the outline of the writing will become embossed on the surface of the photograph. The inks can also bleed and run. So you'll have a great description, but the photograph will be damaged. Placing a sticker on the back of the photograph is likewise a poor choice. The adhesives used in stickers not only do not last that long (meaning the description will become detached and likely lost in a matter of about 20 years), but also cause deterioration and discoloration to the photograph. A preferred method for labeling is to use a soft pencil (4B or 6B) on the back of the photograph. You still have to be careful not to press too hard, but the soft lead makes this less of a problem. If you do write on the back of the photograph, try to keep your writing confined to the outside edges, just in case damage does occur. Labeling digital photographs presents different challenges, but there are ways to tag images, input descriptive details into the image metadata, title photographs, or arrange them in labeled folders. For any photographs, digital or physical, find a system that works for you and does the least amount of damage (ideally no damage) to the photographs. Don't let the difficulties of how to do it prevent you from trying!

A donation of properly identified photographs means the difference between having a description that looks like this: "Three men in a car, ca. 1940." and one that looks like this: "Henry, Peter, and Harvey Scott on the way to Grande Prairie for the Governor General's official visit, July 12, 1939. They are driving Harvey's new Ford." As a researcher (or a family member of the future), which would you prefer?

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The collections at SPRA have all been donated by individuals, organizations, and municipal governments. You are our only resource for the preservation of the history of the south Peace.

Archaeology Teaching Slides & Tapes
Greg Donaldson

Photo of Dog Sleds on City Streets
Donna Shail

Grande Prairie & District Old Timers records
Cheryl Kimble

Tranquility School Reunion records
Gord Mackey

Charlie Turner family photographs
Gwen Turner and Suzanne Dunn

DeBolt Museum Photograph collection
Fran Moore

City Sub-division Plans
City of Grande Prairie

Rotary Club Roster books & Photographs
Bob Wallace

Wapiti Dorm Reunion Minutes
Barbara Boyd

Grande Prairie School District 2357 Minutes
Bob Patterson

Wapiti School District 2802 Minutes
Bob Patterson

Lessard Store Calendar, Eaglesham
David Leonard

New in the Archives Library

Cooking Up Memories

Produced by the Elder's Caring Shelter and Metis Local 1990 in 2010.

130 pages of unique recipes, interesting history, educational articles, and wonderful stories collected by Elders from Aboriginal, Metis and European people.

Donated by Marge Mueller "In the Sharing of Spirit of Metis People".

Are You Enjoying This Newsletter?

Would you like to receive it mailed to your home four times a year? It's free when you are a member of the South Peace Regional Archives Society. See the Membership Form on the back of the newsletter. You can also give memberships as gifts to friends or family.

Submissions to this Newsletter

SPRA Society encourages submissions in the form of stories, poems, memories, letters and photographs. Do you have a story, or does someone you know have a story about the past in the south Peace? Submit it to us by mail or e-mail, or call us at 780-830-5105.

Benefits of Membership

- Be actively involved in preserving the history of this area.
- Have a voice in keeping archival collections in the Peace River Country.
- Become more aware of the issues and types of collections in archives.
- Receive a quarterly newsletter and notice of meetings & events.

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Interested in being involved as a
 _____ volunteer
 _____ board member

There are two types of membership:

Full membership--get involved in the society, attend meetings, vote on issues and run for office.

Associate membership--receive communications (like this newsletter) to stay informed about issues and happenings at the Archives.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

Associate Member
 \$15.00/person _____

I wish to donate to the
 South Peace Regional Archives _____

Total Membership and Donation _____

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
 E-mail: spra@telus.net

Society and Member News



SPRA Board for 2012-2013

We are pleased to introduce the 2012-2013 Board of Directors. From left to right, Janet Peterson, Mary Nutting (Archivist), Gail Prette, Gord Mackey, Jan Shields, Eleanor Dalen, Lesley Vandemark, Irene Nicolson, Stan Bzowy, Beth Sande, Lane Borstad, Kevin O'Toole, Daryl White and Brock Smith. Missing: Gail Haakstad.

Thank you to all our board members for the time and expertise they give to the operation of a Regional Archives. This project could not move forward without them!

Grande Prairie Cemetery Historical Walking Tours

Wednesdays June 13, July 11, and August 8

Join South Peace Regional Archives on a guided walk through the Grande Prairie Cemetery and discover the rich and interesting history of Grande Prairie and area through the lives and stories of its people.

Call the Archives at 780-830-5105 to register (limit of 20 participants)
 Meet at the Cemetery (84 Avenue, 112 Street)
 Please dress for the walk and the weather.