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Issue 2

TELLING **OUR** STORIES



PARTY TIME

THE SOUTH PEACE CELEBRATES

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South Peace
REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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Cover: Connie with her birthday cake and teddy bear. The photograph is labeled "Connie 3 yrs." n.d. (SPRA 483.01.16-05)

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

Birthdays, anniversaries, retirements, and our community—so many of the most important things in our lives are marked by how we celebrate them. Whether people are gathering together, sending a card, or eating a piece of cake, what people honour shows who they are and what they hold dear. And so, in this issue of *Telling Our Stories*, join us as we take a moment to celebrate not only some of the best parties of the South Peace but also the people who threw them.

When preparing to attend a party, context is crucial, and the same applies to archives, as seen in this issue's Archiveology. Then, for any wallflowers in our readership who might be nervous, check out the party etiquette tips in "Are You In the Know." After that, you will be ready to attend any manner of celebration, from birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations in "The Days We Remember" to a celebration of life in "A Monumental Undertaking." Next, swing by some community events in "Powwows on the Prairie" and "Multicultural Celebrations," and of course, don't forget to send a card with "Best Wishes." And after all that, be sure to stop by the refreshment table with our guest contributor Charles Taws in "Taking Tea."

We have a lot to celebrate right now at the archives, so I would like to take this moment to thank the staff, volunteers, and guest contributors who helped make this issue possible. And now, it's party time!

Ellyn Vandekerkhove
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note:

The 2023 **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** for the South Peace Regional Archives is taking place on

Saturday, March 25th at 10:00am

Grande Prairie Museum, Community Room

Full meeting details are available at
www.SouthPeaceArchives.org/2023AGM

Meeting will include:

2022 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 South Peace Regional Archives Society, 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.

The Wheel of Time

Introducing Our New Logo

In this issue, it is only fitting that we at the Archives have something to celebrate, so we are thrilled to announce the launch of our new redesigned logo!

When we selected our previous logo, the South Peace Regional Archives was a new organization. As such, our logo was inspired by what drove us to establish the archives: the records we are dedicated to preserving. The image of the horse and carriage was based on a historic photo from the Harry Tuffill fonds, "Returning From Flying Camp." The picture shows a survey crew returning from the Saskatoon Lake camp in 1910. A rendered illustration of this scene has served us well as our logo for over a decade.

In the years that have passed, our organization has grown into a thriving professional archives. Now we are preparing for another big step forward: moving to our new home in Centre 2000. This will be a permanent home for our region's history and allow us to continue expanding our work. In this time of transition, it was also time to revisit our logo to make it represent our history, where our organization is, and the future we are working towards.

The central element of our new logo is the wheel. This icon is used as an homage to the wagon in our original logo. Not only does it keep us connected to our past, but to the records in our care. But history is about more than one single moment in time. It began long before that single photograph and continues to be created even

today. The image of the wheel, something that is ever turning, also expands our brand beyond a single moment of time as an inclusive organization that will preserve and showcase all the stories of our communities.

The pixels represent the information that flows in and out of the archives. Records come from our community, enter the archives, and build our history, ever adding to the patchwork of stories that make up the Peace region. These pixels represent that as they construct the wheel and push it to continue moving. The pixels also represent the flow of information from the archives back out to the community, as an essential part of our mandate is to provide access to our records. To that end, the pixels showcase our organization modernizing and moving into digital platforms, making our records more accessible than ever.

This new logo ties us to our roots while showcasing how our organization has grown and where we hope to go. With the launch of our new logo, we will be updating our look to match these new themes of the wheel of time and flowing connections. The first step of that is the redesign of the *Telling Our Stories* cover, which you may have noticed in this issue. Keep your eye out for more upcoming changes to our various platforms, including our website and social media.



Context in the Archival Record

This Issue’s Archiveology

In past issues of Archiveology, we have discussed some of the theory and technique unique to archivists. From provenance to original order, each of these concepts guide how records are organized and described to researchers. An essential aspect previously undescribed is context and how archival practices place importance on preserving it as a part of an archival collection.

Context is important both from the perspective of a whole collection and for an individual record. According to the Dictionary of Archive Terminology, a record has three fundamental aspects: structure, content, and context. Structure refers to the physical format of a record that contains the content. Content refers to the information that the records relay to a researcher or archivist. Context is the aspect that connects the individual record to the external. Context explains why a record exists or why the information it contains is important.

As an example, in the Roger Field fonds (693) there are watercolour paintings of different buildings in Grande Prairie and around the Peace Region. Without the related context for those watercolours or of Roger’s career as an architect, it would be impossible to know why the watercolours were commissioned or what their importance may be.



Above: A watercolour of the Theodore Court Office Building, commissioned by Field, Field & Field Architectural Firm (SPRA 693.01.17)

Context also connects an individual archival record to others in the same group. Singular items like a book in a library are complete in and of themselves, whereas an archival record separated from its set is incomplete. A single letter “...does not stand alone. It is part of a series of correspondence. For a more complete understanding of the letter, it needs to be placed in the context of the entire correspondence series” (p. 57, *A Manual for Small Archives*). It is the relationship of records among each other that helps illustrate their context. Together, a set of records can tell us a more detailed story than an isolated page.

For example, Maurice Pivert’s fond (527) contains a

collection of letters exchanged with family members in France. A single letter can tell us only a little bit, while the set of correspondences as a whole shows a lot more about Maurice’s own experience and the lives of his relatives.

Preserving context in an archives also extends past an individual record or set to a whole collection or fonds. When an archivist prepares a new donation to be added to the vault and be made accessible to the public for research, one of the most important tasks is to create a finding aid or guide that describes that collection. The description of archival records also serves to preserve the context of a whole collection: a description provides a way to explain the context and

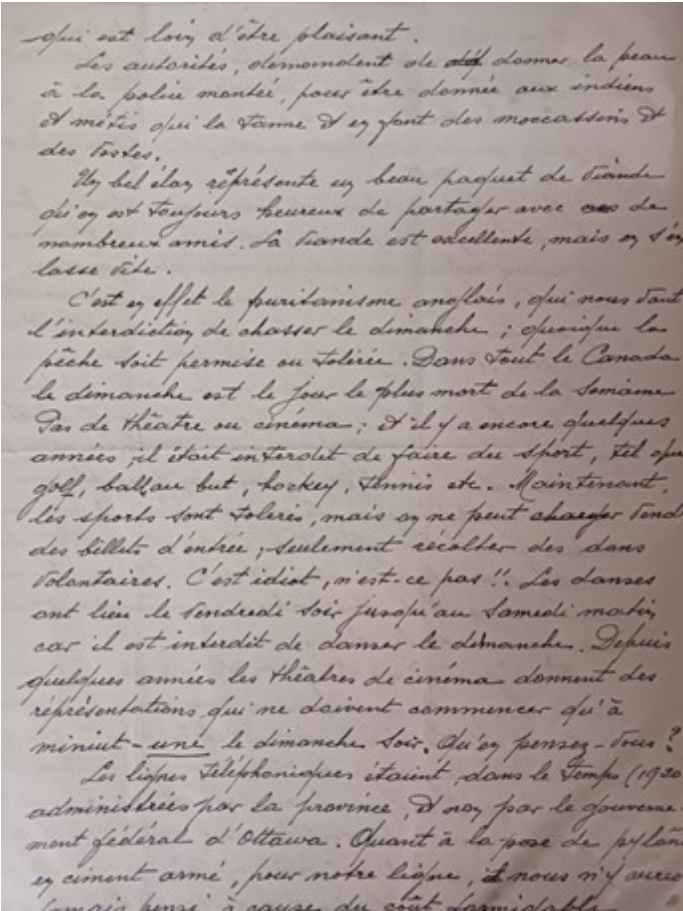
systems that produced a collection of records (p. 62, *A Manual for Small Archives*). Elements of an archival description like a biographical sketch or custodial history both communicate context; the former describes who created a collection while the latter describes the journey it took to arrive at an archives.

The importance of context is also apparent in how archivists arrange collections and vaults through the concept of fonds. A fonds is a way to arrange and describe a collection of records that moves from general to specific. Critically, it also uses principles like original order and provenance to ensure a collection from an individual or organizational record creator is kept together and not interfiled or arbitrarily mixed

with other collections. This is to ensure that the meaning and context of records within and among those records are preserved.

As noted by archivist Terry Cook, “Schemes to classify records by subject or some other artificial system, whether alphabetical, geographical, or chronological, are considered quite un-archival. They destroy utterly the evidential value represented by the original order of the records and render arrangement and description of large bodies of material virtually impossible.” The evidential value that Terry refers to can also be understood as context, of both record groups and entire collections of archival records. For archivists, context is a fundamental aspect of archival records that is important to preserve and communicate as part of the historical value of a collection.

Left: A letter from a series of correspondences between Maurice Pivert and family members living in France between 1951 to 1956 (SPRA 527.01)



Are You in the Know?

Party Etiquette Tips from 1956

Most of us enjoy being invited to parties and celebrations of all kinds. Still, social functions often call for certain types of behaviour and we may find ourselves wondering what's appropriate in a given situation. Should I bring the hosts a gift? Do I need to send a thank you card after the event? What should I wear? A booklet titled *Are You in the Know? About Etiquette, Dating, Grooming, Fashions, This 'n' That* published in 1956 provides some handy advice for putting your best foot forward at (and after) a party. Enjoy these excerpts and test your knowledge of party etiquette, 1950s style.



When you don't know the party guests, should you—

☐ Plunge in boldly ☐ Pause at the doorway ☐ Disappear

Before you cross a crowded room--of strangers--better get your bearings. Instead of anteloping in (only to flounder midway, flustered), pause at the door long enough to spy your hostess. Then beeline (but s-l-o-w-l-y) in her direction; she'll take over from there--introduce you, and start the conversational ball rolling.


All images reproduced from *Are You in the Know?* Published in 1956 by the Kimberly-Clark Corporation. (SPRA 197.04.02)



When invited to a formal tea, should you—

☐ Be punctual ☐ Go formal ☐ Talk about people

Must you dress formally? Stay the full two hours? What should you say to the V.I.P.s you meet? Answers: Wear your best daytime outfit. Arrive and leave when you like. As for the Very Important People: a word from you about their interests and your what-to-say worries vamoose!



Need a thank-you note be—

☐ A formal acknowledgment
☐ Brief but "personalized"
☐ An essay on gratitude

When sending thanks by mail, you needn't be stiff, or wordy or witty. Make your thank-you brief, but warm, with that personal touch that's *you*. And don't delay. Why let "duty notes" nag you when writing them can be so simple?

Multicultural Celebrations

Grande Prairie Heritage Day

Community events don't just have to be about celebrating specific events or individuals. For attendees of Heritage Day in Grande Prairie, a celebration can acknowledge the multiple cultures that come together as a community.

Heritage Day in Grande Prairie began in 1988 as an annual event organized by the Grande Prairie and District Multicultural Association, which had formed the previous year. The celebration served as one of the ways in which the Multicultural Association reached out to community members to promote its mission of inclusion. In 1991, Association member Derek Ross stated the goal of Heritage Day was fostering understanding: "We believe by providing people of the region with the opportunity to experience what people of cultures different from their own have to offer, we are helping them to recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity and ethnic heritage, both of our community and Canada as a whole."



Since its inception, Heritage Day has been held in Muskoseepi Park. The celebration has included a variety of events and programming to highlight expressions of culture including arts, music, dance, food, and fashion.

Heritage Day continues to be celebrated, being held as recently as July 30, 2022, although in a different form. After the Grande Prairie and District Multicultural Association ceased operations around 2004, the City of Grande Prairie began holding the event with the support of the Grande Prairie Museum. Recent celebrations have taken place in Muskoseepi Park and the Heritage Village simultaneously, combining the celebration of multiculturalism with the presentation of Canadian settler history.

Left: photograph by Stephen Fletcher of Ponni Thiyagarajan (left) and Usha Gupta (right), for the Grande Prairie Herald Tribune (1989-08-08)



A male dancer with Hines Creek's Sittanak Dancers leaps high in the air as the group performs at Heritage Days. The Ukrainian dance Troupe recently returned from performing for crowds at Disneyland.

Above: photograph by Randy Vanderveen of Hines Creek's Sittanak Dancers, for the Grande Prairie Herald Tribune (1995-08-08)

The Days We Remember

Celebrating Life's Milestones

The life of any individual or family is punctuated with milestones that mark their development and achievements. Baby showers and birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, graduations and retirements are only some of the milestone events that people choose to celebrate with family and friends. While the outward trappings of the occasion, such as food, activities, and dress, vary based on cultural traditions and personal preference, the desire to commemorate milestones with others always seems to have been strong in the South Peace.

The celebrations may start very early in life. For families coming from some religious and cultural backgrounds, infants are named in a christening ceremony,

which is also an opportunity for the family to introduce the new baby to their community. Many photographs in our collection show children enjoying birthday parties, as seen on the cover and page 18. Cakes often feature in these photographs, showing us that some traditions have changed very little.

Educational accomplishments are another cause for celebration. Below, young David Carlisle shows off the diploma he earned for successfully completing kindergarten. Before 1966, school attendance in Alberta was only mandatory up to age 15 (some exceptions applied). The SPRA collection has several examples of the Public School Leaving Diplomas that were presented to students upon completing eighth grade in

Left: David poses in front of the Carlisle house holding a diploma and wearing a graduate's cap. He is also wearing a sash that reads "1942." The caption below the photograph reads "David graduates from kindergarten." 1942. (SPRA 399.01.52)

Below: The Lawn Social on the grounds of Alberta College after graduation, 1943. (SPRA 2004.42.50, Fonds 162)



Left: La Glace Just-A-Mere-Ladies Club perform a mock wedding for Berna's wedding shower. The bride was Don Johnson and the groom Juliet Haugseth. 1958. (SPRA 481.18)

person asked for Miss Bezanson and left a suit case for her. She was very much surprised, but was finally prevailed upon to open it to find the contents were for herself which proved to be many very lovely and useful gifts from the girls. There was music and a good time in general, Miss Thompson proving herself a very capable hostess."

the 1920s and 1930s, including diplomas for Vera Tanner, Thomas Gass, and Mary Jane Ross. In her history of Grande Prairie high schools, Isabel Campbell writes that "in the mid 1930s no elaborate graduation ceremonies heralded completion of high school studies; no formal gowns and corsages for the girls, no spit-and-polish for the boys, no reception for graduates, no big speeches, no big dance" (SPRA 510.07.127, "Grande Prairie High School," p. 17). However, that had changed by 1945—see the photograph of David's big brother Jim with three of his friends on page 18. Bill Archer, David and Jim's older cousin, celebrated his graduation from Alberta College at a lawn social with his classmates (see left).

Wedding ceremonies are only one of the celebrations a couple may plan, or have planned for them, when they decide to marry. Engagement parties, bridal showers, bachelor and bachelorette parties, and rehearsal dinners may all precede the wedding day itself. The June 10, 1919 *Grande Prairie Herald* describes Miss Gertrude Bezanson's wedding shower:

"A delightful supper was served. There were place cards at each plate with verses appropriate to the occasion which caused much merriment when read. While the guests were still at table, a gruff voiced

Anniversaries also often call for celebrations, and early issues of Grande Prairie newspapers are dotted with messages congratulating couples on 25, 40, and 50 years of marriage. Film footage of Bert and Miriam Tieman's fiftieth wedding anniversary shows elaborate decorations and table settings, cake cutting, and a gift table, elements that may also have been included in their wedding decades earlier (SPRA 1985.03.82B, Fonds 039).

Some milestones celebrate significant transitions—transitioning into parenthood, homeownership, or retirement, for instance. Archival photographs show people marking retirements with ceremonies, parties, and dinners, such as the one showing Dr. Davidson's celebration on page 19. In some cases, certificates or plaques were presented to the retiree to commemorate their accomplishments. One such certificate was presented to Gerald Carveth when he retired as secretary of the Grande Prairie and District Old Timers' Association around 1979 after serving for 25 years (SPRA 384.04.01).

One popular tradition for commemorating life milestones is giving greeting cards. See the following pages for some examples from our collection.

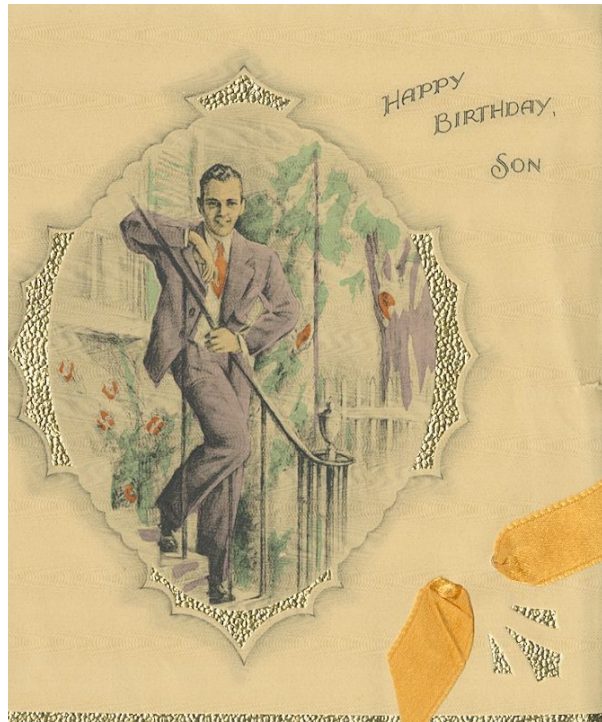
Best Wishes

Commemorating Milestones with Greeting Cards

The custom of exchanging greeting cards to celebrate holidays and life's significant milestones can be traced back for centuries. The large number of cards in our collection tells us that people considered the cards they were given to be valuable mementos of special occasions, long after the occasions were past.

The Billy Salmond fonds (043) contains approximately 265 colorful postcards like the one on the facing page, dating from 1907 to 1920. They contain friends' and family members' messages for Billy as he worked his way west, eventually settling in Grande Prairie in

1911. Cards in the Vader-Grimm (676), Hodgson (630), and Morrison (589) fonds, also featured here, provide details about the occasions and relationships valued by individuals and families. We hope you enjoy these colorful reproductions of a selection of the cards in our collection.



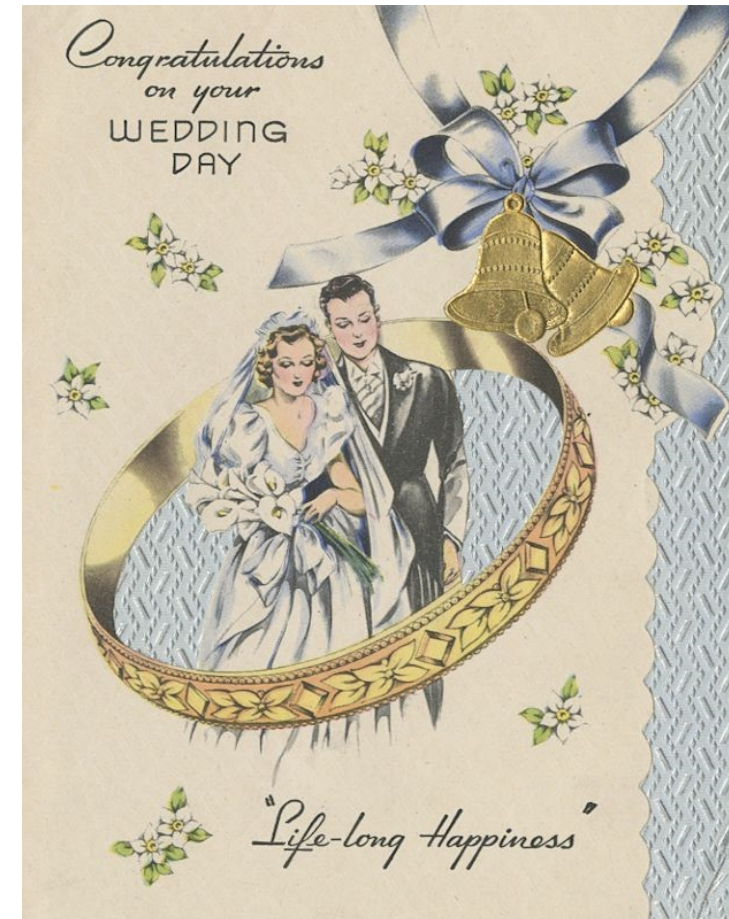
Above: A birthday card sent to Donald Gordon Morrison by his mother, 1935. (from SPRA fonds 589.02)

Left: A card sent to Ora and Edith Grimm to celebrate the birth of their son Ray in 1950. The inscription asks big sisters Elnor and Norma how they like the new baby. (from SPRA fonds 676.03.01.02)

Right: A birthday postcard sent to Billy Salmond in August of 1909. (SPRA 1993.1.1.195)

Below left: A card given to Ora and Edith Grimm by either Ora's or Edith's parents to celebrate their wedding on July 6, 1943. (from SPRA fonds 676.03.01.02)

Below right: A card given to Edna Mae Hodgson for her high school graduation, 1961. (from SPRA fonds 630.07)



Taking Tea

The History of Afternoon Tea

Something as simple as a perfectly brewed cup of tea can make an afternoon break feel like a celebration, especially if it is shared with friends. Join Charles Taws, curator of the Grande Prairie Museum, as he explores the history of the ritual of afternoon tea.

The Rev. Forbes Homestead and Pioneer Hospital is a Provincial Historic Resource Site that opens every summer in Grande Prairie, Alberta. In recent years this Museum has enjoyed success by holding afternoon teas. The teas are well attended and often have themes. In 2022 two teas celebrated the Queen's Jubilee, while others promoted local historic organizations such as the South Peace Regional Archives and the Peace Country Historical Society.

The afternoon tea tradition is not just a pleasant outing but is part of the history of this historic site. Agnes Forbes was one of the very first health care providers in the area. She was known to console people with a listening ear, a comforting word, and a hot cup of tea. Also, while most of her clothing didn't survive their 73-day journey to the Peace Country, her splendid tea set did. She was known to hold afternoon tea parties. In those rough early pioneer times, it was a rare genteel event that many enjoyed being invited to.

Beginning with the Forbes and as the early photographs from the South Peace Regional Archives reveal, the custom of tea was one practiced by our first settlers. It was a way to build community as people met and socialized. This facilitated the formation of groups and people gaining new skills as they organized the various events.

Tea had been popular in Great Britain since the late 1600s, but it was a luxury item enjoyed only by the very rich. Up to the early 19th century, tea was so valuable it was often kept in a locked chest or box. Only the lady of the house would have the key, which she wore on a necklace or chain around her neck, to ensure no pilfering by servants or others. As its demand increased and companies such as the East India Trading Company forged trade routes and networks, the price came down and it became available to all classes of society. As such, before Canada's confederation in 1867, tea consumption already stretched across the country thanks to the Hudson Bay and T. Eaton Companies. Tea consumption permeated all of Canadian society, rich, poor, English, French, Indigenous, and Asian.

Some historians argue that tea can be considered a nation-building product, establishing a Canadian identity while reinforcing ties to the sovereign and the Commonwealth. The exotic nature of tea, coming from distant lands, was also attractive to people. Author Nicole Labrie writes, "The scent, texture and taste of tea provided a break from the monotonous rigors of rural farming life... The feeling of pleasure experienced drinking tea enticed the settlers to purchase more in the future."

The custom of afternoon tea originated in Great Britain and we inherited it from our pioneer ancestors. The ritual is widely attributed to Anna Maria Russell, Duchess of Bedford and friend to Queen Victoria. The English aristocracy had their evening meal quite late.

The Duchess of Bedford found the time between luncheon and dinner too long and would complain about a "sinking feeling" at mid-afternoon and would request some light food and a pot of tea. The snack became part of her routine; she soon started inviting friends and about 1840 the custom of afternoon tea was born.

A quick look on the internet will show a large variety of tea companies operating in Alberta and a wide choice of venues for afternoon tea. The old railway hotels, such as the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton and the Banff Springs Hotel are well known for their celebrated afternoon teas. In recent years the nomenclature of such events has become confused and deserves some clarification. Today, we might see a "High Tea" advertised with the meaning that it is an extra fancy or elaborate tea. But this is an incorrect use of the term. When the upper classes were enjoying their afternoon tea, the workers in the newly industrialized economy of the 19th century were coming home from a hard day's work. They needed a more substantial meal with hot food. This is a High Tea—a working class family's evening meal. This may be further differentiated by the fact that it was served on a "high" dining table with chairs while an afternoon tea for the upper classes was often served on low tables while they reclined in low comfortable parlour chairs (the term low tea is sometimes used for an afternoon tea). I once had the privilege of being invited to afternoon tea at the Chateau Laurier

in Ottawa. While we had the afternoon tea, I noted on the menu a "Canadian Tea" which included steak and potatoes. Such a tea would be considered a High Tea. So, if it's a light snack you want, it's an "Afternoon Tea," and an early evening meal with hot food is a "High Tea," or often just called "Tea" today. A "Cream Tea" is another popular term and denotes the use of clotted or whipped cream instead of butter on the scones and sweets.

In the middle of the last century, Canada's top tea brands were Red Rose and Salada. Those from Ontario, particularly the Toronto region, might remember Flowerdale tea with some fondness. Today, some notable Canadian brands are King Cole from New Brunswick and the many fine teas produced by Murchie's in Victoria. Murchie's have been in business since 1894 and their "Queen Victoria" blend is a mixture of the Queen's favourite teas. As a boy, company founder, John Murchie, delivered tea to Balmoral Castle when the Queen was in residence there.

Below: A party of women in Grande Prairie celebrating around an improvised tea table includes Lois Bezanson at far left. Ca. 1911. (SPRA 1990.30.06, Fonds 155)



Powwows on the Prairie

This article was contributed by Patrick Macaulay. Patrick worked as an Archives Assistant (Student) at the South Peace Regional Archives in the summer of 2022.

The powwow — an Indigenous gathering involving dance, song, and regalia— seemingly originated sometime in the 19th century. The practice originated at a time when Indigenous people across North America were being cornered onto reserves and targeted by assimilationist policies. During this difficult period, powwows could be a way of expressing intertribal solidarity and holding on to a sense of cultural identity. Canadian legislation suppressed the practice in its early years. An 1895 amendment to Canada’s *Indian Act* prohibited “any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony,” in tandem with other efforts to suppress Indigenous culture. Bans on Indigenous dancing were also in place in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During these years of oppression, many tribes held dances in secret.

Full legalization of powwows in Canada would not occur until 1951. In the 1960s, a decade after the prohibition had been lifted, the practice started to gain traction. A 1981 federal report said that “there has been a major increase in Indian cultural expression in the last 20 years in the form of powwows and other types of traditional gatherings, improved communications and the recognition of contemporary Indian artists.” The Peace Country was part of this revival.

In the past, the Canadian government had attempted to separate Indigenous children from their culture; at powwows, the opposite could be accomplished. “Our

parents and grandparents taught us that a newborn should be taken to a powwow as soon as possible so he can get accustomed to the beat,” said Dwayne Redstar, whose three-year-old son J.J Big Eagle danced in front of hundreds of people at a Grande Prairie powwow in 1991. Roy Fleury, Master of Ceremonies for the event, said that the revival of traditions was helping Indigenous people find a sense of identity.

However, such gatherings weren’t necessarily insular affairs, and some organizers encouraged non-Indigenous attendance. “I think it is a wonderful way to celebrate with our non-Indigenous friends and to come and see we have a lot of support in the community,” explained Walter White, who has presided over a number of Grande Prairie powwows in recent years. “This is just one way of giving back and saying thank you for those beautiful ways that we coexist in the Peace Country. We all live and work here and it’s an amazing way to celebrate.”

With this cross-cultural aspect, powwows could also be used to draw attention to problems affecting the Indigenous population. In the 1990s, Grande Prairie Regional College began hosting a convocational powwow; in its third year, the celebration was expanded to a two-day celebration which included workshops on Indigenous issues. “It’s a great opportunity, especially in land claims and aboriginal rights, for people to come out and get a better perspective of what’s happening in the nations,” said Dale LeClair, the college’s native counsellor.

Powwows have always been about more than mere celebration. A century later, organizers in the Peace Country saw the gatherings as not just a reason to get together and have fun, but as a way to heal old wounds and address long-standing issues in the Indigenous community.

Birthday Cake



Left: Presbyterian Youth Choir including Eileen Magnuson, Marjorie Harris, Edith Crosby, Florence Crosby, Doreen Riley, Peggy Hodges, Gladys Duncan, Phyllis Harris, Leona Harris, Jimmy Duncan, Gordon Wright, Max Swallow. Photo taken by Mrs. Wright, April 7, 1935. (SPRA 284.03.01)

The following story was written by Peggy Hodges Mair, remembering her tenth birthday. The story was transcribed by volunteer Samantha Cabral.

January 1932 was a cold one. Our old log house on the farm was snug enough but what can a ten year old do to amuse herself on her birthday? I usually celebrated my birthday with my best friend who lived about a mile and a half away because the next day would be her birthday [sic] too. I had read the book I had received at Christmas, cut paper dolls from the people in Eaton’s catalogue and drawn loads of pictures.

Finally Mom decided that if we dressed warmly we could walk to my friend’s house. It was cold but we arrived safely.

Our Mother’s [sic] put their heads together to try to do something special for our birthdays. Nobody had been to town to buy candles for our cake, but a cake we should have. I think that of all the fancy cakes I have had over the years that one stands out in my memory. It was baked and iced but there would be no candles. When the cake arrived on the table there were still no candles but ten brightly decorated doughnut holes, one for each year. Those ladies really knew how to make the best of things.

Right: Jimmy and Peggy Mair of Grande Prairie in the potato garden, 1954 (SPRA 476.02.01.09)



It's Time to Celebrate

From our earliest photographs to those taken more recently, there is plenty of photographic evidence that the South Peace has always enjoyed a good party. All that's really necessary is good company... and a good cake!

Right: Lawrence Moon, Norma Swanston, Sheila Gwartney, and Jim Carlisle at their high school graduation. The caption below the photograph reads "Lawrence, Norma, Sheila." 1945. (SPRA 399.11.12)

Bottom left: Dancing at farewell party for Canon Owen, 1957. (SPRA 163.07.31-1)

Bottom right: Bruce Horte's birthday party: Ken Hanson, Marv and Ted Rorem, and Bruce Horte by his cake, ca. 1938. (SPRA 2009.082.14)



Above: Nora Shields at a work party presenting a cake, ca. 1955. (SPRA 627.04.176)

Top right: A group of people gathered for the Christening of Ann Roberts, including (from left) Walter Ward, D. P. Roberts, Ann Roberts, Mrs. Roberts, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen Mercer on the right. The photograph was contributed by Walter Ward. Ca. 1915. (SPRA 032.08.08.0589)

Middle right: Muriel and Clem Collins in the buffet line at a banquet to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary, surrounded by many friends, 1973. (SPRA 476.03.01.19)

Bottom right: Dr. Davidson retired after serving 23 years at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon. He was minister at Forbes Presbyterian Church, Grande Prairie from 1948-1953. Photograph taken in 1987. (SPRA 284.03.23)



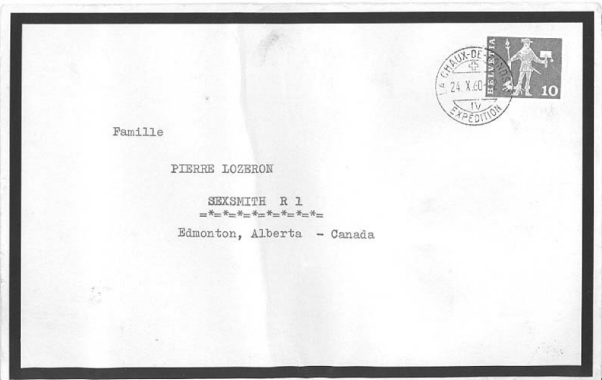
A Monumental Undertaking

Funerals in the South Peace

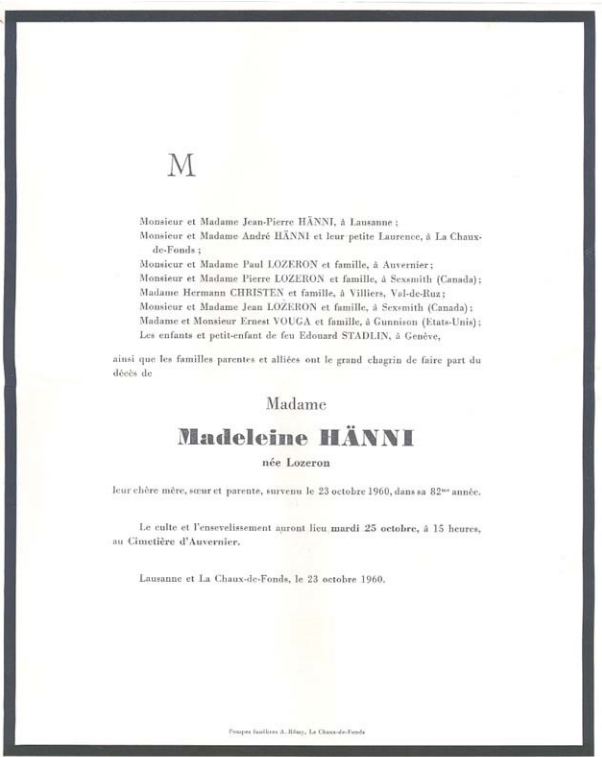
Few celebrations carry more weight or ritual than the ones surrounding life and death. Funerals and mourning rites provide a structure through which we can lay a person to rest, help their spirit move on, and also a space to begin to process the loss of the person. However, what those rites looked like varied drastically based on the culture, time period, and even the social and economic status of the individual.

Some mourning rituals include an outward display of that loss, a visual way to immediately communicate it, like the Victorian Era's use of mourning clothing. For women, there was deep or heavy mourning where women would wear black from neck to ankle, a crepe veil, and no jewelry, and it would last six months. This was followed by a year of half-mourning, where black was still worn, but richer fabrics were permitted, a shorter veil was optional, and certain types of jewelry would be allowed. The final stage was light mourning for six months, where white lace could be added. Similarly, people would use stationery outlined in black. While these were often used specifically for funeral invitations, many people would use them to send all correspondence during their mourning period.

There were also mourning and funeral rituals for people's homes. Many people passed away at home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the British Empire, the curtains would be drawn, and clocks stopped to mark the time of death. Mirrors and photographs would be covered to prevent the deceased's spirit from being trapped or possessing any



Above & below: Mourning stationery with black borders, 1960. (from SPRA fonds 006.04.01)



Above: Grande Prairie ca. 1928. J.B. Oliver's furniture store is the first building on the left. (SPRA 032.08.08.0389)

Right: Formal portrait of Mr. James Bowes Oliver in his furniture store, also called J.B. Oliver. 1965. (SPRA 2013.047)



family members. When the body was removed from the house, it was usually taken head-first so that it would be unable to call others to follow it.

In a region like the South Peace, people from all over the world would bring their own customs. For example, a family of Scandinavian descent might have removed a board from the roof to allow the soul to leave and carried the deceased out the door feet-first instead so that the soul could not see the doorway and find their way back. People of Scottish or Irish descent might have tied black ribbons around beehives to "tell the bees" of the death. So historically, there was a seemingly endless array of customs and traditions to navigate. Luckily for the residents of Grande Prairie, a professional soon came to assist.

J.B. Oliver was born in Ontario in 1888 and was eager to go into business in Western Canada. After studying in Manitoba, J.B. moved to Grande Prairie in 1915 to run a store for George Crummy. That same year he founded two businesses under one roof, J.B. Oliver's

Furniture Store and J.B. Oliver's Funeral Home. While this combination may seem strange to us today, at the time, it was a common practice for furniture stores to provide the services of an undertaker since they often made and sold coffins as well. Since J.B. Oliver also had a horse-drawn flatbed wagon large enough to transport the coffins, he was frequently commissioned to transport coffins to the cemetery. His wagon also served as the first ambulance service for Grande Prairie, taking patients to the hospital.

After serving in the First World War, J.B. continued to build his funeral home and furniture business, and in 1930 expanded to a new location on main street. It was one of the most modern funeral homes in Alberta with a motor hearse. J.B. Oliver also continued to run the ambulance services in Grande Prairie until the city took them over in 1961. Today Oliver's Funeral Home is still in operation, making it one of our city's oldest businesses.

New at the Archives

Since the last issue of the magazine, a number of large processing projects have been completed along with the addition of a few new donations.

Three gift agreements were signed for new archival donations, but we also received a transfer from the Galloway Station Museum, Travel Centre, & Archives in Edson, Alberta. This transfer was a small collection of postcards and photographs compiled by Alonzo Rice (fonds 694), who owned land near the old Bezanson town site.

Two large processing projects were also completed. The first is the new Art Gallery of Grande Prairie fonds (677). This new fonds comprises almost 6m of textual records and over 1,100 photographs along with negatives, CDs, and other materials.



Above: 1997 Spring Art Auction Photobook (SPRA 677.06.02)

The second processing project was done by Treva London, an Athabasca University student completing her practicum at the archives. This processing project focused on records donated by Roger Field (fonds 693) and includes a collection of 22 watercolour paintings and over 600 architectural drawings of buildings in the South Peace region.

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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
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