

Volume 16

December 2024

Issue 1

TELLING **OUR** STORIES



DISHING UP HISTORY

FOOD CULTURE IN THE SOUTH PEACE

A PUBLICATION OF THE



South Peace
REGIONAL ARCHIVES

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This issue was sponsored by the Grande Prairie & District Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society



Cover: Mae Trelle serving up strawberry pie. N.d. (SPRA 438.03.2922)

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.



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Letter from the Editor

As the holiday approaches, we would like to welcome you all back to our table with this special issue of *Telling Our Stories*. We first visited food history as a theme in December 2020, and it proved a rich topic. Food is essential to everyday life, but it is also tied into our circumstances and cultures. And so, much like a really good buffet, one plate just hasn't proved to be enough. We are back for a second serving in this issue, "Dishing Up History."

Start off with a sample platter, and learn about food in archives in "A Taste of History," and "Cookbooks as History," this issue's Archiveology. Browse the grocery store shelves in "Mealtime Marketing," "Fashionable Food," and "Cheap Eats." Explore the links between food and culture in "Pemmican and Bannock," and dine out on the history of restaurants in "Five Stars." And of course, pair it with the perfect drink in "Let's Have a Pint," from guest contributor Dr. Daryl White.

But the best part of any meal, is of course the people who can join you at the table. So we would like to take a moment to thank all of the staff and volunteers who have helped make this issue possible. We would especially like to thank our guest contributor, Dr. Daryl White. And of course, thank you to all of you for reading and supporting the work we do. I hope you enjoy "Dishing Out History," and wish you all the best heading into the next year.

Ellyn Vandekerkhove
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note:

Holiday Hours

The South Peace Regional Archives will be **closed to the public from:**

December 22, 2024 – January 9, 2025

for the holiday season.

Thank you for your understanding!



Above: Festive postcard, ca. 1910. (SPRA 1993.1.1.235a)

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.

Taste of History

A Year-Long Adventure in Historical Cookery

Those of you who follow our blog and Facebook page will have seen our culinary adventures throughout the past year. At the end of 2023, we stumbled upon an assortment of cookbooks and recipe leaflets that inspired us to try out a selection of historical recipes and share the journey with our readers.

Executive Director Ellyn's favorite recipe of the four she cooked was the green tomato pickle (top) featured on our blog in September. Making preserves based on a 1933 cookbook gave us an opportunity to learn about standardized measurements commonly used in the past, like bushels and pecks. The resulting pickle was delicious paired with crackers and cheese, and we're still enjoying Ellyn's creation.

Archivist Jack's favourite recipe was the egg coffee (middle). He says that "while the attempt was not successful, it was really fun to read up on the science of using eggs to clarify coffee. It was also cool to look into older versions of the recipe which used fish scales instead of eggs, showing how people immigrating to somewhere new often combine traditional techniques with local ingredients. The sweet egg coffee recipe from Nguyen Giang that we also featured was super delicious."

Access Coordinator Teresa's favourite was a recipe for Lady Goldenglow, or Second Mystery Cake (bottom). This recipe will be coming up on the blog on December 18. The triple-layered, marbled extravaganza with its chocolate and orange flavor combination felt like an appropriately festive note on which to conclude the *Taste of History* project. If anyone knows the origin for either of the cake's names, please let us know!



Cookbooks as History

This Issue’s Archiveology

Of the many different kinds of records preserved at the archives, cookbooks can be one of the most fun. They can come in a variety of forms, from official publications by well-known chefs to more informal collections put together by local communities to celebrate shared food culture.

As historical items, cookbooks can be a great window into the past. Readers can glean information about the kinds of ingredients that were available, what recipes were popular, and the etiquette and social norms of a specific time. Even the scribbled notes in a cookbook can reveal more about the individual who owned it and their cooking habits.

Another way to look at cookbooks with a historical lens is in how the books themselves have changed over time. Learning recipes by observing others cook is a method dating back as far as people have cooked, but written cookbooks also have a long history.

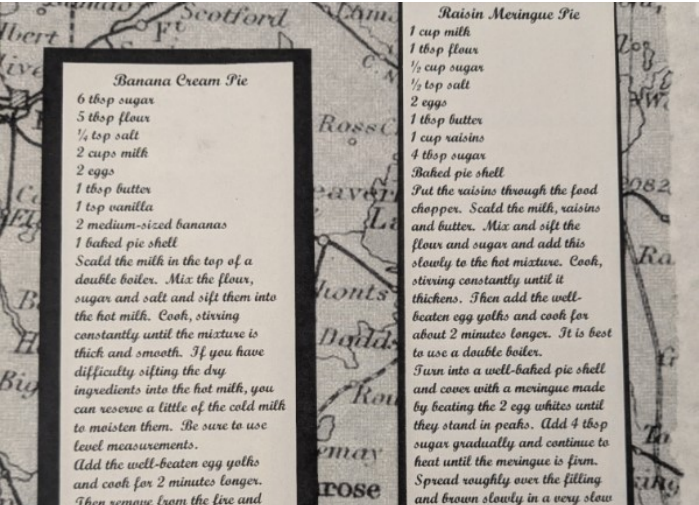
The oldest known written recipes are collected on a series of clay tablets from Mesopotamia, with the

oldest three dated to around the 1730s BCE. Kept as part of Yale University’s Babylonian Collection, an interdisciplinary team conducted a project in which a few recipes from the tablets were translated and recreated. According to the team, many old recipes were decidedly vague and did not list the amounts of ingredients. This required the Yale team to experiment with the recipes and compare them with modern recipes that have a historical connection.

For cookbooks published in English, the 1390 book *Forme of Cury* is considered one of the earliest. It also is a great example of a type of cookbook that was common well into the 19th century—a collection of recipes usually intended for the wealthy prepared by professional kitchen staff. Expecting an audience familiar with cooking, these recipes often leave out multiple steps or details. Many of these books also predated standard ingredient measurements or temperature controlled ovens. This required a cook to develop a good sense of proper ratios or methods from experience.

By the 20th century, with the development of Home Economics (or Domestic Science) as an academic field a new style of cookbook was popularized. This included works like Fannie May Farmer’s *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook* (1896) or *The Household Science Book of Recipes* (1933), edited by Annie L. Laird and Edna W. Park. The latter example we referred to regularly in this year’s cooking blog series, *Taste of History*. During this period there was also an increase in the

Left: *Seasonable Meat Recipes*, 1933. (SPRA 129.07)



Above: Gail Fox & Mel Delaney. Scrapbook of Prairie Recipes: 1899-1995 (TX 715 S33 D45)

Right: Cooking Up Memories: Elder’s Caring Shelter (TX 715 C66 E43)

production of cookbooks by food companies, aimed at promoting home cooking using their brand of products.

Home Economics cookbooks were developed to make recipes replicable in any home kitchen through the use of modern cooking tools and standardized measurements and techniques. Unlike the Mesopotamian tablets in Yale University’s collection, these recipes would list exact amounts of each ingredient and provided a series of steps to achieve the same result as the author. While this is very familiar to modern recipes, we found out through our blog series that these recipes could still omit important steps as they were assumed to be common knowledge for cooks at the time.

Regardless, cookbooks created by Home Economics professors had an impact on the development of the modern cookbook. Modern recipes are often educationally focused with very specific information about the ingredients and the steps required to make a recipe in the same way at the author. These cookbooks



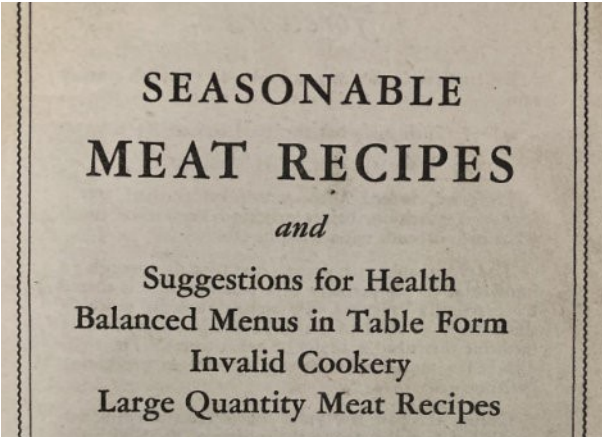
will share specific techniques within a recipe, like what is considered medium-rare meat or how to pleat the edge of a dumpling wrapper.

This focus on education also extends to food culture. Some books focus specifically on different cuisines, with the author sharing the cultural importance of a certain dish or their personal connection to a culture’s shared food.

In some ways this provides another lens to approach cookbooks historically. As historians look at cookbooks of the past to better understand culture at the place and time, authors of today can share their own culture and history through their recipes.

Sources:

- <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/ancient-mesopotamian-tablet-cookbook>
- <https://www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/717>
- <https://bookriot.com/history-of-cookbooks/>
- <https://eatwell.healthy.ucla.edu/2021/03/08/the-history-of-cookbooks-and-where-we-are-today/>



Let's Have a Pint

Drinking Your Beer in the Peace

This article was contributed by Dr. Daryl White. Daryl is a professor at Northwestern Polytechnic and formerly served on the South Peace Regional Archives Board of Directors.

The story of beer in the Peace Region is simultaneously new and old. The South Peace Regional Archives collection includes a photograph of Henry Roberts and friends sharing a pitcher of beer in 1920 (see the photograph below). Given the difficulties involved in transporting beer, particularly unpasteurized draft beer, it seems likely it was home brew. While Alberta breweries from farther south opened distribution branches in the Peace, they came a little later. And commercial brewing in the Peace belongs to the 21st century and the rapid expansion of craft brewing, which we will return to shortly.

We should also give Henry and the gang the benefit of the doubt that the beer they were drinking was under 2.5% in strength and therefore legal under Alberta's prohibition regime enacted in 1916. After all, the Peace Region had voted to go "dry" in the July 21, 1915 referendum. The Peace River district had 22 polls across the area, many in private homes, and

voted for prohibition by roughly the same 3:2 margin as Alberta overall. Grande Prairie voted again to stay "dry" by rejecting the interprovincial import of liquor (usually by mail) in 1920 by 2:1, a higher margin than the province overall.

Shifting public sentiment, coupled with the perception that prohibition had largely failed, brought a third vote in November 1923. Where the *Grande Prairie Herald* had carried advertising from the Alberta Temperance and Moral Reform League in 1915, it now ran pieces from the Moderation League of Alberta, which urged government sale of alcohol. The results in the Peace River district flipped, with voters choosing "Option D" (government sale) even more enthusiastically than the rest of Alberta.

Legal, stronger beer returned to the Peace Region, but there was still no one brewing it commercially. Government liquor stores opened in Grande Prairie and Peace River in 1924 and beer licenses were issued to around a dozen Peace Region hotels, including the Grande Prairie Hotel and the Murray Hotel in Grande Prairie, and the Great War Veterans Association in Peace River. Commercial brewers opened warehouses at Grande Prairie, McLennan, and Peace River to supply them. Brewery presidents such as J.B. Cross of Calgary Brewing flew in to entertain hotel operators. We do not have ready access to quantities of beer sold in the Peace, but the Grande Prairie and Peace River stores were more profitable than the average for the new Alberta Liquor Control Board.

Left: Henry Roberts and friends share a pitcher of beer, 1920. (SPRA 256.01.16)



But despite the amount of barley produced in the Peace Region, commercial brewers had not been established by mid-century. Deputy Premier Hugh Horn-er, speaking at Marvin Moore's nomination meeting in 1974, asked why there should not be a brewery in the area with most of the malting barley grown in High Level and Fort Vermilion.

There had been a glimmer of hope when the *Herald-Tribune* reported in 1959 that a market survey and economic report had been completed for a brewery in Grande Prairie. It certainly fit the optimistic mood of the region with discussions of a new pulp mill and the Dunvegan Bridge nearing completion. But several months later, Angus Blake McKenzie of Edmonton was charged with unauthorized trading in securities for the Peace River Brewery Syndicate. Some seventy-three people in Grande Prairie and district had paid \$500 in cash and pledged a further \$1,000 for a share in the venture. McKenzie was convicted and the Syndicate dissolved.

The Grande Prairie brewery might have been viable, but it was an idea ahead of its time. The trend in the Canadian brewing industry in the post-war era was consolidation. E.P. Taylor's Canadian Breweries Limited, along with Molson and Labatt's, controlled nearly 95% of the national beer market. Efficiency, economies of scale, and expensive brand advertising were the order of the day. The result was a homogenized product which some critics derided as flavourless alcoholic pop.

The response was a new wave of small Canadian craft breweries beginning in British Columbia in the early 1980s. Some were simply enthusiastic but others thrived. Unfortunately, it was poor timing for the Peace Region which had just seen the oil boom of the 1970s bust. Grande Prairie had emerged as the dominant urban area with a population of more than 20,000 but the brewery would have to wait.

Any prospective Peace Region brewer faced challenges. They would be competing for market share with big national brands in a relatively small regional market. The market size issue was magnified by Alberta regulations that required breweries to produce a minimum of 500,000 litres per year – or approximately one case of twenty-four cans for each of Grande Prairie's 55,000 residents according to the 2011 census.

Alberta dropped that requirement in 2013. Three years later, Grande Prairie finally got its first breweries. Grain Bin Beer opened in February 2016 with a 7,200 litres/month capacity but grew rapidly. It was very much in the craft beer tradition of enthusiasm and experimentation with ten years of "doing it just for fun" as Dalen Landis put it before they opened. GP Brewing Company was a different operation which opened in March 2016 on a much greater scale with a more mainstream product, and by July was shipping canned beer to more than 200 liquor stores across Alberta.

These two breweries continue to operate today and have been joined by others in Fairview, Fort St. John, Slave Lake, and Peace River. Commercial beer production was a long time brewing in the Peace Region but it seems here to stay.

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Alberta Liquor Control Board Annual Reports.

Canada. Alberta. Legislative Assembly Journals, 1915, 3rd Leg., 3rd Sess. https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R3BF1PEMEME?FR_=1&W=1366&H=1097

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Fashionable Food

Food Trends Through the Decades

No matter where I look, I feel like I am being confronted by food trends. I encounter them when I'm out shopping for groceries, but also at home when I'm looking for a recipe that will incorporate the basket of mushrooms that's been at the back of my fridge for a little too long. Advertising, whether print or digital, tells me to eat this superfood for better health or buy that gadget to streamline my cooking process. Consumers in the past seem to have experienced a similar bombardment of food trends.

Newspapers from decades past are filled with advertisements proclaiming the virtues of various food products. The Pacific Milk advertisement shown at right was printed in the *Herald-Tribune* in 1934 (SPRA 510.09.05). Although the most attention-grabbing text—"Pacific Milk is an old time pioneer"—communicates familiarity and an established reputation, the advertisement also emphasizes progress and innovation.

In this case, the company had grounds on which to base their claims to both dependability and progress. Pacific Milk was produced by the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association in British Columbia, founded in



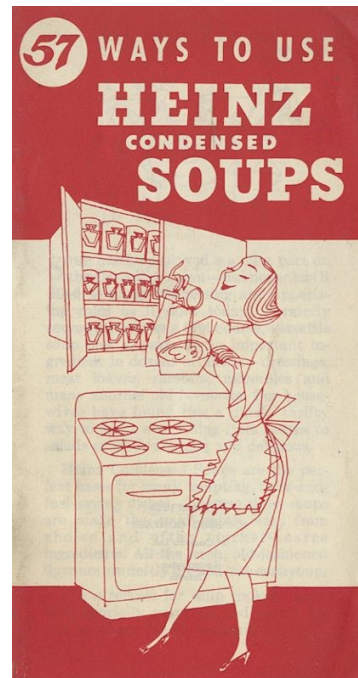
1913, meaning the brand would likely have seemed like "an old time pioneer" to many. But the organization was progressive too, as the advertisement promised. The FVMPA was the first dairy organization in Canada to employ a bacteriologist in 1923, and by 1934 they were vacuum packing their milk to save "vital vitamins" [sic]. It is still common today to see food products being promoted for their superior health benefits and innovative production methods.

In our archival collections, we also have pamphlets and booklets promoting different brands and featuring recipes that use their products (for more about this, see the article on the following page). Members of the Watt family collected a large number of these (SPRA 144.04). Kellogg's, Maple Leaf, and Certo, brands that are still available in grocery stores today, are only a few of the companies represented.

The promotional booklets gathered by the Watts were printed anywhere from the 1920s to the 1980s, but the ones that piqued my interest were those from the 1950s. According to an article by the National

Women's History Museum, convenience foods like cake mixes and canned soups were becoming more accessible and commonly used by home cooks in the wake of World War II. While these products had been available in previous decades, they were used more to "supplement diets rather than predominating at the table." Then during the war, production of canned foods increased, but they were rationed for civilians. It is unsurprising, therefore, that their popularity exploded in the 1950s after rationing ended. Instead of supplementing a meal, convenience foods were used in creative new ways, often as a central ingredient. Using the Heinz recipe booklet shown below, a cook could prepare an entire meal featuring Heinz soups, from a cocktail sauce for the appetizer, to fricassee chicken and a molded vegetable salad for the main course, and a tomato soup cake for dessert.

Cookware, appliances, and other kitchen tools are just as likely to be the subject of enthusiastic marketing. Andre Pivert, pictured at right, was a salesman for Wear-Ever aluminum cookware around the 1930s (SPRA 197.02). He sold items like pots, pans, and mixing bowls, but also more specialized tools



like the Wear-Ever Jiffy Juicer. A small pamphlet advertising the juicer promises "no fuss... no muss" and states that the handy tool

"miraculously extracts the valuable Vitamin A Oil from the orange rind—equal in value to fresh Cod Liver Oil and most delightfully piquant in flavor." Meanwhile, the pots and pans were said to cook fruits, vegetables, and meats without water or fat, preserving more of the food's nutritional value and reducing fat intake. Promises like these remind me that whatever changes have taken place in our kitchens and grocery stores, the strategies used to make this food or that kitchen tool seem like a must-have to cooks have stayed remarkably similar through the decades.

Sources:

<http://bcdairyhistory.ca/PDFs/First+40+Years+FVMPA.pdf>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/how-highly-processed-foods-liberated-1950s-housewives>



Above: Wedding portrait of Andre Pivert and Jeanne Marcil, taken October 30, 1928. (SPRA 528.01.01)

Left: Recipe pamphlet for Heinz Condensed Soups, 1953. (SPRA 1985.48.183, fonds 144)

Mealtime Marketing

Food Advertisements of the Past

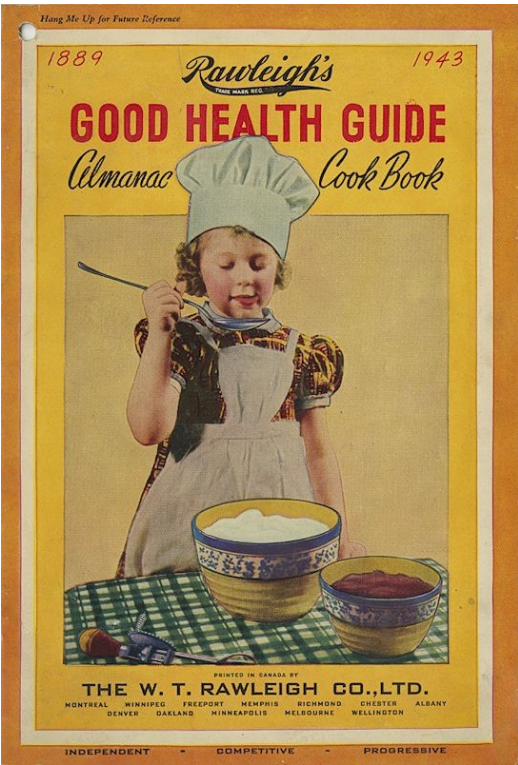
Colorful marketing materials, like these selected from the Watt family fonds (SPRA 144), are sure to catch shoppers' eyes and leave a memorable impression. Beyond simply advertising a product, the items reproduced here go the extra mile and show readers the many ways the product can be enjoyed.

The McGavin's bread pamphlet below suggests an array of sandwich fillings, ranging from familiar grilled cheese to chopped chicken livers. There are also suggestions for cutting and serving sandwiches—notice the tiered cake-like sandwich in the center of the illustration.

Keep on the Sunny Side of Life, shown on the facing page, was produced by Kellogg's in 1933. It offers information about the importance of a fiber-rich diet. Referring to the kitchen as a beauty parlor (see far right) is a unique strategy for making Kellogg's All-Bran more appealing to their female audience!

Right: Front cover of the Rawleigh's Good Health Guide. 1943. (SPRA 1985.48.141a)

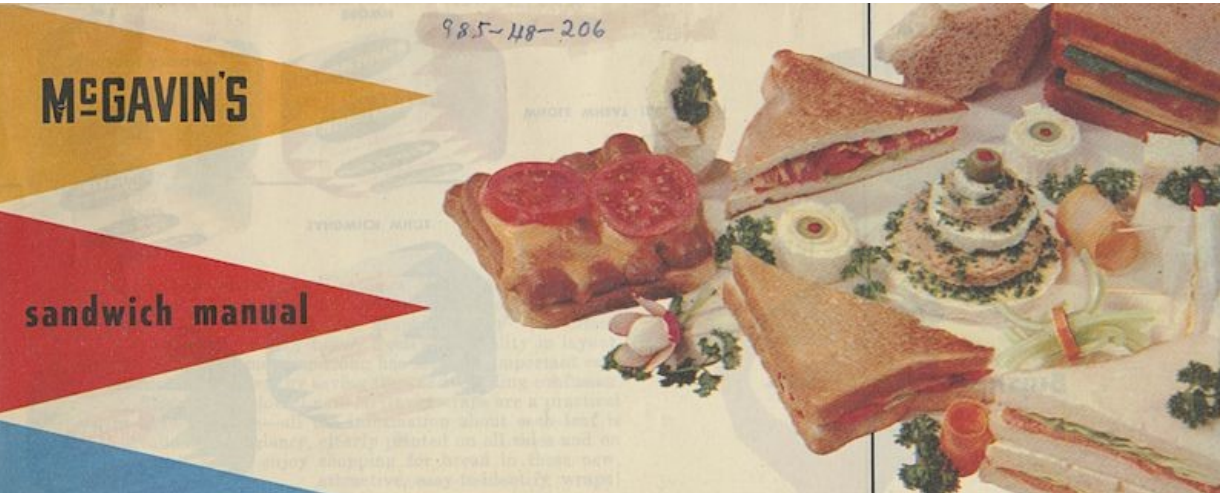
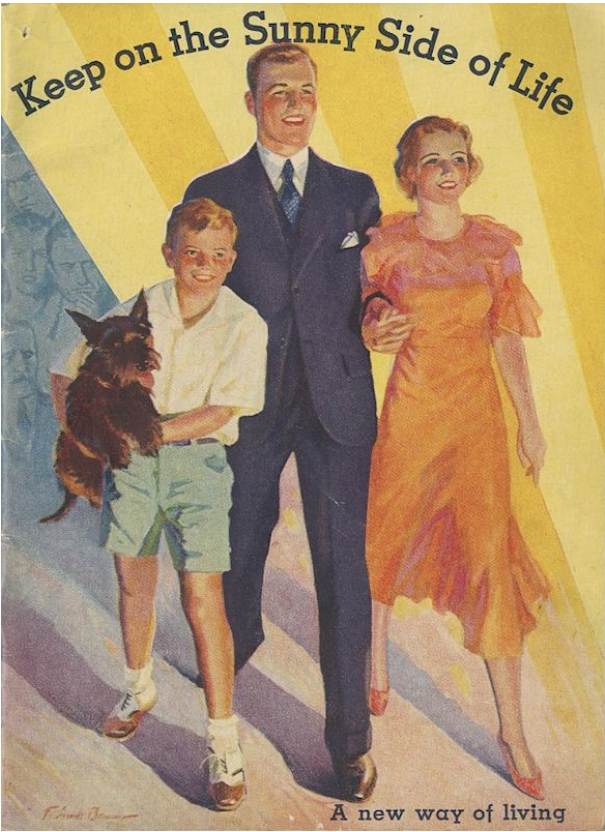
Below: Front cover of McGavin's Sandwich Manual. n.d. (SPRA 1985.48.206)



Above: Back cover of the Rawleigh's Good Health Guide, showing several Rawleigh's products, including mustard and ground cloves. 1943. (SPRA 1985.48.141a)

Right: Pages from *Keep on the Sunny Side of Life* discussing the uses and benefits of Kellogg's All-Bran. 1933. (SPRA 1985.48.290b)

Below: Front cover of *Keep on the Sunny Side of Life*, a Kellogg's marketing booklet. 1933. (SPRA 1985.48.290b)



Cheap Eats

Cooking on a Budget in 1953 & 2024

HAMBURGER AND FRIED RICE	
¾ cup raw rice	Cook rice in fat in large skillet until golden brown, stirring constantly. Add onion and meat, and cook until meat loses its red color. Add bouillon cube and water. Bring to boil, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed. Stir occasionally, adding more water if necessary to prevent sticking. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 4 servings.
2 tablespoons fat	
1 onion, chopped	
1 pound hamburger	
1 beef bouillon cube	
3 cups water	
Salt and black pepper	

This article was contributed by Alyssa House. Alyssa is working at the SPRA as the Junior Archivist for the rest of the year, a position funded by Young Canada Works.

In this article, I aimed to find out if a budget meal from the past still holds up as a budget meal today. I chose a recipe from the “budget budgers” section of the recipe book *Hamburgers... and How!* written by Barbara Tyson. This recipe is titled “Hamburger and Fried Rice”, a simple dish consisting mainly of ground beef, onion, and rice. Since the recipe booklet was published in 1953, I chose 1953 as the year to compare prices with. I looked through advertisements in the *Daily Herald-Tribune* in the year 1953 to find an approximate price for the ingredients used. For the 2024 costs, I used prices from Superstore to compare.

The cost of the ingredients is broken down in the table to the right. When I calculated the cost of the ingredients, I recorded the cost for the actual amount used in the recipe, not the price an entire package of each ingredient. This is why salt and pepper have

Left: excerpt from *Hamburgers... and How!* 1953. (SPRA 985.48.207, page 7).

been omitted from the table. Their prices are too negligible in either year to count. Additionally, I was unable to find a listed price for beef bouillon in 1953 which is why it is also missing from the table.

When comparing the price of the meal between 1953 and 2024, it is

necessary to calculate for inflation in the overall total. The cost of the ingredients for the meal in 2024 is \$8.72, which was equivalent to \$0.76 in 1953. The price to make the meal in 1953 was \$0.48, which would be \$5.48 in 2024. This means that today, counting for inflation, the dish is over 1.5 times more expensive than it was in 1953.

Though the dish costs more to make today, it is still a relatively cheap meal for four people, with each serving costing approximately \$2.18. The “Hamburger and Fried Rice” recipe from *Hamburgers... and How!* is included on this page for you to give it a try yourself!

Ingredients	1953 Price	2024 Price
Rice (139g)	\$0.068	\$0.417
Fat (28g)	\$0.008	\$0.264
Onion (114g)	\$0.025	\$2.05
Hamburger (454 g)	\$0.38	\$5.99
Totals	\$0.481	\$8.72

Five Stars

Restaurants in Grande Prairie

Commercial food establishments serve as places where community gathers together. No matter where one travels, the first question is often about the food. We can see that from as early as the Breeden Hotel, opened in 1909 in Grande Prairie. While the one-room log cabin may not have resembled a modern hotel, for some settlers it was the first impression they received of the region. And many of them remembered clearly the fantastic meals prepared by its proprietor, George Breeden. Travelers were so impressed, in fact, they brought their game to his hotel for him to cook and to be shared with other travelers.

As Grande Prairie grew, so did our restaurant scene. For early settlers, often away from their family as they worked to establish their homestead, professional food establishments provided home cooked meals and hosted special events. For example, in 1913 the Taft Café put on a Christmas Dinner for people in the area. They published their menu in the *Grande Prairie Herald* on December 23, and it featured oyster soup, prime roast, mashed potatoes, and plum pudding for dessert. Almost a decade later the Crown Café hosted a similar dinner in 1921, which featured a clam chow-

der, young turkey, cranberry jelly, and various pies.

Various restaurants and cafes also served as gathering places for community groups and events. From meetings to fundraisers, names of Grande Prairie restaurants, such as Joe’s Corner Coffee or the Royal Café, repeatedly appear in the records, showing how central these restaurants were to our growing community.

Interestingly, like many Alberta communities, a large percentage of restaurant owners and operators were Chinese immigrants. Bill Mark managed the Donald Café and his brother, Joe, went on to start Joe’s Corner Coffee. The Mah family operated the Palace Café, the Royal Café, and the Golden Star Restaurant. The Wong family was also involved in the Royal Café and Golden Star Restaurant, as well as the Windsor Café and a restaurant in Beaverlodge. These business owners faced many of the challenges and barriers early Chinese immigrants did when settling in Canada, from official legislation like the head tax and Chinese exclusion act, to language barriers, to the unfortunate realities of racism. Owning restaurants and cafes allowed Chinese immigrants to grow connections with their communities, their familiarity with the English language, and filled a need throughout the rapidly growing South Peace. So, whether looking at individual homesteaders, organizations and community groups, or immigrant experiences, commercial food establishments were essential in building the South Peace community into what it is today.

Above: Richmond Ave Grande Prairie, 1935. Visible businesses include the Royal Café. (SPRA 002.05.01.011b)



Pemmican & Bannock

Early Indigenous Foods in the Peace Region

This article was contributed by Axel Brett. Axel worked at the SPRA as the Archives Assistant this summer, a position funded by Young Canada Works.

The earliest Canadian cuisine comes from many First Nations groups, including those in the South Peace region. As a matter of survival they used the many plants and animals in their environment to create food that was both portable and practical. The most common embodiment of this food philosophy was pemmican. Groups across the South Peace region mixed the meat from hunts with berries and animal fat to create a nutritious food. Because pemmican is very dry, it can be stored for a long time and transported with ease. It was either eaten on its own, or used as an ingredient in a larger meal. Pemmican also played an important role in trade with Europeans. The Hudson’s Bay Company relied on pemmican as a food source for fur traders, and frequently traded for

it with the Denesuline First Nations at Fort Chipewyan as early as 1839.

Numerous sites were used in pemmican preparation. The Kleskun Hills served as one of the largest sites in the South Peace region. Several First Nations groups made use of the area, though the Dane-zaa (also known as the Beaver) were the most prolific users. During the fall, pens were constructed to funnel bison towards the cliffs. Hunters would then drive the animals off the cliff. This gave the Dane-zaa the meat and hide they needed to last the winter. The lake was used to clean the hides and camps were set up to prepare the meat and fat. Caching was also very important for living on the South Peace. Excess food was stored for later use. This was done by storing unused animal fat in underground depressions for use at a later time. At Kleskun, these were often places on the sides of hills to minimize exposure to the sun’s rays.

Another food often associated with Indigenous communities in the South Peace is bannock. This flat bread’s name originates from the Scottish word for morsel, and was incredibly popular among early fur traders and settlers. Metis in particular quickly adopted bannock and it did not take long for Indigenous

Left: The first Dominion Day Celebration in the South Peace. Teepees were set up that cooked and sold bannock to Settlers, ca. 1910. (SPRA 2001.01.101)

communities to start incorporating bannock into their diets as well. Bannock was also sold at public events and other festivities. In the South Peace, this practice started to gain popularity in the early 20th century. One of the earliest examples we have is the first Sturgeon Lake Sports Day. Here Indigenous groups set up tepees and sold bannock to the people participating in the games. Bannock sale was also prevalent during the first Dominion Day celebration.

The sharing of recipes helped bring communities together. Each family had their own version of the dish and often shared them with one another. One such example of this is Louis Calliou. He was an Iroquois Metis from Winnipeg who came to the South Peace Region in the late 1800s. He worked as a skilled canoe man, guide, and hunter. He also became famous for his personal bannock recipe, which spread around his community through cookbooks and journals. Here at the archives we have a handwritten version of Louis’s recipe in the journal of his granddaughter Mary. Sharing recipes like this created connections within families and built generational knowledge. These recipes were often taught by elders or by older family members. In the Kakwa region, the site of the current Two Lakes Provincial Park, Cree hunters and trappers taught their children to mix flour in a bowl with baking powder and water. Then it was either pan fried or roasted on a stick until the dough browned.

However, bannock also highlights the suffering experienced by Indigenous people following contact. Following the signing of Treaty 8, Indigenous groups were moved onto reserves and were expected to subsist primarily off farming. Groups such as the Cree slowly lost their ability to access traditional methods of subsistence until farming was the only option they had left. However, the land given to them was unsuitable to cultivation and the seeds supplied to by the



Above: Louis Calliou and his wife Annie Donald arrive in Grande Prairie. ca. 1920. (SPRA 0179.01.01)

Canadian government weren’t hardy enough to grow in the South Peace region. While Treaty 8 promised food aid, the amount given was often insufficient. Therefore, many reserves experienced famine and had to rely on rationing. Bannock was easy to make and did not rely on the large scale hunting that facilitated pemmican production. With this context in mind, it is easy to see why bannock is a cultural symbol of endurance. More than being just food, these recipes were the products of community knowledge and necessary part of their survival. Through bannock and pemmican, we can see the adaptability of Indigenous groups both pre- and post- contact.



What's Cooking?

This Issue's Featured Photographs

Food is part of daily life for us all. Maybe we're eating in our own kitchen at home, or maybe we're eating around a campfire in the woods. Preparing food might be part of a celebration, or maybe it's our job. Some of the technology of food production and preparation may have changed in the past decades, but not our enjoyment of a good meal!

Below: A man is loading bottles into metal crates inside the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool Factory in Grande Prairie. 1965. (SPRA 050.08.02.57)



Above: Keith and Ruth Scruggs and Betty Morrison churning ice cream with Joey Scruggs looking on. Ca. 1943. (SPRA 2004.42.23, fonds 162)

Below: Joseph & Catherine Voz beside the Grande Prairie Flour Mill, which they built in 1912. Machinery for this mill was hauled in over the Edson Trail and its generator produced the first electrical power for Grande Prairie. Ca. 1915. (SPRA 1998.08.01, fonds 001)



Top left: Isabel and Margaret Loggie, Beth Sheehan, Mrs. Loggie, and Harry Taylor around the table in the "Firefly" kitchen. This was on a trip with the "Firefly" on the Peace River from Dunvegan to Hudson's Hope in 1955. (SPRA 002.04.05.20)

Top right: Mrs. J. Schell and Mrs. Duteau going berry picking. 1923. (SPRA 334.03.03b)

Middle right: A family gathers around a fire to roast hotdogs. Ca. 1955. (SPRA 002.01.03.161)



Bottom: Bill Archer, Jim Carlisle, Jean Dalglish, David Carlisle, Murray Carlisle, Bert Dalglish, and Mary Jean Carlisle in their tent at Monkman Lake. The caption on the back of the photograph reads "The camp stove. Jean D. made candy. Bert was shaving." July 1941. (SPRA 399.09.35)



In Memory: Gail Prette

The SPRA staff, board, and volunteers are saddened to share the news of the passing of Gail Prette, a long-time volunteer and board member, on November 13, 2024.

Gail first started volunteering at the Archives in 2009. At first, her experience as a bookkeeper helped bring our books into order, but it didn't take long for her to get pulled into helping with the reference files. She concentrated on the Family and Personal Life Files, building the surname files and database that have been used by countless researchers. She continued to dedicate herself to this project for more than 2500 hours over the next 15 years.



Above: Gail preparing refreshments for guests at the SPRA's Film & Story Tea, October 5, 2014.

Left: Gail at the Archives, 2020.

She was also quickly drawn into the management of the archives, joining the board in 2011. In 2013 she became our treasurer, and she held the position until 2024. During those years she helped steer the archives through challenging times, massive changes, and into our new facility. Without her careful oversight and diligent work, none of that growth would have been possible.

When Gail received the Beth Sheehan Award in 2017, she said that she volunteered because she liked history, and the work was important. Throughout her time here, she shared that love and dedication with countless staff, volunteers, and researchers.

Our thoughts are with Gail's family and friends, and we are grateful for all of the memories we have of her.



In Memory: Karen Burgess

The SPRA staff, board, and volunteers are saddened to announce the passing of Karen Burgess, former staff member and volunteer, on November 8, 2024.

Karen's work with the Archives began in 2002. She had taken an early retirement from her job at GPRC in 2000 but was not ready to stop working entirely. In 2002, a conversation with Mary Nutting, founder of the South Peace Regional Archives, led to Karen joining our team as part-time Archives Technician.

Karen brought inspiring enthusiasm to her role at the archives. She saw the tremendous value of preserving the historical records of the South Peace region and shared this passion with others. Sometimes this meant showing someone that their own story was an



Above: Mary Nutting presenting Karen with a volunteer award at the 2016 Annual General Meeting.

Left: Karen speaking at the SPRA's Film & Story Tea, October 6, 2013.

important part of the region's history; other times this meant showing an elementary school class that their school's name belonged to a real person who had contributed to our community.

Karen herself was one of those influential people. Following her retirement from the SPRA in spring of 2013, she continued to support the organization as a volunteer. Her contributions played an integral role in the formation of the SPRA.

Our sincerest condolences to Karen's family and friends. We cherish her memory.

New at the Archives

As we get closer to the end of the year, staff at the archives are looking forward to the holidays while planning for the upcoming year.

One new donation I am looking forward to working on soon is 2024.023. This accession is composed of textual records and real plant samples collected by Don Nelson and George Henn for a pollen tracing study at the Beaverlodge Research Station.



Above: plant sample from SPRA 2024.003

Another new donation is accession 2024.029. This is a transcription of the diary of Cyril Clarke, completed by Carolyn McLeod with an included biography.

Cyril was well known for his horticultural work in the region (especially his cultivars of peonies), but we unfortunately had few records about his life until now. Today, parts of his horticultural collection are at the Beaverlodge Research Station, the Devonian Botanic Garden, and the University of Alberta.

Thank You for Contributing to our Building Fund

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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About the Cover

Alyssa House, Junior Archivist

During my time with the South Peace Regional Archives, one of my projects has been processing an accrual to the R. Kay Trelle Fonds. The cover photograph for this magazine comes from this new accrual. It is a photograph of Mae Trelle serving strawberry pie.

The accrual has many different types of records. In the nearly 7000 photographs that I have processed, there are photographs from the 1940s into the 2010s. Additionally, there are several more schematics linked to R. Kay Trelle’s professional career with Stanford University and TRIUMF. This new accrual also contains several architectural drawings that R. Kay and Mae Trelle commissioned when building their home. There are also nursing records related to Mae in the accrual, as well as a collection of records from the Peace Country Spinners and Weavers.

South Peace Regional Archives Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

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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.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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