

BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE. THESE RECORDS REFLECT THE PERSONAL, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE SOUTH PEACE RIVER COUNTRY OF ALBERTA AND ARE IN ALL FORMATS AND MEDIA, INCLUDING TEXTUAL RECORDS, MAPS, PLANS, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES, FILM, VIDEO, SOUND RECORDINGS,

TELLING

OUR

STORIES

LOCAL HISTORY

ARCHIVE NEWS



VOLUME 7

JUNE 1, 2016

ISSUE 3

PRODUCED BY

SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

THE MANDATE OF SPRA IS TO GATHER, PRESERVE, AND SHARE THE HISTORICAL RECORDS OF MUNICIPALITIES, ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, FAMILIES, AND INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE REGION.

ESTABLISHED IN 2000, THE FIRST REGIONAL ARCHIVES IN ALBERTA

Inside This Issue:

Take Note	p. 3
Letter from the Editor	p. 4
Contact Information	p. 4
Centennial Celebrations at Spirit River	p. 5
Featured Fonds: Spirit Valley Women's Institute fonds	p. 6-7
Featured Photos: Schenk Family Photos	p.8-9
The Memoirs of Maria Wozniak <i>by Maria Wozniak</i>	p. 10-11
Saddle Hills Mysteries <i>By Lavern Sorgaard</i>	p. 12
Klukas-Norris & Wozniak Family fonds	p. 13
Clarence & Nora Shields Family fonds	p. 14
Hawkesworth, Armstrong, Hodgson Gass & Greber Family fonds	p. 15
Featured Paper Artifact: The Spirit River Echo Newspaper	p. 16
Researching a Canadian Soldier <i>By Patricia Greber</i>	p. 17-19
Rio Grande Rodeo Celebrates 100 Years <i>By Corinne Cowan</i>	p. 20-21
Friends of the Archives News	p. 22
SPRA Society & Member News	p. 22-23
From the Blog <i>By Kathryn Auger</i>	p. 24-25
What's New at the Archives	p. 26
What's New on the Website	p. 26
Membership Application Form	p. 27

Cover: Boody Sprague, Charlie Kitchen, Bud Piper, Mack ?, and Billy Salmond in their automobile outside the Spirit River Hotel, 1916 (SPRA 2001.1.009)

Take Note

2016 Cemetery Tours

Once again SPRA is presenting Cemetery Tours at the Grande Prairie Municipal Cemetery. If you missed it last year, come discover the rich and interesting history of Grande Prairie and area through the lives and stories of its people. This year the theme is World War I and II.

Phone 780-830-5105 to Register for:

Wednesday, June 22 at 7:00

Wednesday, July 20 at 7:00

Change of Venue!

Friends Fall Fundraiser

To better fit our theme of an "Archives Raisin' Barn Dance" we are moving the October 15 fundraising dinner to a real barn! Please plan to join us in the barn at Country Roads RV Park and whirl the night away to the toe-tappin' rhythms of "Vintage".

June 1, 2016

Dear Members and Supporters;

Our main object with this issue of Telling Our Stories is to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of one of our funding partners, the Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133. It was hard to pick from the many collections we could have featured in this newsletter: the Greenway School Orchestra and Dance Troupe donated by Rose Henderson, the James Lillico Family fonds, Ethel Buck's small collection from World War II, or even the Bill Pratt fonds which has photos of the Immigration Hall and Spirit River School in 1928. We had previously featured the Alexander family, early settlers in Spirit River. We finally settled on the Spirit Valley Women's Institute illustrated by old letters, and the Schenk Family photographs of trains in the Rycroft area. This was another nod to the 100th anniversary of rail.

There are a number of other centenaries this summer, including the 100th Anniversaries of the Teepee Creek and Rio Grande Stampedes. SPRA Member Corinne Cowan submitted photographs and a story for the Rio Grande Stampede.

Another member, Lavern Sorgaard, contributed a collection of mysteries from a half-section of land bordering the Saddle Hills. Maybe you can help us solve them.

Then, a requirement to advertise a \$7,500 grant through the Archives Society Alberta, gave me the opportunity to feature eight family collections that we processed this winter.

Finally, we are featuring a new project consuming volunteer time and attracting researchers—the Soldiers' Memorial on our website. If you have soldiers in your family history, we invite you to read about this project and contribute to it.

Wishing everyone a lovely summer!

Sincerely,

Mary Nutting, Editor

TELLING OUR STORIES

PUBLISHED BY

South Peace Regional Archives Society

Jan Shields, President

Lane Borstad, Past President

Eleanor Dalen Whitting, Secretary

Gail Prette, Treasurer

Kevin McLean, City of Grande Prairie

Peter Harris, County of Grande Prairie

Roxie Rutt, M.D. of Greenview

Stan Bzowy, M.D. of Spirit River

Duff Crerar, Director

Tina Dale, Director

Garry Dixon, Director

Douglas Frattini, Director

Cooper Morrison, Director

Beth Sande, Director

Suzanne Turner Dunn, Director

Keely Wohlgemuth, Director

SPRA STAFF

Executive Director Mary Nutting, BGS

Archivist Patricia Greber

Administrative Assistant Teresa Dyck

MAILING ADDRESS

South Peace Regional Archives

Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB

T8V 3A8

Telephone: 780-830-5105

E-mail: spra@telus.net

www.southpeacearchives.org

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.

Centennial Celebrations at Spirit River AND Looking for Spirit River Newspapers



Above: Main street of Spirit River, 1917 (SPRA 2001.1.172)

Happy 100th Anniversary to Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133, one of our long-standing partners at the Archives, and to the Town of Spirit River, both of whom were established in 1916 and are celebrating 100 Years on August 5th-7th.

Since the MD includes the Village of Rycroft, celebrations will also be held in this community, as well as school reunions and 100 Year Family Farms Awards. Check for more details on the home pages of the MD of Spirit River No. 133, the Town of Spirit River, and the Village of Rycroft. SPRA will be there with a display of photographs and documents, and some challenging exercises for anyone who has claimed the MD as home for a number of years.

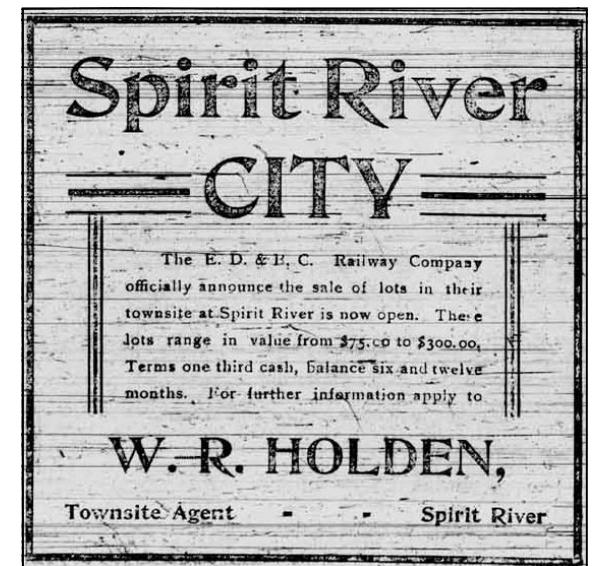
We are so pleased to have the records of the MD archived here, as well as the Spirit River School Division records, several family collections and some issues of the Spirit River Echo from 1920-1921.

Over the years, there were a number of newspapers published from Spirit River, including the Spirit River Times from 1916-1917, the Spirit River Echo from 1917-1921, the Spirit River Signal from 1951-1965, and the Spirit River Bulletin from 1964-1969. So far,

only the Spirit River Echo has surfaced, and we would be very interested to hear about any other collections of Spirit River newspapers that still exist. If you have any records from the Spirit River area that you would like to preserve for future generations, please call the Archives at 780-830-5105.



Above: Main street view of Spirit River, 1917 (SPRA 2001.1.173); Below: Frontier Signal, May 17, 1915



Spirit Valley Women's Institute

The Spirit Valley Women's Institute. – 1948-1964. – 18 cm of textual records.

Agency History

The Spirit Valley Women's Institute was organized in February 1948, for the rural area north and west of the Town of Spirit River. As with all Women's Institutes, of which there were thousands across Canada, their motto was "For Home and Country". Besides the regular executive of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, the group had a Publicity and Radio Reporter; Citizenship, Agricultural, Social Welfare, and Health and Education officers, a Scrap Book Caretaker, Rest Room Committee, and Hospital Visiting Committee.

Meetings were held monthly in the homes of the members, and the hostess supplied a raffle gift for a draw after the meeting. Lunch was made and served by two other members. Membership was \$1 per year and afternoon tea was \$.25. Each afternoon meeting was opened by saluting the flag and reciting the Women's Institute creed. Roll calls were answered by presenting bazaar items, garden seeds or plant slips, or by answering questions such as, "How did you meet your husband?"

During the first few years, the club concentrated on sewing for the needy and sending food parcels overseas to recipients in Scotland who were suffering from food shortages after WWII. One of the club's first projects was the creation of a ladies' restroom in Spirit River which started with leasing a building from the town for \$1.00 in 1949. They hired the carpenter, bought the coal and had it delivered, and took turns doing the janitor work at first. Later a janitor was hired. In December, 1953, natural gas was installed and in 1955, a modern bathroom was installed.

The group raised money in order to operate the restroom and other charitable projects through putting on dances, bazaars, bake sales, elephant sales, card parties, raffling quilts, rugs, doilies, and selling greeting cards. They donated to the Red Cross, March of Dimes, Cancer Fund, Salvation Army, Grace Children's Home, and a scholarship fund through the Dept. of Agriculture for students entering Agricultural Schools. They made Christmas hampers for the needy, sent baby quilts and layettes to the Unitarian Service Committee and to burned out families, and supported a diabetic camp and the victim of a machinery accident. They visited patients in the hospital with baskets of cookies and fruit and sent a fruit basket to Pleasant View Lodge each month.

In 1958, the town of Spirit River purchased the restroom for \$1200. The last meeting of the group was held in June, 1963, where they decided to disburse their funds by buying a baby grand piano for Pleasant View Lodge and curtains and chairs for the restroom, donating the rest to the Happy Valley Club, the Blueberry Mountain Goodwill Ladies, the Spirit River Curling Club, the United Church Hall Fund, and the Spirit Valley Hall.

Custodial History

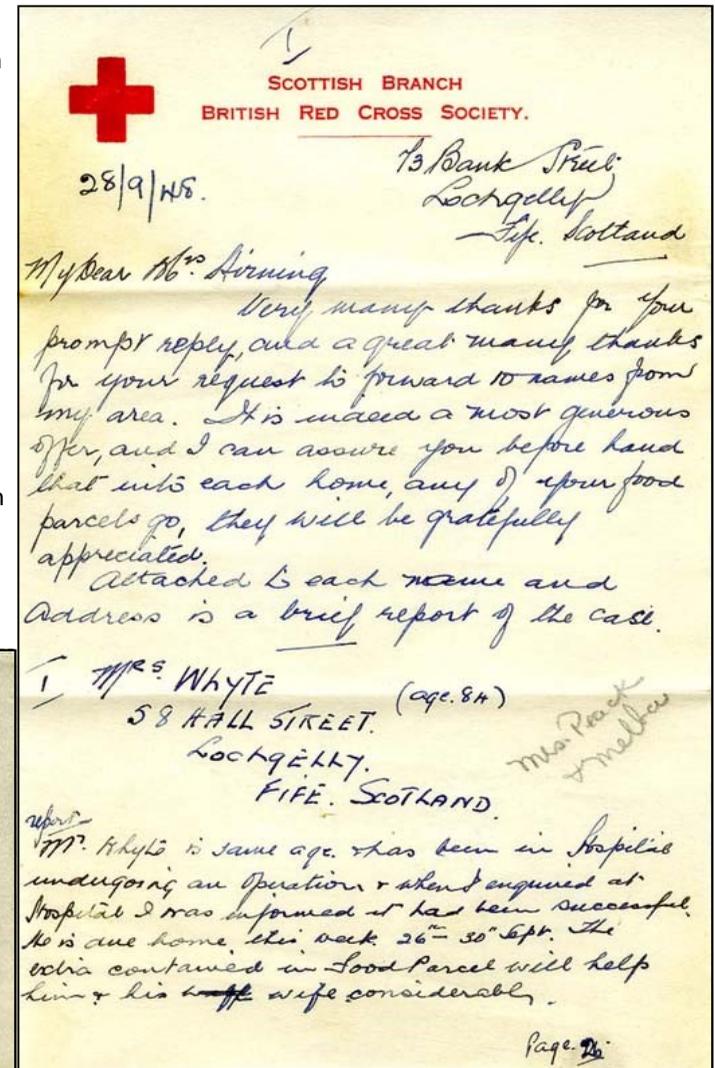
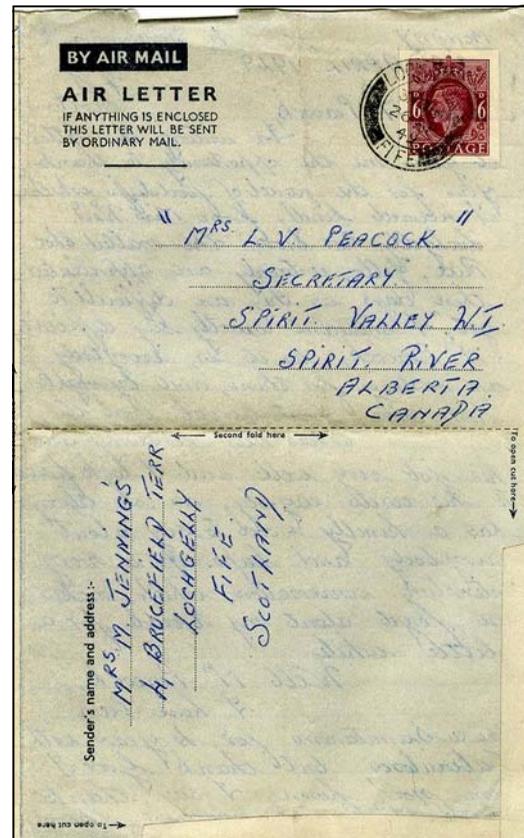
These records were donated to the South Peace Regional Archives by the Spirit River Settlement Historical Society in 2009.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of records relating to the operation of the Spirit Valley Women's Institute, including the certificate of incorporation, lease agreement, membership booklet, and insurance policy; meeting minutes; financial records for operating the rest room; correspondence with other W.I. chapters and groups interested in the Rest Room project; and a file

of records regarding W.I. handicrafts competitions. This file contains documentation regarding purchases of materials from Eatons and Sears for making articles for charities and fundraisers, as well as records of card sales, bake sales, whist drives, and advertisers offering fundraising through sales of the Western Producer or collecting Salada symbols. It also includes records of an order of dresses from the Disabled Civilians' Workshop in Moose Jaw, Sask.

Finally, there are also reports and newsletters from the Alberta W.I. ("Home and Country") and the Federated W.I. ("Federated News"); and three booklets: "Smart Sewing with Cotton Bags" ca. 1950, "The Best in the Cupboard" 1954, and "1960 Grande Prairie County Agricultural Society Fair".



The Spirit Valley Women's Institute contains a nice collection of letters from the early years of their organization, when they sent food parcels overseas to recipients in Scotland who were suffering from food shortages after World War II.

Featured Photos: Schenk Family Photographs



Francis W. Schenk arrived in the Peace Country in 1916, and began working on the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia Railway in 1923. After the completion of the new engine house in Wembley, Francis was promoted to locomotive foreman in McLennan. In 1929, the Schenk family moved to Rycroft where he served as the locomotive foreman until 1957. The Schenks were a dedicated railway family. Their oldest son, Francis "Junior" became a locomotive fireman and engineer, and their youngest son Dave (who donated these photographs) served as a watchman and locomotive fireman before becoming a District Ranger for the Alberta Forest Service.

Left: Francis Schenk and Christine Dolemo (from Valhalla) at the front of Locomotive #16, Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway, in 1923. Francis and Christine were married in 1925. (SPRA 0256.02.05).

Below: Francis' mother, Susanne Schenk, with Francis and Christine Schenk, 1926 (SPRA 256.02.03)



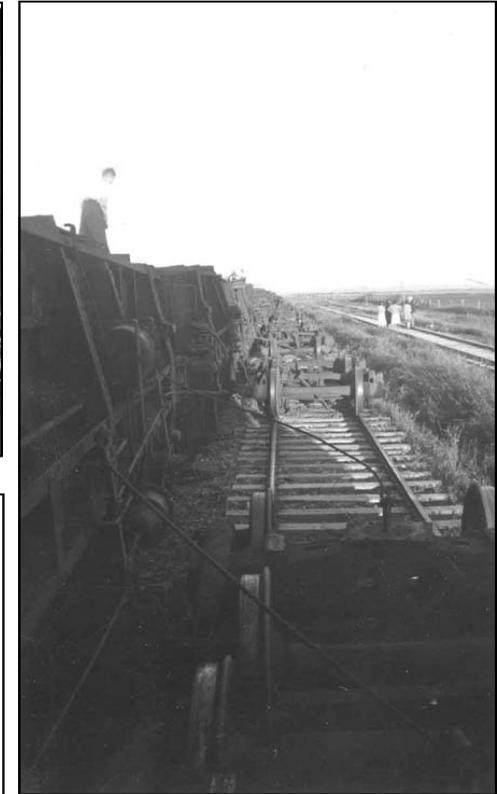
Above: Last Trip of Engine #73. Engine #73 was purchased in 1927. In 1955 it made its last trip back to Edmonton with (left to right) Sam Jones, fireman; Francis Schenk, locomotive watchman; and Carl Gage, locomotive engineer. (SPRA 0256.02.10)



Top: David Schenk ca. 1940 in front of the Locomotive Foreman's Home in Rycroft where the Schenk family lived. (SPRA 2015.076.02)

Above: Steam Locomotive on the Northern Alberta Railway line in the South Peace ca. 1940. (SPRA 256.02.08)

Right: The Schenk collection includes this beautiful photo of the J.B. Taft Stage Coach on the Edson Trail, taken by Dave Schenk's uncle, Jack Mantle, in 1913. (SPRA 0256.01.01)



Above: On September 1, 1951, railway cars at Rycroft were lifted off their wheel bases and overturned in a "weird storm" that resembled a tornado. (SPRA 0256.02.15)



The Memoirs of Maria Wozniak

Translated and transcribed by Mathew Wozniak

Antoni Wozniak and Maria Parachin were both born in Poland in 1903. With poor opportunities in Poland and rumors of hostilities amongst nations, they decided to immigrate to Canada with their family. They had hoped to be able to go to Toronto, but ended up on a farm in the Wanham area, arriving June 24, 1930. Our newsletters this year will feature excerpts from Maria's memoirs, telling the story of their first years on the prairie. This episode begins in 1931, during the Great Depression.

Our neighbors are not too badly off but want to go to Edmonton and look for a reliable job and make a few groszy (pennies). My husband, Antoni, decided to go with them and convince himself of what the situation is. It turned out that there were hundreds of men like them looking for work. For every job, there were fifty men waiting. My husband's going to Edmonton and looking for work was a waste of time and money. The city of Edmonton was trying to find work for their own people and did not care much for those who came from elsewhere. Visitors were fed once a day with oatcakes and milk.

On the twenty-fifth of October, my husband is getting relief work where they will be cutting brush on road allowances. Thanks to this job, he earned \$22.00 which will feed our whole family into the time of winter.

Beginning of November, 1931, snow fell and winter set in seriously. It is to be earlier and colder than last year. The twenty-third of December we moved into our new unfinished home. It is not much protection from winters like those in Canada.

Christmas and New Year were no different than any other day and not holy at all. Away from people and in constant turmoil. Days went by rapidly and without festivity or celebration.

On January, 1932, things are really getting bad, we have no bread or butter, completely nothing. My husband shot a moose and that is all we have to eat. Someone advised us to go and ask for help from our Canadian government. January 20, 1932, the police came to our home for an inspection. They asked us how much we earned, what we bought through the summer. He writes down everything accurately. Asks us to show our passports. I had a feeling that all was not well. They are quickly writing a letter to our counsel in regards to our plea for assistance. In reply we are advised especially not to apply or ask for any help until we are here five years. It was under those conditions that the Canadian government let us come to this country. We were advised that if we became a burden to this country we could be deported.

But here now, the trouble is great, we have no bread, such a rich country. Our oldest son is not going to school. In the home we are burning wood all day and all night and it's still cold. In the spring of 1932 my husband is walking from farm to farm looking for work. Farm income has dropped considerably. The depression is here like no one can remember, we got fifteen bags of potatoes on credit, in the spring my husband will have to work the loan off. We have no sugar, butter, lard, or tea, all we have is moose meat and potatoes.

In the spring, in April, the snow is melting. Antoni goes again to nearby farms and gets a job under the condition that he will not get paid until in the fall. He agreed to work for fifty cents a day, cutting wood and getting it ready to transport. After two weeks he goes to his boss and tells him that he has a wife and four children.

The Englishman, N. Moore, an exceptionally good man, understands our situation and poverty. He gives Antoni ten pounds of sugar, a bag of flour, and five

pounds of lard. In the evening, after work, Antoni brought home all the food. What happiness in our home and so slowly we were assured that we will be provided for. We began to stand upon our feet. Our neighbor (Mr. Stepaniuk) came and seeded one half an acre with oats and plowed the rest of the patch for a garden. This year we had some vegetables, it was a good growing year, the oats grew well, but the rabbits ate it all. This year we now have five head of cattle and sixty-five chickens.

October 1932 we traded a bull for a load of oat bundles which we threshed with a flail and so had straw for the cattle and oats for the chickens. Already this year, August 1932, our second son is beginning to go to school. 1932-1933 winter is severe, snow fell three or four feet deep. At Christmas, our children receive presents from the Presbyterian people, new clothes, toys, and candies. We decorated a Christmas tree. Children are happy. Some people are kind, they remember us even if we live in the bush.

Spring of 1933, my husband Antoni is out looking for work. This time he had to go farther, all the way to Peoria where there was a German settlement. Their name was Richemback and they lived about twelve miles east of Wanham and about eight miles south. Monday morning Antoni had to leave home at five in the morning.

I will never forget the 28th of May, the forests are burning. Strong wind is throwing sparks everywhere. The two oldest boys went to school so I was left alone



Anthony Wozniak standing with his cattle beside a straw stack, ca. 1940 (SPRA 256.02.009)

with two small children while my husband worked at the German colony. There is no place to escape to. The neighbors came, the fire had been at their place also. Wondering what to do, the only safe place is a low place where water stays most of the time. Around the yard, where the children played, the trees had been cut. Thank God, somehow we were saved from the fire and our belongings did not burn. Sparks from the burning spruce trees are falling everywhere and starting new fires. The fire is roaring and the smoke is thick. In the evening the wind died down and everything was quiet again. This fire helped people very much in the clearing of land. Grass will soon grow and again the fire will burn some of the wood that is on the ground and kill the standing green ones. They never found out what started the fire but the punishment would have been severe.

The farmer who Antoni worked for offered him quite a bit of wool like what it was as it came off a sheep for not very much money. We had to wash, dry, and comb it and then spin it into yarn without a spinning wheel. We made a stick that was thin in one end. I would spin the stick and keep pulling wool out. When the yarn got about two feet, I would wind it on the stick at the bottom end, put a half-hitch on the thin end, and keep spinning it between my fingers and thumb. In the third winter in Canada we learned how to knit mittens and socks.

My husband got a job eight miles from our home. Again it is clearing brush but now he is earning one dollar a day. That way we are able to buy winter clothes and above all, we could buy the necessary food. At least hunger was not peeking into our home. This year at Christmas time, we received a parcel from Antoni's brother in the USA. In it were used clothing and much chocolates and candy for our children. The winter is passing quickly, we have many books which my husband reads by the light of a small coal oil lamp.

Saddle Hills Mysteries

By Lavern Sorgaard

The following stories were written by Lavern Sorgaard, all relating to a half section of land on the southern border of the Saddle Hills, four miles north of the Hamlet of LaGlacé. He recounts a number of mysteries surrounding the S ½ of Section 2, Township 75, Range 8, West of the 6th Meridian, and wonders if there is any possibilities of us solving the following mysteries.

Engel Ganzeveld homesteaded the south-west quarter of Section 2, and his brother the south-east quarter, in 1924. The story as I remember it (as told by my father and the other old-timers) was that the skeleton of a lady and a newborn baby were found in what was thought to be the remnants of a packing crate. What made this significant, was that the lady's hair was red and she had a gold tooth. It was reported to police and they took the body. I wonder if there would be a possibility of verifying this through some police records. The speculation was that maybe this was one of the overlanders to the Klondike tragedies.

There were stories of a still that was found on the south east corner of this land. One Sunday, in 1939 or 1940, our family was visiting the Johannes Eide family who lived on the NW 34-74-8-W6. Us young people went for a walk—Morley Eide, Doris Eide, my sister Thelma and myself. Johannes told us where this still was supposed to be 2 miles east from their place just north of the correction line. We walked there and in the heavy timber beside a creek there was the rotted down remains of a small cabin. A large copper kettle and copper tubing were sticking out of the ground. It was supposed to have been from during the days of prohibition, but with the first settlers here in 1913, I now wonder how the cabin could have rotted down in the time frame when we saw it.

The SW quarter was bought from Ganzevelts by the Sandboe brothers in 1951. Four years later it became Raymond and Helen's home. When they were breaking on the west quarter they found a large number of native stone artifacts plus muzzle loaded firearms, barrels that had gone through fire. Raymond collected these. I found out from my friend and we went over and took pictures of the collection. This is the only picture I have left. I had a better picture taken outside with the artifacts on a red wool blanket. I gave that to a man from the University of Alberta and I cannot find the negative. Raymond's son Darcy lives there now, but does not know what happened to them. Chester Sandboe told me someone from the Grande Prairie College took them.

Three mysteries: Who was the woman with the red hair, and why was she there? Who built the still and when? And whose cache of tools and guns were found, and where are they now? Are there any good researchers out there who can help us?

Below, a photograph of the native stone artifacts and muzzle-loaded firearms found on the S 1/2 of 2-78-8-W6. Photo was taken by Lavern Sorgaard, then a member of the Sexsmith Camera Club.

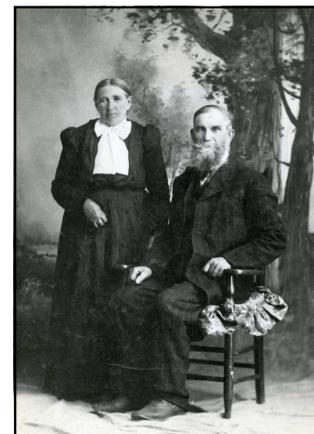


Recently Processed Family Fonds at SPRA

In 2015-2016, one of our projects was to process the records from of three different families: Clarence and Nora Shields, the Wozniak and Klukas families, and a large collection donated by Clayton Greber in 2013. This project was made possible by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation through the Archives Society of Alberta. The following report demonstrates how much family collections tell us about our history. The descriptions for all of these fonds can be viewed on our website by typing the name in the google search box on the home page.

Klukas-Norris Family fonds. — [1900-2010]. — 1 cm of textual records. — 79 photographs.

Herman Klukas was born in Russia and arrived in the Peace Country in 1908. In 1915 he enlisted in World War I, and after returning from war took on the job of Park Warden at the newly-created Wood Buffalo National Park in 1922. Here he worked with Malcolm Norris and met his sister Jessie Norris. Jessie was the daughter of John Norris, a HBC employee from Scotland, and his Metis wife, Euphrosine Plante. John Norris owned one of the first stores outside of Fort Edmonton. Herman and Jessie were married in 1925, and around 1930 moved back to the Bad Heart



district where Herman had homesteaded. Here they raised six children: Malcolm, Norman, Campbell, Johanna, Barbara, and Robert.

The Klukas-Norris collection includes photographs of John Norris and his family (left), Wood Buffalo National Park as it was being established (right) and of the Klukas family and community at Bad Heart.

Wozniak Family fonds. — 1890-2015. — 16 cm of textual records. — 135 photographs. — 27 films.

Barbara Klukas married Mathew Wozniak, who had arrived in the Wanham-Eglesham area as four-year-old with his parents, Antoni and Maria Wozniak. The Wozniaks had emigrated from Poland in 1930. Mathew and Barbara farmed in the Eaglesham area from 1945 to 1999.

The Wozniak collection contains Maria's memoirs, letters from various family members and friends, photographs of community buildings and people, including the teachers and school van at Fox Creek (right), a large collection of 8 mm film, and many of Mathew's stories.



Clarence and Nora Shields fonds. — [1895-2002]. — 7.5 cm of textual records. — 118 photographs.

Nurse Nora Dionne arrived in Grande Prairie in 1928, to work in the old log hospital. Thankfully it was replaced by a new brick hospital in 1929, the same year she married Clarence Shields. Clarence and Nora raised four children--Jack, Betty, Bill and Tom. Nora returned to full-time nursing in 1954, becoming Matron of the Grande Prairie Hospital, and then the Auxiliary Hospital, which was the first established in Alberta. Their oldest son, Sergeant Jack Shields, served in the Korean War and later as the MP for Athabasca. Their youngest son, Tom Shields, became a prominent Grande Prairie Businessman.



The Shields family collection includes photographs of staff at the hospital, the Shields family tree, Jack Shields' military papers and photographs from the Korean War.



From the Shields Family fonds, top to bottom: Nurse Nora Dionne and a co-worker on the steps of the old log hospital in 1928. (SPRA 627.04.026) Clarence and Nora Shields family portrait (SPRA 627.04.133), and Jack Shields in Korea (SPRA 627.05.02).

The collections in the next three columns were all donated by one family. When they came into the Archives, the records were divided into three boxes labeled Greber, Hodgson and Hawkesworth. When they were put in order, however, we found records from two more families: Armstrong and Gass. All of these families were related to three people who came to the Hythe area in the early part of the 20th century: Aubrey Hawkesworth, Susan Armstrong, and Lea Hodgson. The wonderful mishmash reveals the activities of the families and their inter-relationships. There are records from the Hodgson Sawmill, the HOP (Hodgson Oakford Pearson) Development Company, Big Valley Construction, and Greber Farm; the World War II records of Thomas Gass and the Armstrong boys; Hythe Hockey and the building of the Hythe Arena; and Hythe School photographs from various families.

Hawkesworth Family fonds. — [1915-2012]. — 4 cm of textual records. — 63 photographs. Aubrey Hawkesworth filed on a homestead in the Hythe area in 1912. He married Dessie Armstrong in 1919 and they had four children: Violet, Charlotte, Aubrey and Marie. Only Violet and Charlotte lived to adulthood.



From the Hawkesworth family fonds: Above, Aubrey at Hodgson's Mill (SPRA 633.02.02); and right Aubrey pumping water at the farm.



Armstrong Family fonds. — [1900-2014]. — 10.5 cm of textual records. — 30 photographs.



Susan Armstrong (left) and her family had arrived in 1916. Her sons Ed and Leo had travelled in to the Peace Country in 1915, and finding it to their liking brought in the remaining family, consisting of mother



Susan and siblings David, Dessie and Ila. (right as children with Ed and Leo). Ed Armstrong (right) served in World War I. After the war he and mother Susan operated the Halfway House at the old townsite of Hythe.



Hodgson Family fonds. — [1880-2004]. — 22 cm of textual records. — 344 photographs. — 12 maps.

Lea Hodgson arrived with his father John in 1922 and the two established a lumber company on the Kiskatinaw (Cutbank) River. Lea married Sophia Gass, the daughter of Ignatz and Katherine Gass. The photographs here show Tom Gass beside the Hodgson-Gaunt Truck, and St. Joseph's basketball team.



Gass Family fonds. — [1880-2014]. — 7.5 cm of textual records. — 140 photographs.

Ignatz and Katherine Gass (right) left Russia in 1901 to settle first in Texas, then in Saskatchewan in 1910, and finally in Hythe in 1929. Their daughter Sophia married Lea Hodgson. Their son Tom served as a mechanic in World War II (standing 2nd left in photo below) and returned to Hythe after the war.



Greber Family fonds. — [1900-2015]. — 5 cm of textual records. — 240 photographs.

The descendants of these three families added another family to the boxes when Violet



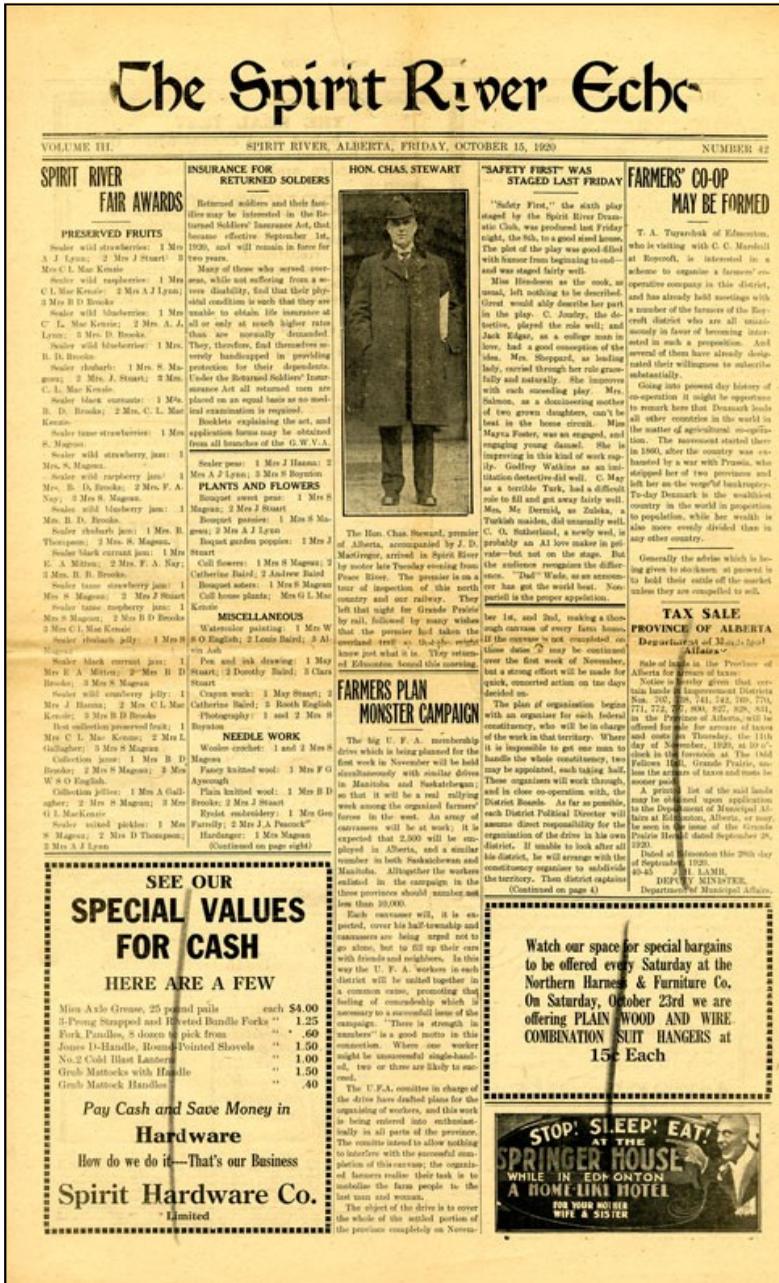
Hawkesworth married Art Greber. Photo on the left shows their son Allan with students graduating from Lambert School ca. 1958. Their motto is: "Tonight We Launch; Where Shall We Anchor?"

The complete biographies and the contents of these great family fonds can be viewed on our website under "Research" Finding Aids and Photographs.

Featured Paper Artifact: The Spirit River Echo

Researching a Canadian Soldier

By Patricia Greber



The Spirit River Echo was printed at Spirit River Station and published its first edition on August 15, 1917. The paper ran until April 8th, 1921 and abruptly ended. It is unknown why the paper stopped running; however, by May 10th of 1921, the Grande Prairie Herald began reporting Spirit River area news.

Eight issues of the Spirit River Echo have been donated to South Peace Regional Archives, from September 3, 1920 to April 25, 1921. Each newspaper is eight pages in length. The content consists of community announcements, news, and advertisements; world events; and items of general interest such as health, humour and agriculture. On the back page is a serial story.

View the Spirit River Echo on Flickr:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/77471412@N06/albums/72157659649831849>

Also, an index to the Spirit River Echo is available on our website (works only in Google Chrome):

<http://southpeacearchives.org/online-databases/spirit-river-echo-index/>

And for Internet Explorer users:

<http://southpeacearchives1.staticmedia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Spirit-River-Echo.pdf>

Front page of the Spirit River Echo, October 15, 1920

What happened to James A. McDonald? That was the question posed by Nora Hassel at the GPAGS meeting in January. Nora was going through old papers and came across the photograph of Jim with a friend Kenneth Murray and Nora decided she wanted to locate the soldier's family to return the photograph. Nora recalls the story of Jim and her relative Charles Edgerton walking over the Edson Trail in 1911. Jim and Charles Edgerton had been running a butcher shop in Edmonton and hearing stories of the Peace region they decided to venture west. The archives decided to see if they could help her in her quest.

Upon arriving in the Peace country Jim applied for a homestead near Huallen on NW 14-T71-R9 W6 and later he bought Sec 13 T71 R10 W6 which was closer to Halcourt.



Kenneth Murray & Jim MacDonald, Christmas 1915

The photograph was attached to a paper that was stamped with the company name, 66th Battalion.

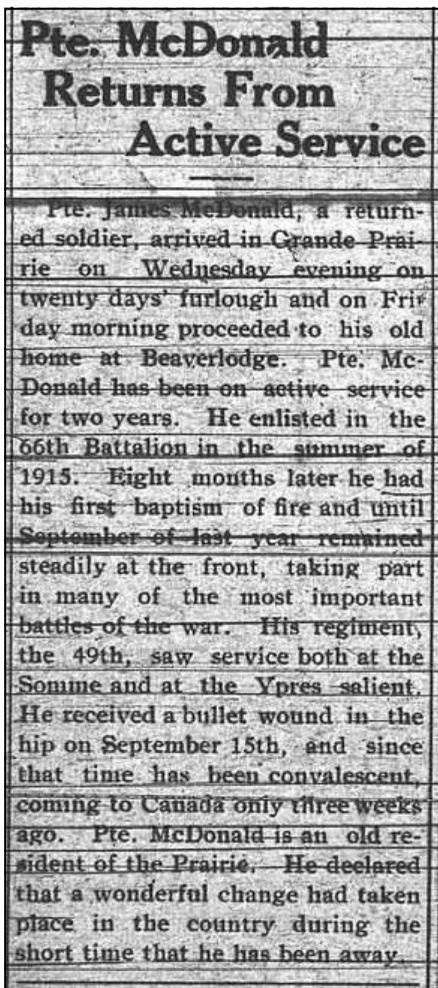
After quite a bit of searching I determined that the photograph is labeled wrong and James A. is actually James R./James Robert. Once that was determined I was able to locate James' attestation papers through the Library and Archives Canada website.

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/canadian-expeditionary-force.aspx>

LAC is putting the full digital files on-line but this project will not be complete for a couple more years, right now they have the complete service files uploaded to the letter H. You are still able to access the soldier's attestation papers, which is a great starting point when researching WWI participants. I also found a great site for researching the 66th Regiment on this website which I found quite helpful.

<http://www.albertagenealogy-research.ca/Admin/MilitarMenu.htm>

ATTESTATION PAPER. No. 109377
 CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, (22 July 1917)
 QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION:
 1. What is your name? James Robert MacDonald
 2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what County were you born? Embury, Oxford, Ontario
 3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? James Robert MacDonald
 4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? Embury, Ontario
 5. What is the date of your birth? March 29, 1881
 6. What is your Trade or Calling? Farmer
 7. Are you married? No
 8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? No
 9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? No
 10. Have you ever served in any Military Force, or in any position of former service? No
 11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? Yes
 12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? Yes
 James R. MacDonald (Signature of Recruit)
 C. G. Prasad (Signature of Witness)
 DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.
 I, James R. MacDonald, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Sea Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty King George the Fifth shall so long continue my service, or until he is discharged.
 James R. MacDonald (Signature of Recruit)
 C. G. Prasad (Signature of Witness)
 OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.
 I, James R. MacDonald, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Rightly, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.
 James R. MacDonald (Signature of Recruit)
 C. G. Prasad (Signature of Witness)
 CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.
 The Recruit above named was questioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.
 The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.
 I have taken care that he understood each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as required, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at Edmonton, this 10th day of Oct. 1917.
 Thomas J. (Signature of Justice)
 I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.
 (Approving Officer)
 M. P. W. S. (Signature)
 H. G. STEWART (Signature)



Grande Prairie Herald, August 28, 1917

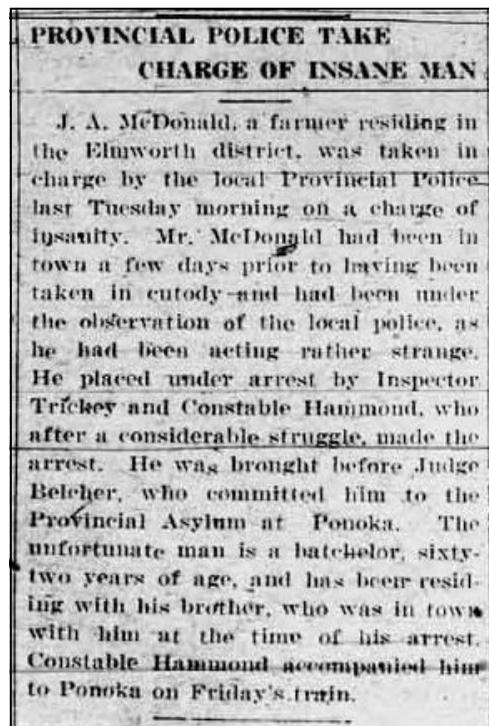
Continuing to research on the SPRA website led to a newspaper article about James returning to Beaverlodge in August 1917 after being shot in the hip:

"Pte. James McDonald, a returned soldier, arrived in Grande Prairie on Wednesday evening on twenty days furlough and on Friday evening proceeded to his old home at Beaverlodge. Pte McDonald has been on active service for two years. He enlisted in the 66th Battalion in the summer of 1915. Eight months later he had his first baptism of fire and until September of last year remained steadily at the front, taking part in

many of the most important battles of the war. His regiment the 49th, saw service both at the Somme and at the Ypres salient. He received a bullet wound in the hip on September 15th, and since that time has been convalescent, coming to Canada only three weeks ago. Pte. McDonald is an old resident of the Prairie. He declared that a wonderful change had taken place in the country during the short time he has been away."

Beaverlodge to the Rockies contains a brief write-up on James confirming his arrival to the area in 1911. It also states that later due to ill health he was forced to sell his land and eventually moved to Calgary with his brother.

Also found in the September 11, 1923 newspaper thanks to the index on the SPRA website was this article that more than likely is about our James McDonald.



Grande Prairie Herald, September 11, 1923

"J.A. McDonald, a farmer residing in the Elsworth district, was taken in charge by the local Provincial Police last Tuesday morning on a charge of insanity. Mr. McDonald had been in town a few days prior to having been taken in custody and had been under the observation of the local police, as he had been acting rather strange. He placed under arrest by Inspector Trickey and Constable Hammond who after a considerable struggle, made the arrest. He was brought before Judge Belcher, who committed him to the Provincial Asylum at Ponoka. The unfortunate man is a bachelor, sixty-two years of age, and has been residing with his brother, who was in town with him at the time of his arrest. Constable Hammond accompanied him to Ponoka on Friday's train."

Things did not improve for James as a few years later his obituary appears in the newspaper.

"James R. MacDonald, one of the early settlers of this district passed away at Edmonton, Alta., on Friday August 16. "Jim" as he was popularly known homesteaded in this district about twenty years ago and farmed successfully for a number of years until compelled by health, he sold out his holdings. He served with the 49th Battalion in the Great War, receiving wounds from which he never completely recovered and which led to his untimely death. He leaves behind in the district a host of friends who will mourn his loss." Grande Prairie Herald, September 6, 1929.

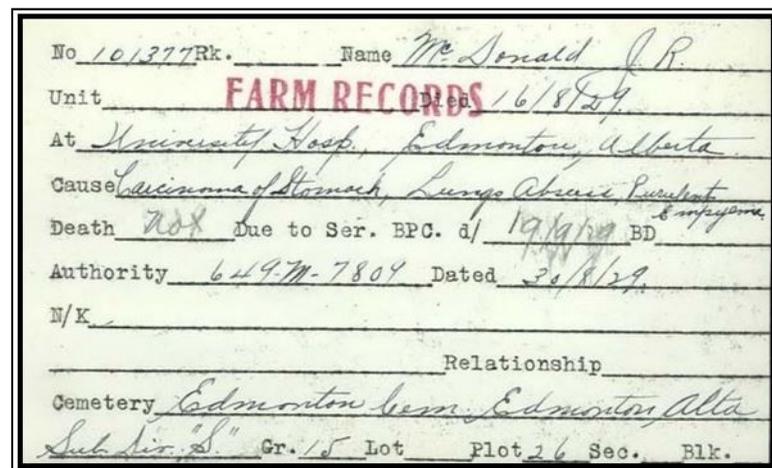
This confirms that James Robert McDonald did not marry or have any children that we know of, this moves the focus of our search onto his siblings if he had any.

Knowing the date of James' death I looked at the probate index on the Edmonton Genealogy Society website, and sure enough James was listed in the index. Ordering this record could be a source used to locate family members for James.

Another place to locate next of kin for WWI soldiers is the Veteran's Death Cards.

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-110.02-e.php?&q2=36&interval=50&sk=0&PHPSESSID=rgi7t06a60or2jdheocn6v65f4>

This resource is also on the Library and Archives Canada website and although it does not have a searchable name index it doesn't take long to browse through the surname files to see if your soldier had a card. James' card is shown below but as you can see there is no next-of-kin listed.



One thing of note on his veteran's card is that his death is stated as not due to [WWI] service. I wonder if that thought would hold true today?

Looking at Ontario birth records, James was born 28th March 1882 in West Zorra, Oxford Co., Ontario to parents Alexander & Jessie McKay. Further searching for siblings born to those parents in that area could also lead to some of James' relatives.

I think this is a good start and I hope that it will guide Nora to finding some of James' family and a home for the photograph.

Rio Grande Rodeo Celebrates 100 Years

By Corinne Cowan

On July 1st, 1916 a small group of settlers in Rio Grande and neighbouring communities set work aside for an entire day to celebrate Canada's 'Confederation Day'. They packed picnic lunches and gathered at the homestead of Dennis and MaryAnne O'Connell. Brothers Dennis, Jack and Jim planned the event with foot races and tug of war for the children and horse shoes and nail driving for the adults. The sports day grew in popularity over the following years with added games and contests. Baseball, softball and basketball tournaments drew more attendees and participants. The responsibility of organizing the Confederation Day celebration was shared by neighbouring farmers. Different families in the area hosted the event on their properties until 1927 when the event was relocated to a permanent and larger spot south of Rio Grande on the east banks of the Red Willow River. The move to the river side made for a new and daring contest, the 'greased pole walk'. Men in the neighbourhood would gather in the morning of the July 1st holiday to peel a newly felled tree. The log was greased and placed across the river, offering a challenge to anyone with the nerve to try making their way to the opposite bank. The wet and slippery log sent many fully dressed men into the drink.

The greatest advantage of the new location was the enlarged area which allowed for a circular race track, corrals, grandstand and food booths. Events expanded further to include horse racing, calf roping, bronc and bare back riding. Later on,



barrel, chariot, and chuckwagon races were added to the list. One year an outdoor plank dance floor was constructed. Music was provided by talented locals and the entertainment continued well into the night.

In its early days, the July 1st celebration was heightened for those in the Rio Grande area by sounds echoing in the distance. Native peoples from every direction rode in on horseback, arriving three and four days ahead of time. As they neared the sports grounds, their chanting and drumming on tom-toms rang throughout the country side. On arriving they would set up their teepees, tether their horses in the long grass and start fires for cooking. The men would sing and drum while they waited for the wagons and people to appear and the festivities to begin. Their favorite sport was bare back riding and they were usually among the first to sign up as entries.

It has always been maintained that participants compete, not for the prize money, but for the love of rodeo. Though considered an unsophisticated affair by some, the Rio Grande Rodeo has attracted a few notable characters over the years. One in particular was Louis Delorme who in 1932 took first place in bare back riding. Louis was a trapper and licensed guide of Iroquois heritage. He made his home in Grande Cache and attended the Rio Grande Rodeo a number of times. His claim to fame began when he guided Bing Crosby on



hunting trips through the Rockies. Later, at fifty years of age, Louis was cast in the movie, River of No Return with Robert Mitchum, Marilyn Monroe and Rory Calhoun. Though notoriety and fame make for a fun and interesting story, it has long been said that at the Rio Grande Rodeo one should keep their eye on the chute – you might see your neighbour ride out! The names of local contestants who made the rodeo what it is today are too many to mention, however they are well known and always remembered.

In its one hundred year history, the rodeo had to be cancelled only once. Heavy rains turned the grounds and race track into a mud bog prohibiting any and all events. The longevity and overall success of the RGR are due to the devotion and strong support of volunteers, fans and donors. The Rio Grande Sports Association is made up of dedicated individuals who work to carry on the tradition of their ancestors and volunteer predecessors. They have improved and expanded the rodeo to become one of the best in Canada's northwest. In 2015 the Association was successful in securing funding for a \$205,000.00 Events Centre. With the help of a grant from the County of Grande Prairie, a 9000 square foot building was constructed with a dance floor, stage, bar counter and coolers. Located next to the grandstands the Centre will serve many purposes for the Rodeo and will be made available to other organizations throughout the year.

The 2016 Centennial 5 day celebration begins June 29 and runs through to July 3rd.

(copyright Corinne Cowan, May 2016)

Rio Grande Sports Success

RIO GRANDE--The weatherman was with Rio Grande when the Sports and Rodeo was held July 1.

The day started with children's races. The horse races were keenly contested and in the free-for-all, Bob Dewar's horses took first and second.

Other results were: stake race - Jonas Webber; Novelty Race - W. Rollins; Pony Race - D. Dewar; Roman standing - B. Veldhuis, S. Bolen second; chariot race - B. Veldhouse S. Bolin, second.

In the baseball, Hythe placed first with Beaverlodge second. In softball Valhalla took first and Beaverlodge second. Hinton Trail ladies won first in softball with Valhalla ladies second.

The bicycle race was won by Larry Cook with Donald Barker second.

In the rodeo event first money went to Ted Labby. The numerous good natured bronc riders came from far and near to compete and many were the thrills and spills.

Two old time rodeo men were on hand to judge. They were Barney Hogg and Mr. Thompson. The pick-up men, Ed Goodman and Glenn O'Connell, worked hard and the big day was topped off by a dance with Holmer's orchestra.

The committee thanked all those who worked so hard and so willingly to make a repeat of one of the best sports and rodeos in the north.

The Herald-Tribune, 1953

Friends of the Archives

Things are happening with the Friends! We had our annual general meeting on April 2, before the general SPRA Society meeting. It was good to see so many supporters come out for a meeting. Our Friends Board remains the same for the coming year: Charlie Penson (President), Karen Burgess (Secretary), Emily Isley (Director), and Jeff Nutting (Treasurer).

We have also been hard at work getting preparations underway for the October 15, 2016 "Archives Raisin' Barn Dance." To better fit the theme, we decided to change the venue to a real barn! Please plan to join us in the barn at the Country Roads RV Park (located just west of the Highway 2/Highway 43 overpass) and prepare to whirl the night away to the toe-tappin' rhythms of "Vintage." We are in need of some volunteer dancers (former or present square dancers would be perfect) to help demonstrate a couple of round dances and get everyone in the swing of things. Contact Leslie at friends@southpeacearchives.org or through the Archives at 780-830-5105 if you can help us out. Tickets for this event will be going on sale soon. Watch www.southpeacearchives.org/friends-spra for more details.

Speaking of the website, we've started a new feature: How Well Do You Know Your Friends? This serial is designed to help you get to know the Friends Board better. So far we've posted profiles from Charlie Penson and Karen Burgess.

We have also started work on a "case statement", which will help us look to the Archives' future and outline the direction in which we want to go in a way that will garner support from our community and supporters. In order to make the case in a way that is appealing and will grab our readers, we want to include some stories of how SPRA has impacted and changed lives in positive ways. If you have a story to share, please contact us. Even just a couple of sentences or a pithy quote is enough.

SPRA & Friends Society AGM



Above: Attendees at the meeting, including the youngest gentleman present, Nathaniel Gordon, in the foreground.

The SPRA Society and Friends of the Archives held their Annual General Meeting on Saturday, April 2nd. Members and Guests enjoyed the updates of what is



happening with both organizations, a talk about immigration into the Peace Country by historian Daryl White, and a simple soup and dessert lunch.

Thank you all for your support. The SPRA Societies now have 128 Members!

SPRA Volunteer Awards, 2016

Volunteer Awards at SPRA are based on the number of hours devoted to the Archives. The volunteer awards for 2015 are:



Mathew Wozniak, 250 hours. Mathew immigrated to Canada from Poland when he was six years old, and grew up on a farm in the Wanham-Eglesham district. He loves to tell stories about growing up in the south Peace River Country. You may have heard him speak at our Film & Story

Teas, or read his stories in our newsletter. He spends his volunteer hours at the Archives on the computer, writing up biographies for our reference files.

Karen Burgess, 250 hours. Karen is a very familiar face to anyone who has spent time at the Archives. She was a staff member for ten years, and has been volunteering since she retired in 2013. Her hours at the Archives are spent on research requests and processing records.



SPRA Staff and Board appreciate all of our volunteers, who work on various projects and make historical material available to researchers of South Peace history in our Reading Room, our newsletter, and on our website. Thank You!

2016 Beth Sheehan Award

The 2016 recipient of the Beth Sheehan Award for Outstanding Contribution to South Peace Regional Archives is Dr. Irene Nicolson.

Irene Nicolson arrived in Grande Prairie in 1974 to begin a long and illustrious career with the Grande Prairie Regional college, first as an instructor, then as Chair of the Office Administration Department and finally as Acting President before she retired in 2001. During this time she also received her doctorate in Education.

Even before she retired, however, she had gone on to another interest--the history of the province of Alberta. In 2000 she was appointed as the Peace Country representative for the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. Four years later, in 2004, the Minister of Community Development appointed her Chair of the Foundation. Her term there covered Alberta's 100th Anniversary.

When Irene retired from AHRF, she graciously agreed to lend her expertise to the board of the South Peace Regional Archives Society. She served for seven years, from 2009-2016, as secretary, president and past-president. We have benefitted from her expertise on everything from meeting efficiency to advice on grants and projects.

The Board of SPRA is grateful for Irene's many hours of volunteer work and dedication to the Archives, and



for the way she has advocated for and promoted SPRA in the Community.

We wish Irene and Gordon many more years in the blissful enjoyment of their acreage and, of course, golfing.

Mary Nutting presenting Dr. Irene Nicolson with the 2016 Beth Sheehan Award

From the Blog

By Kathryn Auger

Spirit River Merchants Preparing for Rush of Winter Trade
Business Places Moving to New Townsite

Spirit River City, a new town-in-
 infant in point of time, but lusty
 and strong and going better every
 minute. Four weeks ago it was a
 place in name only. Situated on the
 gentle slope of the Spirit River di-
 vide, overlooking the great Peace
 River Valley, until recently iron
 and wooden stakes were the only
 marks of the town to be. The grade
 of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and
 British Columbia railway was com-
 pleted to Section 22 early in May
 and it was here that J. D. McArthur
 suspended operations, making it a
 terminal on the main line and the
 end of steel for many months to
 come.

Steel has now almost reached
 Spirit River City. By the time this
 is in print, it is possible that the
 tracklayers will be working along
 the Company's townsite. In any
 event, the construction of the road
 to this point will be only a matter
 of a few days.

In the meantime, things are hap-
 pening at "twenty-two." Building
 operations have begun. Stores,
 business places, warehouses, ele-
 vators every day the list of per-
 manent structures on the new
 townsite has visibly increased. Two
 weeks ago twenty-six carpenters
 were working overtime. Thirteen
 buildings were completed and all
 the available lumber was rushed
 to the 'city' for immediate use.
 There was a shortage of building
 material. Garnett's lumber yard
 had been exhausted. Bell & Evans
 were working frantically to keep
 pace with the increasing demand.

Everywhere there was a spirit of
 optimism coupled with a desire to
 be "among the first on the ground."
 Traffic in real estate was brisk.
 Tradesmen bought choice locations

and, failing in their effort to secure
 lumber, put up log snags or tents
 in order to be in readiness for the
 winter's trade.

The outlook was considered good
 not only by business men but more
 particularly by the farmers, who
 saw in the near approach of steel
 a splendid opportunity for the mar-
 keting of grain and farm products.

Three levator companies, it was
 pointed out, were locating at the
 townsite and would be buying
 grain "before long."

The writer was informed that one
 hundred thousand bushels of oats
 would be sold by the Spirit River
 farmers alone, but that this amount
 would not include all grains to be
 shipped from Spirit River City
 during the winter. The reason was
 given, that the people of Varena
 and the Waterhole, north of the
 Peace, and of Pouce Coupe, west
 of Spirit River, would freight large
 quantities of grain to steel head.
 Waterhole farmers are planning to
 commence hauling about the latter
 part of January. At present there
 are 18,000 bushels in storage await-
 ing the arrival of the railroad.

Twenty acres of Section 22--the
 McArthur Townsite-- have been
 subdivided since April of last year.
 Win. Holden, the Company's agent,
 has sold a very large number of
 the lots, including all those on
 Main street. One gratifying feature
 of these sales has been that in al-
 most every instance the purchaser
 was either a bona fide resident of
 the community or a prospective
 business man.

Many of the buildings which
 have been erected attest to the
 permanency and substantiality of the
 town. McRae & Co. have had com-
 pleted on Main Street, a handsome

new structure, 32 by 50 feet, two
 stories high. The upper storey
 has six offices. The building is
 ready for occupancy and will be
 moved into shortly. On New Year's
 Eve, James Fahey, the Spirit River
 manager of McRae & Co., gave a
 dance in the new building to the
 people of the settlement. It was a
 very pleasant occasion and one
 which was thoroughly enjoyed by
 everyone. The Spirit River orches-
 tra, consisting of Messrs. Hansen,
 Johnson, Claridge and Houston,
 supplied the music. One hundred
 persons were in attendance, includ-
 ing thirty ladies.

The McRae store is situated on
 the corner of Main street and the
 avenue which runs parallel with
 the railway, being directly opposite
 the E. D. & B. C. station. With the
 exception of the exterior finishing,
 the building is complete in every
 way.

Directly across the street from
 McRae & Co., is another building
 of equal dimensions, 32 by 50 feet.
 It is exceptionally well constructed
 and admirably fitted for store pur-
 poses. It is owned by Mr. Pope,
 of the Pope Hardware Co. The
 lower floor will be utilized by the
 above mentioned firm and by A. B.
 Cole, general merchant, whose ad-
 vertisements will be found on
 another page of this paper. The
 upper storey of the Pope block has
 office space, in addition to a large
 store room.

Business men of the new town
 are working as one. At its present
 rate of growth, within two or three
 weeks Spirit River City will be in-
 corporated as a village. There also
 will be a live Board of Trade. Re-
 cently a petition for a post office
 was circulated.

Spirit River Building Boom

originally posted on January 21, 2016

Article printed in the January 18, 1916 issue of the Grande Prairie Herald



Moving a rig, 1954 (SPRA 175.122.8)

And So it Begins...

Originally posted on July 30, 2014

The July 29, 1948 paper reported that the first oil well in the Peace River country was spudded in 4 miles from Spirit River on July 25 by an Imperial Oil drilling crew. Many visitors were on hand to witness the historic event.

First Oil Well Is Spudded In At Spirit River By Imperial Oil

The first oil well in the Peace River country was spudded in four miles from Spirit River on Sunday morning, July 25th, by the Imperial Oil drilling crew. By evening it had drilled 140 feet into the sandstone formation. Visitors from Spirit River, Rycroft and the surrounding district were on hand in considerable numbers to witness the historic event.

The drilling rig is one of the three largest in operation in Canada. A National 100, purchased new in California, it is powered by three 8-cylinder superior Diesels and has a drilling capacity of 15,000 feet. The derrick is 136 feet high with a 10-foot substructure, making a total height of 146 feet.

The drilling crew of about 45 men will work on three shifts of eight hours round the clock. Result of the test well is being watched by many oil companies who are interested in this area.

Gulf Oil is also doing exploratory work in the Peace River country.

The Herald-Tribune, July 29, 1948

New "Film" on YouTube



Happy 100th Birthday to the Municipal District and the Town of Spirit River

You can view this video on the YouTube Channel for South Peace Regional Archives, or through the blog on our website.

New at the Archives

Thank You Donors!

The holdings at SPRA have all been donated by individuals, organizations, and municipal governments. You are our only resource for the preservation of the history of the South Peace. Here are a few of our recent donations.

Video Footage Re: Moving the Hythe Hospital, 2014
By Grace Wideman

Portrait of Russel Burgess, First Grande Prairie
Policeman, 1930
By Karen Burgess

Bay Tree Farmers Union of Alberta, 1954-1990
By Vivian Dechief

Grande Prairie Fire Department History Scrapbooks,
1915-2013
By Grande Prairie Fire Department

Grande Prairie Children's Literature Roundtable,
1999-2014
By Serena Boyte-Hawryluk

World War I Christmas Card & Photograph, 1915
By Nora Hassall

Framed Documents for Reproduction, 1906-1999
By Sexsmith & District Museum

Northern Piecemakers Guild Records, 1995-2001
By Roma Kosyk

Nick & Mary Poohkay accrual, [1900-2000]
By Patricia Busch

World War II Photographs for Bob Scott [1945]
Gentleman Auctioneer Story by Dennis Tink, 2001
By Alice Fortier

New On the Website

We have recently added

The Soldiers Memorial

To our website

Our goal is to have all South Peace soldiers acknowledged for their service. If you happen to know of someone who lived in the South Peace and should be listed here let us know! We also would like to expand on the list of names with a biography, photographs, and links to where more information can be found on the individual. Visit our website for more information on how to get involved and how to research our soldiers:

<http://southpeacearchives.org/the-south-peace-soldier-memorial/>

World War I Soldiers Database

We have the names of well over 900 soldiers who served in World War I, and the list continues to grow - some of them lived in Grande Prairie at the time of their enlistment, others homesteaded here after they returned from Europe. New biographies, photographs, and links are being added each week.

World War II Soldiers Database

The WWII Soldiers Memorial database contains the names of over 2,000 South Peace soldiers. Included with the newsletter is a form you can fill in with information about your relative who fought in any field of war. Our goal is to have photographs and biographies of every soldier from our area.

South Peace Regional Archives

is funded by

City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, MD of Spirit River, grants from the Archives Society and the Province of Alberta, and donations from people like you!

South Peace Regional Archives Society

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Interested in being involved as a: _____ volunteer _____ board member

There are two types of membership:

Full membership--get involved in the society, attend meetings, vote on issues and run for office.

Associate membership--receive communications (like this newsletter) to stay informed about issues and happenings at the Archives.

This membership is _____ new _____ renewal

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

Associate Member
\$15.00/person _____

I wish to donate to the
South Peace Regional Archives _____

Total Membership and Donation _____

Please pay by cash or cheque to
South Peace Regional Archives Society
Box 687, Grande Prairie, AB. T8V 3A8

Phone: 780-830-5105

Fax: 780-831-7371

E-mail: spra@telus.net

THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING



SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

PLEASE VISIT US AT

WWW.SOUTHPEACEARCHIVES.ORG

