

TELLING OUR STORIES

Volume 13

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Issue 2



THE WAY
TO BEAUTY

CATWALKS
IN COFFEE SHOPS

WELL-DRESSED

FASHION ON THE PRAIRIE

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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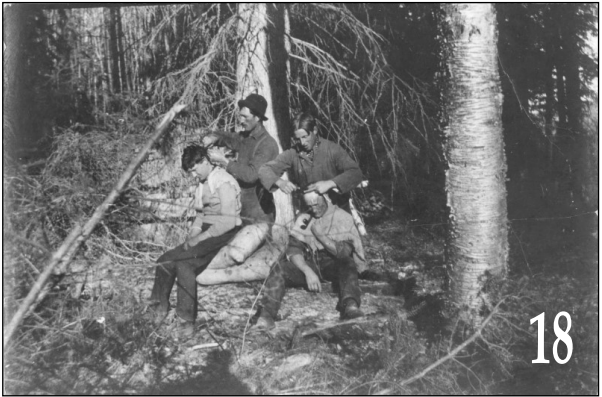
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Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect that the South Peace Regional Archives is located on the ancestral and traditional lands of many Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by Treaty 8, signed in 1899. The continuing relationship between Indigenous peoples and this land contributes to the rich knowledge and culture of the South Peace region.

We are grateful to serve the people on this land and honor the Calls for Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Cover: Portrait of Hugh and Margaret (Archer) Ellis during a visit to Beaverlodge before going to the UK. 1939 (SPRA 399.12.08)

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

One of the first decisions I have to make every morning is what I am going to look like that day. Is it a pin-stripe suit or a pajama pants kind of day? Perfect curls or a ponytail? The way we choose to style and present ourselves on any particular day is dictated by our personal sense of style, but also by our society and culture through norms and expectations, standards of beauty, and even access to fashions. This unique position of fashion, both deeply personal and culturally controlled, allows the history of fashion to give us an interesting perspective on different historical moments. And so in this special well-dressed edition of *Telling Our Stories*, we at the SPRA would like to invite you to explore the history of fashion in the South Peace.

Start your fashion journey with a contribution from summer student Kaydence Redding on moccasins and beadwork. Get some historic grooming and beauty tips in “The Way of Beauty” and “Hot Hair Tips.” Learn how to strut your stuff in “Catwalks in Coffee Shops,” and explore the many uses of the lowly flour sack. Catalogue fashion greets in “Well-Dressed: Decades of Fashion on the Prairie.” And to finish off this fashionable line-up read about privacy in the archives in “Unmentionables.”

I would also like to take a moment here to announce that as of March 1, 2022 the South Peace Regional Archives is officially open to the public once again. We would like to thank all of our staff, volunteers, and of course all of you for your patience and support during this extended closure. We look forward to seeing you all again soon!

Ellyn Vandekerkhove
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note

The South Peace Regional Archives is **reopening** to the public on **Tuesday March 1, 2022**.

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

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

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

The 2022 **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** for the South Peace Regional Archives is taking place :

Saturday, March 26th at 10:00am.

Grande Prairie Public Library, Rotary Room

Full meeting details are available at
www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/2022AGM

Meeting will include:

2021 Annual Reports

Election of Board Members

Beth Sheehan Award

Members who are not able to attend the meeting may still vote by ballot. See the website or call the Archives for details.

As a member of the Archives, your voice and vote are essential to the well-being of our organization. We hope to see you there!

South Peace REGIONAL ARCHIVES

Doris (Sims) Thompson Art Online Auction

Visit the Grande Prairie Mall March 19-20
to see all available art

Bidding open March 19-27, 2022



All Proceeds will be donated to the
South Peace Regional Archives
Building Fund



For more information visit
SouthPeaceArchives.org

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We thank all our donors for their contributions. The work we do would not be possible without your generous support. To donate visit CanadaHelps.org

A special thanks to the following funding organizations for their support of this project:

City of Grande Prairie
County of Grande Prairie
Municipal District of Greenview

Moccasins & Beadwork: Indigenous Clothing

This article was contributed by Kaydence Redding, former Archives Assistant (Student) at SPRA.

Indigenous Peoples all across Canada have been practicing the traditional art of moccasin making for hundreds of years, moccasins are a vital part of Indigenous fashion even in modern times. Traditionally, there were likely as many different kinds of moccasins as there were Indigenous groups wearing them. According to resources from the South Peace Regional Archives Reference Files, the most common types worn by Indigenous Peoples in Alberta were made of moose skin, but deer and elk skin were also popular choices. Women were often the ones responsible for making moccasins, beginning with prepping and tanning the leather, a process that takes many days. A photograph from the Ann Macklin fonds (shown at right) shows two Cree women fleshing a moose hide in preparation for it to be tanned, possibly to be used for making clothing or moccasins.

Below: Two girls wearing moccasins sitting by a building. One girl is cuddling a kitten. Ca. 1900 (SPRA 630.04.022)



Above: Two Cree women fleshing a moose hide, 1935 (SPRA 177.074)

After the moose, deer, or elk hide had been tanned and prepped, it was time to construct the shoe. Among Indigenous groups in Alberta, both soft soled and hard soled varieties of moccasins seem to have been worn frequently. Soft soled moccasins were often favored during the winter as they could easily fit into snowshoes, while hard soled moccasins were helpful when walking over rocky terrain. During the fur trade many Europeans adopted moccasins, as well as other items of Indigenous clothing, into their fashion because of their functionality and durability. This was true in the South Peace Region as well, many photographs within our collections depict European settlers wearing moccasins (see left). This is one sign of the strong trade relationships between settlers and Indigenous groups when Europeans first started arriving in the South Peace.

The patterns of beadwork and quillwork featured on moccasins were extraordinarily diverse across Canada. Even when designs appeared similar they often

had different meanings depending on who created them and which Indigenous group they belonged to. These beautiful designs were not only important aesthetic additions to Indigenous clothing, but they also were important in denoting the status of the person they belonged to and were said to bring blessings to those who wore them. Oral histories are a vital aspect of sharing Indigenous knowledge. One oral interview in the South Peace Regional Archives collection is with Mable Tennant, a Cree woman from Nose Creek. In her oral interview Mable discusses many aspects of beadwork. She describes beading as a large process that is not overly complicated, but takes lots of time and patience. She recalls that many designs her mother used were intricate floral designs passed down from her grandmother. She also remembers her mother copying patterns from designs she would see in magazines or catalogues and that her mother had stacks and stacks of these designs. At the time of the interview, Mable still enjoyed beading but didn't do it as often as she liked, leaving her beadwork to the times when she is making moccasins. Beadwork and quillwork remain essential to Indigenous culture and

Left: Four Indigenous children standing together. The caption on the back of the photograph says "Indian Children at Tom Sheehan's." 1933 (SPRA 002.01.03.047C)

Right: Indigenous man walking in the County Fair Parade in Grande Prairie. He is wearing full regalia. 1970 (SPRA 190.02.01.0343.34)



Above: Pey Wapun Dancers in full regalia in the Heritage Village at the Grande Prairie Museum. They were taking part in Aboriginal Day events at the museum. 1992 (SPRA 001.08.06.04.02.05.01)

fashion, many examples of these gorgeous designs, as well as other forms of Indigenous dress, can be seen in photographs in our collections. After the leather has been decorated with beaded or quilled designs, it is stitched together using wet sinew thread. The sinew thread shrinks as it dries, leaving a nice tight seam. After all the sewing was done, the moccasin would finally be complete and ready to be worn.



The Way to Beauty

Revisiting *This Week in History*

Kathryn Auger volunteered at the Archives from 2011 until her passing in 2017. Kathryn's blog series, "This Day in History," featured articles published in Grande Prairie newspapers between 1913 and 1950. Her posts developed a tremendous following and remain some of the Archives' most popular to this day. We are delighted to share with you this post, originally published on 12 March 2014, that highlights beauty tips Kathryn found in various issues of the *Grande Prairie Herald* printed in the 1920s and 1930s.

Some Hair Raising Advice

While the earlier newspapers contained "telegraphic news" from around the world, and other filler items, it wasn't until the early 1920's that regular features started to appear. The first ones I noticed were a fashion column, and one on Household management. There were other regular items such as Sunday School Lessons, serial novels, a medical column and crossword puzzles. A popular topic, then, as today, was beauty advice. The earliest items I found were ads, but by the 1930's there were regular columns by people such as Helena Rubenstein. This week I thought it would be fun to look at some of the items that appeared in the newspapers in the 20's and 30's, a time when artificial fingernails were featured in "odd But True", and it was suggested that a "simple speedy process" for waving the hair was sticking your head over a pan of boiling water for 5 or 10 minutes. I chose mainly articles on hair care for this time.

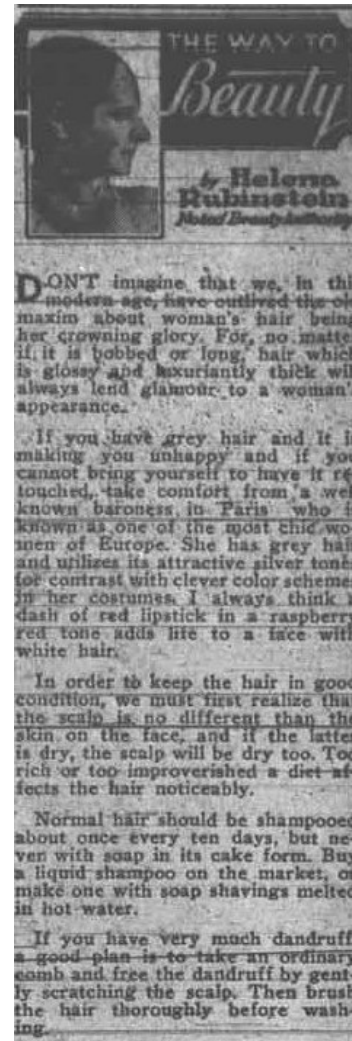


The Way to Beauty by Helena Rubenstein

Don't imagine that we, in this modern age, have outlived the old maxim about woman's hair being her crowning glory. For, no matter if it is bobbed or long, hair which is glossy and luxuriantly thick will always lend glamour to a woman's appearance.

If you have grey hair and it is making you unhappy and if you cannot bring yourself to have it retouched, take comfort from a well known baroness in Paris who is known as one of the most chic women of Europe. She has grey hair and utilizes its attractive silver tones for contrast with clever color schemes in her costumes. I always think a dash of red lipstick in a raspberry tone adds life to a face with white hair.

In order to keep the hair in good condition, we must first realize that the scalp is no different than the skin on the face, and if the latter is dry, the scalp will be dry too. Too rich or too impoverished a diet affects the hair noticeably.



Normal hair should be shampooed about once every ten days, but never with soap in its cake form. Buy a liquid shampoo on the market, or make one with soap shavings melted in hot water.

If you have very much dandruff, a good plan is to take an ordinary comb and free the dandruff by gently scratching the scalp. Then brush the hair thoroughly before washing.

For dry hair, the hot balsam oil shampoo is a necessity, especially should the oil be left on the night before



washing. And for this type always dry the hair with the hands and not with a drying machine. After the shampoo, apply a little herbal scalp food, rubbing it briskly into the skin. Every two weeks is often enough for dry, brittle hair to be washed.

The oily hair will need shampooing twice a week. Use a special hair tonic designed for this type of hair. This combined with repeated massaging with the finger tips and much brushing should shortly put the hair in condition. Never, however, brush the hair down, only upwards and outwards.

The Lowly Flour Sack

The excerpts below were taken from a story written by Winnie Moore, in which she describes creative uses for cloth flour sacks. The original is part of our reference files (SPRA 510.09.03).

Perhaps I should have entitled this story the career of the flour sack. Now, no doubt, you will wonder how a paper bag could have a career; well the sack I'm going to tell you about was made of cloth...

The initial use to which all of these sacks were intended was only the beginning of a long and varied career for they were converted to a multiplicity of uses. They were fashioned into bedspreads, quilting, sheets, pillowcases, night gowns, pyjamas, garter waists, petticoats, shorts, T-shirts, doilies, dresser scarves, tea cloths, curtains, dish towels, and bandages...

Though the housewife was somewhat reluctant to see the supply of flour in the bin getting low (because it took money to replenish the supply) yet in her mind's eye she was already refashioning some garment from the next flour sack.

The hundred pound flour sack when opened up was about one yard square. Thus it was the most valued



Left: Front cover of a booklet showing Simplicity patterns designed for sewing with flour sacks. N.d. (SPRA 2000.79.02, housed in reference file 510.09.03)

sack of all. The string used in sewing the sack was of a fairly good quality so it was wound into a ball and saved for future use. Some string was red and white or blue and white and could be used by the innovative housewife for fancy hand stitching or embroidery.

Sacks were given or loaned to a friend if the seamstress needed one more to finish a garment. The recipient would return the favor later when she had another empty sack.

Near the end of the era of the cloth flour sacks, some flour mills started putting their product in printed sacks of various colors and designs. These were certainly prized by the home dress maker.

It took quite a little work to get the sack ready for use. When the flour was emptied out, the sack would be hung on the clothesline so that the wind could blow away the last traces of flour dust, or the housewife might simply shake out all the dust she could. The next step was to soak the sack in cold water, then wring it out and it was ready to wash with the other

laundry. Most laundry was done on the washboard with a bar of homemade lye soap or other bar soap such as Fels Naptha or P&G. The sack was then put in the wash boiler for fifteen or twenty minutes. If any traces of lettering remained these were usually bleached out by the sun while the sack was on the clothesline.

Two popular brands of flour were Five Roses and Robin Hood. The first, of course, displayed a rose emblem, the second had a picture or print of a Knight in armor covering almost all of one side of the sack.

As I recall Five Roses sacks were much easier to wash the lettering out of. Some ladies were very definite about the baking qualities of the different brands, while others took the brand which had the easier sack to convert to further use.

In the general store where I worked in the 1930s there was more Robin Hood sold than any other brand, but I suspect that was chiefly because it sold for 15¢ per ninety pounds cheaper than other brands.

When we lived in the U.S.A., I can recall having panties and garter waists of flour sacking. They were also used for dish towels.

When we came to the Alberta homestead in 1920 and on through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, as I grew from a child to a teenager, a young housewife on a homestead to a somewhat mature mother of six children, I either observed someone or myself fashion the versatile flour sack and its junior cousins into many useful articles.

For the first picnic at DeBolt July 4, 1921, Mother made Dorothy and I each new dresses and hats. The

Right: Cherry Stewart in a dress made from the printed flour sacks which were designed to be re-usable for clothing, 1953 (SPRA 059.01.05.06)

flour sack material was dyed bright blue and embroidered with pink and yellow yarn around the collars, cuffs, and hat brim. The hat brims were stiffened with fine wire.

Another beautiful dress I recall was made of a flour sack dyed a rose color. Mother had just finished sewing it so I was allowed to put it on so she could have a look at the fit. I ran outside, climbed up to the top of the rail of the yard fence and stood there for a minute or two admiring my new dress. Then as I jumped to the ground alas, my dress caught on a knot tearing the skirt from top to bottom...

I do not look back on these "Flour Sack Years" as a time of hardship or sacrifice, but feel that I am one of the fortunate ones to have had the privilege of experiencing the joy and satisfaction of knowing first hand the era of the lowly flour sack.



Olwen's Own Words:

Brushing Up

In 1933, Olwen Sanger-Davies travelled from East Sussex, England to the Peace Country to visit her younger brother, Morgan. Olwen documented her visit in two personal scrapbooks, containing approximately 500 drawings and paintings. "Olwen's Own Words" features excerpts and illustrations from these scrapbooks.

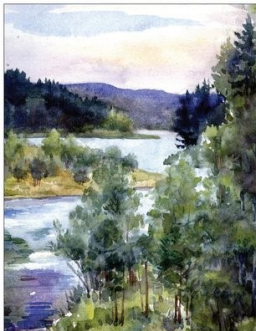
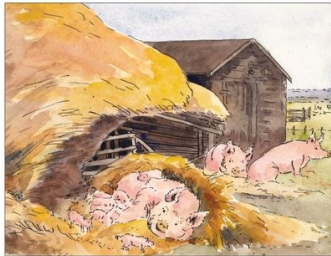
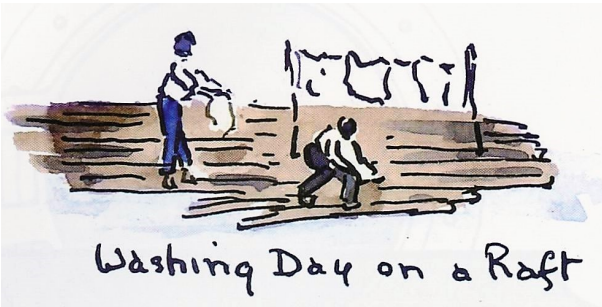


Tuesday, June 20th

At Calgary, we said goodbye to Mrs. Cocq and Mrs. Hughes. Then I lodged in the observation car and got very fine views of the mountains.

At first, we passed numerous ranches in the foothills and saw gophers sitting up in the fields as we passed, pretending that they were posts. There were also swallow-tail butterflies about.

At 11:10, after the usual brush up, I got out at Banff and found Morgan waiting for me; he had arrived 24 hours before and we settled comfortably at the Y.W.C.A Chalet.



Available Now!
Olwen's Card Collection

\$10.00 Price Includes GST
Curbside pick-up available

This beautiful collection of blank notecards features six of Olwen's watercolour paintings. Each set includes 6 cards (5½ x 4¼ inches) and white envelopes. Limited quantities are available.

Well-Dressed

Decades of Fashion on the Prairie

People are photographed for a variety of purposes—maybe to mark a special occasion like a wedding or engagement, maybe more spontaneously to capture a happy memory with family and friends. Whatever the original purpose, these photographs also provide fascinating information about changing trends in fashion.

The portrait of May and Jessie Hothersal at right shows fashions typical of the late Victorian era. Necklines and collars were higher around the neck by the late 1890s than they had been previously; meanwhile, hairstyles became neater and more tightly pulled back than the long curls of previous decades. Sleeves had become long and tight-fitting, though by 1890 small puffs at the shoulder, as seen on both women's dresses, had become fashionable. Both women appear to be tightly corseted.



A new style for women in the 1890s was the tea dress. Tea dresses were less structured, with flowing sleeves and often an undefined waist. They could be worn without a corset and cinched with a sash, like Katherine's lacy tiered dress at left. Light colors were most popular for tea dresses, particularly for summer wear.

Men were wearing relaxed cut trousers by the 1890s, like those worn by Ignatius Gass at left. Single-breasted coats were becoming more common for both working and upper class men. Three-piece suits with matching coat, trousers, and waistcoats like Ignatius's were nicknamed ditto suits.

Above: May and Jessie Hothersal. Jessie (seated) married Robert Holmes and they came to Lake Saskatoon as missionaries in the early 1900s. Ca. 1890 (SPRA 157.06)

Left: Ignatius Gass sitting and Katherine Schmidt standing beside him. Possibly an engagement or wedding picture. Ca. 1896 (SPRA 631.04.004)

The five RNWMP enlistees in the top left photograph show some popular fashions from the years just before the First World War. Trousers were being cut to sit higher, above the navel, so that they could be worn without belts or suspenders, like George Balmer. All five men are wearing the narrow ties that came into fashion in the early 1910s. They are wearing several different styles of hats common in that era, including jaunty fedoras and cloth working caps.

The women's dresses in the bottom photograph epitomize the fashions of 1918. Their dresses are strikingly simple, adorned with wide sashes and collars. Collars were often trimmed with lace or embroidery to dress up otherwise simple outfits. Even for summer



Top: RNWMP enlistees. Left to right: Harlie Conrad, Delmer Pratt, Alex Wishart, George Balmer, and Chester Miller. 1914 (SPRA 032.08.08.0574)

Above: Walter Roberts, Mac Haszard, Elsie Roberts, Bill Haszard, Sarah Kellet, Jean McFarlane, Miss Emmitt, Art Smith, Jessie Haszard, Dorothy Watt, and Wallace McFarlane at a 1918 picnic. (SPRA 557.03)

wear, sleeves were usually long, though some dresses featured sheer sleeves for a lighter look, as seen on Sarah Kellet's dress. Blouses and skirts were becoming more popular for day wear, a trend embraced by Elsie Roberts. Elsie's skirt appears to have large patch pockets, a practical touch. Also around this time knit sweaters were becoming fashionable, not just a winter necessity. Dorothy Watt's hip-length sweater would have been considered very stylish.

In the 1920s, hemlines on women's dresses became shorter, even for evening wear and bridal fashions. Mrs. Wiebe's wedding dress features the dropped waist commonly associated with the era. She is also portrayed wearing heeled shoes with a single ankle strap, the most popular style at the time.



Above: Wedding portrait of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Wiebe. Henry taught school at Bezanson for many years. Ca. 1925 (SPRA 2002.54.25)

Right: Charles Henry Stewart, Clara Stewart, Doris Stewart, ?, Florence Kennedy, Charles Bevan Stewart. 1928 (SPRA 059.01.03.12)

Bottom left: Portrait of John Archer, Hugh and Margaret (Archer) Ellis, Ruth Archer, Joe Archer, and Bill Archer, 1939 (SPRA 399.12.09)

Bottom right: Charlotte Bickell, Bob Given, Georgina Given, Wesley Given, George Given, and Lily Given. Ca. 1940 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0070)

In addition to dropped waistlines, cloche hats like the one shown in the photograph at right may have been one of the most iconic looks in the 1920s. Both women are shown in fur-collared coats, a more affordable option than a coat made entirely of fur. The woman in the center is wearing a surplice jacket, a wrap-style coat with wide, bell-like sleeves and fastened with a single button. The clothing worn by the children is also representative of the time, with loose cotton dresses for the girls and shorts for the young boy. Most young girls and many women began to wear their hair bobbed in the 1920s, as seen in this photograph.

In the 1930s, it became acceptable for women to wear pants in public. They were generally wide-cut



and creased, like Margaret's below. Fashionable women paired trousers and skirts with casual, boldly patterned jackets like Margaret's. Men's clothing was more widely cut in the 1930s than it had been in the 1920s and double-breasted suits like Hugh's created a fashionable illusion of width.

Many men and women in the first half of the 1940s wore military uniforms like Bob in the photograph below. For civilians, wartime clothing rationing led to slimmer silhouettes for both men and women. In the United States, trousers could not measure more than



Above: St. Joseph's graduation class, ca. 1958 (SPRA 630.08.299)

19" around the hem and jacket and shirt pockets could not have flaps. A-line skirts, like those worn by Charlotte, Georgina, and Lily, dominated women's fashion as they did not have gathers and pleats that wasted fabric. All three women are wearing the vivid lipstick and soft, voluminous curls fashionable in the 1940s.

In contrast to the economical styles of the 1940s, 1950s fashions were much more extravagant. All of the young women in the graduation photograph above are wearing elaborate party dresses with plenty of net and tulle to add fashionable fullness. Daytime dresses and skirts, like Louise's in the top right photograph, were much fuller as well. Blouses with rounded Peter Pan collars were popular, and were kept securely tucked in with a wide belt. Men's suit jackets buttoned lower than in past decades, as seen on the young men above, and a red or white carnation in the lapel was a must for formal events.

The sheath dress of the 1960s had a very slim skirt and hourglass shape, like Joan's at right. They were often made of knit fabrics so that the close fitting shape was less restrictive. However, the full skirts of the 1950s remained popular as well during the early part of the decade. Pleated plaid skirts like Linda's were especially popular for winter wear.



Above: Jean and Louise Pegg, and Edith Kirkness, 1957. (SPRA 660.01.08)

Below: Joan, Bill, Linda, and Valerie Turner, children of Ellis and Barbara Turner, standing beside a house and a car. Ca. 1960 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0310)



Hot Hair Tips

Grooming Trends for Men & Women

Throughout time, one's personal appearance seems to have been, and continues to be, extremely important. This is true for almost everyone. One aspect of appearance is grooming. A booklet titled "Are you in the know?" in the Paulette Hrychiw fonds (SPRA 197.04.02) gives tips for women on etiquette, dating, grooming, and fashion. The following tips about hair styling come from that booklet which was published in 1956.

"It's a shrewd sister who has her tresses thinned and shaped professionally, *first*. Later, if you'd trim a lock, use a razor-comb; never scissors. Follow the line of your hairdo—don't 'restyle' it!"

"When groping for a new hairdo, maybe you'd follow the fad-mad crowd—or hitch your noggin to your favorite star. Think twice! According to a famous Paris stylist, your hairdo should suit your own type. *Your* kind of face, personality."

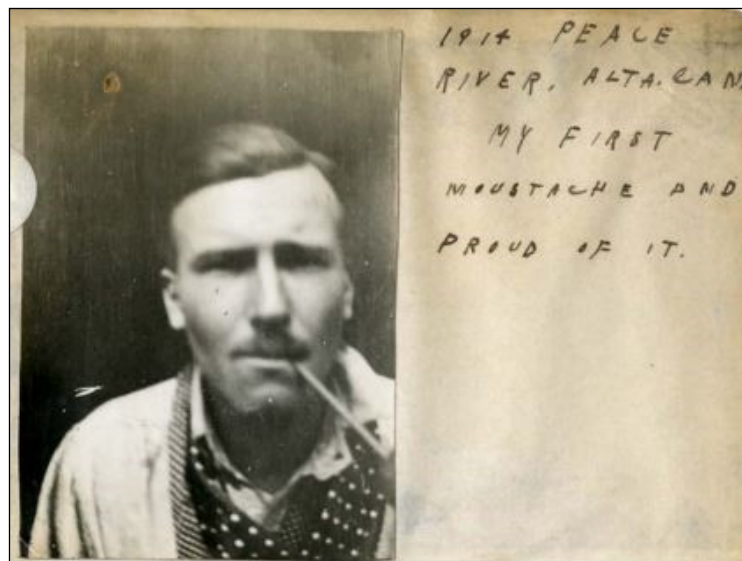
"Sometimes, a different coiffure can help snag a new stag. It's fun to experiment with false tresses. Maybe you'd add a cluster of curls or a braid. Maybe a chignon with come-on. (Unsure about bangs? It's safer to buy'em than cut'em)" Many people likely wish they had listened to that last bit of advice.

Right: William Noll with his new moustache, 1914 - written about on page 5 of his personal diary (fonds 575). A digitized version is available on our website.

"If you yearn to belittle a too-long nose—You *can* cut a long story (nose-wise) short, without benefit of scalpel! Let your hairdo help. Brush your tresses back, away from your nose; make your waves and curls large; wear the ends low. The trick is to fool the eye."

"Which strategy can 'elevate' a low brow? Neither 'long-hair' concerts nor brain bait can lift the kind of brow we mean! If your forehead's low, part your hair higher on your head, parallel to eyebrows. Now make a short bang that conceals your real hairline."

Men are not exempt from caring about their appearance, particularly through grooming. Below is an excerpt from William Noll's diary where we writes "My first moustache and proud of it" (fonds 575). We also have many photographs of men getting haircuts and shaves in the bush while being part of survey crews. One example is on the facing page.



Left: Allan Stuart, Larry Maney, Lou Hislop, and William Blair, members of Henry Selby's 1905 survey crew, involved in the task of getting and giving haircuts, 1905 (SPRA 178.01.15)

Unmentionables: Privacy in the Archives *This issue's Archiveology*

South Peace Regional Archives collects, preserves, and makes accessible records from governments, businesses, families, and individuals. We accept a wide variety of records including letters, financial documents, diaries, photographs, film, maps, and audio recordings.

Records in an archives, particularly those from families and individuals, have the ability to provide a glimpse through a window into someone's personal life. Researchers in the future may learn about past family secrets, affairs, thoughts and feelings that someone used to have (positive or negative), love letters, and so much more.

Having the ability to see a small glimpse into someone's internal life is something I truly love about being an archivist. That being said, there are different levels of comfort when it comes to a donor showing their personal records to the wider public. Many do not care at all, but others do. This is why we have privacy restrictions. During the donation process, a

donor has the ability to discuss restrictions with the archivist. Some things, like medical information or personally identifiable information, are automatically restricted. One way we do this is to make copies of these records with the personally identifiable information redacted.

Other restrictions require a conversation between the donor and the archivist. As a general rule, the Archives does not accept records that have infinite time restrictions. Part of our mandate is to make records available to the public. Having records that will never be made available to the public does not meet our accessibility requirements.

An example of records at SPRA that had a time restriction is Beth Sheehan's diaries (fonds 002). When Beth donated her diaries to the archives in 2003, she specified that she only wanted her direct descendants to have access to her diaries for 15 years. We followed this restriction and now that this time period is over, her diaries are available to the public.

Catwalks in Coffee Shops

Fashion Shows in the South Peace

Throughout the 20th century many people have strutted their stuff on the catwalks of the South Peace Region. Some of these were fashion shows in the traditional sense, put on by designers to showcase their wares. For example in the late 1980's Doris Watson held an annual fashion show of her collection at Paesano's, a local eatery. Her 1987 show featured 22 different looks, and she described it as a "hectic undertaking." Reportedly four days before the show one of the pieces, a "blue-green lamb coat-jacket" that was valued at \$900.00, hadn't been started yet. Designers would collaborate to put on shows, presumably to split that hectic workload, such as the Tin Pin Alley Fashion show in the early 2000s which was a lunch feature at the C-Spot Coffee Shop. (SPRA Reference File 510.09.04)



Above: Preschool Fashion Show at the Opening at the Grande Prairie Hudson's Bay Store in 1948. (SPRA 2014.063.014)

Other shows were put on by local stores to promote their merchandise. When the Hudson Bay Company's Grande Prairie Store opened in 1948 it featured two fashion shows, one for "Cute Teens" and one for Pre-school age children. This inclusion of a fashion show was an interesting choice as when it was first opened the HBC store was part of the Fur Trade Division, and the initial inventory included dog sleds, dog harnesses and horse collars along with traps, rifles and ammunition. Still, manager RJ Campbell may have been on the right track focusing on fashion as it was only two years later when the store was transferred to the Inland Stores Division, and moved away from its fur trade roots (SPRA Surname Reference File, Ti General).

Many fashion shows, however, were put on by local non-profit and community groups. Some of these were to raise awareness such as the Grande Prairie Friendship Center's Annual "Cultural Reflections in Design" in the mid 1990s, which strove to give exposure to Indigenous designers (SPRA Reference File 510.09.04). Other groups used fashion shows as a fundraiser for their efforts. The Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) held regular "coffee-and-muffin brunch" fashion shows at the Hotel York. As early as 1963 newspapers reported on a June fashion show featuring "morning fashions" and "Mrs. Chester Stretch, relaxed on a patio chaise lounge to show some sixty guests how deliciously luxurious basking under a warm June sun can be." Later that same year women were invited to see fall and winter



Above: Five of the women responsible for the success of the I.O.D.E Winter Fashion Show (LtoR): Linda Field, Fran Neil, Jo Everett, Marg Longmate and Helen Stretch. (SPRA 0111.04.017)

casuals, "whether it is a new fabric fur to wear to the season's premiere presentation of the Alaska Music Trail celebrity series or a bulky knit for bowling, warm togs for curling or a slim sheath for an evening of bridge." (SPRA Reference File 510.19.032).

Many community groups put a "new spin" on their fashion shows. In 1992 the Prairie Gallery, now known as the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, held an auction featuring hand painted neckties. The auction brought in nearly \$4000, with the most expensive tie selling for \$325. A few years later the Beaverlodge ALMS group, supporting the cultural centre, the library and the South Peace Centennial Museum, held a similar fashion show auction this time featuring hand painted jean jackets depicting everything from Northern Lights to Mickey Mouse. The highest priced jacket, depicting a moose head, sold for \$675 (SPRA Reference File 510.09.04).

Perhaps one of the most unique fashion shows was held by the La Glace Ladies club on March 24, 1950.

Right: "Cute Teens" Fashion Show at the Opening at the Grande Prairie Hudson's Bay Store in 1948. (SPRA 2014.063.015)

The "Novel Fashion Show and Pie Social" featured models like "Leggy Monsoon (Lawrence Monsoon) the sweater girl," "Flourescent Gilkyson (Floyd Gilkyson) the bride," and "Isaac Too-Little Clothes (Inez Jevning) gents unmentionables." Described in the *Sexsmith Sentinel* as a "riot from beginning to end" the fashion show was followed by a pie auction which raised "approximately \$140, which will very adequately repair the piano." (*Sexsmith Sentinel*, April 6, 1950.)

This final example really highlights two things about the history of fashion shows in the South Peace. First, that such shows not only supported businesses and organizations, but served as community gathering spaces and entertainment. And second, that every good fashion show comes with a food option.



New at the Archives

Since our last newsletter we have received several notable donations.

Roger Field donated 22 architectural drawings and many other architectural plans for buildings that he designed. One is a beautiful drawing of the archives' future home, Centre 2000. Roger also donated a large flat cabinet that we will be able to use to store maps and other oversized records.



Above: Centre 2000 drawing (Accession 2021.027)

We also received two record transfers. One was from the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the other from the Peace River Archives. The Provincial Archives transferred records that were created by James Kirkness. Archives like to keep records created by the same person together in one location. Since SPRA already has records from the Kirkness family in the Kirkness, Steinhauer, and Testawich fonds (fonds 660), the provincial archives passed along these records to reunite with what was already here.

The other transfer we had from Peace River was a 1908 journal created by J.M. Phillips. This journal has a record of road conditions, river levels, elevations, tree types, soil conditions, etc. from this area. It also includes many hand drawn diagrams of rivers.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the Pearcy Family Fund

Community Impact Grant

through the

Community Foundation of Northwestern Alberta

The South Peace Regional Archives are very grateful for the financial support provided by the Pearcy Family Fund, which was used to support core operations at the archives including raising social awareness and collection care and preservation.



Join Our Team

We are currently accepting applications for the Archives Assistant (Student) position, May—August.

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

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



South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

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Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

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I would like more information about becoming 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.

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This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

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