

TELLING

ARCHIVE NEWS

OUR

LOCAL HISTORY

STORIES



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SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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On the Front Cover: (SPRA 2014.041.013) Jean and Maggie Alexander at their mother’s reed organ, ca. 1914. You can read more about the Alexander family on pages 10 and 11.

Take Note



Annual General Meeting
and Election of Officers

Saturday, March 21, 2015

Schedule of Events

- 10:00 Friends of the Archives AGM
- 10:30 South Peace Regional Archives Soc. AGM
- 11:15 Volunteer Awards, Beth Sheehan Award
- 11:30 Guest Speaker, Dr. David Leonard
Peace Country Land Settlement, 1915 to 1930
- 12:30 Lunch and Tours of the Archives

March 1, 2015

Dear Members and Supporters;

This issue features the Central Peace, but covers some distinct eras, beginning with the fur trade and Spirit River Settlement, early agriculture settlement with the Alexander family, the coming of the Railway in 1916, life during World War II, and finally the fun of the Eaglesham Drama Club in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

It also features work done by dedicated volunteers. I hope you enjoy the first of three installments about the “Memories of a Pioneer Doctor.” This is the transcript of an oral history recorded by Dr. Andrew Carlisle ca. 1970. It was donated to SPRA in 2010, and thanks to volunteer Grace Wallace, who typed up the transcript, it is now widely available in the newsletter, on the web, and on YouTube.

Archivist Leslie Gordon has continued on the theme of volunteers in her column, “What Archives Do, and Why We Do It,” which is about the interesting projects our volunteers are doing. With only 2.2 staff at the Archives, we depend on volunteers to help us process and provide content on the web. If you have ever thought you might like to volunteer at the Archives, pay special attention to this column.

If you’re wondering what “The Friends” of the Archives are up to, check out page 25. President Penson has this great idea for a Campfire Play about Harry Adair who started for the Peace Country in 1906 with 700 head of horses. How long do you think it took to rustle that herd from Montana to Wembley?

Don’t miss the Society News on page 26. That’s where you’ll find the list of some of the interesting donations from the past three months.

And of course, don’t miss our Annual General Meeting on March 21st. That’s where you’ll hear all the news, and this year the guest speaker is Dr. David Leonard on the Settlement of the Peace Country from 1915-1930.

Happy Spring! Mary Nutting, Editor

TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY
South Peace Regional Archives Society

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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.

100th Anniversary of Watino

One hundred years ago, in the early winter of 1915, the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia Railway laid steel across the ice on the Smoky River at what we now call Watino. This was the long-awaited line into the Peace Country which would ease transportation of goods into the country and resources out to market.

On the east side of the river, Pruden’s Crossing had settled on the lower banks of the Smoky River. This community included an RCMP barracks, a hospital, a rooming house, hotel, pool rooms, and three stores. A small cable ferry connected it to the west side of the river, where the hamlet of Smoky River began to develop (*Smoky Peace Triangle*, p. 42). Between the two, it is estimated that there were up to 2,000 inhabitants, all involved, in some way, with the construction of the railway.

When the railway bridge was erected in 1916, a railway siding was situated higher up the west bank. Eventually, this community (named Watino in 1921) consisted of a school, two grocery stores, two hardware stores, post office, three machine agencies,

garage, grain elevator, restaurant, pool hall, community hall, and skating rink (*Smoky Peace Triangle*, p. 123). There was also a railway station, a pump station, and coal dock for the steam trains, and stockyards on the railway, from which Egg Lake Ranch shipped 13 carloads of cattle to Chicago in 1920.

Over the years, businesses in Watino included the Donis Store and Post Office (later Shellbalter’s Store), Harry Hanson’s Store, the Ford Lumber Co. Sawmill, Zeena’s Restaurant, the Midland Pacific Grain Company, the Alberta Pacific Grain Company elevator, Watino Garage, Watino Hall, Hartman’s Restaurant, the Rockall Machinery Agency, McCammon’s Restaurant, Anderson’s Sawmill and NAR Tie Camp, Joe Remillard’s Shingle Mill, the Park Brothers Sawmill and Planer, and Tardiff’s service station and grocery store on the east side of the bridge. This list underscores the importance of rural communities to the history of the Peace Country.

A search of all the Archives in Alberta brings up only a few photographs for Smoky River at the Glenbow Archives, some trapline records and photos of the NAR Watino gravel pit at the Provincial Archives, and a few photos of Smoky River and Watino, plus the records of the Smoky West Rural Electrification Association at South Peace Regional Archives.

Of course the stories in *Smoky Peace Triangle* (where I found the information above) give a wonderfully human history of these three communities, but we would love to be able to preserve a more extensive record of this history with photographs and records from the businesses and families who once occupied Watino, Smoky River, or Pruden’s Crossing. Do you have, or know of anyone who has records relating to the history of this area that you could share? It would be a great 100th birthday present for that community and historians in future generations.



Row of log businesses, including pool hall, restaurants, and drugstore, which was Smoky River when it was the end of steel. (SPRA 2001.01.144)

Eaglesham & District Drama Club fonds

At South Peace Regional Archives, we have the organizational records, production notes and an original script, video recordings, programs, publicity materials, and photographs of the Eaglesham & District Drama Club. This fonds demonstrates the creative and talented spirit of dedicated volunteers typical of community based dramatic societies.

Eaglesham and District Drama Club fonds (477). – 1977-1993. — 5.5 cm of textual records. — 231 photographs. — 71 negatives. — 14 video recordings.

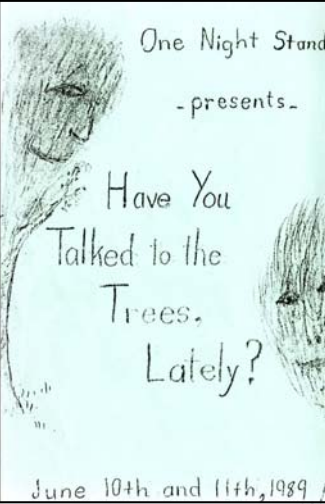
Agency History

The Eaglesham and District Drama Club was formed in 1981, but before the official organizational meeting in the Tangent Church basement on June 4th, 1981, they had already staged a production of four plays--“Overtones,” “Address to Ladies’ Macrame,” “Newstime,” and “The Dear Departed”--on May 30, 1981. The first executive was composed of JoAnn Cantwell (President), Steve Cregg (Vice-President), Leah Boreen (Secretary-Treasurer), and Greg Donaldson, Irma Lees (Donaldson), Faye Knitel, Annie Pawlusi, Lilliane Lefebvre, and Pauline Cregg (directors).

The club was unofficially known as the “One Night Stand.” Their symbol was a leaning lamp post and their colours black and red. They aimed to offer programs in the community to promote participation in and appreciation for the performing arts, discover and develop local talent,

entertain, and create an awareness of and concern for social and moral issues.

The group usually gave one or two performances a year in Eaglesham, Tangent, and occasionally at festivals. The plays that they performed included: “Summer People,” “The Unseen,” and “The Al Slick Show” (April 1982), “A Good Time” and “Mr. Foot” (May 1983), “The Boor” (December 1983), “Monica” (January 1985), “She Walks in Beauty” (June 1985),



HAVE YOU TALKED TO THE TREES LATELY?

(A BEGGAR'S OPERA)

written by Steve Cregg

Assisted by a DISCOURAGED, DISMAYED & DISAFFECTED cast in the order of their (DIS)APPEARANCE:

John Morgan	a DISPOSSESSED farmer
JoAnn Cantwell	a DISTRAUGHT mother
Greg Donaldson	a DISENCHANTED bureaucrat
Denise Cotton	a DISGRUNTLED teacher
Beth Chmara	a DISILLUSIONED teacher
Pauline Cregg	a DISTURBED teacher
Mike Pearson (as Sam Malice)	a DISTRUSTFUL cop.

Accompanied by a DISMEMBERED Eaglesham Olde Tyme Musick Group (They're not all there, see!) with Gilbert Ulland, Lester Webb, Katie MacBaid, Claude Polard and special guest Charles Ulland but please refrain from talking during the Overture.

It is a DISSONANT mood-setter for the DISASTER which is to follow.

(Mis)directed by Steve Cregg
(Mis)managed, stage-wise, by Vicky Barclay

SETTING: A MEADOW IN NEVER-NEVER LAND
or, if you prefer,
THE TOM LESSARD NATIONAL PARK IN THE SUBURBS OF EAGLESHAM !!!

Also (DIS)CREDITED:

Greg Barclay	Master of Ceremonies & Dimmer of Lights
Sue Gartley & Tom King	Video.
Annette Sasseville	Backdrops
Judy Brown Dance Studio	Choreography.
And	
Diane Granger	Make-up

Grateful DISBURSEMENTS to all who have helped in any other way without having actually DISGRACED... themselves.



“I’ll Meet You in the Far Pasture” can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CznTVfNjSI>

“Spreading the News” and “Visitor from Forest Hills” (December 1985), “My Financial Career,” “To Open, Pry Cover,” “The Fishing Hat,” and “Parents’ Day” (April 1986), “World Without Men” and “Pyramus & Thisbe” (December 1986), various skits for the Eaglesham School, “I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow” (March 1987), “The Laboratory” and “The Gift of the Magi” (December 1987), “Pasque Flower” and “The Make-Up Artist” (March 1988), “Breeches from Bond Street” and “Trifles” (December 1988), “Have You Talked to the Trees, Lately?” (June 1989), “Indian” and “Hansel & Gretel Revisited” (December 1989), “Marred Bliss,” “When God Comes to Breakfast Don’t Burn the Toast,” and “A Fine Colored Easter Egg” (April 1990), “The Waste Disposal Unit” (April 1991), “I’ll Meet You in the Far Pasture” (August 1991), “Passacaglia” and “Quare Medicine” (March 1992), and “This Land Is Your Land” (April 1993). Some of the plays were written by local playwright and drama club member, Steve Cregg.

The Drama Club operated under the umbrella of the Eaglesham Cultural Society (incorporated 1977), allowing it to access additional grants. The Drama Club was financed by donations from local clubs, direct and indirect government grants, and performance admissions. Its expenses included audiovisual equipment, stage sections, props, makeup, hall rental, royalties, and festival fees.

Memories of a Pioneer

Doctor: Part 1

By Dr. Andrew Murray Carlisle

Our 2015 newsletters will feature the memories of Dr. Andrew Murray Carlisle in serial form. Dr. Carlisle moved to the Grande Prairie area in 1921 and had many fascinating and humorous stories to tell about his early years as a country doctor in this region. One of our volunteers (see pages 20-22) has been working on a transcript of the recording Dr. Carlisle made in the 1960s-1970s (the exact date is unknown) and we are excited to share her work with you.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Carlisle family, we have a biography and an extensive collection of family photographs available on our website:

<http://southpeacearchives.org/carlisle-family-fonds/>

And if you wish to listen to the whole recording, you can find it on our YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilPnMdFJU2g>



Above: Dr. Carlisle playing chess with Mrs. Pratt, 1942 (SPRA 0399.01.53)

I practiced medicine in the Alberta part of the Peace River country from June 1921 to June 1957. I saw this new country grow up. I am no public speaker. As the whale once said to her calf, “Remember, son, it is only when you are spouting that you are liable to be harpooned,” so I have never done much spouting in public. This will only be a chat.

First, I would like to give you a brief resume of my background. I was born in Peterborough, Ontario in March 1896 into a family of seven, five boys and two girls. I was the second youngest. I got my senior matriculation there, started medicine in Toronto in September 1913, and joined the Second Division of the Canadian Army in March 1915 as a stretcher bearer, then three and a half years overseas, almost three years of that time at the front in France.

In September 1918, I was sent home along with some other medical and dental students to finish our courses. We got home October 10 and started medicine again in Toronto in uniform; but on November 13 we were discharged and out on our own. Our father had died while three of us boys were in France, but my oldest brother, a doctor in Winnipeg, helped me financially until I graduated in May 1921. At that time I had been asked to go to Ocean Falls, B.C. to assist a doctor there, so I took my Dominion Council examinations so I could practice in the west.

I just finished these exams when I got an urgent telegram from my brother-in-law, Jack Archer, a lawyer in the Peace River country, to come at once to Lake Saskatoon, a small village there north of the 55th parallel, as the only doctor there had left because his young wife had died. So not knowing whether I had passed my Dominion Council exams or not I left by train for

Edmonton and I am glad I did. I found out in Edmonton that I had passed. I got registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and in a few days I left by the weekly train for Grande Prairie, then the end of steel, a 500 mile trip that took thirty hours, if it got there. Grande Prairie is 260 miles northwest of Edmonton as the crow flies and Lake Saskatoon was 15 miles northwest of there. Mr. Archer met me at the station and drove me to Lake Saskatoon where some calls were already waiting. I had only ten dollars to my name when I arrived there. There were so many things I needed. My oldest brother, the doctor, had bought me a medical bag and some necessary instruments when I stopped in Winnipeg. My second oldest brother, Dave, had been wounded seriously just after we took Vimy Ridge and had taken up soldier settlement board land on the east shore of Lake Saskatoon. The village was on the west shore. As one great need was a car, Dave mortgaged his farm and lent me enough money to buy a brand new 1921 T-model Ford. That was the first year that Henry Ford had put a self-starter on them and was a most useful addition both in winter and summer.

I found this a beautiful rolling country, so different from the prairies, dotted with lakes and bluffs of



Above: Lake Saskatoon, ca. 1920 (SPRA 362.02.12.06)

trees, high in the sunny skies wild ducks and geese flying in the fall, always the snow-capped Rocky Mountains on the horizon. It looked like the promised land to me.

There were many men there who had just returned from the First World War, on the farms and in the towns and some with English brides. Lake Saskatoon had been the distributing centre for the whole area until the railroad came in 1916, making Grande Prairie the end of steel. The big trading companies then moved away, the Hudson Bay, Revillon Freres, and the Diamond P etc. So I rented the Diamond P store mostly because it had a nice new lean-to that had been built on its west side. It made a good warm office and I had slept in a big unheated store those first two winters. There were usually a few five foot high blocks of ice above my bed as that was my water supply. A Scotch lady made me two big comforters each lined with carded wool, about an inch thick, so I slept comfortably. For this luxurious accommodation I had paid five dollars a month, but after paying my large livery bill and my drug bill it wasn't always easy to find that five dollars. I had to carry my own medicines, I couldn't just give a prescription to patients who lived thirty miles or more miles from a drug store.

There was no antifreeze for cars in those days and winter set in early. At first I used coal oil in my radiator but then the motor would get so cold the car wouldn't start. So then I would use just water, a tricky business at 20 to 30 degrees below zero. Even with a good radiator cover, a large piece of cardboard, and a thermometer visibly sticking out of the radiator cap, I used to keep two large pails of water boiling on my office stove. So when I had to start the car in cold weather I would pour one pail full in the radiator with a big funnel, leaving the drainage tap open and then shut the tap and pour in the second pail full. When the engine had warmed a bit in four or five minutes, I would turn it over a few times with the crank, pour a kettle of boiling water in the carburetor, I would get in, pull out the chock and step on the starter a few times and it would usually start. If not, I cranked it. Then if the tires were not

frozen to the ground or flat I would get away. So often the very cold weather would make those early tires go flat. But in the winter I usually drove a cutter and team, and in the spring and fall a buggy and team, on the clay roads and prairie trails. These roads were like pavement when dry in the summer, but that was the shortest season of the year there. When asked what we did there in the summer time, one fellow said: “Oh, we play baseball that day.” But the season for hockey and curling was much longer. I met an old army friend a few years ago who said I was looking young. When I told him I had lived up in the Peace River country for thirty-six years he said: “Ohhh, that explains it. Anything will keep in a deep freeze, even the...”

Well, the province is called Sunny Alberta. While the days in June and July are usually quite long, when you had to look south to see the brilliant northern lights you began to realize you were up in the north. In June and July one can read or play golf until 10:30 PM and the north glows all night like the midnight sun. But in December and January the days are real short. Lights are needed in the buildings before 4:00 PM and it's cold. I have driven by a government thermometer at midnight that registered sixty-five degrees below zero [-54° Celsius] at the experimental farm at Beaverlodge. But every January or February we often got one or two chinooks. We welcomed that warm dry wind from the Pacific coming at us over the mountains. We have seen the temperature change ninety degrees in an hour or two from forty below zero [-40° Celsius] to fifty above [10° Celsius]. The snow would start melting and the ditches start running and you would think spring had come for sure. But in two or three days the temperature would drop to way below zero again and this was hard on gardens and trees. As a warning of a chinook, a blue-green haze would soon be seen in the west, called a chinook arch. Soon you could hear a rushing sound and then the warm wind hits you. People would come out of hibernation and so would some animals. The chinooks are a wonderful phenomenon and they sure break the monotony of winter there.

Featured Photos: Alexander Family fonds

William Alexander left Scotland at the age of 18, bound for New York, later moving to Canada, drawn by the gold rush. He became involved in the Riel Rebellion as the driver of a Red River cart and eventually made his way to Edmonton after the Rebellion ended. From there he went to Rossland, British Columbia, where he married Emilie Dannhauer in 1896. She had been born in 1873 in Pembroke, Ontario, the daughter of Paul Dannhauer and Caroline Gutzmann. Her family had journeyed west to the Stony Plain area in 1892.

The couple later returned to the Edmonton area where William worked in a lumbermill. They had five surviving children: William Paul, Charles Edward, Frederick Arthur, Jean Emilie, and Maggie Helen.

In 1910, William walked to the Peace Country in search of land. The rest of the family followed in the spring of 1911 with a caboose and sleighs pulled by ox teams over the Long Trail. William filed on homestead land west of the town of Rycroft (portion of NE 5 and SE 8 78-5 W6th) in 1911 and obtained an additional half-section using South African scrip (NW 4 and SW 9 78-5 W6th), gaining the patent to the land in April 1916. A large two-story home was built, which was later used as a hospital during the 1918 influenza



epidemic. William Alexander was also one of Rycroft's first reeves, serving on council 1918-1919.

On August 10, 1916, Emilie Alexander died of Bright's Disease and the rest of the family dispersed shortly thereafter. William Jr. and Edward enlisted for service in the First World War, Arthur moved to Edmonton to take classes, and Jean and Maggie were sent to Edmonton to live with relatives, where they remained for the next five years.

William Sr. sold the farm in 1918 and in 1919 moved to Bear Flats, beyond Fort St. John, where

he invested in Aberdeen Angus cattle. Unfortunately, the onset of a depression made the venture unprofitable. From there William Sr. and Edward went to Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith, where William was killed in a logging accident on June 6, 1928.



Above: Ed and Bill Alexander in their World War I uniforms, ca. 1916 (SPRA 2014.041.076)

Below: the Alexander family on their farm near Rycroft with a slaughtered pig. Left to right: Art, Emilie, Maggie?, Jean?, Bill or Ed?, William Alexander, and Mr. Leslie, ca. 1912 (SPRA 2014.041.012)



Photographs from the Alexander Family fonds include:

Bottom left: Riders, including Maggie (left) and Jean (middle?) Alexander at a Native Grave Site near Fort St. John. (SPRA 2014.041.015)

Top left: the Alexander boys and their father, ca. 1908. Left to right: Ed, Art, William (father), and Bill Alexander (SPRA 2014.041.001)

Above: the Alexander children, left to right: William, Maggie, Edward, Jean, and Arthur, ca. 1911 (SPRA 2014.041.078)



Explore the History of the Spirit River Settlement

If you could fly like a bird over the area south of the Town of Spirit River and the Village of Rycroft (or simply look on Google Earth), you would see an area of land where the lot lines are not in square sections and quarter sections, but in long “river lots” bordering the Spirit River. This is the footprint of the Spirit River Settlement.

Spirit River Settlement pre-dates any land surveys and roads. It grew up on the banks of the Spirit River where the First Nations trail from Dunvegan branched west to Moberly Lake and south to the “grande prairie”. Around 1880, when buffalo were becoming scarce, the Hudson’s Bay Company established a ranch here to supply beef for the Dunvegan Fur Trade Post. As was their habit, the Catholic Church soon followed with a mission, this one on the opposite side of the river.

When the settlement was surveyed in 1907, the Hudson’s Bay Co. Fur Trade Post and the English & Calkins Store, which included a land office and a post office, were already on site, as well as a number of residences, most of them Hudson’s Bay Company employees.

We will start the tour from Secondary Highway 731, south of the Town of Spirit River, and turn east on Twp Rd 780-7. The original road into the Settlement (about 200 meters north) is now closed, though still clearly visible. From 780-7, take the first (unmarked) road north and turn east again on Twp Rd 781.5. Why the oddly-numbered roads? In the Settlement, the roads follow old trails and routes, not the established system of township roads every two miles and range roads every mile.

Twp Rd 781.5 follows the basic trajectory of the First Nations trail from Moberly Lake to Spirit River in the

days of the fur trade, winding along the north bank of the Spirit River. Now we see just small fields tucked in between the road and the curves of the river, but this was one of the earliest settlements in the south Peace.

At the first intersection (Rge Rd 61 and Twp Rd 782.4) turn east. Charlie Bremner’s house still stands in the field north-east of the intersection. Mr. Bremner managed the Spirit River Ranch for the Hudson’s Bay Co., so perhaps this was the home site of the original Spirit River Ranch.

One mile east, the third Roman Catholic Church at St. Joseph’s Mission can be seen south of the road, and behind it the “Old Mission Cemetery”. The first RC Mission was built here ca. 1890 and housed a priest, the church, and barns for various livestock —cows, horses, pigs, and chickens—to supply the needs of the inhabitants. It also acted as a hotel for new settlers coming in.

Built at the junction of the Moberly Lake and Dunvegan trails, this church is inaccessible on private land, but the cemetery can be reached by turning south on Rge Rd 60 and entering, on foot, through ornate iron gates with four stone pillars. The sign tells us that the church was moved to Rycroft in 1941.

Continuing east on Twp Rd 782, the Revillon Fur Trade Post & General Store occupied the first lot on the right. Then came a series of log homes belonging to the employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company, with Cree and Metis names like Testawich, Bedson, Thomas and Waniandi.

The 1911 Henderson’s Directory for Alberta lists some of the establishments and those in charge at Spirit River Settlement in 1911, including postmaster WSO English, Anglican minister Rev. M. Johnstone, Catholic

minister Rev. Father Alex Josse, the Hudson’s Bay Company with Factor H.A. Martineau, and the Revillon Frere General Store, under St. Pierre Ferguson. Also listed were contractor Richard Brinkman, and farmer/ranchers Charles Bremner, Duston Brooks, Joseph Champagne, and David & John Esplen. Altogether, the population totaled about 100 people, most of them Cree Metis and their families, employed by the Hudson’s Bay Co. and living in the well-built log homes typical of the Metis.

As you curve north onto Rge Rd 54.2, you leave Spirit River Settlement and cross a railway track first laid in 1916 by the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia Railway. This line spelled the death of the Spirit River Settlement. The regularly-spaced railway sidings, where people and freight could catch the train, became townsites with railway stations and grain elevators. A new townsite to the west was called Spirit River, and a new post office was immediately established there. Business and commerce soon followed. In 1920, the Settlement post office was moved to Rycroft. The school, established at the Presbyterian Mission in 1910, also moved to the Village of Rycroft, and re-named Rycroft School District 2109.



Above: The Catholic Mission at Spirit River Settlement. L-R the third church, the second church, and the first mission church. Date unknown. (SPRA 0394.02, Lillico family fonds)

Back in the present, once over the railway line, turn east on Highway 49. Pick up the trail again by taking the next intersection (51st Street) south into the Village of Rycroft and then west at the T-section on the south edge of town. You are now back on Twp Rd 782, but this time on the south side of the river. Follow the road south onto Twp Rd 781.5.

About half a mile west, on the north side of the road, you would have seen the English & Calkins Store, a stopping place, and a pool room. This is where the post office was started in 1905, and where the RCMP established a police post in 1915. English & Calkins also brought in one of the first threshing outfits and a sawmill about 1906.

Traveling west, we soon reach the MD of Spirit River Community Cemetery, which was originally the site of the Anglican Mission in 1905. Serving there was Metis minister Murdoch Johnston. After Mr. Johnston died in 1911, the Presbyterian Mission took over the buildings and started the first school. A tour around the cemetery reveals many interesting stones, such as that of Murdoch Johnston, and of Emilie Alexander, whose story is on the previous page (10-11).

A mile west, the road turns towards the river and winds along the south bank of the Spirit River, past acreages and hobby farms. Another curve onto Rge Rd 62 brings us back to Twp Rd 780.7 where we began. If you are exploring this route in the summer, why not turn north on Secondary Highway 731 to visit the Spirit River Settlement Museum in the Town of Spirit River to learn more about the history and the stories of the Spirit River Settlement.

Resources: [Chepi Sepe](#)



Chepi Sepe

Featured Paper Artifact: The Effects of War

DOMINION OF CANADA
NATIONAL REGISTRATION REGULATIONS, 1940
REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

This certificate must always be carried upon the person of the registrant.

Electoral District No. 223 Peace River (Name)
Polling Division No. 106 Spirit River (Name if any)

Signature of Registrant: *Ethel Louise Buck*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
Mrs Ethel Louise Buck
residing at *Spirit River Alta*
was duly registered under the above-mentioned Regulations this 29th day of June 1940.
Deputy Registrar: *J. M. Miller*

Above is Ethel Louise Buck's National Registration Certificate from World War II. As part of the war-time measures act, all Canadian citizens were required to be registered and, as the card states, "This certificate must always be carried upon the person of the registrant". It was also used for elections. Ethel is registered as to her Electoral District (Peace River) and her Polling Division (Spirit River).

Ethel's small collection, donated to the Archives in 2014, consists of only one letter and 14 photographs. When her cousin, Ray Rappel, enlisted in World War II, she wrote to him faithfully while he was stationed in Britain. At Ray's request, she also wrote to the girlfriends he met there, first Jean Goff, then Rosina. Ray returned home after the war with his English war bride (Rosina), but died in 1954. Rosina remarried and moved away from Spirit River, and Ethel lost contact with her. But in 2014, at 90 years of age, Ethel was still writing to Jean, the first girlfriend. Although they never met, they corresponded for over 70 years, brought together by a war that affected their personal lives and their families.



Left: Ethel Buck's National Registration Certificate (2014.082.15).
Below: Ethel's WWII Penpal, Jean Goff, 1943 (SPRA 2014.082.06)

25th Sept, 1944. 13, Laurie Road, Greenford Avenue, Harwell, W7, London.

My dear Ethel & Walter,
Hello there and "Howdy" as our Ray would say. I hope at the time of receiving this letter you are well, like all here at No. 13.
I am not quite sure who you are, but Ray has a cousin named Ethel & I am presuming that you are she, for I know of no one else of that name in Spirit River who would send me a packet of chocolate, as you have done.
Thank you so much dear for your gift, you can't imagine what it is like to only have 12ozs. of sweets per month. For a person with such

Above, the first two pages of a letter written by Rosina to Ethel & Walter Buck when she was planning to come to Canada as a war bride.
Right: Ray Rappel with his English war bride Rosina, 1946 (SPRA 2014.082.02)



Below: Ethel and Ray Rappel in Spirit River, 1942 (SPRA 2014.082.01)



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a sweet tooth as I have, well it's just (hell.) I hope that isn't sweating to you. It isn't over here, but Ray said what is a sweat word here isn't at home, & vice-versa. I'll have to mind my P's & Q's when I get back home I can see. Still I suppose I will soon get into the way of things.
Boy will it be lovely to set foot in Spirit River!! I do so hope it won't be long before I do so. I am only waiting for the word "Go" now. All my papers are in & all details settled, I have just got to take my turn on the waiting list. I bet Ray a dollar I wouldn't be home by November 5th, but he is expecting me before that & I dare say he still has his fingers crossed.

Steamboats on the Smoky

By George Robinson

The following story about Watino and Pruden's Crossing is reprinted with permission from the South Peace Historical Society Archives in Dawson Creek. It can be found in the Dorothea Calverley collection on <http://www.calverley.ca/calcoll.html>. This is a great site for stories about the Peace River Country. George Robinson worked on the railway, and trapped as a sideline. He later lived in Sexsmith, and many will remember him as an amateur paleontologist.

In 1915 there were two boats or scows on the Smoky River plying between Peace River Crossing and Bezanson hauling freight, settlers' effects and the like. One of these was operated by a man known as "Whitey." I never did hear him called by any other name but probably his name was White. The two boats were about the same size and Whitey's boat would be between 35 to 40 feet long with a beam of 8 to 10 feet as near as I can remember, and good solid boats, probably built in Peace River Crossing. They were propelled by a gasoline motor and operated fairly regularly considering the vagaries of the Smoky River's erratic flow. The shifting of the

river's bed moved gravel beds from one place to another so that the pilots would never know for certain where the channel would be from day to day.

Whitey's boat could carry about two tons of freight and the charge was 2 cents per pound from Pruden's Crossing to Bezanson. At Bezanson there is a good-sized river flat and as the railroad was expected to cross the Smoky at this point A.M. Bezanson and several others had settled there and had started a townsite. This was expected to develop into the metropolis of the Peace River Country or at least of the South Peace. Of course their dreams did not come true and for the last fifty years the city of Bezanson has produced nothing but pasture and blueberries. But to give it its due, the blueberries there are really good and for as long as I can remember the farmers have come for miles in the fall to pick them. But to get on with the story of the steamboat. In the summer of 1915 two brothers of the name of Fletcher brought a flour mill down to Pruden's Crossing. The idea was to take it up the river to Bezanson and set up a milling business there, which appeared to be a mighty good proposition at that time.

They unloaded on the bank on the east side of the river and thought it would be no trick at all to load it on the gas boat and take it up to Bezanson. But Whitey and his boat were in business for Whitey, and his price from Pruden's Crossing to Bezanson was 2 cent per pound. I do not know what the weight of the mill and engine would be but am sure it must have been more than Whitey could move in one trip. And anyhow at 2 cents per pound even if only 2 tons, or one trip, the cost would be \$80 and the

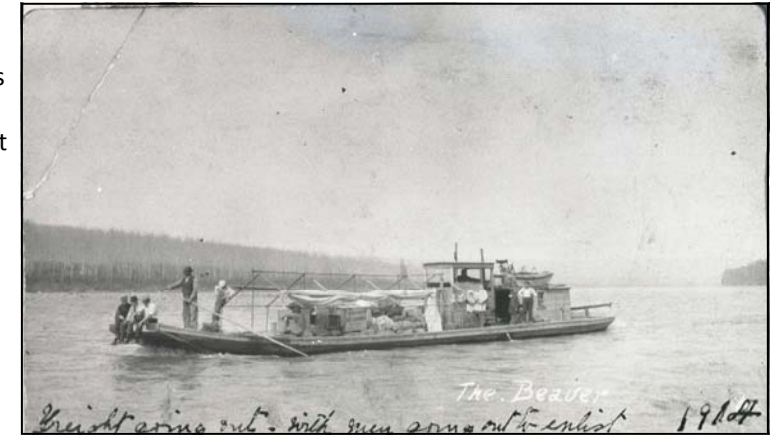
Fletchers decided they could certainly not afford that much, which was probably more cash than they had anyway. So they decided they would build their own boat and power it with the engine which was to run the flour mill when they got to Bezanson.

Now the engine was an upright boiler steam engine and though I saw it only from a distance I would guess it to be at least twelve feet high. So the boys set to work and built their boat and sent out to Edmonton for a propeller and the project took them all the summer of 1915 and when they finished they had a mighty odd looking craft with that high upright boiler in the middle. By the time it was ready for launching (there was no champagne in Pruden's Crossing though there was plenty of moonshine!) it was October and the river, following its usual custom, was low and the navigable channel narrow and fast. Anyhow this would not bother the pilots of the steamboat for they had no idea of what the river was like between there and Bezanson, but if Whitey could do it with his gas boat they could sure do it with their steamer.

I was by that time setting out my trapline on the hillside of the river and was lucky enough to see the steamboat set out on its trial trip. They took it upriver some two or three miles and back to its dock and apparently everything went well and they loaded up the outfit and after a couple of days set sail for Bezanson. I have travelled the river by boat and raft between Pruden's Crossing and Bezanson several times and I would judge that by river it is about 70-75 miles. This was a two-day trip for Whitey's gas boat but at least four days for the Fletcher steamboat, as they would have to stop every few hours and cut wood for fuel. I did not see them start for Bezanson so the rest of the story is hearsay. Apparently they got as far as the mouth of the Little Smoky, some ten miles by river from Pruden's Crossing, when they hit either a rock or gravel bar. Finally, Whitey had to salvage them and take them on to Bezanson! I might mention that there was a very rough trail through the

bush through the Saddle and Burnt Hills which they might have used after freeze-up but it would have entailed at least double the river mileage and the Fletchers had no sleighs or horses.

However, they eventually made it but did not set up the mill at Bezanson but took it to Sexsmith where it was set up. After a couple of years it was purchased by Mr. Warren who operated it until it burned some twenty years or so later. This mill, which was operated most efficiently by the Warrens, proved a very valuable asset to a very large area of the South



The Beaver river boat is carrying freight and men who are going to enlist. Three men are sitting on the bow of the boat, another is poling and the rest are standing on the boat, ca. 1915 (SPRA 0024.01.09.28)

Peace, most especially during the Dirty Thirties. There was always a crowd of men and horses at Sam Moon's livery barn waiting their turn to get their load of wheat made into flour, cracked wheat and bran and shorts. The Warrens would always take a load of firewood for the boiler or a share of the wheat in payment for the milling charges which was a wonderful help to the settlers who were selling wheat for 19 cents and oats for 5 cents a bushel. Also, the quality of the product of the Sexsmith mill was very good and if your wheat was top quality wheat so was your flour. But in those days much Garnet wheat was grown and one needed experience to make good flour from Garnet though a small admixture of Garnet in Marquis or other top grade wheat was actually an advantage.



"The Beaver," a long narrow river boat which plied the Smoky River, ca. 1910 (SPRA 0155.03.10)

What Archives Do and Why We Do It

by Leslie Gordon

Author's Note: Did you know that National Volunteer Week is April 12-18, 2015? There are volunteers everywhere, but at the Archives, we are proud to say that ours are some of the best. If you come down to the Archives for a visit, you will, of course, be assisted by Mary, Leslie, or Teresa, our staff members, but sitting in the reading room and working diligently nearly every day of the week are our hardworking volunteers. This issue's column is dedicated to our Archives volunteers and their many projects. If you attend our Annual General Meeting on March 21, you'll be able to help us thank this incredible group of people for their service to the Archives.

Volunteers have been helpful to the Archives for many years. With our small staff, only one at first, then two, and now three, there is a limit as to how much we can get accomplished in the time available to us. Our ability to get things done and resources available to the public are greatly increased by the efforts of our various volunteers, who collectively contribute about 800 hours per year, the equivalent of another half-time staff member. For a good many years, we had a Thursday afternoon group of faithful ladies (Phyllis Stewart, Marie Mencke, Cathy Van Everdink, Edith Burroughs, and Betty Welter) who did all sorts of odds and ends and Martin Peterson who catalogued our collection of pipeline plans. These days, our volunteers generally each have a long-term project to work on and really sink their teeth into. We have at least one volunteer scheduled for every day of the week.

On Monday mornings, you can expect to see Shannon Nelson seated at her laptop or the volunteer computer. One of our former presidents suggested she come volunteer with us and she did.



Mary & Shannon

We thought it would be great if the Archives could have a presence on Wikipedia. Wikipedia provides snippets of useful information on a wide variety of topics, including our local communities and

historical figures. If we could get on Wikipedia, the vast majority of the world that has no idea of the existence of South Peace Regional Archives, would be able to access our collections. I had read about other institutions, particularly libraries, hiring a "Wikipediologist" for similar projects. How hard could it be? Shannon has done hours of research and tests to figure it all out and come up with a framework for adding our material and information and citing SPRA as a source so we can capitalize on links back to our website and resources. In the meantime, her project has expanded to adding photographs of our local rural communities to Flickr (check it out at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/77471412@N06/>). So far she's done Hazelmere, Glen Leslie, Sturgeon Lake/Calais/Sturgeon Heights, Lake Saskatoon, Buffalo Lakes, and Grande Prairie, with more to come.

Tuesday afternoons, the office is humming with the industry of Karen Burgess and Kathryn Auger. Karen should need no introduction to our readers as she was on staff at SPRA from 2002 to 2013. We let her have a couple of months off before bringing her back as a volunteer. Karen assists with the research requests we receive and has had some interesting things to track down, including numerous missing family members. She has also been processing some



Kathryn & Karen

Catholic school daily registers and doing other odds and ends. We are forever saying, "Maybe Karen can do that."

Kathryn was first introduced to the Archives as a donor of her family's records and a member of the Society. When we embarked on the Isabel Campbell card transcription project, we advertised in this newsletter for a volunteer. Kathryn called to volunteer, without really knowing what was involved, and she's been here ever since. So far there are four of her databases available online, Family Names, Organizations, Businesses, and Sports in Newspaper Articles, at <http://southpeacearchives.org/online-databases/>. That project piqued Kathryn's interest in the old newspapers, so when Mary wanted to start a blog on the topic of "This Week in History," she knew who to ask. Kathryn now contributes one or more entries per week for our blog (<http://southpeacearchives.org/blog/>) and Facebook posts, featuring items from the old Grande Prairie newspapers. When she comes in on Tuesday afternoons, though, Kathryn now works on adding details about our boys to the "Lives of the First World War" memorial database hosted by the Imperial War Museum (<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/>). She's on the "E"s right now. Kathryn is also an amazing cook and frequently brings in all sorts of scrumptious baked goods.

On Wednesdays, Leita Askew comes in the morning and usually stays all day. We first encountered Leita's awe-inspiring proofreading skills on a Grande Prairie tax record transcription project we did with the Grande Prairie



Leita

and District Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society in 2009. Since then, Leita has been our go-to person for projects that need fine attention to detail. Leita was the second stage in Kathryn's card transcription project and the second stage in a Spirit River tax record transcription project started by another volunteer. She has now taken that Spirit River project to a whole new level and is completing another year in the records nearly every week. For those of you who don't know, the Municipal District of Spirit River will be celebrating its 100th anniversary of incorporation in 2016. Thanks to Leita's hard work, we will be prepared and information from the tax records held at the Archives (1917-1989) will be available and searchable online.



Mathew

Thursday afternoons are another busy volunteer time with Mathew Wozniak and Gail Prette. Mathew has been an archives donor and member for many years. You have probably seen his name in

this newsletter numerous times before as a newsletter sponsor and as a writer. Knowing his love for storytelling and his familiarity with the Central Peace area, we recruited Mathew to write articles about Central Peace organizations and communities

and start work on the Spirit River tax record project. Mathew has moved on to writing biographies based on our numerous oral histories. We have the tapes and basic transcriptions, but our finding aids lack biographical information about the people interviewed. With Mathew's help, we will soon be able to make this information available.



Gail

Gail Prette was the treasurer of the local Genealogy society when she was recruited by Mary, who admired the clarity of her financial statements. The SPRA Society needed a treasurer and Mary needed help in the office. Financial matters didn't take up all of her time, so she branched into the

maintenance of our newspaper clippings files, organization and filing being another one of her strengths. The clippings files are one of our most well-used resources and every one is neatly labelled and in the correct spot, thanks to Gail. Part of her labours can also be found online in the "Surnames Database" that lists the names of the people featured in the clippings files (<http://southpeacearchives.org/surnames-database/>).

On Friday mornings (when he is not travelling) you can often find Pat Wearmouth at the Archives. Pat was first introduced to the Archives through his involvement with the Peace Country Historical Society. He has a great interest in mapping projects and has assisted Mary in mapping the disappearing and vanished communities of our area, getting out into the field, looking for traces and talking to local people, as well as doing research and writing at the Archives. The June 2014 article and map on the Saskatoon Mountain Radar Base was one of his projects.

Others of our volunteers work from home. Grace Wallace is one of our newest volunteers. Using skills

acquired as an assistant in the legal profession, she has undertaken the transcription of some of our oral histories. Grace is fast and accurate and determined to figure out just what they are saying. Her transcript of Dr. Carlisle's memories is found elsewhere in the pages of this newsletter and will shortly be available online in the Carlisle finding aid (<http://southpeacearchives.org/carlisle-family-fonds/>).



Freda, Marie, & Phyllis

We also have a host of other volunteers including Phyllis Stewart, Freda Tarrant, Marie and Gaston Mencke, Kathy Scott, Gail Schau, and Carol Grey who assist with events, getting this newsletter out, costuming, cooking, shredding, and (nearly) anything else we ask of them.

Hopefully this column has demystified the role of our volunteers and their projects. If I have piqued your interest and caused you to think "I could do that!" or "That sounds really interesting!" or "I want to be an Archives volunteer!" that is even better. We are always happy to add more volunteers to our roster, so just drop by, give us a call, or send us an email and we'll try to match you with a project that suits your abilities and interests. Because we have limited space at the Archives, we'll also need to schedule you in with our other volunteers. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, if we had a new, larger building, we would be able to accommodate more volunteers and their amazing projects. Any volunteers?

Kathryn's Pick: Moon Mirage

By Kathryn Auger



Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune
January 16, 1947

Genealogy Puzzler

With the information now available on the web, we are hoping that someone can help our volunteer Mathew Wozniak find the answer his family was never able to. This is Mathew's story:

My Mother, Maria Wozniak, wife of Antoni, wrote in her diary "12 Feb 1913, early morning. The horses are hitched to the sleigh, in the house is sadness and crying. Janek is leaving for Canada, saying good-bye like it was for the last time. 'I will never forget you, Mother,' he says."

Janek lived in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and worked on the railroad. Then he joined the Canadian Armed Forces when the war broke out. He was not a Canadian Citizen, so he was taken out of the army and put in an internment camp, where he died. We learned this from the Canadian Legion.

The Government should have notified the next of kin of his death, but there was a war on—mail didn't run. Under his epitaph we have "Lost in Canada".

When we came to Canada in 1930, Mother wrote to the Government, the Red Cross, Canadian Legion, and ran ads in the Moose Jaw newspapers, hoping someone would remember what he called himself so we could find where he is buried.

We are still hoping that we may close the page on Janek Parachin (that's how I would spell his name).

Mathew Wozniak

780-539-4614

Grant Report: McNaught, McBryan, & Morrison

South Peace Regional Archives is pleased to announce that we have completed processing three family fonds for the McNaught family, Evy McBryan and Gordon Morrison. This project was made possible by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation through the Archives Society of Alberta.

The McNaught family fonds is packed with personal writings: Eliza's letters to her son John, written on stops along the Edson Trail in 1911; John's diary of his trip over the Edson Trail in 1912; letters by Margaret, Marion, and Isabel to their brother John from 1908-1912; and Euphemia's letters home to Beaverlodge when she was studying in Toronto in 1928-1929. It will provide research material for many topics for years to come.

Evy McBryan was a student and a partner to Euphemia McNaught on auspicious occasions such as documenting the building of the Alaska Highway. Her slide collection, included with this project, is more personal and shows family life and her other activities such as the Junior Artists group.

Donald "Gordon" Morrison's World War I records include a number of unidentified photographs of WWI soldiers, and photos of the family back home. Sadly, we do not know which one is him, and there is no-one to ask as the records were simply left with a local family ca. 1950.

These grants are of great benefit to us because they allow us to pay for additional staff time to process collections which might otherwise remain on the unprocessed shelves for a number of years. Once they have been processed, the descriptions are uploaded to our website where they are available to researchers from around the world.

The finding aids for these family collections can be viewed on the Archives website, www.southpeacearchives.org under the Holdings tab. The documents are also available in the Reading Room at the South Peace Regional Archives.



Above, unidentified photograph from the McNaught Family fonds of Euphemia drawing in makeshift camp, possibly with Evy McBryan at her side. (SPRA 586.06.174)



The unidentified WWI soldier above could be Gordon Morrison, as it is the title photograph in his album about the First World War. (SPRA 589.04.07)

Friends of the Archives

Coming This Summer!
Barbeque and Campfire Play
at the Scenic Heights Picnic Grounds

Plan to Join the Friends
as they tell the story of Harry Adair
and the three women who helped
him herd 700 head of horses from
Montana to Bear Lake in 1906.
The play will be enacted with live
animals in the country where the
Adair Ranch once dominated the
landscape!

Here's another chance to dress up in
period costume, listen to music, and
dance in the Pavilion.



Above, the Harry Adair Campfire Play, first enacted in 2011, and below, the Adair Ranch at Scenic Heights ca. 1930. (SPRA 032.08.08.1208)



Also, watch for the Friends Booth at the Peace Country Ag Classic at the Entrec Centre on March 12-14, 2015. The booth will be manned by the Friends Board and SPRA Staff, but if any members want to volunteer and have a reason to go to the Fair, give me a call at 780-830-5105. Next events for the Friends are the Summer BBQ and Campfire Play and our second "Raising the Archives" in October, 2015.

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. Here are a few of our recent donations.

Valhalla Voters’ List, Federal Election, 1937
By Anne Harpe

Kleskun Ranch News Articles, 1920-1933
By Dale Bekkerus

For the Record book and files, 1914-2011
Justice Jacquelin Coutu and Grace Wallace

Jack & Betty Lowe Photo Album, 1929
By Mort Timanson

Stanley William Bird letters, 1918
By Fay & Murray Dovauro

Glaubitz & Bronson Family Photographs, [1940-1950]
By Shirley Croken

Map and Photograph collection, [1960-1995]
By Canfor Industries

AMA Highway Map, 1947
By Ruth Enns

Northern Alberta Railway Publications, 1960-1990]
By Dale Nykolaychuk

Euphemia McNaught publications, 1974-1983
By David Biltek

South Peace Regional Archives

is funded by

City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, MD of Spirit River, grants from the Archives Society and the Province of Alberta, and donations from people like you!

New in the Archives Library

Euphemia McNaught

Pioneer Artist of the Peace

By Isabel Perry

Published in 1982 by the Beaverlodge & District Historical Association, this book has lovely, colour illustrations of many of Ms. McNaught’s paintings. The text, written by her sister Isabel Perry, tells the story of the McNaughts as a family, but especially Betty’s story, based on interviews with her friends.

The Perfect Introduction

If you hear someone say: I’ve retired, and I’m looking for something to do in the history field. Do you know of any good organizations to volunteer for?

You can tell them: The Archives is a great place to volunteer! You can find a project that suits you, meet other people, and enjoy the fun of preserving history. Why not call them up and ask for a tour?

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.

South Peace Regional Archives Society

Membership Application/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
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Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB. T8V 3A8
Phone: 780-830-5105
Fax: 780-831-7371
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