

TELLING OUR STORIES

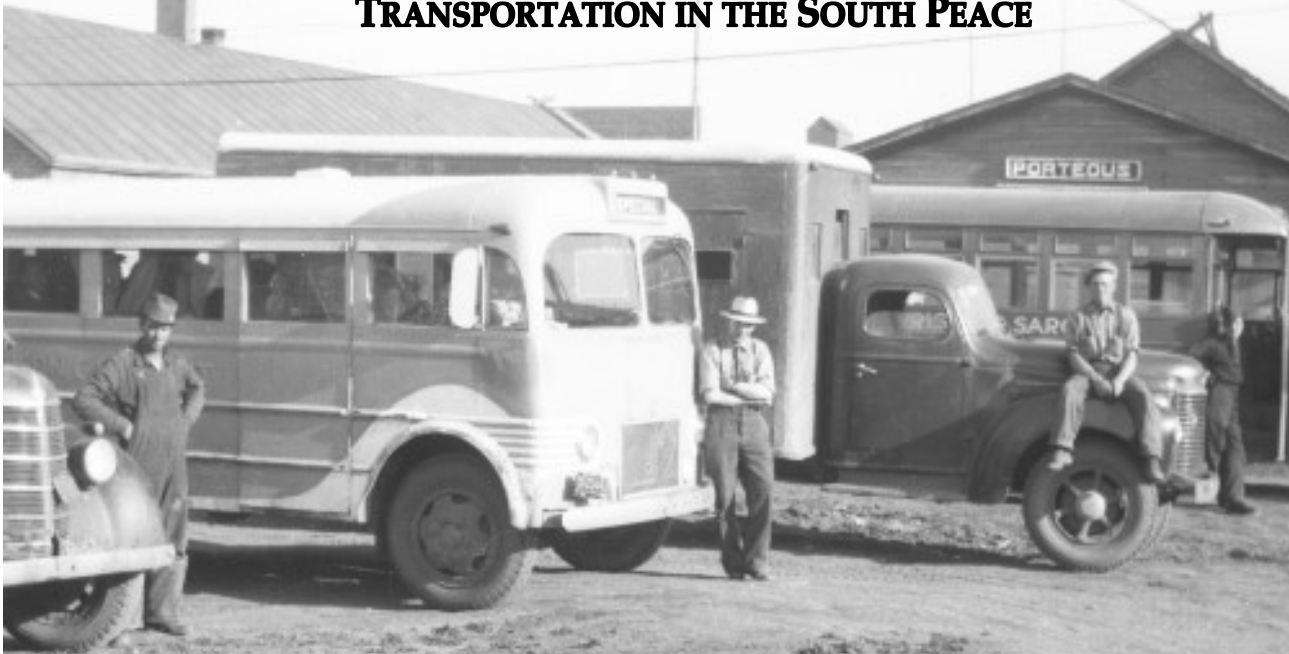
Volume 12

MARCH 2021

Issue 2

RIVERS, ROADS, & RAILS

TRANSPORTATION IN THE SOUTH PEACE



BRIDGING
THE PAST
ARCHIVEOLOGY

MARV MOORE
ROADS SOUTH
REVISITING HIGHWAY 40

TRACKS OF
HISTORY
INFLUENCE OF THE RAILWAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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Cover: Morrison and Sargent trucks and buses gathered at their Grande Prairie depot behind Porteous Hardware. This was the first bus company in the Grande Prairie area, starting in 1943. 1945 (SPRA 2013.086.46, Fonds 570)

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

In this issue of *Telling Our Stories*, we highlight the things that move our society. When fur traders and surveyors first arrived in this area, they found the land woven with a network of Indigenous trails and canoe routes that had existed since time immemorial. Since then, the landscape of the South Peace has been overlaid with countless railways and roads that have facilitated the essential movement in and out of our resource-rich but remote area of the province. As these grids continue to overlap and expand, their impact on the land and people who live here increases.

For this first issue of 2021, we consider the rivers, roads, and rails that have been etched into our community's history. We also explore the modes of transportation that have served as a backbone for settlement, economic growth, and communication. We hope that this issue will increase your understanding of these systems and your appreciation for the conveniences they bring in your everyday life. We also hope you will help us *move* this issue along by sharing it with friends and talking about your favourite articles. In this way, you can help us bridge the past.

As always, we are deeply indebted to the staff, volunteers, and guest contributors who make this magazine possible. Their time and research efforts are more important than ever as we strive to increase accessibility and awareness of the archives. Their articles are not only thought-provoking, but a real joy to read. Finally, thank you to our readers and members, for your continued support in this new year.



Alyssa Currie
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note: AGM

The 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the South Peace Regional Archives is taking place **Saturday, March 27th at 10:00am** on Zoom. Full meeting details are available at www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/2021AGM

Join us for important updates, including:

2020 Annual Reports

Election of Board Members

Volunteer Recognition

Beth Sheehan Award

Members who are not able to join the virtual 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!

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.

From the Vault Friday Our Newest Social Media Project

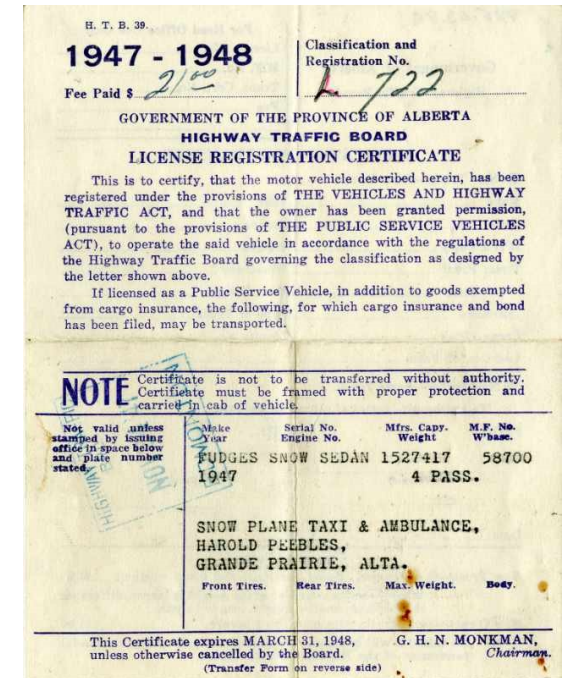
Supported by
archives
SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

The Archives is pleased to announce the launch of our newest social media project, thanks to the Archives Society of Alberta. "From the Vault Friday" will promote access to the Archives' collections by highlighting a new artifact on the blog and Facebook every week in 2021. Funding for the initiative was provided from the ASA's Access to Holdings Grant, which is financially supported by the Alberta government.

The first "From the Vault Friday" featured a snow plane taxi and ambulance license from the Harold Peebles fonds (Fonds 142). The snow plane worked well in the winter months when few Peace region roads were ploughed.

Want to learn more about this and other exciting artifacts from the collections? Visit the blog each week and "like" the South Peace Regional Archives on Facebook!

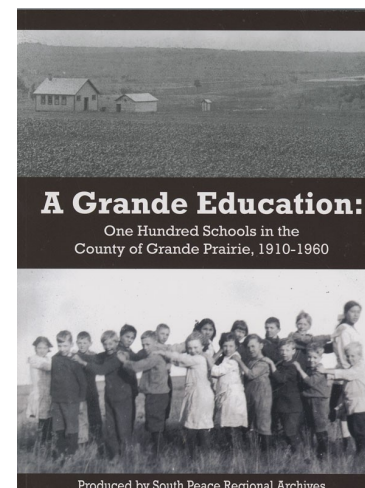
Right: Highway Traffic Board License Registration Certificate from SPRA Fonds 142: the Harold Peebles fonds.



A Tribute to Mary Nutting Presented by Grande Prairie Seniors Reading Theatre

The Archives is also pleased to announce the launch of a new video series honouring the late Mary Nutting. The series, produced by Grande Prairie Seniors Reading Theatre with support from M3M Marketing, showcases reading performances of *A Grande Education: One Hundred Schools in the County of Grande Prairie, 1910-1960*.

New videos will be posted every week on M3M's YouTube page and shared on the Archives' Facebook page. *A Grande Education* is available for purchase from the Archives.



The Shape of Things to Come: Following the Rivers of the South Peace

The following article was contributed by Duff Crerar, a member of the Archives' Board of Directors and Indigenous History Committee. Before retiring, Duff taught History and Native Studies courses at Grande Prairie Regional College for over 20 years.

Before the railways and the roads, there were the waterways and the craft that rode them. A quick glance at the geography of Canada and something odd stands out. The country runs from east to west, but the prairies that form the heartland east of the Rockies run north and south. The great plains between the Rockies and the Mississippi lie almost unbroken from the boreal forest south to the Gulf of Mexico. The 49th parallel, the border with the United States, the "medicine line" is just a line on the map. There is no distinctive geographic feature to make a border with.

The prairies should unite, perhaps, but the rivers told a different tale: along with that busy dam-building beaver. The fur traders, both indigenous and French, drove their exploration and marketing southwest on the St. Lawrence, northwest on the Ottawa and Mattawa, then through Lakes Huron and Superior across to Lake Winnipeg, then further west along the Saskatchewan rivers. Eventually they would cross over into the Athabasca. The south-bound Mississippi and its tributaries did not produce good beaver, but the cold northern rivers and lakes yielded prime pelts and carried skilled navigators to trap and deliver beaver skins to the waiting ships both in Montreal and on Hudson Bay. With the beaver trade and the rivers that carried it came empires, both royal and commercial, which ran east and westward, making and marking the boundary.

As the nickel shows, the beaver was the lure which pulled the nation along virtually in its path. But not without the people, who crafted the ideal tools to make the beaver pay its way. The indigenous people long before had invented the perfect canoe, which in its largest form could travel the great lakes and rivers with tons of goods, or, heading east, an equal weight of fur. Strong, light, portaged past waterfalls and rapids, and even from one watershed to another, the bark canoe

Left: View of the Peace River and Smoky River junction from the top of Peace River Hill, 1928. (SPRA 0107.01)

Right: A Hudson's Bay Company York boat with sail raised on the Athabasca River, 1906 (SPRA 032.08.08.1073)

characteristic to Canada remains, along with the beaver, a national icon. The fur trade also created the matrix out of which emerged a distinct and unique North American nation, the Métis, who joined with indigenous paddlers to create the distinctive life of the voyageur. It is still possible to put a canoe in the Peace River and follow their old routes all the way to Montreal.

The first Europeans came by canoe, guided by the local peoples. The men of the Northwest, then later the Hudson's Bay Company, staffed each of their posts with canoe-builders, recruited from the Beaver and Cree nations. They stocked the posts with bark and tools to repair the canoes, for every spring and fall fleets of them would ply the rivers, racing against freeze up. Even new and young ice was no friend of the canoe. Eventually, the canoe builders and their craft fell into disuse and disappeared from Posts, as a new vehicle appeared.

In Hudson's Bay country, where the good birch was not available, and where wood could be brought by ship, another craft had evolved. At York Factory, there emerged the distinctive river boat, crafted like its Norse ancestor by Orkney men who themselves were descended from the Vikings. The York boat was clinker-built: heavy interior framing interfered with storage, so the hull was shaped by nailing overlapping boards together. Pointed at both ends, the York could be rowed, carried more tonnage, managed rough waters and fresh ice better than canoes, and could even hoist a sail when the wind was right. After the



Bay replaced the Nor 'Westers, the York Boat dominated the Athabasca and Peace Rivers, and in various sizes, could be found in use into the twentieth century. Though less affluent or less-practiced navigators still resorted to the log raft, even after the steamers came, a miniature version of the York, dubbed the scow, was in regular use on the rivers.

The boats carried a distinctive people in the Peace and Athabasca region, as distinctive as the people who invented the famous carts and sold pemmican to the Company at Red River. Both men and women pulled at the back-breaking oars and carried the heavy cargo. Though by then a few dogsled, pack horse and wagon routes had begun to cross the land, the rivers that linked the posts and settlements were the highways that gave access to the Alberta North. With names like Cardinal, Perriard, Lafreniere, Grey, MacDonald and d'Allair, the freighters and their families were the skilled, experienced, and river-wise carriers who dominated the rivers until the steam engine and paddle wheel took away their living. By then, land routes were beaten across the prairies, with horse, wagon, sled and caboose, which brought the people who could not wait until spring thaw. The shape of the future would also be over land.

Moving on the Prairie

This article was written by the Archives Outreach Intern, Alia Kolodychuk. This position was made possible by an Access to Holdings Grant from the Archives Society of Alberta.

Long before the arrival of railways or cars, Indigenous peoples journeyed across this region using methods adapted to the seasons. Here in the Archives, we see evidence of their use scattered among the records of fur traders, missionaries, surveyors, and early homesteaders. As we survey the collections for Indigenous-related materials, we hope to provide greater context for these records.

During the winter months, people would traverse the snowy landscape with snowshoes. Snowshoes were constructed by steaming or soaking birch or ash branches, bending them to the desired shape, and then lacing them with string made of rawhide, sometimes called babiche. Leather or rawhide straps were used to keep the wearer's foot in place. When hunting in deep snow, snowshoes enabled hunters to quickly and quietly stalk their prey. During the fur trade, many non-Indigenous people also utilized snowshoes.

Some groups also used dog sleds for winter transit. The most common sledding formation was twelve dogs in six pairs. In the Peace region, dogs were used to pull toboggans loaded with goods. During the fur trade, the sleds transformed into a basket style with narrow runners. This allowed for more cargo space while hauling bales of fur.

Right: Albert (Alibe) Grostete, age 12, at St Peter's Mission, Hay River, Great Slave Lake in May 1903. Albert was employed by William Bredin, who operated a series of fur trading posts. Albert is holding a bow, a pair of snowshoes, and beaded mittens (SPRA 502-2005.11.03)



While dogsleds and snowshoes were very useful tools, the most used method of transportation was walking. Travelling across a wide variety of environments required a sturdy and comfortable shoe. Moccasins were typically made from the soft-tanned leather of deer, elk, or moose. Summer moccasins often had hard rawhide soles to protect the wearer's feet from thorns and sharp rocks while winter moccasins were soft soled and fur lined to keep feet toasty warm. The soft soled moccasins worked well for wearing snowshoes. Quillwork, and later beadwork, was used to create intricate designs on the leather.

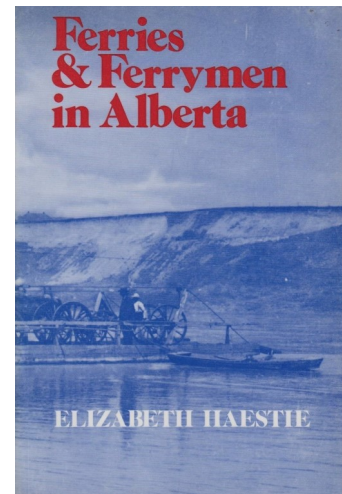
From snowshoes to dogsleds to moccasin clad feet, the Indigenous people of the South Peace used a variety of methods to travel, many of which are still used today by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

All Aboard the DA Thomas

This article was written by the Archives Outreach Intern, Alia Kolodychuk.

Built by George Askew in 1916, the iconic *D.A. Thomas* sailed the Mighty Peace River for 14 years before being retired in Fort Fitzgerald. At 167 feet long and 40 feet wide, the *D.A. Thomas* was the largest steamship to cruise the Mackenzie River watershed. The palatial steamship was a luxurious boat; with a men's smoking saloon, a ladies' parlor, a dining saloon (which included fine silver, glassware, a dumb waiter, and a piano), electricity, running hot water, a bridal suite, and the crews quarters. At times, the dining room was converted into a courthouse, and court sessions were held while the ship navigated the waters of the Peace River. The ship's main voyage was from the Vermilion Chutes to Hudson's Hope: a journey of over 900 kilometers.

In the reference files of the South Peace Regional Archives, there are many anecdotes about the *D.A. Thomas*; including the time Captain McLeod, who was leery of moose swimming near the boat, shot a moose that was standing on the shore pawing the ground. Another time, the crew shot a bear, and the passengers enjoyed bear steaks for the rest of their journey. The Archives' reference library includes several titles that discuss this once-mighty steamship: *Paddle Wheels to Bucket-Wheels On the Athabasca* by J.G. MacGregor, *Where Go The Boats... Navigation of the Peace 1792-1952* by Evelyn Hansen, and *Ferries & Ferrymen in Alberta* by Elizabeth Haestie. You can also peruse our selection of photos of the *D.A. Thomas* online at Alberta On Record.



Top: D.A. Thomas, [ca. 1920]. A settlement is visible in the background (SPRA 032.08.08.0989)

Middle: D.A. Thomas River Boat, [1920] (SPRA 0394.03)

Left: Ferries & Ferrymen in Alberta by Elizabeth Haestie (SPRA Reference Library, Fonds 507)

Getting Around

This issue's featured photographs highlight transportation in the South Peace. Do you have a favourite photograph? Let us know on Facebook!



Above: Clarence Field on a motorized bicycle in the early 1900s (SPRA 2002.54.04, Fonds 052)



Above: The aerial ferry over the Wapiti River, ca. 1930 (SPRA 2001.01.100)



Left: Bobby Lewis in a carriage on Grande Prairie's Main Street, ca. 1938 (SPRA 174.01.04)

Below: Wop May was the first pilot to land in Grande Prairie, ca. 1920 (SPRA 024.01.09.46)



Left: Harry Horte's snow cruiser automobile cut down to run on a sleigh track, 1933 (SPRA 1990.30.115, Fonds 155)

Below: The Fox Creek homemade school van was pulled by a tractor driven by Joe Bilinski. His route was down what is now Highway 49 about seven miles. If it rained and was too muddy for the tractor, he hitched his horses to the van. 1947-1950 (SPRA 279.02.006)



Above: The Morrison and Sargent bus parked outside of Morrison's General Store. This was the first bus in the Peace Country. Ca. 1945 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.1058)



Right: Arthur S. McLean (first land agent), George Balmer, Luella Patterson, and William Caldwell in the box of a sleigh pulled by a large ox. This is identified as Grande Prairie's first taxi service. The photograph may have been contributed by Mrs. V. C. Flint of Beaverlodge. 1913 (SPRA 032.08.08.0859)



Tracing the Tracks of History

The Influence of the Railway on the South Peace Region

This guest article was contributed by Archives volunteer Pat Wearmouth. Pat is a retired forester and current President of the Peace Country Historical Society.

This month marks the 105th anniversary of the railway arriving in the South Peace region in 1916. Travel over the difficult, time consuming Athabasca and Edson Trails ceased almost immediately. The region became much less isolated and the small local economy began to expand. The railway's presence went on to influence many aspects of life in the region and continues to do so in a smaller way to this day.

The timing of settlement was one of the first effects. This occurred not from an actual railway, but rather the promise of one. Unlike other parts of the Prairies, prospective settlers did not wait on a railway. Many felt they could not delay coming into the region and lose the chance of some of the last almost-free land on the North American continent. The first wave of settlers arrived in 1910, six years before the railway.

They arrived with an expectation that a railway would follow. Speculation about the route was rampant at the time but, in the end, the railway came in from the north. The Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway arrived in Spirit River in 1915. It planned to head straight west to British Columbia, but a delegation from the South Peace changed that decision. There were more potential payloads to the south.

The railway did change direction. It followed a route from Rycroft to Grande Prairie and on to Dawson Creek. The line was 138 miles long, and arrived at Dawson Creek in 1931 as the Northern Alberta Rail-



Above: Grande Prairie villagers greeting the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia as it reached end of steel here on March 29, 1916 (SPRA 2001.01.038)

ways. In doing so, the railway immediately influenced the local economy. Settlers were able to work for the railway itself or for those enterprises that provided material for construction. For instance, the railway required 3000 ties per mile, which meant income for loggers and sawmill workers in the local forests.

As construction progressed, it set the location for many of the communities in the region. The railway built sidings at intervals alongside the main line. Sidings had two purposes. One was to allow trains to pass by one another in opposite directions. The other was to serve as loading points for freight and passengers. The railway built small flag stop stations for passenger use, mail delivery, and cream can shipment. They also built stock pens and loading chutes. Grain buying companies built elevators. Other businesses and social amenities appeared, and soon enough there was a community formed. Because the railway preferred to build on level ground, some existing settlements had to move to be near the tracks. Lake Saskatoon moved itself from the slopes of its namesake to Wembley. Beaverlodge came down the hill to level ground.

These communities became part of the infrastructure of the South Peace. They were the focal point of economic and social activity for the surrounding area, and have persisted in some manner to this day.

As the region developed, the railway replaced some original stations with larger ones. These were stations with agents and telegraphers who built up the railway business. They served customers with freight handling, ticket sales, telegrams, and a warm place to wait for often late passenger trains. In the South Peace, this influence is obvious. Sexsmith, Grande Prairie, Wembley, Beaverlodge, and Hythe all had these larger stations. When rural roads began to improve, there was a natural draw to these communities. They continued to grow and prosper.

The most obvious influence of the railway though, was transportation. Freight, passengers, and information were all moved along the railway. With freight services, settlers had the means to bring in the heavy machinery needed to develop larger farms. They also had access to export markets to sell the resultant agricultural production to the world. The income from these exports was the major reason that the region began to grow and prosper. Settlers benefited as well from the ability to import household goods. Eaton's catalogues were a popular place to find and order such items, which then arrived on the train. Life became easier with such amenities.

Passenger trains moved people in both directions, and this had the effect of lessening the sense of isolation in the region. The railway allowed travel between

Right: Bird's eye view of the Grande Prairie Train Station in winter, crowded with people and cars. The horse-drawn dray unloading the Royal Mail from the mail car in the foreground belonged to Mr. Alex Wishart. Ca. 1930 (SPRA 1997.13.07, Fonds 052)

communities here and the outside. The trains brought in family visitors and business people, as well as cultural groups like sports teams, choirs, and drama groups. Meeting the passenger train at the station was always a social gathering as people observed who arrived and who was leaving.

The third but no less important result of rail transportation was the transfer of information. One was the result of the telegraph service the railway operated. It allowed instantaneous information that people could act upon. The other was the information that arrived via the Royal Mail that was carried by passenger trains. Grain market and price predictions were of great interest. News of world events, social trends, and sports scores was all appreciated.

The railway brought the world to the South Peace and vice versa. It influenced the development and prosperity of the region in many ways. The railway's role in the South Peace began to diminish in the 1950s. Alberta built highways, and personal vehicles and transport trucks became dominant. The railway still plays a role though. Today, Canadian National owns and operates the entire rail system left in the South Peace. The track runs from both Rycroft and Hythe to the Grande Prairie rail yards. From there, trains head south to the CN's mainline near Hinton, carrying some of the goods they always did. You can still hear the whistles once in a while.

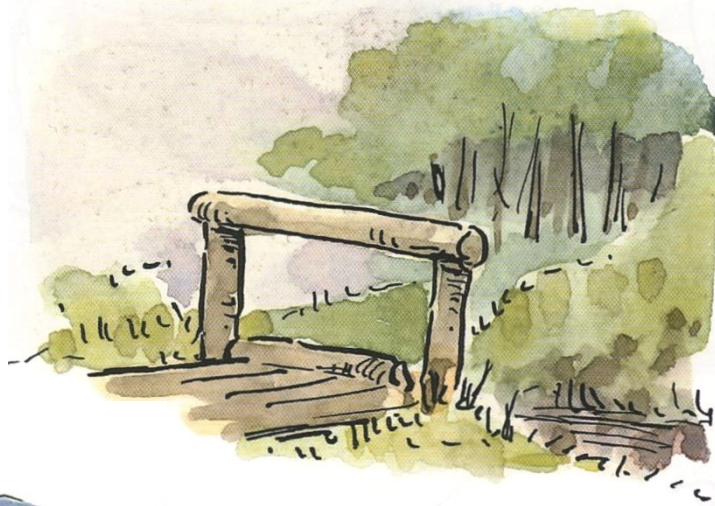


Olwen's Own Words: Roads & Rails

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.



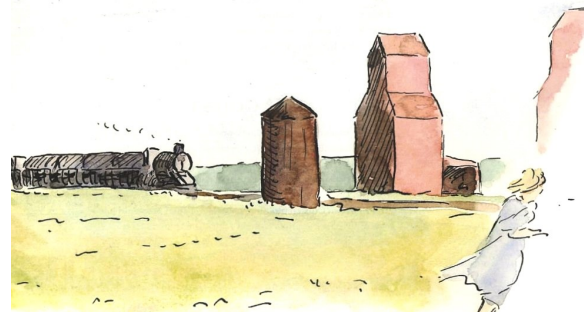
Morgan fishing up water for the car on the Ferry over Peace River



In B.C. the ends of Culverts were well marked

Wednesday, August 2nd

A lovely day and so we set off to Fairview to visit Miss Orwin. The first sixty miles were along the road and over the ferry to Dunvegan, and the next twenty miles were through rather flat country with good crops coming in.



The Train arriving at Hythe

Tuesday, August 22nd

We motored one hundred ninety-one miles to Pouce Coupe in British Columbia and back. It was not so cultivated up there and, though the train now goes on to Dawson Creek, some of the stations consisted of just one store apparently...

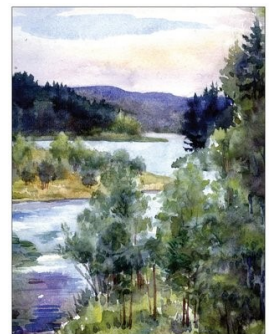
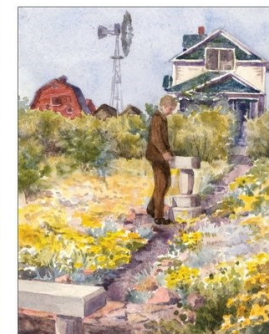
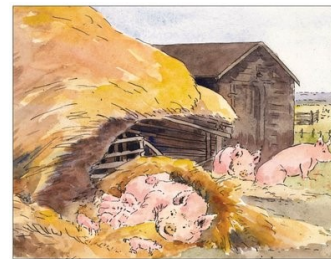


The Old and New Cameron Bridge

...On the way there we visited the Experimental Farm at Beaverlodge; they had some good apple trees and nice flowers, many were the same as ours.

On our way back we met the bi-weekly passenger train arriving at Hythe, and we also met cars and waggons [sic] going into their various post offices to get the mail. Going up to Pouce Coupe ninety-five and a half miles we had only met one car and about five horse vehicles.

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.

Marv Moore Roads South

The Story of the Routing and Development of Highway 40, Grande Prairie to Grande Cache

The following article was contributed by longtime Archives member and supporter, Marvin "Marv" Moore. Marvin served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta from 1971 to 1989, representing the electoral district of Smoky River. During his time in government, he worked in numerous Cabinet positions, including the Minister of Transportation.

For many years, a convoy of interested people from Grande Prairie and the South Peace would travel down the Forestry Trunk Road from Goodwin to Muskeg in an effort to build a case for the development of an all-weather highway connecting the Peace Country more direct to the Yellowhead highway and Jasper. It was not until Dr. Hugh Horner was appointed Minister



Above: Photograph of the construction of Highway 40 south to Grande Cache, 1975 (SPRA 0050.06.03.01)

of Transportation in 1975 that a commitment was made to do a complete and comprehensive study of the best possible route.

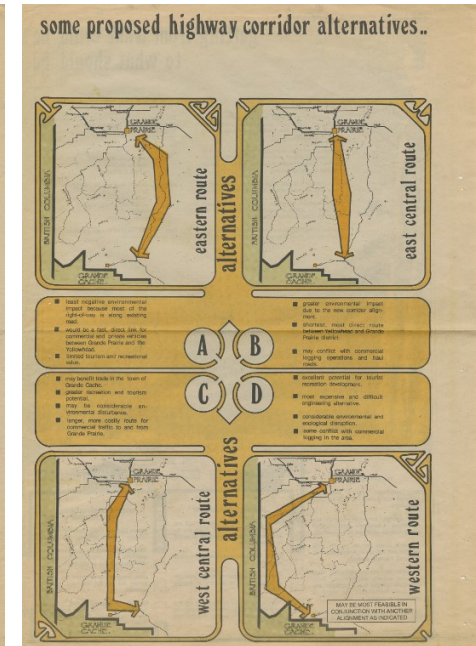
The study, which examined four potential routes, was completed and released to the public in June of 1977. Dr. Horner then had the matter discussed in cabinet and by MLAs from the effected areas and further announced that the Government of Alberta had chosen the eastern route which had been recommended by the study group.

All of the routes started in Grande Prairie. The Eastern route would cross the Smoky River south of Grande Prairie near the Canfor Bridge, meet the Forestry Trunk Road south of Goodwin at about mile 50, and continue on the forestry road alignment to Muskeg. The East-Central route would cross the Smoky River much farther south and would come out at Muskeg. The West-Central route would go from Grande Prairie to Grande Cache on a more direct route. The Western route further west was not supported at all.

For the next four years no further development occurred except for a start on 16 kilometers south of Grande Prairie that was common to all four routes studied.

After the 1979 election, Henry Kroeger was appointed Minister of Transportation. Some time in 1980, Mr. Kroeger was approached by interested resource companies operating in the area with a view to changing the route from the Eastern to the East-Central route.

Right: Excerpts from "Highway 40 Environmental Planning Study Newsletter" published as a newspaper supplement to: The Grande Prairie Booster, The Herald Parklander, The Valley News, The Grande Cache Mountaineer for the week of Sept. 13, 1976 (From SPRA 510.28.16, Highway 40 Reference File)



In August of 1981, I became aware of a possible route change and contacted everyone involved including Premier

Lougheed, expressing my concern about a change. I felt the route was selected to please some resource companies without involving many of the local people and local MLAs or the cabinet members that made the original decision.

I should explain the reason for my concern. The original decision would have included upgrading the Forestry Trunk Road from Goodwin to mile 50 where the residents living East of the Smoky River, from Goodwin to Valleyview, would meet up with an all-weather road that would be paved in the future. I outlined my concerns in a memo to Premier Lougheed.

From January to September of 1982, there was a variety of letters and representations supporting the original route decision or the East-Central alignment. The City of Grande Prairie, the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce and most resource companies all lobbied for the East-Central route.

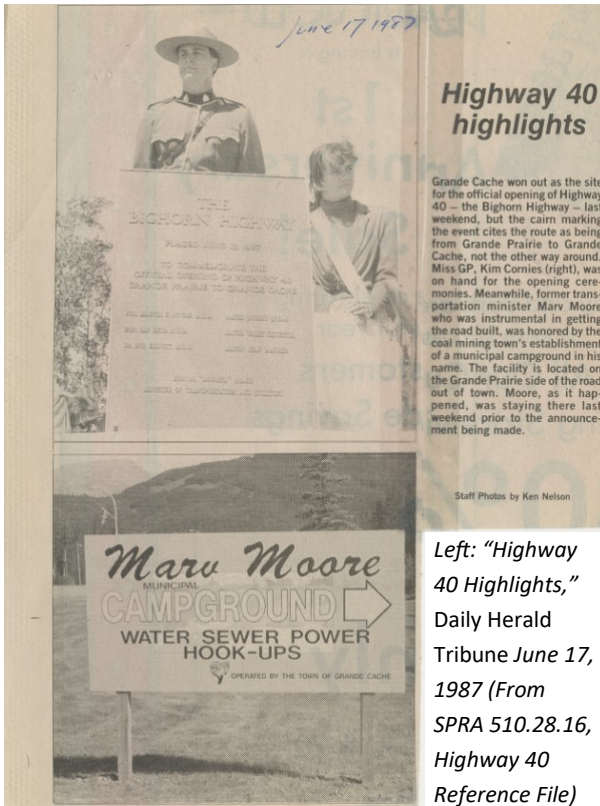
In October of 1982 Premier Lougheed called an election for November 2, 1982.

I had hoped to follow Hugh Horner as Minister of Transportation in 1979 but Lougheed wanted me in Municipal Affairs. Lougheed had indicated he would consider giving me the transportation portfolio after the next election. But, with all of the controversy over the routing of Highway 40, I was unsure if the Premier would appoint me as Minister of Transportation.

Premier Lougheed called me in after the election and said he wanted me to be Minister of Transportation and one of my jobs would be finalizing a route for Highway 40 and getting it built. So now I had to figure out what to do. I was wearing two hats, as I was the MLA for Smoky River and had the broader responsibility for Highways for the entire province.

As Minister of Municipal Affairs, I had been involved in a cabinet committee that was trying to figure out how to prevent Grande Cache from becoming a ghost town after the announced closure of the coal mine. We were recommending to cabinet that a provincial

Continued on page 18



Highway 40 highlights

Grande Cache won out as the site for the official opening of Highway 40 – the Big-horn Highway – last weekend, but the cairn marking the event cites the route as being from Grande Prairie to Grande Cache, not the other way around. Miss GP, Kim Cornies (right), was on hand for the opening ceremonies. Meanwhile, former transportation minister Marv Moore who was instrumental in getting the road built, was honored by the coal mining town's establishment of a municipal campground in his name. The facility is located on the Grande Prairie side of the road out of town. Moore, as it happened, was staying there last weekend prior to the announcement being made.

Staff Photos by Ken Nelson

Left: "Highway 40 Highlights," Daily Herald Tribune June 17, 1987 (From SPRA 510.28.16, Highway 40 Reference File)

jail be built there and timber resources allocated for a sawmill in the area. Tourism was also a prospect over the longer term. It was clear to our cabinet committee that a highway bypassing Grande Cache would be very detrimental to the future of the town.

In January of 1983, after much soul searching, I appointed a committee chaired by John Drobot MLA for St Paul area with other MLAs from the affected areas with a view to having their recommendations on the route go cabinet for a decision. My recommendation to the committee was: to build a new highway direct from Grande Prairie to Grande Cache, that being the West-Central route; to upgrade the Forestry Trunk Road for its entire length from Goodwin to Muskeg; and also to build a connecting link from the forestry

road to the Canfor Bridge and on to the newly built Highway 40. The committee agreed to that recommendation which I then forwarded to cabinet for approval, together with a request for the necessary funds of about \$120 million to complete the project over 3 to 4 years. Cabinet approved my submission and we were on our way.

After becoming Minister of Transportation, I was able to appoint Harvey Alton as my new Deputy Minister. Harvey was very good at completing surveys, drawing up tenders, and getting the project underway. I also designated the Forestry Trunk Road as a secondary highway so the province would always be responsible for upgrading and maintaining the highway. Over the next three years, 1983 to 1985, we were successful in getting the main highway from Grande Prairie to the coal mine north of Grande Cache completed. We also completed rebuilding the Forestry Trunk Road to mile 75 and built the connector to the Canfor Bridge.

Lougheed announced his retirement in September of 1985 and he was replaced by Don Getty. Getty called an election for May of 1986 and I was moved from Transportation to the Health portfolio.

The new Minister of Transportation felt we had spent enough money on the project and no further tenders were let for any major work over the next four years. The balance of the Forestry Trunk Road was not completed for many years. A few years later, the Department of Transportation offered the MD of Greenview the opportunity to take responsibility for the Forestry Trunk Road for payment of a few million dollars, and remove the secondary highway status. The MD agreed to that proposal.

In June of 1987, the Town of Grande Cache held a Grand opening of the highway and named it the Big-horn Highway. At the end of the opening ceremonies, they unveiled a large sign in which they had named

the local campground the Marv Moore Campground. The Town was very thankful that the highway had not bypassed them

I did not run in the 1989 election and thought my involvement with the project was over; however, that was not the case. Don Getty resigned as Premier in September of 1992 and a lengthy contest to replace him took place ending with Ralph Klein elected leader of the party and Premier. I had worked with Ralph over a period of ten years when he was Mayor of Calgary and I was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Transportation, so I got to know him quite well.

I worked with the team mainly in the Peace Country and northern Alberta in getting Ralph elected leader. In January of 1993 Ralph asked me if I would manage the provincial election campaign. I agreed to act as campaign manager with a good friend Peter Elzinga as Campaign Chairman.

Peter and I convinced Ralph he should run on a policy of aggressively balancing the budget and paying off the debt. Ralph agreed and that is the policy we ran on with one major exception. No paving had been done on Highway 40 since its construction. I was able to convince Ralph to make a public commitment in Grande Prairie to pave Highway 40 over his first term in office. After the election Peter Trynchy was appointed Minister of Transportation and got the job done over the next four years.

When I wrote this history in late 2019, passing lanes were being constructed in five areas on the highway and consideration was being given to building four lanes starting in Grande Prairie. I can still remember in the 1970s transportation planners saying there would not be enough traffic south of Grande Prairie to support a new road. I guess none of us knew what the traffic would be like now: bumper to bumper.



Left: "The Man Behind the Road," Daily Herald Tribune June 12, 1987. In this article, Ken Nelson discusses Marvin Moore's role in the route selection and construction of Highway 40 (From SPRA 510.28.16, Highway 40 Reference File)

Did you know?

The Archives' Reference Files (Fonds 510) include over 40cm of textual records related to transportation in the South Peace. The Highway 40 Reference File has news clippings dating back to 1958!

Thank you for your support!

We would like to gratefully acknowledge Marv and Fran Moore

The South Peace Historical Archives and Future Planning Committee would like to express our gratitude to Marv and Fran Moore for their generous contribution to the Archives' building fund.

The Archives has recently approved a proposal to relocate our facility to the Heritage Discovery Centre in the lower level of Centre 2000, no sooner than 2023. The next two years will allow time for preparation, fundraising, and renovation of the space. Thank you for your support.

Moving the War Forward

Transportation During WWI

This guest article was contributed by Archives volunteer Kaylee Dyck. Kaylee researches First World War veterans of the South Peace in order to write biographies for the Archives' online Soldier's Memorial.

Donald W. Patterson, a former mayor of Grande Prairie, came to the city in 1919 after having served in the Canadian Field Artillery during the First World War. He recorded his Great War memories in 1956, providing us with a fascinating first-hand account of a soldier's life, and a wealth of information regarding military transportation.

Before sailing for England, enlistees trained at camps such as Valcartier and Barriefield. In Patterson's case, the training included learning to ride, as horses were widely used during WWI. *"One stunt we had to perform was called vaulting... it sounds difficult, but is really quite easy; much easier than trying to get a balky horse to go over the jumps!"* Horses and mules

were the most commonly used animals during the war, serving in the cavalry as well as pulling guns, ambulances, supply wagons, etc. At the end of the war, the animal strength of the Canadian army was nearly 23,000.

Patterson crossed the Atlantic in early 1916 on the *Missanabie*, an ocean liner serving as a troop ship. Traveling by sea was the only option in 1916, and keeping shipping lanes open

between North America and England was vital to the war effort. Munitions, food, and soldiers all made their way across the Atlantic to aid Britain. Patterson was not overly fond of sea travel, though he fared better than many. *"I was not a good sailor. I did not get sick but was uncertain all the time."*

Once in England, training continued. Officers attempted to replicate conditions in France in order to prepare the men, going so far as travelling at night when moving from one camp to another. *"All troop movements in France were made at night, and the Colonel wanted this trip made at night also,"* wrote Patterson. As his battery made its way to the coast, the convoy *"...was strung out - 120 horses, 140 men, 4 guns, 8 ammunition wagons, general service wagon heavily loaded, water cart, mess cart, and headquarters party..."* To Patterson's shock, the entire convoy was loaded onto the train within five minutes! Once at the

coast, Patterson observed how horses were loaded onto the ship: *"wide straps... were hooked under their abdomen and they were lifted away up in the air... most horses were so surprised that they did not do much struggling."*

In France the mud was ever-present; it is mentioned frequently in D.W.'s memoirs, and it certainly affected transportation. Patterson recalled a particular instance when *"the mess cart with the rations and water cart came up"*, but moving the am-

Left: Rose & D.W. Patterson on their wedding day, January 1, 1923 (SPRA 152.02.01.01)



munition was a great deal more difficult. *"It was a killing job for the horses lugging these wagons through the deep mud and shell holes."*

Where horses and motor vehicles couldn't go, manpower was used. Many men found themselves carrying their wounded comrades out of No Man's Land to relative safety. *"(We) were detailed to carry Downer on a stretcher to the wagon lines. The night was dark, the ground was muddy and though there was a path that wound around and through the shell holes it was difficult to follow. The wagon lines were about three miles in the rear and we finally landed there with the wounded man."*

Wounded soldiers were transported by truck or light rail to a Casualty Clearing Station, and from there by train to a General Hospital. Traveling toward safety on an ambulance train was a relief to many soldiers after the mud and terror at the front lines, but the experience of those headed in the opposite direction was quite different. Private Simmons, who later homesteaded NE 3-79-13-W6, described in his autobiography the train ride he endured as a prisoner of the Germans: *"Our mode of travelling was by the regular prisoner train which had lately - quite lately - been occupied by horses. It had two small, dirty windows, and the floor was bare of everything but dirt. We were dumped into it... like cordwood that is thrown together without being piled... I don't know how many people sat on me."*

The First World War birthed many advancements in the world of transportation, such as tanks and submarines, but perhaps the most notable advancement was in the air. While Patterson observed the air war from the ground, watching as the Red Baron downed an Allied observation balloon, another local made his name as a flying ace. William "Dozy" Claxton was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a bar to his DFC, and the Distinguished Service Order at only 18

years old. His citations read along these lines: *"this officer at all times shows fine courage... his utter disregard of danger inspires all who serve with him... untiring in attack in the air or on the ground, this officer has rendered brilliant service"*. Judging by Claxton's career, being a pilot was not for the faint of heart.

As the war came to a close, D. W. Patterson found himself training in England for his officer's commission. Life in England must have seemed idyllic after having been at the front, but it was impossible to forget the impact of war. *"One Sunday evening I got on my bicycle and rode out into the country and I came to a church... there was not an able-bodied man or woman in the crowd. They were all either in the Army or the munition factories."* Although Patterson had the luxury of cycling for pleasure, even bicycles were used by the military during the First World War. Cyclists proved themselves invaluable, performing tasks such as firefighting or transporting carrier pigeons. At least five South Peace soldiers are known to have served in the Cyclist Corps.

To calculate the miles travelled or tons of supplies moved by all methods of transportation during the war would be an impossible task. But we can conclude, without a doubt, that transportation and logistics shaped the war.

Below: A military convoy, ca. 1917 (SPRA 2018.004.083)



Ferry-Tales

Ferry Crossings of the South Peace Region

In landlocked Alberta, boats may not be the first thing that comes to mind when one considers modes of transportation. However, with numerous rivers winding through the South Peace landscape, ferries played a key role in transporting people and goods around the region. Want to know more about South Peace ferries? Here are a few fun facts about some of the ferries featured here.

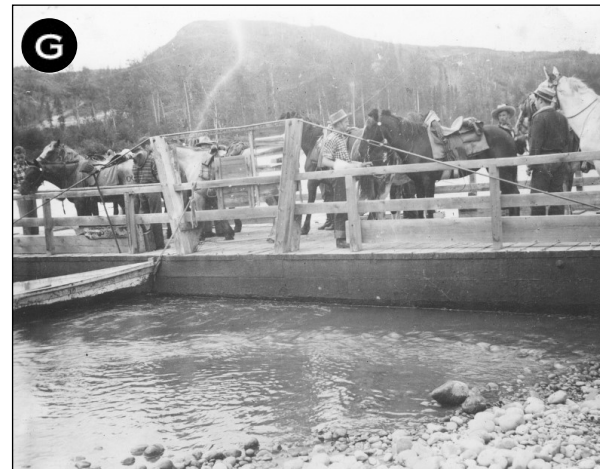
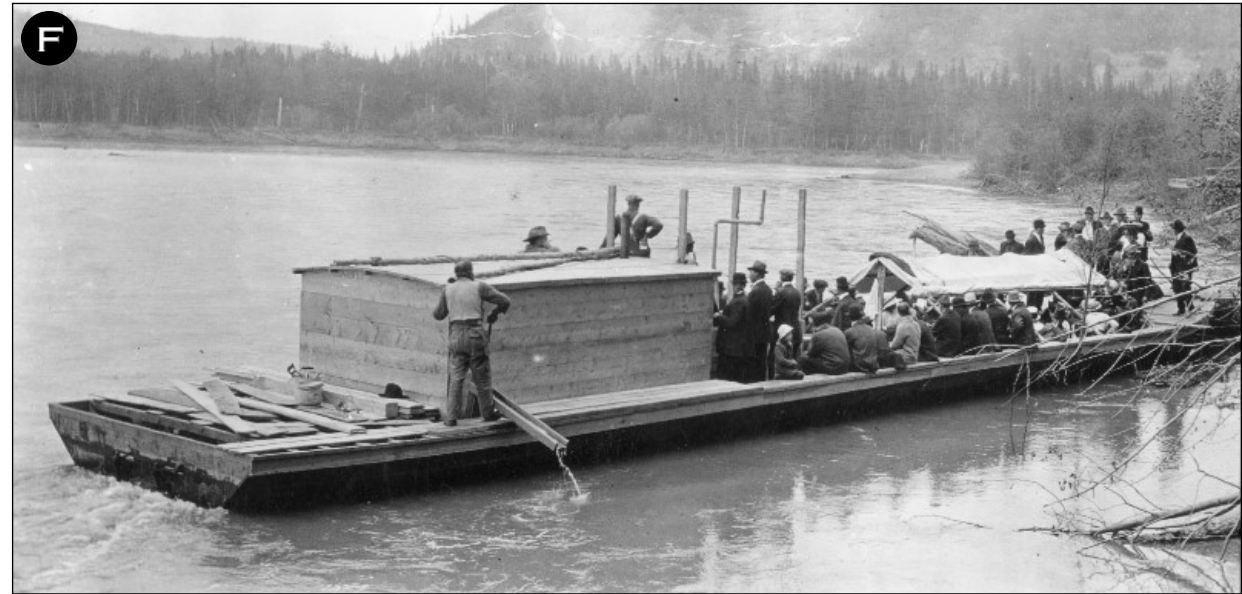
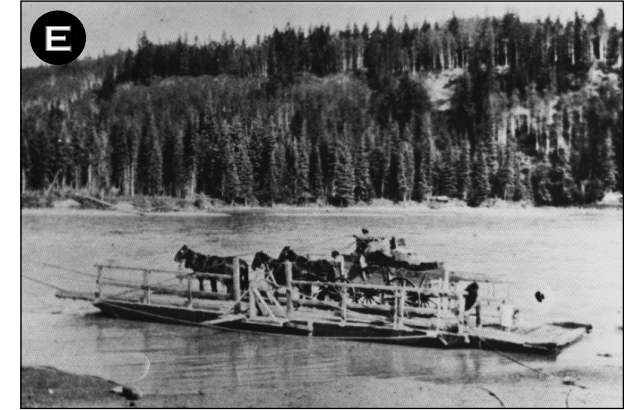
The Beaver was one of the early river boats in the South Peace, crossing the Smoky River at Bezanson. Unlike many of the other ferries that were cable-operated, the Beaver was operated with a pole.

The **Goodwin Crossing Ferry**, locally known as Moody's Crossing, was the last of four ferries on the Edson Trail. Four taxis enroute from San Francisco to

Anchorage were the first passengers in the 1948 season, after having waited for two days at the crossing for the ice to clear.

Engineer A.H. McQuarrie believed that the location of the **Pipestone Creek Ferry** south of Wembley had been chosen too hastily and was not ideal as a ferry crossing. However, despite occasional mishaps with the ferry, it was a popular route during the summers and often transported three to four hundred passengers across the river for berry-picking expeditions in a single weekend.

How many of these historical South Peace ferries can you match to their locations?



- | | | |
|----------|---|--------------------------|
| A | ① | Goodwin/Moody's Crossing |
| B | ② | Pipestone Creek |
| C | ③ | Dunvegan |
| D | ④ | Grovedale |
| E | ⑤ | The Beaver |
| F | ⑥ | Mehlum Creek |
| G | ⑦ | Athabasca River |

Bridging the Past

This issue's Archiveology

A bridge can be a physical structure that is built over a river or valley to allow travel from one side to the other. A bridge can also be a connection or link between groups of people, things, or ideas. This bridge can be used to lessen the distance between them. An Archives and their collections can act as a bridge to the past and our shared, or even personal, history. Like their physical counterparts, these bridges require solid footing and regular maintenance to ensure their long term success.

There are many possible reasons for the failure of a bridge. In 1957, a landslide caused by erosion on the river banks at Taylor resulted in the collapse of the Peace River Suspension Bridge. Likewise, there are many reasons why the archives can fail to connect with the past; these bridge failures sometimes result in more questions than answers for archival researchers.



Above: Dunvegan Bridge under construction in the summer of 1960. (SPRA 2000.73.102)



Above: The Collapse of the Taylor Bridge (SPRA 032.08.08.1147)

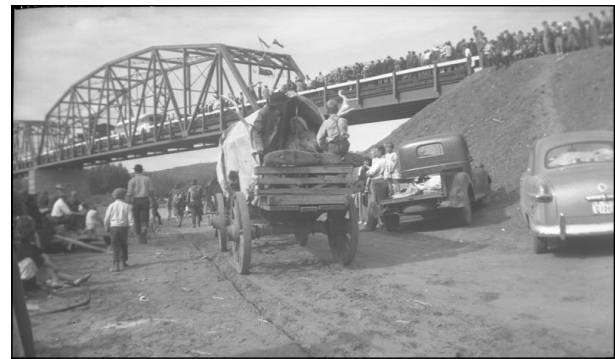
In some cases, the records that may help answer your questions were never donated. As obvious as this sounds, we cannot provide access to records we do not have. An archive is thus supported by the donors who contribute their records.

Similarly, if the records themselves have degraded or been destroyed, the bridge to the past may fail. We work very hard to preserve all records in our collections. Unfortunately, not all records are created equal. Some records were never created with the intention to survive long-term. This means that the physical material is inherently more difficult to preserve. Poor quality paper, for example may become brittle over time and thus must be handled carefully. Other times, records can be destroyed due to extreme weather events like floods. Our emergency response plan is in place to mitigate these risks.

We consider these possible failures so we can better plan for them. The measures that Archives must take to gather, preserve, and share historical records come

with a cost. The South Peace Regional Archives is a non-profit organization with charitable status. We are able to offer our services through a collaborative funding partnership between our four municipal partners: the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District of Greenview, and Municipal District of Spirit River. The Archives is also supported by project-based grants, book sales, society memberships, and donations from the public.

When people and organizations donate their records to the Archives, they allow us the opportunity to preserve their material forever. This material is invaluable to future historical pursuits. The Archives, in turn, does its best to preserve and make these records accessible to everyone who wishes to see them in perpetuity.

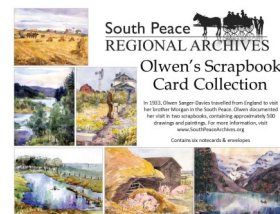


Above: Smoky River Bridge Opening 1949. (SPRA 0116.09.01.01.0976)

Well-maintained bridges are often overlooked or taken for granted until a failure occurs. As caretakers for cultural heritage, it is our job to ensure these links to the past remain effective and to advocate for their maintenance to prevent failures from occurring.

Love the Archives? Shop the Archives!

You asked, and we delivered! Due to popular demand, the South Peace Regional Archives has launched a new online store, featuring our books and stationary. Shipping is available for a fee; and curbside pick-up is free! Prefer to pay via cash or cheque? Contact the Archives directly and we would be happy to arrange a curbside exchange. Here are a few of our recent bestsellers:

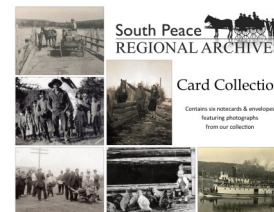


Olwen's Scrapbook Card Collection. 6 blank cards

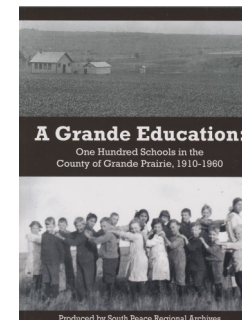
\$10.00

Notecards, General Collection. 6 blank cards

\$10.00



Olwen's Scrapbook Card Collection. 6 blank cards

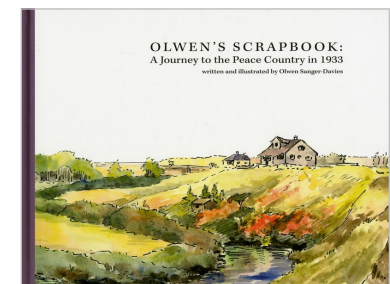


A Grande Education: 100 Schools in the County of Grande Prairie, 1910-1960

\$30.00

Olwen's Scrapbook: A Journey to the Peace Country in 1933

\$42.00



All prices include GST and are subject to change without notice. See www.SouthPeaceArchives.org for full details

New at the Archives

We have great news! We've finally finished processing the Bill Turnbull fonds (Fonds 664) and we are so excited to share it with you all on both our website and Alberta on Record. In total, this fonds consists of 1.07 m of textual records, 4,752 photographs, and 1,448 negatives. Stay tuned for more details on this fonds in our next issue of *Telling Our Stories* magazine.



Above: Runners at the beginning the 1994 Daily Herald Tribune Press Run in Muskosepi Park (SPRA 0664.06.18.01)

During the closure, we have been busy processing other fonds as well. We just finished processing an accrual of 324 photo negatives to the Teepee Creek Stampede Association fonds (Fonds 389). We've digitized a selection for your viewing pleasure, now available on Alberta on Record.

Lastly, we've finished processing a new fonds. The Colleen Stewart fonds (Fonds 690) consists of one scrapbook that details Colleen's life as an artist in the North Peace. It includes photos of her art, newspaper clippings, and exhibition invitations, in addition to other records.

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.



Solutions to Ferry Matching Game, p 22-23

A, 3: *The Dunvegan Ferry over the Peace River, 1955 (SPRA 556.03)*

B, 6: *Boys' ferry service. Robert Mehlum and Dale DeBolt in a homemade boat on Mehlum Creek, 1929 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0296)*

C, 1: *Francis and Christine Schenk with friends on the ferry over the Smoky River at Moody's Crossing. Ferry poster is visible at right, 1926 (SPRA 256.02.04)*

D, 4: *Grovedale ferry on the Wapiti. Claude O'Keefe is standing on the approach, April 1956 (SPRA 256.03.20)*

E, 7: *The last outfit, a wagon pulled by four horses, to cross the Athabasca River in 1917, which was the last year the government operated a ferry between there and the Baptiste River, 1917 (SPRA 116.09.01.01.0868)*

F, 5: *Passengers on "The Beaver," a long narrow river boat which plied the Smoky River, 1915 (SPRA 155.03.10)*

G, 2: *Bert Osborne's group of guides and pack horses crossing the Wapiti River on the Pipestone Creek ferry, 1937 (SPRA 140.04.02)*

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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.

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. Lifetime members will also receive an official donation receipt for income tax purposes.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

Lifetime Membership
\$500.00/person _____

I wish to donate to the
South Peace Regional Archives _____

Total Membership and Donation _____

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*.

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