

TELLING OUR STORIES



Volume 8

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Issue 2

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Cover: Greg Walker, goalie for the Hythe Bluebombers ca. 1948 (SPRA 2009.19.01)

Take Note

South Peace Regional Archives and Friends of the Archives

Annual General Meeting

and

Election of Officers

April 8, 2017

In the Grande Prairie Museum Community Room

Schedule

10:00 a.m. Doors Open

10:15 a.m. Breakfast Bar Open

10:30 Friends of the Archives AGM

11:00 South Peace Regional Archives AGM

11:30 Volunteer Recognition & Awards

11:45 **Special Speaker: Dr. David Leonard**

***"150 Years: How the Peace Country
Contributed to Canada's Growth"***

March 1, 2017

Dear Members and Supporters;

Since this Archives was established on the first working day of the new millennium (January 2, 2000), I think it is appropriate that we begin a new phase of our existence during 2017, the 150th Anniversary of Canada. The Board at SPRA is launching an Awareness Campaign (p. 5) with the goal of letting everyone in the South Peace know about the Archives. They are being ably assisted by our new Archivist, Josephine Sallis. Read all about her on p. 24.

The campaign will be launched at the AGM on Saturday, April 8th. Please take note that our guest speaker is Dr. David Leonard, who will be speaking on the contribution that the Peace Country has made to Canada over the last 150 years.

So much of this newsletter is possible because of the contributions of members and volunteers, and grateful thanks go to:

- ◆ Norm & Margaret Dyck for donating the records from their Puskawkau homestead;
- ◆ Fran Moore for donating the memoirs of Phil Nilsson, and to the Nilsson family for giving the permission for publication;
- ◆ Pat Wearmouth for his article about Halcourt, Rio Grande, Elmworth, and Hinton Trail;
- ◆ Grace Wideman for sharing her experience researching the businesses of Hythe;
- ◆ Kaylee Dyck for her article on finding Prisoner of War records for Canadian soldiers.
- ◆ Wanda Zenner for her article on the first grave in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

I have no idea how much time and research these authors have put into their articles, but I know it is much more time and expertise than we could include if it was only Archives staff writing for the newsletter.

The sad ending to the newsletter is the “good-bye” to volunteer blogger Kathryn Auger. We will miss her.

Sincerely,
Mary Nutting, editor

TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY

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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.

Awareness Campaign: You Are Our Greatest Ambassadors

In 2017 the SPRA Board of Directors will be launching an Awareness Campaign for the Archives.

Vision of Awareness Campaign:

Every person in the South Peace River Country is aware of the Archives, what we do, and what we can do for each of them.

Mission of Awareness Campaign:

To plan and put into action strategies to create awareness, deepen knowledge, and increase enthusiasm for Archives and what SPRA can do for each person in the South Peace River Country.

Goal of Awareness Campaign:

To increase the number of donors who share their historical records and to increase the financial support from our constituents.

The Awareness Campaign Committee, consisting of Jan Shields, Tina Dale, Elizabeth Sande, Josephine Sallis, and Mary Nutting have already done some energetic planning for the first six months of the campaign, so be prepared for some interesting developments at our AGM!

We hope that our members, supporters, and volunteers will join us in this campaign for **you are our greatest ambassadors in the community.**

Because of your interest in the history of the Peace, you help with projects, attend events, and faithfully renew your membership every year.



SPRA and Friends Society Members at the 2016 Annual General Meeting and Members Event (SPRA Staff Photo)

What are we asking you to do? Please share your experience with anyone you know, whether that is your family, any organizations you belong to, or your community leaders.

Remember that every time you share with one person, you are really sharing with more than one, because they will go on to talk to someone else.

In the words of our new Archivist Josephine Sallis (whose background includes recruitment for the Canadian Armed Forces): “You are our first line of attack. We are sending in the troops!”

Share Your History~ Preserve Our Past

Featured Fonds: Marg & Norm Dyck fonds



Left: "Norm Dyck, 19 years (1959) I fell in love with the majesty of the mighty Peace River." (SPRA 598.01.01)

breaking rotary plow and D4 cat which were purchased when Norm and his brother Allen bought into the partnership. On winter weekends the crew attempted their first brushing with very limited success. The following summer custom breaking with the rotary plow and custom fescue hauling to Edmonton saw marginal returns.

The partnership dissolved and Norm, having decided to leave teaching, found employment with AGT in Calgary where Michael and Steven were born in 1966 and 1967.

During the winter of 1968-1969 they contracted Art Matlock to clear 60 acres on their homestead while they built pre-fabricated panels for a home. In the spring of 1969, the panels were trucked to the homestead, and with the help of Norm's father they constructed their farm home. They were still living in Calgary at this time, and in March 1970 moved from Calgary to Grande Prairie where Norm worked for AGT and Marg and the boys lived out on the homestead from May to October. October found all of them in Grande Prairie where there was running water.

In 1975, after leaving AGT, Norm moved his family out to the homestead, and in 1976 daughter Christine was born. They enjoyed their neighbours in the Puskwaskau, especially the baseball games and hockey on the local dugouts. They built up a herd of cattle and grew wheat and grass seed. Norm's fescue took first prize at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto in 1989. The previous year, in 1988, he had run for the New Democratic Party in opposition to the Conservative Free Trade Deal with the USA.

Norm & Margaret Dyck fonds. -- 1964-2016. -- 43 cm of textual records. -- 58 photographs. -- 1 maps. -- 2 sound recordings.

Biographical Sketch

In 1964, Norman and Margaret Dyck filed on a homestead in the Puskwaskau District north of DeBolt. This was an era when the Alberta Government was opening up more land for homesteading in the Peace Country.

Norm was born in May 1940 to Wilhiem (Bill) Dyck and Helena (Lena Reddekopp) in Three Hills, Alberta. He was living in Red Deer, Alberta in 1963 when he married Margaret Jones, a recently-arrived immigrant from Liverpool, England. The young couple joined forces on the homestead with Norm's father Bill, brother Allen, and cousins Bev and Vern in 1964, but for that first year Norm taught at Sexsmith and Marg opened a hairdressing salon in the back of the teacherage.

Vern and Norm's father Bill had cobbled together an old D7 caterpillar for brush cutting. It was hauled up from Sunnyslope along with an experimental land

Right: Norm Dyck with sons Michael and Steven in the field burning roots, 1971 (SPRA 0598.01.16)

The 1980s also saw many new families move into the Puskwaskau District, but unable to make a go of farming. The Dyck family story in *Bridges to the Past* concludes with, "We would never have believed the changes from the sixties to the nineties, but for belonging to the National Farmers' Union. It, in hindsight, predicted what would happen to Canadian farm families and we owe our survival to that organization, as we arranged our farm to survive these hard time. Surviving was one thing but the isolation as our neighbours left was devastating and so in 1995, we built a house in Grande Prairie." They continued to farm, commuting from Grande Prairie, until they sold out in 2002-2003.

Custodial History

The records were deposited at South Peace Regional Archives by Norman and Margaret Dyck in 2014 to 2016.

Below: Norm and Marg Dyck's Homestead, May 1967 (SPRA 598.01.02)

Right: Marg Dyck on the 55 Massey, ca. 1969 (SPRA 598.01.12)



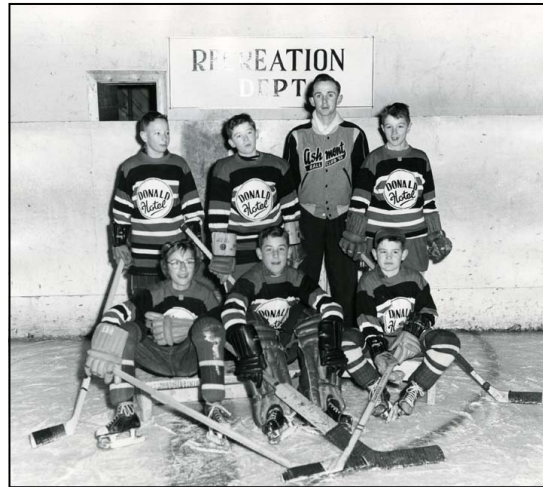
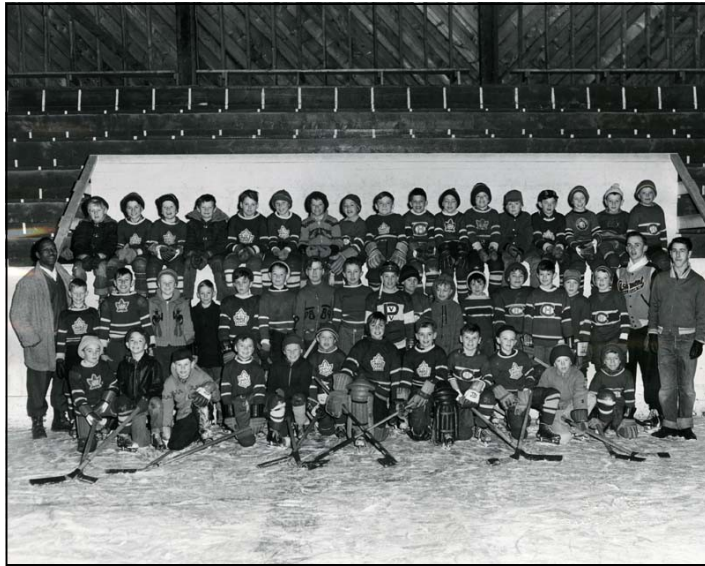
Scope and Content

The fonds consists of textual records, photographs, and sound recordings, divided into the following series: farm and family photographs, personal papers, and farm records. The material covers the family's experience on a family farm, beginning in Calgary with their filing on a homestead in the Puskwaskau area north of DeBolt, NE 13-75-26-W5. It follows their move to Grande Prairie in 1970

and then the move to the homestead in 1975. The fonds includes financial records and activity calendars from 1980-2001 and a scrapbook from 1988 when Norm ran for the NDP party in the federal election. The sound recordings contain Norm and Marg's memories of homesteading in the Puskwaskau area. There is also one reference book *Merchants of Grain* by Dan Morgan, which was removed from the records and added to the Reference Library at the Archives.



Featured Photos: Recreation Department Hockey Teams



Left: Art Craft Studio photograph, ca. 1958 (SPRA 0458.04.03)

Above: Minor Hockey team sponsored by the Donald Hotel and administered by the Grande Prairie Recreation Department, ca. 1958. Back left: David Emerson (SPRA 0458.04.06)

Below: Minor Hockey team sponsored by the York Hotel and administered by the Grande Prairie Recreation Department, ca. 1958. Back row: second from left: ? Van Gitzel; fourth from left: Ken? Pollock. (SPRA 0458.04.05)



In the late 1950s, the Grande Prairie Herald began to report on Minor Hockey games in Grande Prairie and area, first in Dawson Creek, and then on Grande Prairie Minor Hockey in January 1958.

It is evident from these photographs that the Recreation Department of the newly formed City of Grande Prairie was supportive of the Minor Hockey Program, consisting of the 14 & Under All Stars, and the 16 & Under All Stars, from the beginning.

The teams were sponsored by community businesses such as the Donald Hotel, the York Hotel, the Herald Tribune, and Grande Prairie Builders and assisted by many volunteer coaches and managers.

As you can see from our descriptions, there are many unidentified boys in these photographs. If you think you recognize the groups and can help us put names to faces, please drop by the Archives and look at some enlarged copies of the photographs, or call us at 780-830-5105.



Above: Minor Hockey team administered by the Grande Prairie Recreation Department, ca. 1958. From left to right, Ken Eskdale, Michael Lyon?, ?, ?, Ken? Pollock, ?, Terry Gorman, ?, Leigh Ferguson?, ?, ?, ?, Jackie Connolly, Tom Hamilton, Jack Bodding-ton. (SPRA 0458.04.08)

Right: Minor Hockey team sponsored by the Builders Bruins and administered by the Grande Prairie Recreation Department, ca. 1958 (SPRA 0458.04.04)



Above: Art Craft Studio photograph, ca. 1958 (SPRA 0458.04.02)

Above right: Minor Hockey team sponsored by the Herald Tribune and administered by the Grande Prairie Recreation Department, ca. 1958. Middle back: Galen? Head, Cliff Oatway. Front second from left: Greg Remple. (SPRA 0458.04.07)

Right: Art Craft Studio photograph, ca. 1958 (SPRA 0458.04.01)



A Lumberjack Remembers

By Phil Nilsson

Our serial this year will feature excerpts from A Lumberjack Remembers, written by Phil Nilsson. Phil is the grandson of Peter and Johanna Nilsson, who emigrated from Sweden in 1906. Phil was born on March 8, 1920 in Battle Lake, Alberta to Peter and Johanna's son Nils Hjalmar and his wife Harriet. This excerpt begins in September of 1947, when Phil came north to Grande Prairie.

In late September 1947, Earl, our friend Edward Abbot, and I left Winfield for Grande Prairie. We drove a 1938 model Chevrolet which I had bought from Edward earlier in the year. We left in the late afternoon and with three drivers we intended to go straight through. This for me seemed very adventurous because I had never been further north than Chisholm before in my life. And for the present, I was so involved in starting our business that I forgot all the negative things that had beset me since receiving my discharge.

Arriving in Grande Prairie at 9:00AM we were surprised to see a live bustling town with more than its fair share of new cars and trucks. This seemed to say to me, this is a more affluent town than I had seen in Alberta previously.

We had breakfast at the Royal Café and then went to the Alberta Rooms, got a couple of rooms, and sacked out till about 2:00PM. Earl and I got up and went to the Grande Prairie Lumber office which was about a half mile west of town then. We met Ernie Ayre, the manager, and his reaction to us was something like this: "I've heard you were good lumberjacks, and you sure look like lumberjacks!" He had already talked to John and Don Cissell about us, and we were dressed in ironman pants, high top boots, pant legs rolled up a few turns, and wore wool plaid shirts over our work shirts. This was common lumberjack attire in those

days. Ernie gave us a good description of a good future with the company if we could fill the bill. He set us up with a trip out to look at the timber for a couple of days, and he also said they were looking for several mills to saw for them, so our prospects were good.

The next morning we met John at the Grande Prairie Lumber office and he had the company jeep ready to take us the 43 miles out into the timber. When we came to the Wapiti River, everybody was real thirsty and stopped to have a drink of water. John said jokingly to us, "You guys are hooked, because the legend has it that once you drink from the Wapiti you will keep returning over and over again for more of it."

The road to the mill was very narrow, in fact, so narrow that during the winter the traffic went out early in the morning, returning to town by noon, went out again in early afternoon, returning mid-afternoon and later. This one-way rule was in effect for everyone that used the road. We got stuck a couple of times and had to winch ourselves out. We arrived at the Camp #1 mill at almost noon, so the trip was a slow one with many detours around a multitude of swamps and bogs that with winter freeze-up the haul road went over. Waiting for the dinner gong outside the cookhouse we ran into Don Cissell who was Cat foreman at Camp #1. It was good to see him because I had not seen him since before he joined the army.

That afternoon the bush foreman, Bob Latham, took us out to look at the timber we were being offered to log and saw. Were we ever surprised! The timber was solid spruce and there were miles and miles of it. The terrain had a gentle slope to the east which would be good for logging to a mill situated near the edge of the east side of the timber berth. Another

plus for us was there was a camp formerly used by Hystad Brothers which was ours for the asking. We stayed at Camp #1 that night. This gave us an opportunity to visit with Don Cissell and Bob Latham and discuss the logging situation with them. It seemed necessary from these discussions that we would need a Caterpillar to successfully log these big spruce trees in the area we were to log. Of course, this was a problem because we didn't have a Cat anymore.

The next day, we left early and went to look at the camp we had been offered, and found that the roofs on the buildings were reasonably good, but they required windows and repairs to the doors and some of the walls. But this would sure be a saving to us in getting started and we were quite elated about our good fortune. The only problem was the mill would be a half to three-quarters of a mile away from the camp. Ernie Ayre came out that afternoon to see if we would take the offer. We told him we would, and he said, "I'll go back to town right away and get the lawyer to draw up a contract. You fellows spend the rest of today looking around a bit more and John will come and pick you up in the morning."

Early the next day John came and picked us up at the mill and we were in the office in town by 11:00AM. We told Ernie Ayre we would need a Caterpillar tractor of some kind, and that we would need financing of the total cost of it, because our money

was all tied up in the cost of sawing Mickleberry's lumber. He said he would have to talk to Mr. Ross in Edmonton, who was president and owner of Grande Prairie Lumber, and he would have an answer for us after lunch. We left for lunch and afterwards went down to the office of the N.A. Railways to find out what a flat car would cost us for moving the sawmill from Winfield to Grande Prairie.

Back to the Grande Prairie Lumber office after lunch we were glad to learn that Mr. Ross agreed we should have a Caterpillar for skidding. We were to go and find a suitable Cat, phone Ernie Ayre of the details, and if he agreed it was a good deal he would send a cheque for it right away. We were to pay for this machine in ten equal payments out of our future logging and sawing income. We then told him how much it would cost us for the flat car to transport the mill and asked him to pick up the tab for this also. We were, in retrospect, real brassy, but dead serious about getting our business started at Grande Prairie. We signed all the contracts and agreements on all we had discussed, pocketed them, and left for Pendryl later that afternoon.

We were jubilant with the assumed success of our three days in Grande Prairie. Once rested after our trip, we got busy right away getting ready to fulfill our contract to saw lumber at Grande Prairie. I made arrangements with the railroad to get us a flat car put on the siding at Winfield so we could load the sawmill on it. Earl and Leo, who owned a truck together in a partnership, then began hauling the mill out and loading it on the flat car. This was quite difficult because the roads into where the mill was still sitting was quite muddy, but they persevered and in a few days everything was loaded, tied down, and the flat car was on its way to Grande Prairie.



Unidentified men at a lumber camp, ca. 1940 (from the Hans Arnold & Isabella Christianson fonds SPRA 483.01.40-06)

Explore the History South of Halcourt Ridge

By Pat Wearmouth

The “Explore the History” section of our newsletter focuses on rural communities that were once more active than they are today. In this age of urbanization and centralization, it is easy to forget that the history of the South Peace Region is found in these places. Settlers arriving throughout the first half of the last century settled largely in the countryside. They made their living farming or utilizing natural resources the region offered. Distance, time, and poor roads were often obstacles to travel, so once arrived, people tended to work and play locally.

As transportation improved, services centralized. The small communities faded as commercial places, but often do remain as focal points for social activities.

In this issue, we explore an area south of the Halcourt Ridge. This is a local name for the height of land that separates the watershed of the Beaverlodge River from that of the Red Willow River southwest of the town of Beaverlodge. The area contains four communities, Halcourt, Hinton Trail, Elmworth, and Rio Grande. The communities are found along the four sides of a rectangle created by the road system. They are spaced out reflecting the original need of settlers to have services within reasonable distance for travel by foot, horse, or early motor vehicles.

Unlike many small places in the South Peace area, these settlements did not have rail service. This meant that farm and other commodities had to be hauled a substantial distance to Beaverlodge, and incoming freight hauled back from there or Grande Prairie. With horse and wagon, or the small trucks available at the time, this could be a major time commitment, and would not be undertaken regularly. The situation ensured that services such as stores, schools, churches, and blacksmith shops were needed, and thus provided, within the communities.

The first settlers arrived in the area before the 1910 land survey made major settlement possible. Once

surveyed though, the area filled quickly and within 10 years was almost fully occupied.

Secondary Highway 722 is the main road over the Halcourt Ridge. If you are coming from either direction on Highway 43, you have two choices. Either turn west onto Secondary Highway 667 southeast of Beaverlodge and connect with 722; or begin at the south end of Beaverlodge and turn west and then south onto 722 itself. Either choice will have you arriving at the junction of 667 and 722 on a paved road. From here, the route will be about 60 km long and you will arrive back at this junction.

The first point of interest is found about 2 km south of this junction. Note the sign for the McNaught homestead on the right, now managed as a Provincial Historical Site by a volunteer society. You are welcome to drive into the farm yard to look at several original buildings that still exist. Charles and Eliza McNaught, settlers from Ontario, arrived here in 1912 with their four daughters and one son. Besides the assortment of buildings used in farming, the McNaught farm boasted basketball, tennis, and clock golf courts.

All the children became teachers in local schools, and one daughter, Euphemia, studied art with the Group of Seven in Ontario, and became a well-known Peace Country artist. Her studio, a former schoolhouse, sits in the yard. If time is available to you, some of her art is hung in the Beaverlodge Culture Centre.

Follow 722 as it curves west along a correction line. As you go through the curve, weather permitting, you should have a clear view of another local landmark, that being Nose Mountain to the south. It is not actually a mountain, but rather a ridge that runs east west for many miles, then drops abruptly into the valley of Nose Creek. The silhouette of the drop off resembles to some, a nose.

You will then pass the homestead land of Harry Halcourt Walker after whom the district is named,

and shortly see a white church on the right. This is the Halcourt Methodist (United) church on Halcourt Hill. A half kilometer detour to the south on the range road opposite will take you past the site of the first Halcourt School and Post Office, and on to the Halcourt Cemetery. Benches allow one to sit and take in the mountain views to the south and west.

Return to 722 and proceed west to the next curve. At this intersection, which is the beginning of a loop, you can make a choice to proceed in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. This article is based on the latter, so turn north for a short distance and follow the curve west onto the Township Road (TR) 710 alignment. Originally this was a “T” intersection.

Immediately, you are looking at the remains of the Hamlet of Halcourt. The two most obvious buildings are the school and a small log building that was the blacksmith shop. The map illustrates the locations of several other building that existed during Halcourt’s heyday starting in the 1920s. Funnell’s store was a busy place which included the post office, lumberyard, and gas station. Halcourt also included a curling rink, an Orangeman’s Hall, and some other buildings.

Inevitably, small rural communities have stories to tell. Halcourt is no exception. One of the more interesting ones is about a supposed kidnapping. Just north of the school was the homestead of Robert and Fern Shaw. In 1913, 14 year old Mildred Shaw ran away with Asa Hunting, a local trapper. It was presumed that she had been kidnapped and the Royal Northwest Mounted Police spent two months of winter searching for and arresting Hunting near present day Grande Cache. Although he was found guilty, the couple went on to marry and have children.

More on the story can be found in Robert Guest’s book, *Trail North*. Our route will take us to this trail (the Hinton Trail) a bit later. Robert is another well-known artist from the South Peace area.

Proceed west from Halcourt along TR 710 approximately 11 km to Range Road (RR) 121 and turn south. Rio Grande is about 1 1/2 km. down this road.

Before there were any buildings or even a name, Rio Grande area settlers would gather every year for a Sports Day or Rodeo. This began in 1916, and this article you are reading was written during the 100th anniversary year of the Rio Grande Rodeo.

The actual hamlet had its beginnings in the winter of 1917-18 when St. Patrick’s church was built. That same winter, a school was built about two miles to the northeast of the church. The school served as the centre of education until the 1950s, and as with many rural communities, the centre of community life.

In 1919 a post office was built and a name was required. One settler, hailing from Texas, suggested the well-known river in that State, and Rio Grande is indeed named after the river that divides the United States and Mexico.

The map indicates the buildings that made up the community. Besides the existing church, cemetery, and hall, there was MacDonnell’s store and Alphonse Cook’s (who ran the store) house, and a rectory. The Rio Grande Rodeo, which had been held in various local places until 1927, settled on using the Red Willow River flats just south of the Hamlet.

Take a moment to stop and read the story board outside the hall. Rio Grande was a jumping off point for the volunteer crews that built the Monkman Pass Road through the Rocky Mountains to the west in the 1930s. It is an interesting story. The book *People of the Pass* records the story in detail, and is available locally.

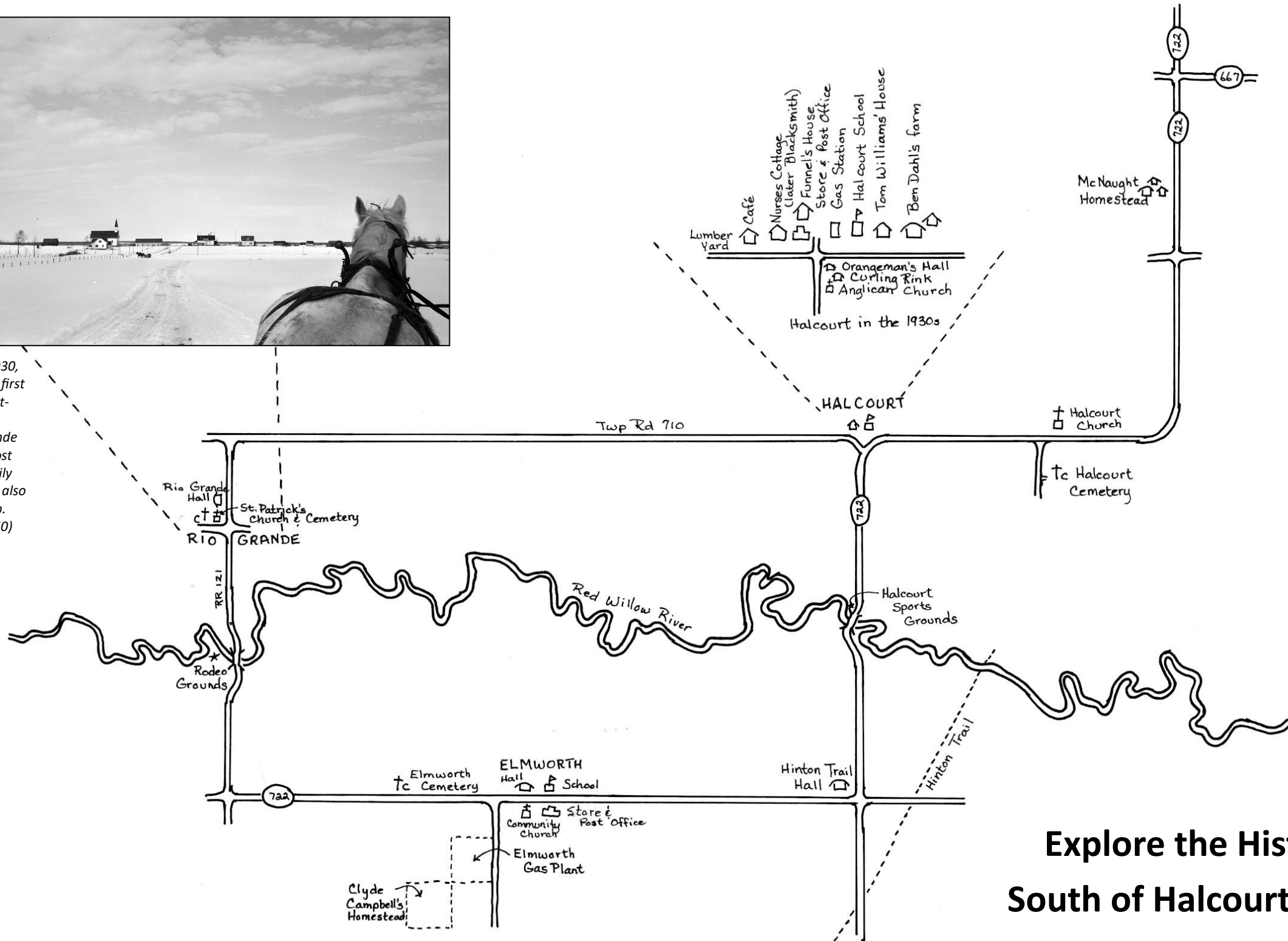
As you continue south, you will cross the Red Willow River for the first time, and see the Rodeo grounds on your right. Proceed south a few more km until you come to the intersection of RR 121 and Hwy 722.

Turn left at this intersection onto the pavement. Elmworth is about 5 km east of here. As you proceed, keep your eye open for the Elmworth cemetery on the left (north) side of the road. If you also look south between RR 115 and 114, you will see the Elmworth gas plant. This plant exists because of drilling programs carried out initially by a company called Canadian Hunter in the mid-1970s. They drilled some

Continued on page 22



Rio Grande ca. 1930, from left to right: first log Church; St. Patrick's Church and Rectory; Rio Grande Hall; Store and Post Office; Cook Family Home. There was also a blacksmith shop. (SPRA 1998.27.350)



**Explore the History
South of Halcourt Ridge**

Hythe... Back in the Day

By Grace Wideman

“No, I won’t be able to help with the Homecoming this summer,” was my reply to the gentleman on the phone. “I’ve had a knee replacement and am recuperating from that and a few months to prepare isn’t enough time to do it properly.” I thought that was the end to the Hythe Homecoming story but in the beginning of April I got another phone call from the same gentleman asking if we planned it for the summer of July, 2016, would I help then with the preparations, to which I said yes. We had our first planning meeting April 25, 2015 and I along with another lady headed up the Archives and Artifacts Committee.

Previously in the early winter of 2014 I kept getting this idea that I should look up some info on the Hythe Indoor Rodeo, when did it start and end, why did it start, who was involved. I had a lot of questions about it but had no answers as my dad, who was very involved in it, had passed away a few years before. I knew there were advertising posters hung on the wall in his shop at the farm and there were a few of the original men who had helped with the rodeo that I could possibly get some info from. I sent out an e-mail to my siblings and got a bit of info from them and then got in touch with Jarvis Shail, who had been involved originally when the Mustangs started the rodeo till the end when the Elks had taken over the running of it. Jarvis and Wayne Swanson, who had been the Treasurer of the Indoor Rodeo when the Elks ran it, told me the history of the

Right: Bird's eye view of Hythe, Alberta seen from the southwest in 1929. The Donald Hotel is on the far right. (SPRA 610.01.20)



Rodeo. That was the start of my quest to find out all I could about the rodeo and my little town of Hythe.

I felt impressed to do the history of the businesses that had been in Hythe from the time Hythe was in its original spot on the Beaverlodge River in 1917 to where the new location of Hythe was moved to when the railroad came through, one mile east, to 1969, the year the Beaverlodge School and the Hythe School integrated.

I proceeded to get in touch with people who had lived in the district for a long time, or whose parents had history in the town, and who were willing to let me take their family photos, documents and stories home to enter them into my stories. I started by going online to www.ourfutureourpast, a web page where early Herald Tribune newspapers were digitally scanned up to 1948. I also researched at the Daily Herald Tribune, the South Peace Regional Archives, and the library in Grande Prairie. It took over fifteen months to research the information, add it to my computer files, and look for photos that I could use on my display boards. It was like a full time job with overtime as there were many nights I would still be



Left: Hythe train station, ca. 1930 (SPRA 637.02.01.087)

entering information well after ten in the evening. I was later told that it was the equivalent of a Masters Degree in History. While doing the research, I kept wondering how I was going to display all the articles and photos and finally decided to make four pockets on the middle part of a trifold display board (cardboard) and use the flaps for mounting pictures. I also included original advertising and articles from the newspapers for folks to see how the paper described events in the days gone by. The biggest draw for people to come to Hythe was the flowing wells and the excellent wheat crops the farmers could grow in the area. At one point the town fathers thought that Hythe might become a city. I did ask different family members or interested parties, whose parents or grandparents operated businesses in Hythe, to write about the family business and included them as well.

I also decided to have albums of obituaries of people who have lived in Hythe or the area on display, which was very well received. I also had been collecting school photos from everyone I could and had them enlarged; some dated back to 1931. As time approached for the Homecoming I

Right: Hythe in 1959 (SPRA 637.02.01.007)



didn’t know if I had enough information and photos or if it would look okay, but by the response of the ones coming back home for a visit I needn’t have worried. I had twenty-three tables for the displays with a few collectible items that represented the businesses that were on display. I had volunteers, who for two days put photos on the walls and helped set up the display tables. One display table was of the Mustangs with the original coat of Jack Oakford, who had pinned all his hockey buttons on it. People were lined up at tables to read the info about the businesses and look at the picture wall. We decided to reopen on Sunday afternoon for people to come and look some more; they hadn’t gotten enough on Saturday. It was a very good weekend and the positive comments from our homecomers was beyond what I could have imagined. I am in the process of taking the display apart and will be taking the photos and some of the information to the Hythe Historical Society next spring for storage. It is my goal to put all the stories about the businesses into a book, as so many have asked for that. It would be good to have a coffee table book to pick up and read for fun.

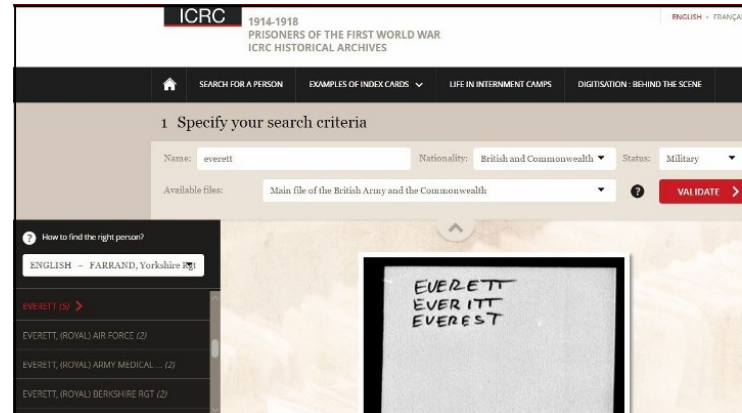
Researching a Prisoner of War

By Kaylee Dyck

Since I began working on the WWI Soldiers' Memorial at SPRA, my list of frequently used online sources has grown from about two to more than thirty. There are so many incredible websites pertaining to Canadian soldiers in the First World War. One of my latest and most exciting discoveries is the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) Prisoners of the First World War archives (www.grandeguerre.icrc.org).

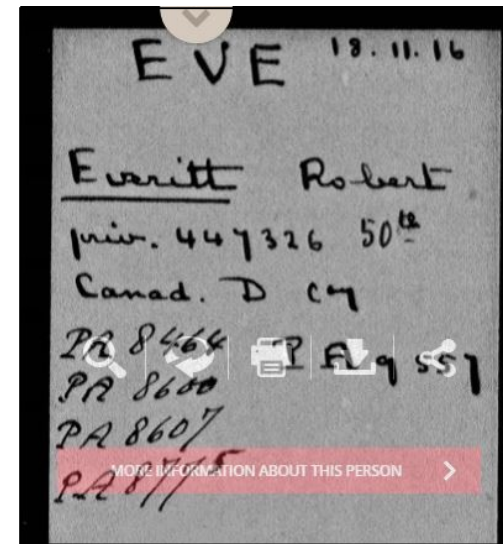
I stumbled across this site while researching Pte. Robert Last Everett, a soldier who settled near Woking after the war. In Pte. Everett's digitized service file (found online at Library and Archives Canada) there was mention of him being captured by the Germans, and I thought it would be neat to see those records and track his journey from camp to camp. I googled something along the lines of "WWI POW Records" and voila, there it was. I could have jumped for joy.

The website is fairly simple and straightforward, although the arrangement used to display the results can be a little confusing at first. There's a search bar right on the home page where you can type in the surname of the POW you're searching for, or you can click "Search for a Person" on the menu at the top and then enter the name (both methods take you to the same place and give you the same results). Be sure to search by surname only. If the POW you are searching for was a soldier in a non-Commonwealth army, change the option in the Nationality tab. Change it to the country in whose army the soldier served, not where he was born. In the Status tab, you will find only two choices: Military or Civilian. The options in the last tab (Available Files) change, depending on



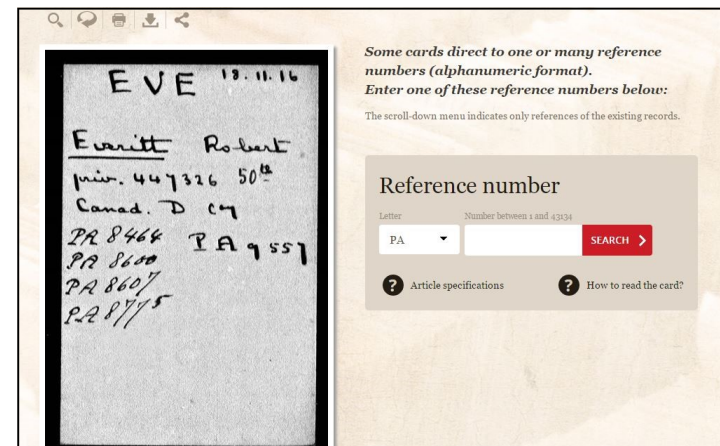
what nationality you chose. This final tab helps you to narrow down the results if you know in what country your POW was held.

Now that you've searched, it's time to filter through the results. It really helps if you know what unit the POW was a part of. I would also suggest clicking on the little question mark labelled "How to find the right person." It'll give you a number of useful tips and tricks for finding the right POW. As you scroll through the results on the left hand side, you'll see that the soldiers are organized by unit, but luckily the Canadians are in their own little category, so in the case of Pte. Everett, I didn't even have to know the name of his unit. I clicked on "EVERETT, CANADIANS



(4)" and it took me to the index cards for the four Canadians by that surname. The index cards are in alphabetical order, so I found Robert Everett at the end. Hovering over the card, a number of options pop up. Click on "More Information About This Person." Once you've done this, you will again find those handy little question marks which will lead you to an excellent explanation of how to interpret the cards (I would have been lost without this help).

The numbers beginning with "PA" or "R" are the reference numbers you use to find out at which camps your POW was held. ICRC makes this search very simple by having the search bar ready and waiting right on the current page. When you enter



one of these reference numbers, it will take you to the record book (I'm not sure of the official name for these books) of the prisoner of war camp where your POW was held. Not only that, but it takes you to the exact page where the name and information of the soldier you searched for is on. ICRC has been kind enough to provide an Abbreviations Glossary to help translate these pages. You will find the link on the right hand side.

Stb. Nr.	b) (Name mit der Nationalität) oder bei dritter Nationalität	Dienstgrad	a) (Stempel) b) (Stempel) c) (Stempel)	b) (Ort und Name des Lagerplatzes) c) (Ort und Name des Lagerplatzes)	b) (Adresse des nächsten Verwandten)
164	Edwards Arthur	Gen.	1. Sonnet	St. 2. Sonnet	St. 2. Sonnet
165	Edwards James	Corp.	17. Sonnet	St. 17. Sonnet	St. 17. Sonnet
166	Edwards Dagmar	Gen.	20. Sonnet	St. 20. Sonnet	St. 20. Sonnet
167	Ellis Alfred	Gen.	15. Sonnet	St. 15. Sonnet	St. 15. Sonnet
168	Ellis John	Gen.	16. Sonnet	St. 16. Sonnet	St. 16. Sonnet
169	Ellis Victor	Gen.	17. Sonnet	St. 17. Sonnet	St. 17. Sonnet
170	Emerson Danie	Gen.	18. Sonnet	St. 18. Sonnet	St. 18. Sonnet
171	Emmerson William	Gen.	19. Sonnet	St. 19. Sonnet	St. 19. Sonnet
172	Everett Robert	Gen.	30. Sonnet	St. 30. Sonnet	St. 30. Sonnet

A lot of information can be gathered about prisoners of war through these records, such as their date and location of capture, the names and locations of the camps where they were held, and personal information such as birth dates and names of next-of-kin. But not only can you search for specific individuals on this website, it also contains a selection of personal accounts, camp reports, maps, photos, and a wealth of fascinating information about life in internment camps.

The First Burial in the Glen Leslie Cemetery: Grace Howard (Brookbank) Parker (1891–1914)

By Wanda Zenner

In November 1913, the Presbyterian Church of Canada had been granted ten acres on which to build a church and plot a cemetery in the Glen Leslie area by the Department of the Interior.

James and Annie (McKinnon) Brookbank were married on May 3, 1881 in Wingham, Ontario. A daughter, Grace Howard Brookbank, was born on June 6, 1891 in Park Head, Ontario. Grace was named after her paternal grandmother, Grace Howard. Grace married Frederick James Parker, a jeweler by trade, on December 30, 1908 in Shallow Lake, Ontario. A daughter, Mary Isabel, was born on December 10, 1910 in Shallow Lake.

In 1912, James Brookbank, a blacksmith by trade, had succumbed to the lure of “Last Great West” and decided to move his family to Northern Alberta. He would have been 54 in June of 1912, when he filed on a homestead for SE 32-71-2-W6 in the Bezanson area by the Smoky River and was on the land in March 1913. The family lived in a tent while constructing a log home. James received the patent on the property in February 1916.

His son-in-law, Fred Parker, had come west earlier and filed a homestead application on W ½ 33-71-2-W6 in July 1911. The family was on the land in August 1911. The homestead record stated Fred also worked in Edson and Ontario on farms while proving up his land. The family settled into the routine of homestead life; building a home, barn and other outbuildings along with fences to keep the livestock close at hand. Land was broken and cultivated with a few acres being seeded. Grace was very busy with a young daughter and maintaining the farm when Fred would seek employment off the farm to subsidize their income. Shortly after the family arrived, Grace became ill and was diagnosed with Tubercular Peritonitis by Dr. Annie Higbee.

The August 5, 1913 issue of the Grande Prairie Herald reported: “Mrs. Parker of the Smoky, who has been in poor health for some time past, underwent an operation at the hospital here last Thursday. Her condition is very critical and little hope for her recovery is held out by the attending physicians.”

The September 23, 1913 issue of the Grande Prairie Herald reported: “Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Brookbank and little granddaughter, Isabel Parker of the Smoky, spent Sunday at the hospital with their daughter, Mrs. F.J. Parker.”

Grace passed away at home on April 11, 1914 after an illness that lasted nearly two years with her husband by her side. What a sad time for the young family as they had just embarked upon an exciting new life when tragedy struck. She had been a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church. The funeral was held at the family residence with interment taking place in the Glen Leslie Cemetery - Grace being the first burial that occurred in the Cemetery.

The homestead of Grace’s parents, located relatively close to the Old Bezanson Townsite, was known far and wide as the “blueberry patch” on the flats by the Smoky River. The first of the annual May 24th Bezanson Community Picnics was held on the Brookbanks’ flat in 1914. That must have been very difficult for the family as it had only been one month since Grace passed away. As such, it would appear that the Brookbank and the Parker families were very community minded.

Grace’s husband Fred continued on, as evidenced with articles found in the local newspaper, one of which on September 22, 1914 stated, “Fred Parker is erecting a store and ½ building at Bezanson for a jewelry store.” Following which on August 24, 1915 - “Fred Parker & William Stobie have installed a first class restaurant in connection with Mr. Parker’s

Right: Isabel Parker Ringo’s grave in the Nowata Memorial Cemetery in Bartlesville, Oklahoma

rooming house to better accommodate the traveling public.”

It is not known where the Brookbank family or Fred Parker relocated to as they could not be found on the 1916 Census of the Prairie Provinces. However, as the Brookbanks received the patent on their land in February 1916, they probably sold it and moved before the 1916 census took place. As the railway did not pass through the Townsite of Bezanson but rather entered Grande Prairie from the north in March 1916, perhaps that explains why Fred Parker decided to sell his business and his land as he had received the patent on it in December 1915. Unfortunately, all in the name of progress, the homesteads of the Parker and Brookbank families are being excavated as a gravel pit.

Annie Brookbank wrote a letter to Mrs. Leslie (Dorothy) from Bartlesville, Oklahoma but the year was not written on the correspondence. However, it did state that Isabel was still working and that they did not have any contact with Fred. As such you would assume that the Brookbanks took their granddaughter with them and raised her when they left the Bezanson area. James and Annie Brookbank passed away in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, USA – James in December 1932 and Annie in October 1945, both being buried in the Nowata Memorial Cemetery. Isabel married Robert Ringo in July 1933 in Caney, Kansas so the family would probably have been living



there at that time. The 1940 US Census listed Isabel and Robert as living in Bartlesville and stated they had been there since 1935. They had four children, two boys and two girls. Isabel passed away in November 2003 at the age of 92 at Bartlesville; Robert Ringo had passed away in April 1981 also at Bartlesville. Both are buried in the Nowata Memorial Cemetery.

An obituary was found in the December 4, 1951 issue of the Edmonton Journal for a Frederick James Parker. The date of birth on the headstone was August 15, 1885 – the same date that was listed as birth year on Grace and Fred Parker’s marriage certificate. Further information stated that he was born in Wiaraton, Ontario; again, the same information that was found on the headstone. There was no mention of Grace or Isabel Parker in this Frederick James Parker obituary but if this is the same Mr. Parker, it would appear that he did marry again and had a son, William, and a daughter, Norma.

The Brookbanks were known to be very kind and gentle, therefore you could assume that their daughter Grace would possess the same qualities. Although Grace’s life ended far too soon, she will always be remembered in the Community as the first burial in the Cemetery. It is also heart-warming to know that her daughter Isabel married, had a family, and lived a very long life. Grace probably has many great-grandchildren and who knows, maybe one of them was named after her.



Left: Grace Howard (Brookbank) Parker’s grave in the Glen Leslie Cemetery

Continued from page 13

very deep (for the time) gas wells into a geologic formation called the Deep Basin, an underground gas reservoir found under northwest Alberta and northeast BC. The subsequent gas finds were a significant part of the South Peace area's industrial development.

Quite near the gas plant is the location of Clyde Campbell's homestead where he lived with his family from 1919 to 1928. Clyde was the father of Isabel Campbell, a well-known historian of the Grande Prairie area. The South Peace Regional Archives holds her collection of historical documents including years of the Daily Herald Tribune articles.

As you arrive at the western edge of the Elmworth community, note a large brown barn to the south. In the early years, this was owned by the Brewer family and the place was locally known as the Brewery. It was the social centre of the area where most community events were held – church, meetings, demonstrations, and election polls. It was headquarters for district nurses, ministers, and teachers.

From here the map indicates other buildings as they were. The Elmworth school, curling rink, and store are still active.

Proceed east from here to the Hinton Trail Hall which is about 6 km along.

The community of Hinton Trail is centered at the four way stop as 722 turns north. It is so named because a trail of the same name runs just to the east of the community hall.

The Hinton Trail was one of the very earliest means of travelling from the Yellowhead and Jasper National Park area of Alberta to the Peace River Country. Originally, it would have been a route taken by Aboriginals to travel and trade as part of the nomadic lifestyle they lived.

As Europeans arrived, they also used the trail as a way to get into the northwest part of Alberta. The trail was never more than a horse packing and

sometimes wagon route, so it was used for travel rather than moving any amount of freight. The trail began at what is now the junction of Hwy 40 and Hwy 16. It is largely overlain with Hwy 40 until it reaches Grande Cache. From there, though, the trail went west and north, coming over the Nose and crossing the Wapiti River south of Hinton Trail. From there it proceeded to the Grande Prairie where it branched out to Saskatoon Lake and northeastern BC. A large steel marker of the trail can be seen about a mile east of the Hall, in a private farmyard lawn to the north of the road.

The previously mentioned artist, Robert Guest, was raised south of the Hall. His book *Trail North* includes many scenes and several stories of the historical trail. During the 1930s and 40s, the Trail was used as a route for people taking trail riding holidays out to Nose Mountain and beyond.

The map indicates the buildings of the community over the years. These included a post office, a store, and at one time a planer mill. The Craigellachie School which served the community was located farther east and south of the intersection.

After turning, proceed north to complete the loop back at the Halcourt corner. About halfway there you will again cross the Red Willow River. The river runs east and south from here, picking up the Beaverlodge River at a fork, and then moving on to the Wapiti River which leads eventually to the Peace River and on to the Arctic Ocean.

At the north end of the bridge off to the left, you will see an open field. This is known as the Halcourt or Red Willow sports grounds. It was the site of many sports days and ball games in the past. People still use the place as a campground and a place to cool off on hot summer days. Recently, a major dinosaur fossil find was made just across the river in the south bank of the river.

Proceeding up the hill out of the Red Willow valley soon takes you back to the start of the loop. As you follow 722 back east then north, notice the gentle valley of the Beaverlodge River as you break over the hill with the view to the north. Saskatoon Mountain off to the northeast is a well-known landmark.

OGOPOGO AT RYCROFT
 The hamlet of Rycroft is accustomed to scares of various natures, especially in the wee sma' hours of the morning, which on being investigated usually turn out to be cows turning over the garbage, and drinking your soft water from the barrels. But the one we got last week was the most startling of the lot.

There is a dam in the vicinity of the hospital building which is private and forbidden to the public but occasionally used to fill up barrels of soft water by some of the more daring.

Some children raised an alarm by crying out down the main street that a submarine had appeared in the dam. Others declared that it was an airplane with floats on. Others declared that it was a strange creature of the unnamed variety and viewed from a distance it could have been voted a submarine by the majority of the onlookers, because it was a partially submerged object with a conning tower and a periscope on the upper structure, but still not as symmetrical in style as a submarine would appear.

Rifles of 22 calibre were dug out, as also were 12-gauge shot-guns, but when they were all arraigned, there were no shells available, and as there was no time to connect with the War-time Prices and Trades Board to obtain a permit, the guns had to be discarded. However, a strategical scheme was drawn up. A force was to advance on a frontal attack, another was to make a right flank attack and another to make a left flank attack, and whichever force could make a rush attack they were to do so, but not to unnecessarily expose themselves.

From the Blog

By Kathryn Auger

This story took place at a dam near the hospital in Rycroft. While saying that an Opopogo had been seen in the dam was an exaggeration, the story itself is pretty funny. It does point out, though, the difficulties in adjusting between two modes of transportation.

In Memoriam



SPRA is extremely sad to announce the passing of our friend and volunteer, Kathryn Auger.

Kathryn began volunteering at the Archives in January 2011 when we were looking for someone to help transcribe the Isabel Campbell Index to the Grande Prairie newspapers. Those databases on our website are a result of her dedication.

The newspaper project introduced Kathryn to the Grande Prairie newspapers online, and she loved reading them, finding funny stories and tidbits about people she knew, and contacting friends whose family names she found in the paper.

This led, in July 2013, to Kathryn beginning the "This Week in History" blog for our website. She developed a tremendous following and it was not unusual for Kathryn's posts to reach thousands of people. The top blog was "Escaped Lion Shot at Rycroft" in September 2016, which reached 9,931 people.

Kathryn loved writing this blog, and her stories and laughter will be greatly missed by staff and fellow volunteers at the Archives.

Her last post was on January 31, 2017. She became ill a few days later and passed away on February 7, 2017.

The plan worked out good. The party making the frontal attack ad lots of cover and when about 20 yards from the object made a rush and captured the object and two prisoners ashore. What had made up the periscope was a man, standing on the top of a light delivery truck, which was up to the roof in the dam, and the man shouting "Save me! Save me!"

One of the prisoners who was ashore immediately told us that she would tell us everything, the two being girls. She said the driver of the truck had gone to get a barrel of water and he was backing up the truck, and as he had driven horses and a dray for years, when he wanted the truck to stop he forgot himself and commenced to yell "Whoa! Whoa!" instead of shutting off the gas and applying the brakes and consequently he had given the truck a bath.

The truck was brought back to shore and no ill effects were suffered except that all the oil had to be changed and the truck regreased.

The moral is shut off your gas in time or keep away from dams (as numerous repetitions of the latter word were very prevalent on this occasion). Horses for me from today and evermore.

The Herald-Tribune, August 26, 1943



Meet Josephine Sallis: SPRA's New Archivist

endeavor. Working for eight years as a volunteer and project archivist alongside the Librarian, Kenlyn Collins, I processed a variety of records. My favourite was the Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe Inuit Clothing Patterns collection. These two researchers collected over 200 clothing patterns which were created for them by Inuit sewers as a teaching tool. Normally, this skill is transferred and practiced strictly through oral teachings and memory so having patterns that detail how to cut, layout, and piece items is quite unique.

It was difficult to leave my work at the WAG but I am delighted to be joining the archival team at South Peace Regional Archives. My biggest goal is to help increase awareness and use of the archives. I'm looking forward to meeting many of you in the near future to talk about what SPRA can do for you and what you can do for SPRA. Hope to see you soon!

Correction and Apology

In the December 2016 newsletter, we printed a story about World War II Soldier Robert Ernest Nelson (p. 15) using material from an old Remembrance Day poster. We failed to attribute the writing, the research and the source of the photographs to the author, Jane Pilling-Cormick, Ph D.

Ms. Pilling-Cormick is a retired professor who has researched and written the stories of Squadron 405, some of whom came from the Grande Prairie area. She is a good friend of SPRA member Bill Bessent.

Our apologies to Jane, with many thanks for all the interest and effort she has devoted to the stories of WW II soldiers from the Peace Country. Some of her work can be seen on <https://raf-pathfinders.com/405-squadron-the-bessent-twins-and-black-thursday/>.

Opportunities with Friends of the Archives



Are you a golfer? The next Friends fundraising event will be a Charity Golf Tournament.

You can sign up a team! Or be a Sponsor!

Our friends in the photograph above are Gordon Cooper, Dorothy Patterson, and Murray Carlisle golfing in Banff in 1945. (SPRA 399.04.10)

Build on the Past!

Our ancestors did a great job of building the Peace River Country and have left us a land of beauty, character, and economic prosperity.

The Friends of the Archives seeks to show respect for their efforts by providing an Archives facility and collection which will preserve a record of the past.

As a vehicle to provide ongoing success and sustainability for the Archives, Friends are exploring opportunities for fund-raising through

- ◆ Legacy Donations
- ◆ Bequests
- ◆ Endowment Funds

Specifically, we would like the following:

- ◆ Someone who has experience with the language of bequests, annuities, and endowments to help us create the literature. This could be an ad hoc position or a permanent board position.
- ◆ A designer or artistic individual to help us design literature which attracts the reader's attention.
- ◆ Someone who can advise us on legal matters surrounding donations, bequests, and endowments.
- ◆ Event volunteers who can help us organize the next fundraiser: a charity golf tournament.

The Friends meet about six times a year and put on one major fund-raising event. If you are interested in helping on the Friends Board, or as a volunteer, please contact Mary Nutting at 780-830-5105.

If you have any wisdom to offer on any of these avenues, please do not hesitate to contact Mary Nutting at 780-830-5105 or Charlie Penson at 780-539-9029 (after March 30). This is a new venture for us, and we need all the help we can get!

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The holdings 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:

Northfield & Norden Lutheran Church
"Minsterialbogs" and Minute Books, 1916-1961
By Lavern Sorgaard

Sexsmith Milling Co., 1930-1938
Sexsmith Loyal Orange Lodge 2937, 1924-1937
By Julie DeWinter, Sexsmith Museum

1928 Northern Winter Carnival Photograph
By Ray Edey

Rio Grande Rodeo, 100th Anniversary Publication
By Corrine Cowan

Grooming the Grizzly Update, 2014
By Elaine Dick via Karen Burgess

Hythe Homecoming 2016 Photographs
By Grace Wideman

City of GP Department Photo Albums, [1955-2000]
By Charles Taws, Grande Prairie Museum

Spirit River Ag Society Seed Fair Flyer, 1919
By Ray Grimm

Nursing School Photo for Gwen Wilcox Turner, 1947
By Suzanne Dunn

Hythe Indoor Rodeo, 1977-1986
By Grace Wideman

Olsen Family Photographs & Accounts, 1921-[1955]
Sexsmith Post Office documents, 1959-1991
Emmanuel Lutheran Account Books, 1937-1947
By Julie DeWinter, Sexsmith Museum

Peace Parkland Naturalists
By Margot Hervieux

A Note from the Menckes

It's always nice to hear from former volunteers and members. We received the following photo and note at Christmas time and wanted to share it with any who might know Gaston & Marie. Marie is an SPRA Honourary Member who volunteered at the Archives from 2000 to 2013.

Hi Mary & staff, also the volunteers,

It is nice to be back in Falher. We do think a lot of our friends in Grande Prairie. The Archives was a lovely place with such nice people to work with. All things change and life goes on.

Gaston is back doing puzzles and I knit. We play cards, do exercises, and join in when there's entertainment.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and may your holidays be joyful and bright.

Have a happy New Year. God's blessings on you all.

Gaston & Marie



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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