


# TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 9

MARCH 2018

Issue 2



MARRIED IN MCQUEEN:  
100 YEARS OF WEDDINGS

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YOUR  
WEDDING

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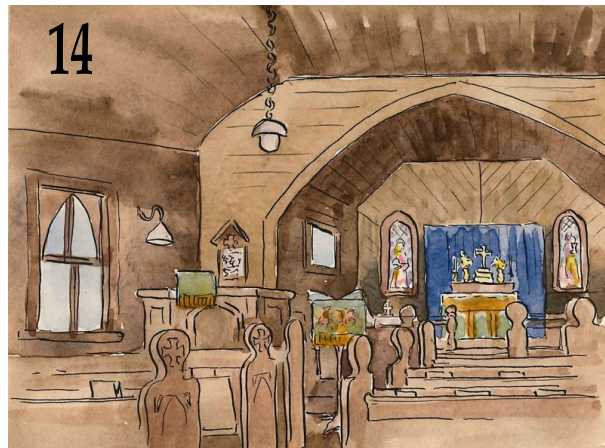
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Cover: Arnold Dryer and Violet Remnant were married August 23, 1945. (SPRA 259.02.01)

**Note on Photographs:** Photographs featured in *Telling Our Stories* are unedited, apart from minimal cropping. In cases where substantial cropping may impact the context of the photograph, this will be noted in the caption.

## A Publication of the South Peace Regional Archives

**Our Vision:** Preserving and Sharing the Past.  
**Our Mission:** The purpose of South Peace Regional Archives is to gather, preserve, and share the historical records of municipalities, organizations, businesses, families, and individuals within the region, both now and in the future.

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## Letter from the Editor

Love is in the air at the Archives! From courtship to honeymoons, this issue of Telling *Our Stories* will explore a range of topics related to weddings.

Curious where it all starts? Learn how researchers trace courtship in military personnel records (pg. 12). Fall in love with Ursula and Dick Lewis through their personal letters (pg. 18). Follow our cover girl, war bride Violet Dryer, as she sets sail across the Atlantic to follow her husband (pg. 6).

Ready for the 'big day?' Explore the local churches where so many brides were wed (pg. 5, 14). Looking to satisfy a sweet tooth? Our article on wedding cake traditions includes a recipe for you to try at home (pg. 8)! Love our featured photographs? This issue showcases wedding dresses (pg. 10) and wedding portraits (pg. 20).

Wondering what comes after the vows are sworn? Consider the lasting historical value of the wedding documents with Archiveology (pg. 21) and the Canada 150 records (pg. 16). Finally, smile as you read about a "most unusual" honeymoon from the Daily Herald Tribune (pg. 24).

As we return to present day, consider incorporating family memories into your own wedding (pg. 11) and preserving your own wedding memories for future generations (pg. 22).

Join us as we celebrate weddings and wedding traditions from days past, for better or worse! We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed writing it.



Alyssa Currie  
SPRA Executive Director

## Take Note

The **Annual General Meeting for the South Peace Regional Archives** is taking place **March 24th** at **10:00am**. Join us at the Archives for continental breakfast, and updates on the Archives activities. This year, the AGM will feature three mini-presentations on the Olwen Sanger-Davies scrapbook. We hope to see you there!

Learn how to pass on your story to future generations at our event with the Grande Prairie Museum on **Monday, March 12th: Documenting Your Life Story**. Call the museum at 780-830-7090 to register.

Take in a "bite" of history with our Culture Bites Lecture at the Public Library on **Monday, March 20th: Family Scrapbooks**. Stay tuned on our Facebook page for more information.

Grande Prairie will be hosting the biennial **Rupert's Land Colloquium** on **May 16-19**. Contact Archivist Josephine Sallis (Archivist@SouthPeaceArchives.org) for more information.

*The McQueen Presbyterian Church was the first Protestant Church to be erected in Grande Prairie. Founded by Rev. Alexander Forbes, it was dedicated on October 8, 1911 and served until 1925. (SPRA 1969.39.960.06)*



# Married in McQueen: 100 Years of Weddings

On June 18, 1918, Gertrude (Trudy) Bezanson and Herbert (Herb) Mattinson became the first couple to wed in the McQueen Presbyterian Church. 2018 marks 100 years of joyous nuptials in this historic Church.

Trudy and Herb's wedding was officiated by Rev. A. Forbes. Percy Bezanson and Gladys Thompson served as best man and bridesmaid, respectively. Family and friends gathered to share their well-wishes with the couple. Year later, Trudy reminisced on the occasion in an interview with the Daily Herald Tribune:

*"The wedding was the talk of the town for years – a real gown' and sumptuous feast for the reception 'all cooked by my mother and grandmother.' A year later they honeymooned – Banff and Lake Louise plus a stay at the luxurious Hotel MacDonald in Edmonton – 'fancy formal dinners with orchestras playing, velvet couches and chairs in the rooms,' Trudy recalls" (DHT, 20 June 1986).*



*A happy couple celebrates their wedding in McQueen Presbyterian Church, ca. 1990, after its relocation to the Grande Prairie Heritage Village (SPRA 001.08.06.02.08.02)*



*The first wedding in McQueen Presbyterian Church, 1918. (SPRA 1986.24.1)*

In the mid-1970s, the McQueen Presbyterian Church was relocated to its current location in the Grande Prairie Museum's Heritage Village. In October 1976, the Museum records noted the first wedding held in the church after it was moved. We do not know whose wedding was celebrated, nor do we have photographs of the event.

The McQueen Presbyterian Church continues to serve as a wedding venue in its current location in the Grande Prairie Museum's Heritage Village. Each year, approximately 8 couples say their "I do"s in the historic Church during the summer months. The administrative records of the Grande Prairie Museum held in the Archives contain some photographs of weddings in the church, mainly from the late 1980s to 1990s.

Did you or someone you know celebrate a wedding in the McQueen Presbyterian Church? By donating your photographs to the South Peace Regional Archives, you can contribute to the 100 year history of weddings in this church.



# Cover Girl: Violet Dryer



Violet Remnant met her future husband, Arnold Dryer, at a dance in the village hall in Wrecclesham, Surrey. Arnold was stationed at that time at a Canadian army base located a short distance away in Aldershot, and his squadron was billeted in the nearby village of Rowledge. Vi was won over by the very attractive young man in uniform. After Arnold's squadron was moved, they wrote letters to each other for the duration of the war.

When the war ended, they were worried that Arnold could be sent home at any time so they decided to get married. As Vi was under 21, she needed her parents' consent. With only four days notice, Violet and Arnold planned their wedding. "We still needed clothing coupons to buy new clothes," Vi remembered. "I bought a royal blue dress, and my mother used seven of her own coupons to buy Arnold some Oxford shoes. There was no way she was going to let him go up the aisle in army boots!"

Above: Vi Remnant in uniform, 1943 (SPRA 259.02.05)

At the time, Arnold was in Holland and was late getting back for the wedding. Vi and Arnold were married on August 23, 1945 in Wrecclesham's Methodist church. There were approximately thirty people in attendance, including members of Vi's family, friends, and neighbors.

After the marriage, Arnold was indeed sent back to Canada where he returned to farming in the Hermit Lake area west of Grande Prairie. Vi waited approximately ten months for permission from the Canadian Wives Bureau to join him. She had to be ready to leave with only a few days' notice.

On June 24, 1946 Violet and Betty Eskdale sailed on the *Aquitania* bound for Canada. Vi's sister-in-law, Pat Dryer and her young child sailed on a separate ship for wives and their babies. The food onboard the *Aquitania* was marvelous, but there was no fresh water and many of the ladies were seasick. Upon their arrival, they were all processed through immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax.



Above: Arnold Dryer and Violet Remnant were married August 23, 1945 (SPRA 259.02.01)

The three war brides and the baby took five days to travel on a special Red Cross train to Edmonton. The trip was long and hot, and the train had to stop often for blocks of ice. They made a brief stop in Quebec on July 1 but everything was closed due to the holiday. They took a train from Edmonton and arrived in Grande Prairie on July 4. Vi wore her going-away tweed suit despite the summery temperature. She was met at the station by her husband and his family. Vi almost didn't recognize Arnold. "It was the first time I had seen him in civilian clothing, and he had bee stings on one ear."

The editor of the local newspaper, J.B. Yule, met Vi on her first day in Grande Prairie. The headline on the front page of the next issue announced, "Three War Brides Arrive in Grande Prairie."

The community gathered together to welcome the new bride to the Peace Country. An August bridal shower was held for Vi. She didn't know what to expect, as this was not a custom in England. Community members gifted her with comforts for her new home, including a cream and sugar set, dishes, pillow slips, towels, and a box of home canning consisting of peas and beans in pint sealers.

Although Vi was homesick during her first year in Grande Prairie, she enjoyed being on the farm, attending gatherings at the school for card parties and showers, and socializing with good neighbours.

*Violet & Arnold's story is preserved in Fonds 259: War Brides Collection and Fonds 553: Violet Dryer.*



Above: The family group at Arnold and Violet Dryer's wedding consisted of her sister Winnie, her mother and father, Mr. & Mrs. Remnant, and Vi's uncle (SPRA 259.02.02)

Below left: Arnold and Vi Dyer's wedding in the village of Wrecclesham was attended by close family and neighbours from the village (SPRA 259.02.03)

Below right: Violet wearing the jacket from her tweed going away suit (SPRA 553.06)



# Let Them Eat Cake

Wedding cakes come in all shapes and sizes and are the centerpiece of the wedding reception. Cutting the cake is an iconic image in Western culture. But why is the cake the most highly anticipated part of the wedding meal? Historically, the presentation and eating of cake played a part in creating good luck for the bride and groom.

In Ancient Rome, the wedding “cake” was broken over the bride’s head as a symbol of good fortune. The newly married couple ate a few crumbs in a custom known as *confarreatio*—eating together. The wedding guests then gathered the crumbs to take home as tokens of good luck. Breaking bread over her head was a bit traumatic for the bride so the tradition evolved to crumbling the cake over her instead. Guests would still gather crumbs and if those ran out, guests were given handfuls of *confetto*, a sweet mixture of nuts, dried fruit, and honeyed almonds. Often, these treats were thrown at the bride and groom. This tradition still persists

today: now we shower happy couples with rice, flower petals, paper, and more recently, bubbles.

In medieval England small spiced buns were stacked in a towering pile. If the bride and groom were able to kiss over the tall stack, it meant a lifetime of prosperity. With the current craze for cupcakes, maybe that tradition could begin anew.

Later, the “Bride Pie,” a highly decorated pie filled with oysters, pine kernels, cockscombs, and other delectable items, became popular. Other versions existed, luckily, as it was considered rude not to eat a piece of pie at the wedding. Brides often hid a ring inside the pie and whoever found it would be next to marry.

In the seventeenth century, the predecessor of the modern wedding cake developed; fruited cakes, symbols of fertility and prosperity, gradually became the centerpieces for weddings. Bride cake covered with white icing first appeared sometime

in the seventeenth century. Pure white icing, symbolizing purity and virginal attributes, was the ultimate goal of bridal cakes. This notion became especially popular thanks to Queen Victoria’s wedding to Prince Albert in 1840. The white icing used to decorate her cake has been known as “royal icing” ever since.

The multi-tiered cake, which by the nineteenth century had gradually

Left: Eileen Woodard’s wedding cake, 1941 (SPRA 399.07.04)



Above: Gordon Percy and Irene Ritchie were married in Grande Prairie, August 1, 1952 (SPRA 2009.66.02)

acquired the name “wedding cake,” was a grand affair of heavily fruited cake layers decorated with royal icing and embellished with sugar flowers, doves, horseshoes, and bells. It was not until the turn of the century that columns, first made of decorated broom handles and later hardened icing, separated the tiers of wedding cakes.

Despite being far from home and often having little to their name, early brides in the South Peace did not scrimp when it came to this delicious and meaningful tradition. We hope you enjoy these examples of wedding cakes from our not-so-distant past. Curious what a prairie wedding cake tastes like? Try the recipe and let us know to win an archives-themed prize.

## Wedding Cake Recipe

from *Scrapbook of Prairie Recipes, 1899—1955*.

2 lb raisins	2 ½ cups flour
2 lb currants	1 lb brown sugar
1 lb almond (blanched)	¼ cup sour cream
1 lb butter	¼ cup grape jelly
1 /4 lb candied pineapple	1 tsp soda
½ lb candied cherries	4 tbsp rose water
½ lb citron & lemon peel, chopped	2 tsp each: cinnamon, nutmeg & mace
8 eggs	

Bake In tiers

Below: Violet and Arnold Dryer on their wedding day in Wrecclesham, England, 1946 (SPRA 553.01)



# Say Yes to the Dress

1840

Queen Victoria popularizes the iconic white dress with her wedding to Prince Albert. The dress was made of silk satin and trimmed with lace.

1925

Flapper-inspired wedding looks include shorter hems and cloche-style veils.

**Mr. & Mrs. Henry Wiebe, ca. 1925** (SPRA 2002.54.25)



1945

Many war brides opt for a practical wedding outfit that can be reused later.

**Earl and Sheila Peterson, 1945** (SPRA 0259.18.01)



1997

Minimalist styles and streamline silhouettes dominated the 1990s.

**Colleen & Kevin Palmer, May 3, 1997** (SPRA 001.08.06.02.08.10, cropped)



1906

Early 20th century dresses were often heavily adorned with lace and frills.

**Fred and Bertha Lewis, 1906** (SPRA 0195.01.01)



1940

Wartime rationing required brides to exercise their creativity in creating a dress.

**Deane and Marj Toews, ca. 1940** (SPRA 174.01.09)



1960s

Bridal trends embrace slim silhouettes and empire waists. Shorter veils accompany pill box hats.

1980

Cathedral trains, large sleeves, and lace frills return to popular bridal fashion.

**Vic Patrick's daughter, ca. 1980** (SPRA 001.08.06.02.08.03)



# The Modern Vintage Bride

Your wedding is a celebration, and sharing the day with family and friends is important. There are many unique ideas to honour loved ones, both past and present, on your special day.

Photographs are an excellent way to incorporate relatives in your wedding. A floral photo hoop, dedicated table display, wall-mounted framed photographs, or a family tree can exhibit family members' weddings.

You can place photographs in necklaces, lockets, bracelets or on pins to wear. Photograph charms can be placed on the boutonniere or the bouquet. Pose for photographs holding framed pictures of your parents on their wedding day. Recreate some of your parents' formal wedding portraits for a fun wedding activity.

Another way to make your family history part of the wedding day is to use, alter, or repurpose your



Framed reproductions of photographs from the Archives.

mother's or grandmother's wedding dress. Take a piece of the dress and incorporate it into your wedding dress, bridal sash or headpiece, jewelry, a clutch, or attach the lace onto the bouquet or garter.

Have fun creating paper flower bouquets, place cards, or placemats using copies of your parents' love letters or sheet music from their wedding.

To pay tribute to deceased relatives, you can include candles or empty chairs with family member's names and/or photographs on them. Pose for pictures holding framed photographs of them.

There are many unique ways to make your wedding day special for you and your loved ones. The South Peace Regional Archives can assist you by safely storing your photographs and documents. If you donate or loan for copy your family records to the archives, you can easily access the items and help preserve your family history.



Flowers made using Lewis love letters (see p. 18-19)

# Permission to Marry

## Love and marriage in military personnel records

Following the end of the First World War, numerous ships crossed the Atlantic carrying a new type of human cargo - war brides. These women (mostly of British origin) had fallen in love with the soldiers they met at dances, hospitals, or perhaps even in their parents' homes, where servicemen were often billeted. The couples married in simple ceremonies, then perhaps had a few days to spend together before the newlywed soldier was sent back to France.

After the Armistice and demobilization of the troops, the young wives boarded ships bound for Canada, often without their husbands, who were transported home on separate troop ships. It is unlikely that the brides fully understood the ruggedness of the land they were going to call home, or expected the challenges it would present. While there are no official figures, it is estimated that at least 35,000 war brides had immigrated to Canada by August of 1919. Most of them exhibited great courage and tenacity as they endured - and even thrived under - the hardships they faced here.

In the early 1900's, it was uncommon for a woman to be called by her given name by anyone but close friends and family. This makes researching war

*Right: Patients and nurses at a World War I convalescent hospital in 1918 (SPRA 1969.59.331)*



*Left: Charles T.M. Turner and his wife, Jeanne Dubois, with their first child, Charles W.S. Turner, ca. 1917. Charles was billeted at the home of Jeanne's parents in France while serving in the army. They married in 1916 and moved to England, where Charles Jr. was born. After the war the Turners returned to Canada, eventually settling in the South Peace in 1920. (SPRA 2014.024.59)*

brides rather difficult, as news clippings (and even community books, which were published much later) simply refer to a 'Ms. Jones' or 'Mrs. J. Smith'. Soldiers' service files (digitized by Library and Archives Canada) are often our only source of information regarding their wives, since army

records usually include the full name and address of the pay recipient and next-of-kin.

One can almost follow the developing relationship between a soldier and his sweetheart through his



P. B20 12474-3764-19-2-18.	ASSIGNED PAY: EFFECTIVE DATE: 1.11.16. AMOUNT: 16 <sup>00</sup>	ENGLAND or CANADA	SEPARATION ALLOWANCE: EFFECTIVE DATE: 31.10.18. AMOUNT: 20 <sup>00</sup>	ENGLAND or CANADA	NAME: COLLINS Alfred NUMBER: 505718
PARTICULARS OF RANK OR APPOINTMENT					
NAME, ADDRESS, RELATIONSHIP & AUTHORITY			WHEN PAYEE OF A.P. IS THE SAME AS PAYEE OF S.A. THE WORD "SAME" ONLY TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS SPACE.		AUTHORITY
Mr. Glen C. Collins brother 66 Honeywell Rd. Windsor Park, London SW 11 Eng.			Mr. W.C. Collins 64 Honeywell Rd. London SW 11		DATE EFFECTIVE
Mrs. W.C. Collins, wife 64 Honeywell Rd. London SW 11 effective 1.11.19					RANK OR APPOINTMENT
Staffed off 1.11.19					UNIT AND TRANSFERS
EXTRACTS FROM ACTIVE SERVICE PAY-BOOKS					ORIGINAL UNIT: 66 P.D. 19 <sup>th</sup> Div <sup>n</sup>
UPON CLEARANCE OF VOUCHERS, ENTRIES WILL BE CANCELLED BY INSERTION OF DATE CHARGED IN RED INK					DATE ACCOUNT FIRST OPENED: 1.11.16
			AUTHORITY		DATE EFFECTIVE
			H. B. C.		11.2.17
			DATE CLOSURE		UNIT TRANSFERRED TO
					3rd Div <sup>n</sup> Eng

*Above: a pay sheet from Alfred Collins's service file, showing that he had been granted permission to marry as well as the change of address for his next of kin; originally he had listed his brother but after his marriage he changed it to his wife's name. (Source: Library & Archives Canada)*

service file. Most often, hospital records will appear, indicating that the young man was wounded and sent to England for recovery. This is shortly followed by a note stating he had been 'granted permission to marry.' Obviously he had fallen in love with his nightingale. On the occasion that a healthy soldier found a wife, it likely occurred while he was on leave in England, or perhaps he had married the daughter of his French or Belgian billets. Shortly after being granted permission to marry, a new will was made out (with the wife's name on it), and near the same time, the pay sheet confirmed the change of next-of-kin. By following these leads, a number of war brides' stories have been uncovered.

On slightly more rare occasions, these new brides also became mothers before coming to Canada. Such was the case of Alfred Collins and his wife Winnifred Emily. Though it is uncertain when and where Alfred and Emily met, Alfred had leave in September 1917, and in April of 1918 he was hospitalized with influenza. It is quite possible that they became acquainted on one of these occasions. In October 1918, Alfred was granted permission to marry, and

*Right: Jarvis Guise's will, updated with his wife's name after their marriage. (Source: Library & Archives Canada)*

shortly thereafter he was given a week's leave, presumably for their honeymoon. During this leave, the war ended and Alfred did not return to France. By the time they were ready to return to Alfred's home in Spirit River, the Collins were parents to a baby daughter named Betty.

The clues found in the digitized service files have been invaluable to the research of our soldiers, their wives, and what awaited them following the war. Many of the nurses on our memorial would not have been found if not for the unique documentation of these love stories.

*Guest article by Kaylee Dyck*

Form P. 85 1918-608-29-11-16.	167874
<b>FORM OF WILL.</b>	
Name in full.	I Jarvis Mark Guise
Regimental/Number	658018 serving in 21 <sup>st</sup> Res. Bn.
of the Canadian Expeditionary Force do hereby revoke all former Wills made by me and declare this to be my last Will.	
Name & Address of person or persons to whom it is to go.	I DEVISE and BEQUEATH all my real estate unto my wife Mrs. Florence Guise 6 Radstock Rd Reading Berks Eng
Name & Address of person or persons to receive personal estate (see Note 1.)	absolutely, and my personal estate I bequeath to my wife Mrs. Florence Guise 6 Radstock Rd Reading Berks Eng
Fill in Date and Year.	IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand this 15 <sup>th</sup> day of November A.D. 1917.
	J.M. Guise (Signature)

# Olwen's Own Words:

## Churches of Grande Prairie

In 1933, Olwen Sanger-Davies travelled from England to the Peace Country, to visit her younger brother, Morgan, who lived just outside the town of Grande Prairie. Olwen documented her journey and time in the Peace Country in two scrapbooks, containing approximately 500 drawings and paintings. "Olwen's Own Words" features excerpts and illustrations from these scrapbooks.

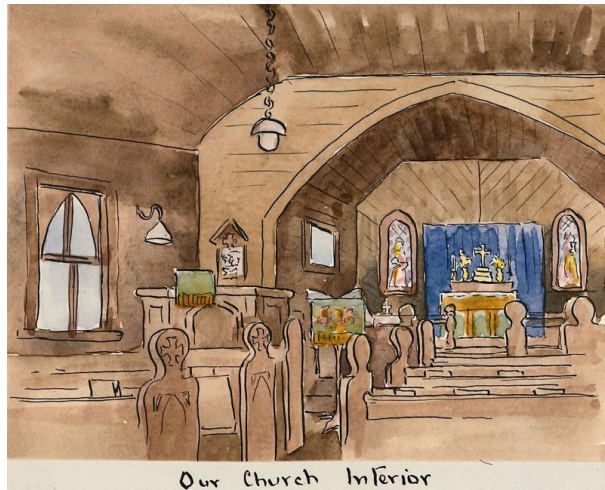
**Olwen's Scrapbook: A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933** can be purchased from the Archives for **\$40.00 + \$2.00 GST**. Cash and cheques are accepted.

Limited quantities are available.

### Sunday July 9th

We motored in to Church; it was Mattins at 11.00 & Evensong at 7.30. Mr. Jackson preached about "Unity" in connection with the Oxford Movement Centenary [sic].

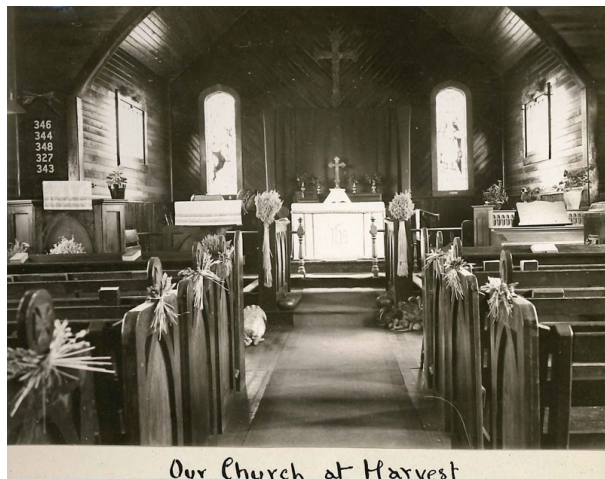
The Church was larger than most round about & measured 14 small paces from the door to Chancel Steps & four more paces to the Altar Rails: it was well cared for & had some nice frontels & hangings, a hand-painted War Memorial & Font Roll & two stained glass windows given by Morgan in 1929. The congregation was then about 25, but it was holiday time & there was no choir. Grande Prairie had recently been made a self-supporting parish but was



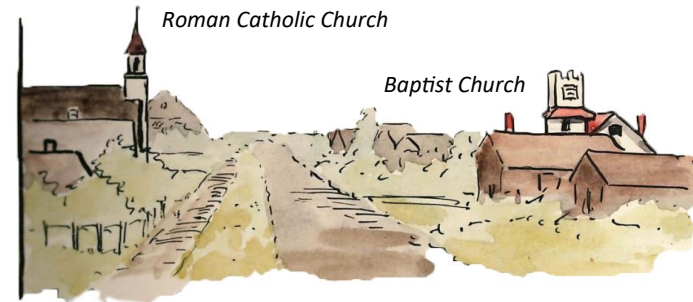
Our Church Interior

not managing without outside help after all; 1350 dollars for stipend (\$250) plus 25 dollars for organist, [Meetings?] etc. take a good deal of collecting when everyone was hard up. The "Women's Auxillary" [sic] collected 25 dollars a month by special efforts such as Rummage Sale, Catering & Teas & the "Anglican Young People's Association" did their bit.

There were other Churches in the place; the "United" started about 10 years ago was supposed to unite Wesleyans, Presbyterians & Baptists, but the two latter have split off & have built new Churches. The United had a strong backup & had built a Church at Clairmont & in other places.



Our Church at Harvest



Roman Catholic Church

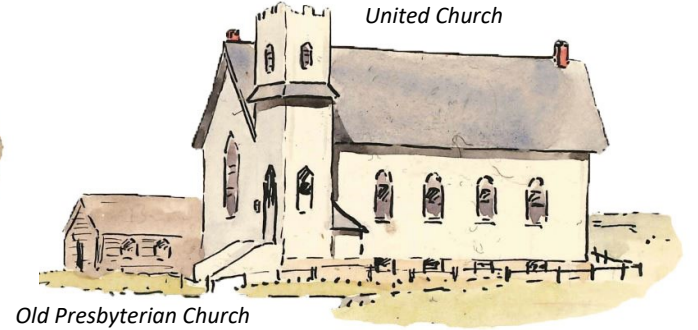
Baptist Church



Presbyterian Church

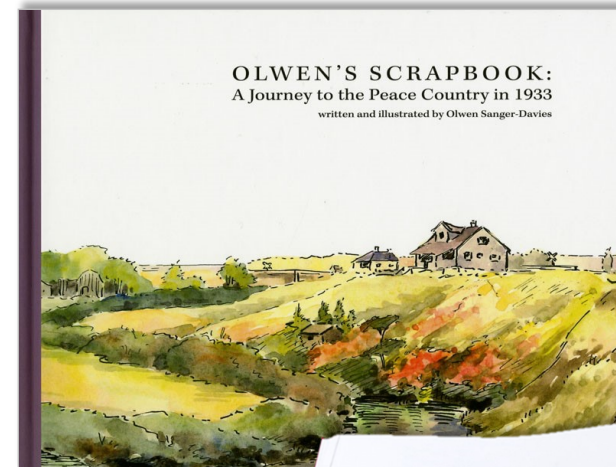


Anglican Church



United Church

Old Presbyterian Church



OLWEN'S SCRAPBOOK:  
A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933  
written and illustrated by Olwen Sanger-Davies

Purchase your copy of Olwen's Scrapbook today

ONLY \$40.00 +GST  
while quantities last

Don't miss out!  
Cash and cheques are accepted.





# Canada 150:

## The Working Copy of the 1901 Census and the 1920 Grande Prairie & the Peace River District Booklet

The Canada 150 Project helps tell the story of the South Peace Region through ten documents selected from the Archives collection. Together, these records trace the history of the region starting in 1820. In this issue, we explore the working Copy of the 1901 Census and the 1920 Grande Prairie and the Peace River District Booklet published by the Grande Prairie Board of Trade.

Spirit River  
POPULATION BY NAMES 6

No. of Family	No. of Person in the Family	NAME OF EACH PERSON IN THE FAMILY.	Sex.	Colour.	Relationship to Head of Family.	Single, Married, Widowed, Divorced.	Age at last Birthdate.	PLACE OF BIRTH.
1	1	Herald Alexander	M	H	Father	M	37	York Factory
2	2	Lea Lee	F	H	Mother	M	27	Dunvegan
3	3	Sarah	F	H	Daughter	S	7	Dunvegan
4	4	Elizabeth	F	H	Daughter	S	6	S.P. River
5	5	Charles	M	H	Son	S	4	"
6	6	Angus Norm	M	H	Son	S	3	"
7	7	James	M	H	Daughter	S	1	"
8	8	Johnnie Marshall	M	H	Daughter	S	28	S.P. River
9	9	Medford Norman	M	H	Father	M	41	Comlagan
10	10	Delia	F	H	Mother	M	33	Lake Athabasca
11	11	Joe James	M	H	Son	S	6	Dunvegan
12	12	Caroline	F	H	Daughter	S	4	Dunvegan
13	13	Jane Mary	F	H	Daughter	S	3	S.P. River
14	14	Yastawitch Paul	M	H	Father	M	45	S.P. River
15	15	Mary	F	H	Mother	M	42	Sturgeon
16	16	Charles	M	H	Son	S	22	Dunvegan
17	17	James	M	H	Son	S	18	St. John's
18	18	Elizabeth	F	H	Daughter	S	12	Dunvegan
19	19	Delia	F	H	Daughter	S	10	Dunvegan
20	20	Alie	M	H	Son	S	8	Spirit River
21	21	William	M	H	Son	S	6	Spirit River
22	22	Breuner Charles	M	H	Father	M	36	Scotland
23	23	Marguerite	F	H	Mother	M	24	S.P. River
24	24	George	M	H	Son	S	2	"
25	25	John	M	H	Son	S	9 mos.	S.P. River
26	26	Thomas Louison	M	H	Father	M	40	St. John's
27	27	Charlotte	F	H	Mother	M	30	S.P. River
28	28	Angelic	F	H	Daughter	S	15	S.P. River
29	29	John	M	H	Son	S	13	"
30	30	Blige	F	H	Daughter	S	19	"

### The Working Copy of the 1901 Census

Every ten years since 1851, a census has been carried out in parts of North America known as Canada. The government uses the census to understand the composition and needs of the population it serves. But the value of a census increases once it has outlived its initial purpose.

At the time of creation, a census is a confidential government document and it remains so for 92 years. After that period, it is released to the public. The 1921 census was the last to become publically available. The 1931 census will be available in 2023.

Researchers use historic censuses to assess the impact of a government's policies on its people. Social and economic trends missed by government reporting may become apparent after a scrutiny of past census reports. Census records also provide the kind of personal and statistical information that can help researchers understand the development of society. Through such records, the movements of groups can be discerned, be they groups based on culture, ethnicity, or income.

These records are also invaluable for genealogists. In cases where birth, death or marriage certificates may be difficult to find, a census can provide clues about when life changes occurred. A man could be listed as a farm labourer in 1891 and in 1901, he is the head of a household with a wife and three children living on a homestead.

Local Métis resident, St. Pierre Ferguson, created this working copy of the 1901 census as he traversed the northern Athabasca District on horseback. This

Right: a page from the Working Copy of the 1901 Census for this region. SPRA 501.2000.32

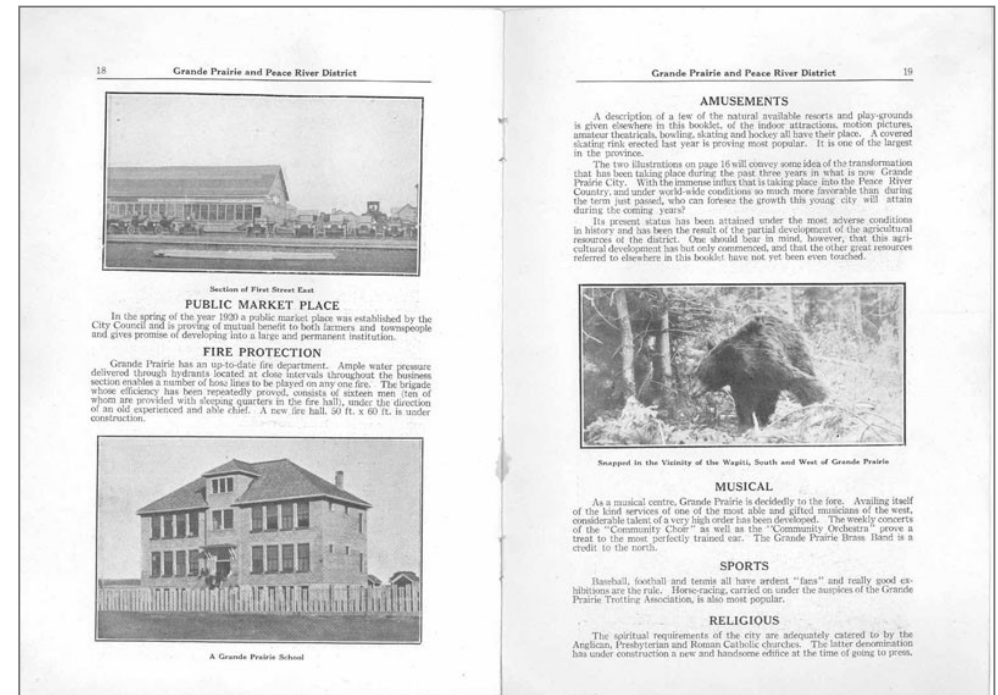
portion of the 1901 census recorded communities at Smoky River Forks, Dunvegan, Spirit River, Grande Prairie, Sturgeon Lake, and Lesser Slave Lake, making this document a rich historical resource for families in those areas.

### 1920 Grande Prairie & the Peace River District Booklet

The tiny village of Grande Prairie had big dreams and the Grande Prairie Board of Trade was determined to play a large role. By 1920, the Board had published this little booklet and distributed it to all the English-speaking countries in the world in an effort to encourage more settlement in the region.

In the world of archives, items like this booklet are labeled "ephemera" – material created for a specific, short-term use. Posters, leaflets, brochures, business cards, and trade booklets are not made to last. The information they contain, however, often has lasting value. The description of Grande Prairie village includes descriptions of the village's physical features as well as social activities: certainly something to entice those looking for more than farming in their futures.

The Grande Prairie trade booklet is a local project that played a part in the larger national vision for populating the western region with desirable immigrants. Distributed widely throughout Europe, it was the first of many to go out into the world, extolling the virtues of the South Peace Region. By the time this publication was produced, "The



Above: 1920 Grande Prairie and the Peace River District Booklet published by the Grande Prairie Board of Trade. SPRA 0050.07.01.01a-b

population of the district is estimated at from about twenty-five to thirty thousand, consisting almost entirely of English-speaking people." Later, the authors note that this number was nearly double from the year before.

When we think of the immigrants who settle here, we often view them as being young couples just starting out, newly wed and embarked on a long, working honeymoon in the wilds of Canada. But the truth is, all sorts made their way to the "Last Best West": bachelors, newlyweds, young families, and older families with three generations in tow. Bachelors made up a large contingent of these immigrants, some with fiancées waiting for them to make their mark so they could join them in settlement and matrimony. This trade booklet may have been the spark to encourage immigrant men and women to partake in these adventures.



# Lewis Love Letters



Dick Lewis, 1942 (SPRA 195.01.07)

*"As I've told you before, you've always sort of been my dream girl. From the first night I met you I found there was something about you that was irresistible. If I were to call you up in about six months time, do you suppose you'd go for a walk with me through Stanley Park?"*

These were Richard "Dick" Lewis's words to Ursula Walker when he wrote to her from Holland on May 10, 1945, shortly after the Allied victory in Europe [see facing page].

Dick and Ursula had met in the summer of 1941 at a dance in Vancouver, where Dick was stationed with the Royal Canadian Air Force. When Ursula went to work in Penticton the following summer, the two began a lively correspondence. It did not take Dick long to realize that he had met the girl of his dreams, and in his letters he made no secret of the fact that he was smitten.

In a letter dated June 23, 1942, Dick proposed to Ursula for the first time.

*"You know, I do think an awful lot of you, and even though I have known you a comparatively short time, feel I do know you well. After this war is over, I would like to talk*

*you into a life-time job. Is there any chance? Believe me, you are the only one I have ever talked thus to."*

Ursula, only seventeen at the time (Dick was twenty-six), was less certain, and turned down the proposal. They continued to correspond, however, as Dick went overseas to serve with the RCAF.

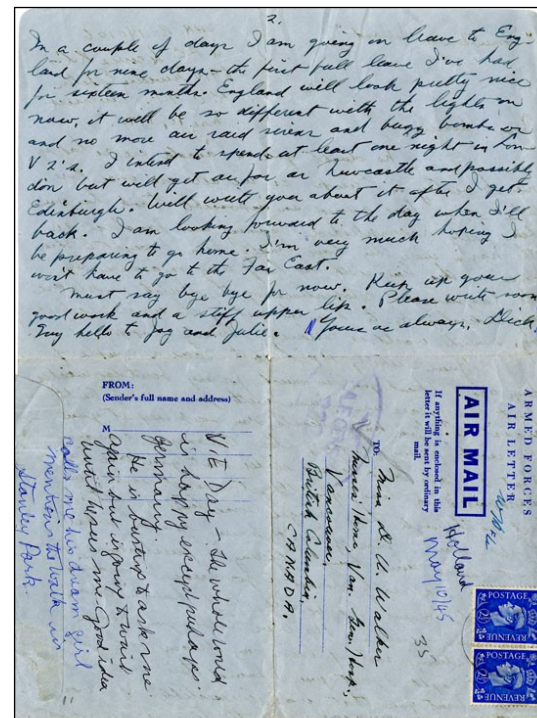
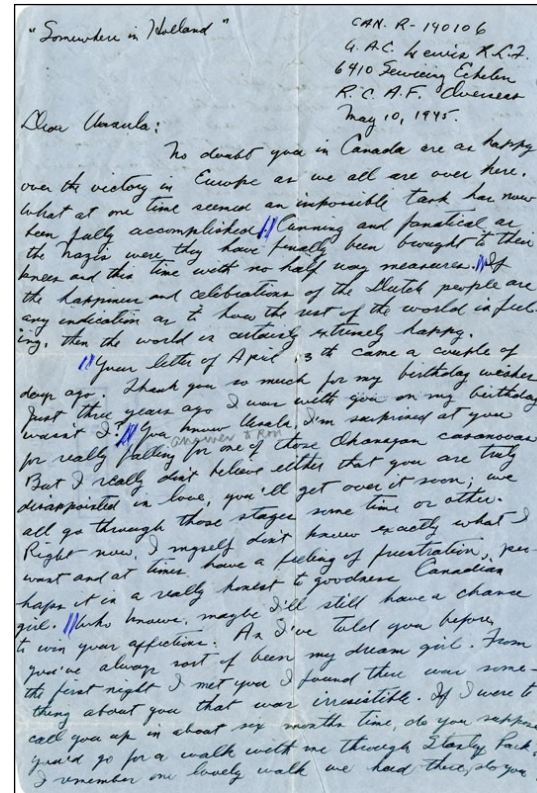
Three years later, after the war ended, Dick returned to Canada. After not having seen each other for so long, neither was entirely sure how they felt about the other. As Dick wrote to Ursula on August 7, 1945:

*"You say you don't know exactly how you feel towards me. I suppose to be quite fair, it is difficult to know. I'm not exactly sure myself but I think I know and I do want the chance to find out for both of us."*

On October 22, 1945, Dick arrived on Quadra Island, British Columbia, where Ursula was spending two months of rest (as a nursing student, she had been stationed on the tuberculosis ward and had contracted an infection). They spent two weeks together, taking the opportunity to get acquainted once again after the years apart.



Ursula Walker by Okanagan Lake, 1942. Dick carried this photograph with him during his time overseas, 1942-1945 (SPRA 195.01.05)



Above: Ursula and Dick Lewis on their wedding day, April 4, 1946 (SPRA 195.01.08)

Evidently, Dick found that Ursula was still his "dream girl" and the woman with whom he wanted to share his life, for he proposed the very day of his arrival. Ursula needed more time to be sure of her own heart, but before Dick left on November 5, she said yes.

November 6, 1945

My dearest sweetheart,

*I know it is late but I just can't go to bed without telling the most wonderful girl in the world how much I love her... Thank you so much, Ursula darling, for saying "yes" before I left you; it means more to me than anything else in the world. I am missing you awfully, darling, but there is such a feeling of comfort to know that you are there and that you love me...*

Twenty-eight of the letters Ursula and Dick exchanged during their five month engagement are housed at the archives. These letters, as well those written during the war years, have been digitized and are in the process of being transcribed.



# Wedding Portraits



Top left: Gretha Snoek and Bob Gerow, 1946 (SPRA 259.07.01)

Top center: Marion Ward and Miles Marcy, 1946 (SPRA 198.01.24)

Top right: Joseph Mervin Jasbec and Sarah Gossen, November 8, 1935. (Fonds 441, SPRA 2011.05.01)

Bottom left: Rose Devlin married Donald Patterson on January 1, 1923 (SPRA 152.02.01.01)

Bottom center: Wedding of Frank and Pauline Kinderwater, 1912 (Fonds 624, SPRA 2007.033.02)

Below right: A wedding photo of Jen Boyd and Robert "Bob" Barley, ca. 1900 (SPRA 565.02)



# Archiveology: Commitments & Contracts

We love to “ooh” and “ahh” over old wedding photographs with their beautiful brides and bouquets, but the level of ceremony we drape around the signing of marriage documents is only icing on a very serious piece of cake.

This was particularly true in the past when women’s opportunities to enter the workforce were restricted and men’s reliance on women for raising families meant committed couples were a necessity for developing communities. These legal documents were also valuable for defining relationships, financial responsibilities, and rights to assets.

Besides their initial legal and relationship value, these documents are useful to researchers for the information they provide about couples and their community. Marriage documents include the names of the bride and groom; where they reside; the date and place of the marriage; and names of witnesses. Sometimes they include the couple’s parents, and the officiant. For many women from the past, their marriage license and marriage certificate may be the last time we see their given names: before they transitioned from being Miss Jane Jones to Mrs. Dick Smith.



Above: The marriage certificate of William Alexander and Emilie Dannhauer, 10 Sept. 1896. SPRA 572.

The level of ornamentation on the documents can be a testament to the financial or social status of the couple and their families. It can also be a clue about the personalities of those marrying: a plain document may indicate a practical couple and an ornate one indicate the joining of a sentimental duo.

Any legal document, including marriage documents, provides intriguing clues about the nature of human relationships and the context in which they develop. The people signing them probably never thought about that. They were probably dreaming about their future together, not the future researchers. Something to think about when you sign your own.

# Documenting Your Wedding

Weddings are great moments in time where friends and family come together. People who seldom see each other often come together at a wedding. Storytelling and sharing memories between friends, relatives, and generations becomes an important and long cherished part of the event. Along with your wedding photographer and videographer, why not task someone with recording oral histories? This can seem like a daunting task but there are ways to streamline the process.

Ahead of the event, create a family and friends tree of everyone you know. You have the guest list already, bride and groom-to-be. Turn that list into a chart, making space to include everything you know about them. Taking the time to write down as much information as you can about the guests and the wedding party, including their relationships to you and to each other, can provide a wealth of information for descendants trying to trace those relationships in the future. For larger weddings, it can help you familiarize yourself with each other's side of the family.

Next, create a list of questions for the historian-for-hire to ask. Keep it to three questions so that there is room for follow-up to intriguing answers. Since multiple generations and branches of family come together at a wedding, consider placing mixed generations at the dinner tables. As an activity, set out interview questions for table partners to ask each other. This will help get those conversational juices flowing so when your historian-for-hire shows up, guests are ready to talk.

Another way to encourage conversation about family history is to incorporate family history into your wedding decorations (see pg. 11). Historic photographs and cherished family items evoke memories, sometimes long forgotten, about the

*Below: The wedding of Curley and Martha Pitman at Pitman's homestead, Bear Lake. Rev. E.A. Wright officiated. The other persons are unknown. Ca. 1933. (SPRA 284.03.12)*



people and events that make up our past. Guests may reminisce on their own marriages and love stories. Why not record those as well? Besides being a great family history, these stories can provide life lessons to help you on your wedded path. Encourage your historian-for-hire, whatever their medium, to pay attention for those moments of recognition and memory so they can be documented while the memories are fresh.

At the wedding, make sure to get in as many group shots as possible.

How wonderful for your children and grandchildren to be able to look at a photograph full of people all sporting the same chin, or that one grandparent with the same cowlick as they have? How wonderful to actually know their names and that that person with a shared cowlick is a maternal grandfather who once flew Lancasters in WWII? Which takes me to the next step.

After the wedding is over, go through your collected material as quickly as you can. Bring in the bridal party and close friends. Watch those videos and look through your photographs. Read or listen to those oral histories. Write down as much as you can. When creating your wedding albums, identify everyone you know and find out the names of people you do not know. Just because you have not seen that odd cousin twice removed in 15 years does not mean they did not show up. They just might and someone there will recognize them. Memory is fleeting. You tell



*Above: Hilary and Jim Lightfoot photographed with their wedding party in December of 1944 (SPRA 259.14.01)*

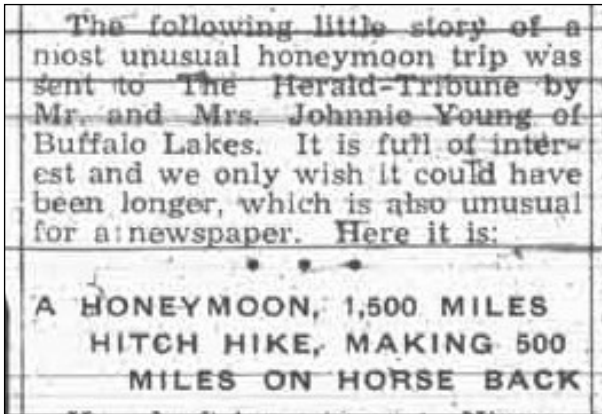
yourself you will never forget any of those magical moments, those great stories but without robust prompts, that is exactly what people do. They forget.

When writing out thank-you cards, add a thank-you for a story or anecdote your guest shared, or share a special memory with that person. It will add to the time it takes to write thank-you cards but can be accomplished by dividing and conquering, bride and groom. Not only will you remember that person, that gift, or that moment better, but you will have added to their memory of the event and you in a positive way.

Last but not least, as much as possible, during the wedding, talk to all your guests. Try to find out something new about each of them. You won't remember it all, but you will remember some of it. You can be sure, they will remember you. And you will have given them a story to share at the next wedding they attend.

# Newlywed Adventures

Source: The Herald-Tribune, September 11, 1947



You don't have to go to Niagara Falls or travel in luxury to enjoy a Honeymoon trip — all you need is a good sense of humor and St. Vitas in one thumb.

We left Grande Prairie on July 10th, hitch hiking, Our spirits were high when we caught a ride and arrived at High Prairie stampede that night. The hotels were over crowded so we caught a ride back to Valleyview, where we spent the night with relatives.

Next evening after a splendid day at High Prairie, we caught a ride to Edmonton with a friendly traveller from Fort Nelson. We was an excellent conversationalist and we found ourselves taken into the north, hardly noticing the long night's ride. After a day in the Capital visiting relatives, we decided our method of travelling was inviting, so the following afternoon we arrived west of Olds via an oil truck.

Two interesting day we spent at a ranch there. We witnessed some very good baseball at a local tournament also. Our friends decided then was a

food time to visit Edmonton, so our thumbs has a rest, while they took us back to Edmonton by way of Delburne.

Taking leave of our friends in Edmonton, we headed for the Fair Grounds where the Edmonton Exhibition was in full swing.

We noticed work done by the Sturgeon Lake Indians had taken first prize. Other exhibits from the Peace River country has also take prizes.

Our hitch-hiking wasn't over. With the same good luck we went west of Edmonton on the Jasper Highway to Entwhistle and then on 30 miles south west to roughly settled country on the Pembina River. Fishing was good and swimming and boating on this pretty little river was a wonderful attraction on hot days. We stayed there one week, and caught and trained two range horses for the return trip. It might has been foolish as some suggested, though it proved very interesting and not without excitement.

People along the trail were very kind to us, and of all the places we stopped, only one accepted a small payment for the grand hospitality they showed us.

There were hardships of course, though we both enjoyed them to some extent, with the exception of the large mosquitoes encountered.

The most arduous portion of our trip was on our short cut through flat bush to Smith. Part of this country is



Beth and Everett Sheehan on their honeymoon in Banff and Calgary in 1943. (SPRA 0002.01.03.029a )

floating swamp and quite unsettled. We had to travel at the rate of two miles an hour for 16 miles along the railway, there being no other route through the heavy rains.

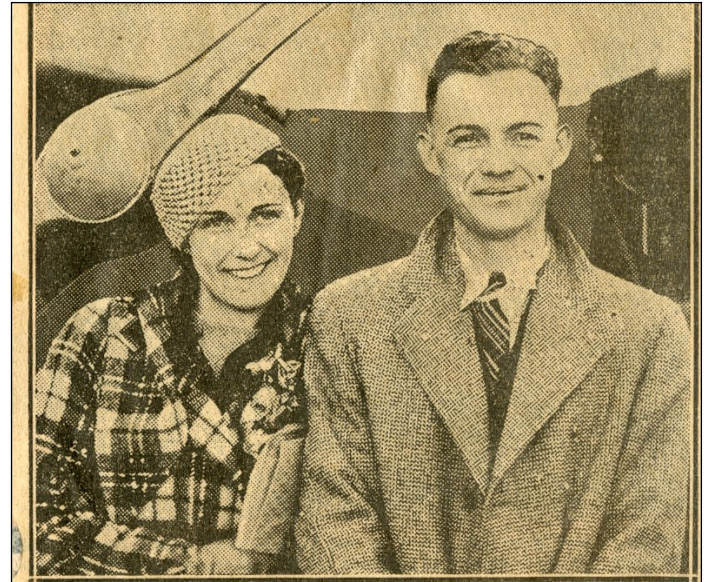
One creek we had to persuade our horses to cross on a rail road bridge, placing each foot on the ties. We hesitate to mentioned the jigger that came along the tracks just four minutes after our second horse successfully navigated the treacherous footing.

On another occasion, Pearl's horse slipped into the quagmire. As if that wasn't enough, after pulling the horse out we heard the 10:30 pm passenger coming.

As bog holes ran for miles on both sides of the track, we could not get more than about 10 feet away from the track without falling into one, so we decided the best thing to do was to unsaddle our horses to give them a chance, should they slip into one of the bog holes. The muskeg shook as the train's headlights bore down on us. Our horses reared and snorted as the train rolled past. The horse that had been in the bog hole before jumped toward it, but when she found herself slipping quickly jumped toward the train again. After the train pulled past the



A couple on their honeymoon as they travel the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail to their homestead. (SPRA 0116.09.01.01.0844 )



Out of the north late Monday flew Pilot Arthur Rankin, youthful Edmonton-trained Canadian aviator, who landed here with his bride following the wedding ceremony earlier in the day in Grande Prairie. Above, caught by the Journal photographer, are shown the happy couple shortly after arriving at the Edmonton airport where they received a royal welcome by a small group of aviators and friends. Mrs. Rankin, the former Miss Dorothy Medlock, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Medlock, Grande Prairie, appears quite happy with the hub of a propeller nosed over her shoulder. They will leave by automobile to continue their honeymoon at the Pacific coast.

Above: The Herald-Tribune, April 9, 1968

frightened animals neighed to each other.

Coming to within a mile of Chisholm, we still had to sleep out, as we could not cross a stream there at night. A big fire made us quite cheery again and we were soon fast asleep on our pine bough bed.

Very little game came to our notice and what deer we did see were thin.

Crops in general outside were poor due to drought and hail.

After five weeks away from the Peace River country we were very glad to get back even if it did rain for a week after we got home.



# New at the Archives

## Thank You Donors!

The number of recent donations is small but their value is high. Here are some recent examples:

Paulette Hrychiw donated a beautiful family album created for her brother, Roland Pivert. This album includes images, newspaper clipping, certificates, and transcripts from his diaries. It is a wonderful addition to the Pivert collections at the archives.

Another family album arrived early this year from Jan Shields. Created by her grandfather, this small and fragile treasure chronicles his World War I experiences and his family.

For all you earth science nerds, Al Martin recently made two substantial donations of material related to his and Doug Cottrell's work as assessors. These records provide a glimpse into the stories the land has to tell about human use in this area.

The Beaverlodge Area Cultural Society contributed 17 boxes of records from their archives. The records will add to the Archives' extensive collections related to Beaverlodge.

These are only a few examples of the thoughtfulness of local people and organizations supporting our commitment to all the stories that need to be told about the South Peace region. We'd love to make yours one of them.



From 2018.004, Jan Shields donation.

# Join Our Team

The Archives is currently accepting applications for the position of Archives Assistant (Student) .

- Engage in hands-on training in the Archives
- Liaise with the Indigenous History Committee
- Curate a display of archival materials
- Assist with educational programs and events
- Conduct research using archival resources
- Assist through the records donation process
- Process archival materials for consultation
- Write articles for Telling Our Stories
- Network with professionals in the heritage field

Visit [www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/Careers](http://www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/Careers) for eligibility criteria and application information. This position is contingent on funding from the Young Canada Works Program.



# Tell Us Your Story

SPRA is currently accepting submissions for the next themed issue of *Telling Our Stories*:

# National Aboriginal History Month

Share your stories (max 350 words), artefacts, and photographs related to indigenous communities or people and you could be included in our next issue of *Telling Our Stories*.

Contact: [director@southpeacearchives.org](mailto:director@southpeacearchives.org)

**Deadline for consideration: 30 April 2018.**

# South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

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

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in being involved as a:  volunteer  board member

Select your membership:

**Yearly membership:** receive communications to stay informed about issues and happenings at the Archives, get involved in the society, attend meetings, vote on issues, and run for office.

**Lifetime membership:** receive all of the benefits of a regular membership, without the hassle of yearly renewal, and know that your membership could have a greater immediate impact.

This membership is \_\_\_\_\_ new \_\_\_\_\_ renewal

Yearly Membership  
\$20.00/person or \$30.00/couple \_\_\_\_\_

Lifetime Membership  
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I wish to donate to the  
South Peace Regional Archives \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please pay by cash or cheque to:**  
South Peace Regional Archives Society  
Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB. T8V 3A8  
Phone: 780-830-5105  
Fax: 780-831-7371  
[Director@southpeacearchives.org](mailto:Director@southpeacearchives.org)

Eco-option: I would like to receive a digital subscription to *Telling Our Stories*; I will receive an email link to a full-color copy of each issue. By selecting a digital subscription, I understand that I am opting out of receiving paper issues of *Telling Our Stories*.

Effective 1 December 2017, associate memberships have been discontinued.

Applications and renewals for 2018 associate memberships received before this date will not be affected.

*Thank you for supporting*



[www.southpeacearchives.org](http://www.southpeacearchives.org)

