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Issue 4

TELLING **OUR** STORIES



LITERARY PURSUITS

READERS & WRITERS OF 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: Unidentified girl looking at books. Photograph likely taken for use in an edition of the Herald Tribune. Ca. 1955. Cropped. (SPRA 032.08.08.0174)

Note on Photographs: Photographs featured in *Telling Our Stories* are unedited, apart from minimal cropping. In cases where substantial cropping may impact the context of the photograph, this will be noted in the caption.

A Publication of the South Peace Regional Archives

Our Vision: Preserving and Sharing the Past.
Our Mission: The purpose of South Peace Regional Archives is to gather, preserve, and share the historical records of municipalities, organizations, businesses, families, and individuals within the region, both now and in the future.

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Letter from the Editor

Growing up in small-town northern Alberta, books have always been a huge part of my life. Visiting the local library and combing through the shelves gave me a chance to explore not only my community, but infinite other worlds. And so, we are thrilled to celebrate the readers and writers of the South Peace in this issue of *Telling Our Stories*, "Literary Pursuits."

To start with, it's important to never judge a book by the cover, so explore some of the surprising ways archival records have been used in "In the Books" and unexpected items in our reference library in "Literature in the Archives." Start a new read with local authors in "Telling Our Stories in the Stacks" and "Building a Book," or dust off an old favourite and learn about Special Collections in "Books in the Archives." Hit the books and learn about the creation of the Grande Prairie Public Library in "Growing a Library," and the Grande Prairie Book Club in "Literary Connection." And before you shut off your reading light, learn about the importance of books for Private Mervin Simmons as a prisoner of war in World War I in "Reading Undercover."

Before you turn the page, though, I would like to take this chance to thank our readers and writers, the staff and volunteers who have made this issue possible. I would like to extend a special thank you to Hailey McCullough from the Grande Prairie Public Library, Margaret Bowes, and Taci Trudeau for contributing articles to this issue, and of course to the Grande Prairie and District Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society, without whose generous support this issue would not have been possible.

Ellyn Vandekerkhove
SPRA Executive Director

Take Note:

Folktales

This Fall we will be partnering again with the Grande Prairie Museum, the City of Grande Prairie, and the Senior's Reading Theatre to bring you Folktales Tours. These tours will explore the history and lore of the Peace Country through tales of interwoven fact and fiction.

Friday, October 13
Saturday, October 14

Check out our website and follow us on Facebook for more details.

Volunteer!

Folktales would not be complete without our actors and readers. So join us, get in costume, and step back into history in our Folktales tours. Roles for all comfort levels are available, so reach out to learn more!

info@southpeacearchives.org

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.

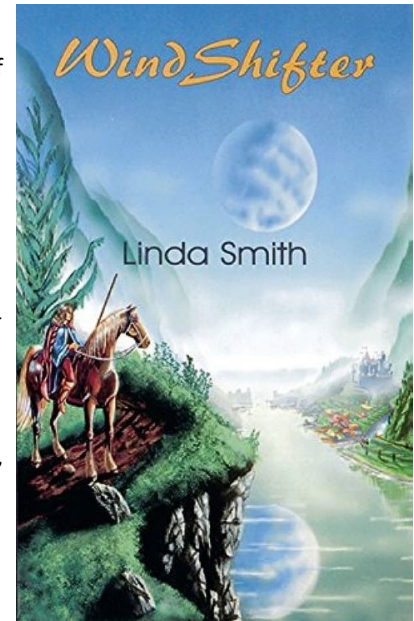
Literature in the Archives

Selections from the SPRA Reference Library

Visitors to the South Peace Regional Archives generally spend their visit in our reading room, surrounded by files full of newspaper clippings, boxes of obituaries, and the shelves of books that make up our reference library. Many of the books focus, not surprisingly, on local history and other topics relevant to understanding our region (see the article on page 8 for more information). However, we also have a selection of literary works, such as novels, short stories, and poetry.

W.D. Albright is perhaps best known for his role in establishing the Beaverlodge Dominion Experimental Substation. However, in addition to writing and lecturing about agriculture and horticulture, Mr. Albright also wrote poetry. A volume in the SPRA library (PR611 A43 P64) includes poems titled "A February Morning in Grande Prairie," "The Railroad Comes at Last," and "Atonement," which was dedicated to the memory of his brother Frederick, who died in action during World War I.

For lovers of fantasy novels, we have *Wind Shifter*, a novel by Grande Prairie author Linda Smith published in 1995 (PS8587 M5528 W56 1995). The back cover reads: "A young apprentice wizard finds herself in the middle of a historic war which only she can stop. Focusing on the power of love and friendship, Smith defies the traditional 'Good versus Evil'



Above: Cover of *Wind Shifter*.

theme in order to see through the blind acceptance of history. This is an enchanting tale which combines adventure with the varied emotions involved in growing up."

Finally, *Shimmercale* (PS8235 S4 S55) is "a collection of prose, poetry and pictures" written and drawn by the students of the Spirit River School Division in 1980. The title is taken from the first short story in the collection, "Shimmercale the Cowardly Dragon." Themes covered in the book include Seasons, Feelings, Tomorrow, and Things That Go Bump in the Night.

Left: W.D. Albright in a field of stooked oats, 1928. (SPRA 107.37)



Growing A Library

The Origins of the Grande Prairie Public Library

This article was contributed by Taci Trudeau. Taci worked as an Archives Assistant (Student) at the South Peace Regional Archives during the summer of 2022.

For many residents of Grande Prairie, and even visitors taking in the sights of the city, the Grande Prairie Public Library is a popular stop. The library serves as a communal meeting space while also providing a large collection of books and media for patrons at the Montrose Cultural Centre. What is now a visually interesting building filled with thousands of books and other forms of media was once merely a single cupboard in the council chambers of the old Grande Prairie town hall on the top floor of the original fire hall building. A replica of the fire hall can be viewed at the Grande Prairie Heritage Museum.

Our first library was established by the Grande Prairie Women's Institute (GPWI), a branch of the Alberta Women's Institute, that was an educational organization with the overarching goal of giving women opportunities to engage in national and international interests. The GPWI was established in 1924 and provided aid to schools and hospitals, formed clinics pregnant women from rural areas, organized relief efforts, and created the first library

Right: The Grande Prairie Library was started by the Grande Prairie Women's Institute in 1939. It was turned over to the town in 1941, with 600 books on its shelves. The library was moved to this location in 1957, with 15,000 books in its collection and a circulation of over 51,000 per annum. 1957. (SPRA 152.02.02.22)



in Grande Prairie. In 1939, members of the GPWI were able to get their hands on a cupboard in the original council chambers to store the few books they had in the beginning. The women visited local churches in search of any books they could add to the library's collection. During World War II, they continued to search for books they could mend and add to the collection that would soon grow too large for its single cupboard. The SPRA's Peggy Mair fonds (fonds 168) provides firsthand insight into the early years of our local library. For the first year, the GPWI opened the library every Saturday evening from 7 to 9pm, checking off returns and signing out books to the public. In the 1940s, the GPWI decided to offer the position to any students who were looking for a job in a small community where employment for young peo-



Left: Three people in the Grande Prairie Public Library. The photograph was likely taken for use in the April 20, 1956 edition of the Herald Tribune. 1956. (SPRA 032.08.08.1101)

In 1952, Charles Spencer, a local businessman and one of Grande Prairie's first real estate agents, donated his own collection of 2500 books to the library. He had been collecting books in the Donald Hotel since about 1917 and lending them out to the public. Thanks to this large donation and the continued work of the GPWI, the library consisted of approximately 15,000 books by 1957.

The Grande Prairie Women's Institute established the foundation of what is now the Grande Prairie Public Library through sheer determination to make knowledge and literature accessible to the community. Today, the Grande Prairie Public Library is an immense collection of every genre and medium one can imagine. Knowing that it began as a single cupboard of books in the town hall and grew through the hard work of determined community members makes the collection that much more meaningful.

ple was sparse. Mair states that "I was offered the job. The four dollars a month looked pretty good to me. Jobs for students were not very plentiful at that time. So, every Saturday evening found me at the library checking off returned books, shelving them, and signing out other books."

According to the organization's minute books, the library quickly became a great success. By December of 1941, the collection had grown to 600 books. In March of the following year, ownership of the library was transferred to the town government and it was given its own building. Members of the public agreed that the library was significant to the cultural life of the Grande Prairie area and appreciated the Women's Institute's tireless efforts. The town and the GPWI worked together to host the Wild Rose Tea to celebrate the women's accomplishments.

Below: Women's Institute members riding on their Dominion Day parade float. 1926. (SPRA 371.05.03.01)



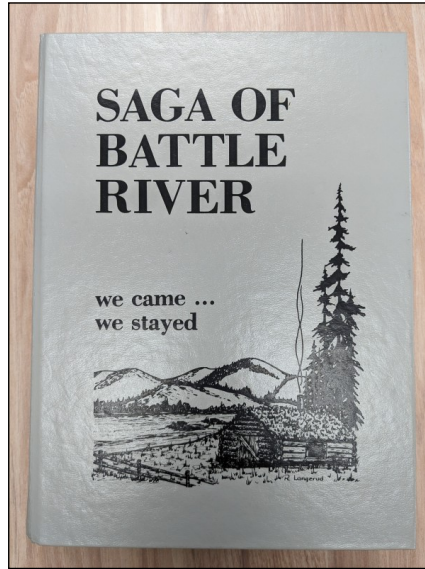
Books in the Archives

This Issue's Archiveology

When asked about what separates cultural and heritage institutions like archives, museums, and libraries many say the difference is in the material they collect. Archives focus on collections of unique unpublished records, museums preserve individual historical artifacts, and libraries collect published books organized by subject. However, anyone who visits our reading room and sees the shelves of books we collect at the South Peace Regional Archives knows that there isn't a firm divide between fields.

As a type of institution that often collects rare and valuable books, a special collection can represent a connection between archives and libraries. Special collections are sometimes separate organizations, but are usually a part of a larger institution. A special collection may include materials that you might find at an archives, like photographs and textual records, but the most common items in a special collection are rare and out of print books.

Books that are connected to important individuals or aspects of history, art and culture, sciences, or politics are of interest to preserve. So are books, manuscripts, or other published materials that are valuable and difficult or impossible to replace. Like an archives, items in a special collection are non-circulating and



Above: *Saga of Battle River*, Battle River

require you to visit to see them. This is to help protect and preserve the records or books as they usually cannot be replaced.

Special collections that preserve rare books can be found as part of many academic libraries or in large institutional archives. For example, Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa has a rare book collection focused on Canadian printed materials prior to confederation as well as some rare items post confederation. This includes items like a 1752 issue of the *Halifax Gazette* or a copy of *Catéchisme du diocèse de Sens* printed in Quebec around

1767. This special collection fits well within the mandate of an organization that serves as both a national library and a national archives.

At Memorial University in St. John's, the special collection is organized by a number of topics including Folklore, Ecclesiastical and Theological literature, Victorian illustrated books, and pre-Raphaelite literature. Their collection policy is intended to add diverse materials to the special collection, not just rare and valuable books but also:

"... works with an early publication date; manuscripts and typescripts; presentation/association copies; first editions of belles-letters and of classics in other subject areas; copies of an edition issued in a limited

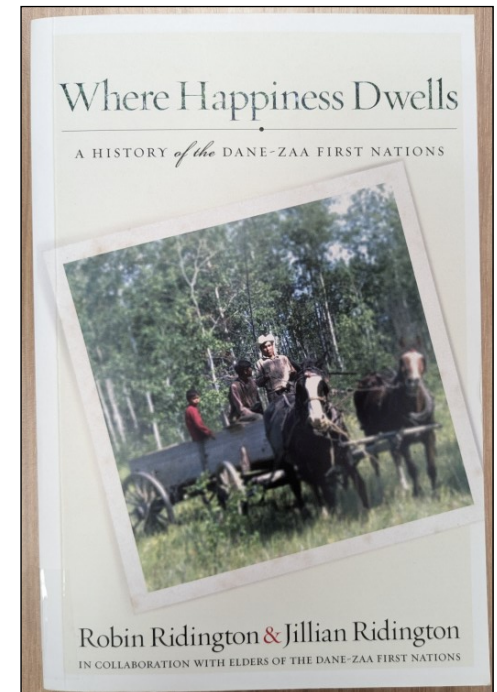
print run; editions which because of some aspects of their physical makeup are unusually interesting examples of the art of book-design; items which because of their physical condition or format are especially liable to be damaged, misplaced or lost; works or particular editions of works difficult or impossible to replace."

Even small institutions sometimes hold special collections. Here at the South Peace Regional Archives we collect a number of books that may be of interest to visitors and researchers. The kinds of books we keep in our collection are in four broad categories.

One major collection we keep is of community history books. These are often produced by historical societies or community groups and record the history of an area by interviewing individuals and families about their stories. As these often only get one printing, they can be particularly hard to replace.

We also keep books that give overviews on important topics related to the region. This can include books on local industries like agriculture and lumber, the history of policing and legal practices in Alberta, or even a small set of local cookbooks.

A third category of books in our collection relates to Indigenous communities in the South Peace and Alberta. This includes books on history, as well as on legal, political, or genealogical topics.



Above: *Where Happiness Dwells*, Ridington, Ridington, and Elders of the Dane-Zaa First Nations, E99 T77 R54 2013

Finally, we have a smaller collection of books consisting of the works of researchers and local authors.

This includes works that were produced in part based on research conducted here at the archives (see pages 12 and 13) as well as fictional and poetic works by local writers (see page 5).

While these books aren't strictly archival, they are important to preserve as valuable information resources and as helpful starting points for researchers who visit the archives.



Left: Reading Room at the South Peace Regional Archives

Telling Our Stories In the Stacks

Writing at the Grande Prairie Public Library

This article was contributed by Hailey McCullough, Head of Adult Services at the Grande Prairie Public Library. We are excited to feature her work here and to partner with our local library in this literature-themed issue of Telling Our Stories.

Ask someone what words they associate with libraries and you'll likely receive responses like "books," "community," or "literacy." They're words that effectively describe some of what libraries are best known for. They're also apt descriptors for writing workshops, local authors, and writing contests, all of which have a home at the Grande Prairie Public Library (GPPL).

While it's easy to go online and see how many writing programs and events the Library currently offers, the art of the scribe has been a longstanding feature at GPPL, with writing contests going back decades. If you peruse the shelves in the Library's Isabel Campbell Room, which also contains a number of fascinating local history books, you'll find writing anthologies going back to 1985 and 1988, when GPPL sponsored teen writing contests in the fall. Hundreds of manuscripts were received each year with a selection of those the judges deemed best compiled into anthologies.

After the popularity of the teen writing contests, the Library established the first annual Grande Prairie Public Library Writing Contest the following year with categories for pre-teens, teens, and adults. For its inaugural contest, the theme chosen was "The Spirit of Grande Prairie" in light of the 75th anniversary of



Above: Muriel and Clem Collins outside of their Grande Prairie home, ca. 1960. (SPRA 476.03.01.11)

Grande Prairie's incorporation as a village. Some of the entries that were selected for the anthology included an amusing visual poem about 214 Place, a heartfelt remembrance piece from a third grader following the death of his best friend from leukemia, and a reflection on what makes one teenager proud to call Grande Prairie home.

Over the years, the Grande Prairie Public Library's writing contest has changed and grown, with themes ranging from kaleidoscope to birthdays to scared silly.

Since 2004, the contest has been funded by Clem and Muriel Collins, who originally moved to Grande Prairie in 1951 with the intention of only staying for a few years. However, the couple ended up putting down roots in the Swan City and stayed for the rest of their lives. Passionate about serving their community, Clem and Muriel Collins were heavily involved with supporting a number of local non-profits, including the Grande Prairie Museum, the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital Foundation, and the Library, among others. In honour of Clem and Muriel's commitment to funding the Library's annual writing contest, it was renamed to the Collins Writing Contest, which it is still known as to this day.

Children's Processing Coordinator, Judy Garlinski, who has worked at GPPL for 29 years and helped organize, plan, and facilitate the Collins Contest for much of that time, has fond memories of reading the work of aspiring young writers. "We've had such a variety of themes over the years, it's really allowed the creativity of some of the younger writers to shine through. It's been a joy to read their poems and stories."

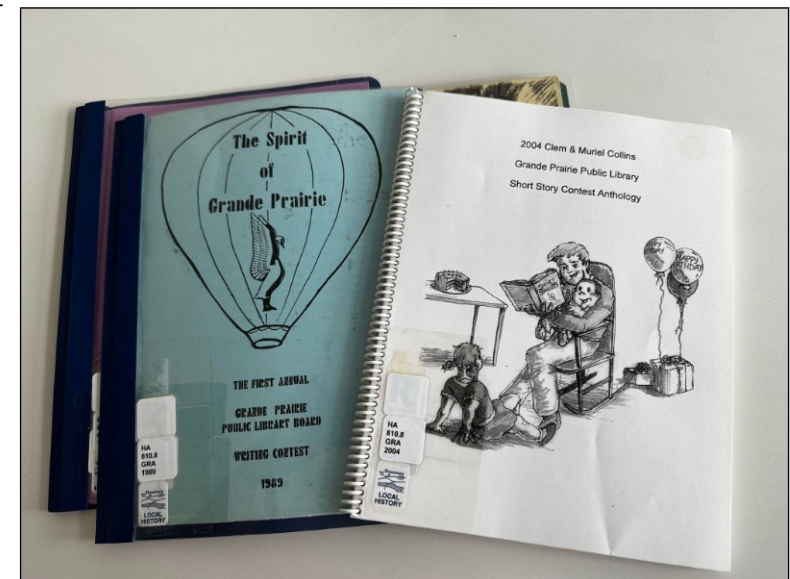
The past 35 years of Collins Writing Contests have seen a number of local writers, both young and old, try their hand at writing a story. Some have been members of the Swan City Writers, the Library's bi-weekly writing workshop group, and others have gone on to become published authors, joining the likes of successful local authors such as Judy I. Lin, Sue Farrell Holler, and Holly Crichton.

Right: Past anthologies of stories written for the Clem and Muriel Collins Writing Contests. Photograph courtesy of Hailey McCullough.

"Local author programs have been a longstanding feature at the Library," says Marci Banack, GPPL's Adult Program Coordinator. "It makes a lot of sense for us to try and work with local authors who are interested in doing a book signing and reading, because writing and literacy really go hand in hand, and we have the Swan City Writers program and the Collins Contest, so the Library is sort of like a one-stop shop."

The theme for the 36th annual Collins Writing contest will be announced later this month. Those interested in submitting an entry can visit www.gppl.ca for a full overview of the requirements and rules.

You can find more information about Clem and Muriel Collins and their involvement in our community on our website: www.southpeacearchives.org/finding-aid/fonds-476-clem-and-muriel-collins-fonds/. The fonds contains over 100 photographs as well as textual records about activities the Collinses were involved in, including the writing contest. If you are interested in viewing these records, schedule an appointment to visit our reading room and our staff will be happy to assist you.

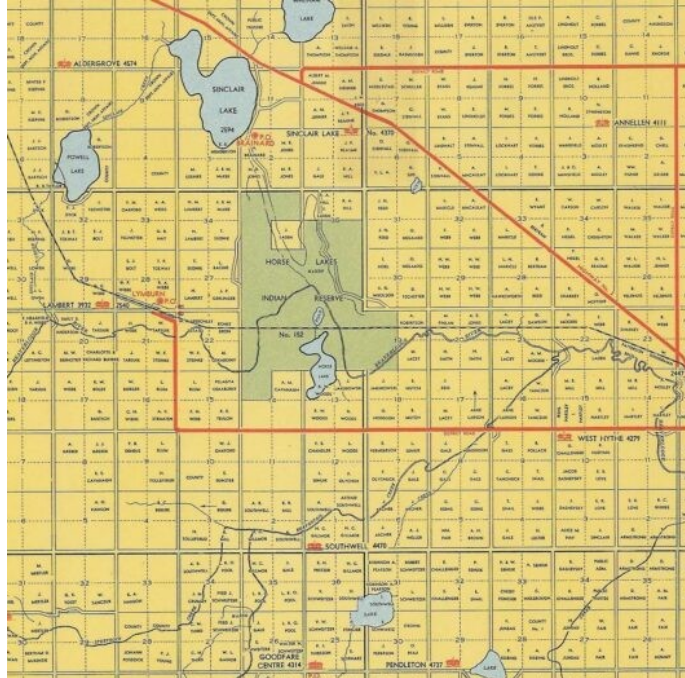


In the Books

Archival Records in Print

Readers would not be surprised to see archival records referenced in history textbooks or family and community history books. However, authors access archival records for many other types of books as well. Our records, for instance, have been featured in a bestselling Norwegian novel and a Canadian book about horticulture.

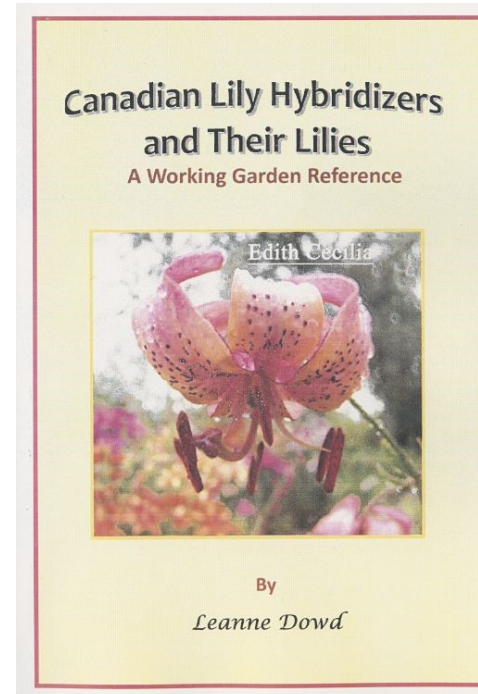
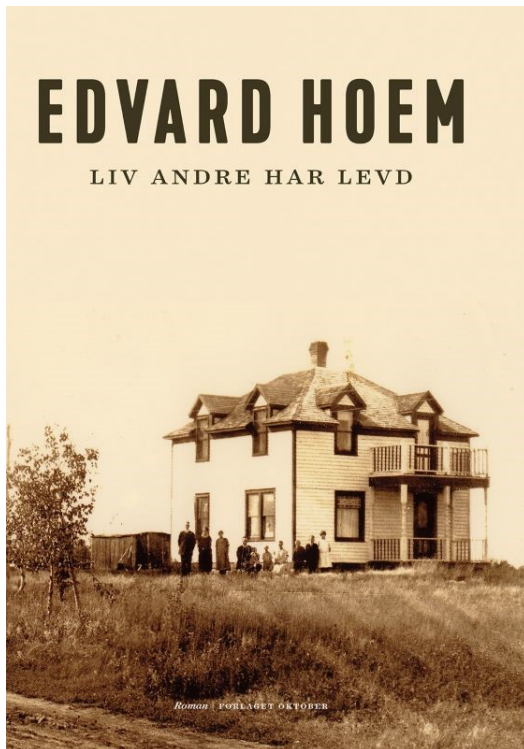
In early 2017, a Norwegian editor reached out to us looking for a map showing the Lymburn area around 1930. Bestselling Norwegian author Edvard Hoem was writing a novel featuring



the area and wanted to get a better grasp of the region's geography. The closest thing we had was a 1955 County of Grande Prairie landownership map, but Mr. Hoem was nevertheless able to use it for research and the editor asked to reproduce the relevant portion of the map in the book. A portion of the map (including what is shown above) was used for the back endpapers of the book. The editor sent us a beautiful hardcover copy, which you can view in our reading room. It appeared at the top of Norwegian bestseller lists for several weeks in December 2017.

Above: 1955 County of Grande Prairie Land Ownership Map [cropped] (SPRA 1969.53.075)

Left: Cover of Liv Andre Har Levd, by Edvard Hoem. SPRA Reference Library, PT8952 H64 L58 2017.



In 2020, researcher Leanne Dowd was working on a guide to Canadian lily hybrids and hybridizers. She contacted us to request several photographs of lilies from the John Wallace fonds (SPRA fonds 383) to use as illustrations in her book. John Wallace worked as a horticulturist at the Beaverlodge Experimental Station from 1944 to 1949. He returned to the position periodically



when the Experimental Station was between horticulturists until he retired in 1959. John also established the enterprise that eventually became the Beaverlodge Nursery, where he continued to work in his retirement. The Germaine Lily and Katja Lily shown on this page were two of John's cultivars and are listed in Ms. Dowd's book, a copy of which she sent us for our reference library.

Left: A Katja lily, one of John Wallace's cultivars, 1984. Leanne Dowd featured this photograph on page 180 of Canadian Lily Hybridizers and Their Lilies. (SPRA 383.01.06.132)



Above: A Germaine lily, one of John Wallace's cultivars, 1975. Leanne Dowd featured this photograph on page 148 of Canadian Lily Hybridizers and Their Lilies. (SPRA 383.01.06.131)

Left: Cover of Canadian Lily Hybridizers and Their Lilies, by Leanne Dowd. SPRA Reference Library, QK982 D69 C36 2020.

Reading Undercover

An Excerpt from Private Mervin Simmons' *Three Times & Out*

One of the South Peace's authors was Private Mervin Simmons, who, with the help of Nellie McClung, wrote about his experiences imprisoned in and escaping from German prisoner of war camps during World War I. His memoir, *Three Times & Out*, is available on Project Gutenberg's website and in the SPRA reading room (D627 G3 S5 1918).

Private Simmons frequently addresses the value prisoners placed on books. He describes how, in one prison camp, the prisoners gathered together all the books they received in parcels to make a shared library. They cataloged the books and one of the men became their librarian. They eventually collected about one hundred books.

After being caught trying to escape, Private Simmons was sentenced to two weeks in The Cells, which were small, pitch dark rooms reserved for the most "troublesome" prisoners. On his first day, the prisoner in the cell adjoining Private Simmons' advised him on how to acquire and read books, despite the isolation and darkness.



Soon I noticed that in the partition at my right there was a place where the darkness was broken, and a ray of light fil-

tered through. As I watched it, into the light spot there came two glistening points which looked very much like a pair of eyes...

... "Hello!"

"Hello!" came back the answer; and looking through the crack I saw a lighted cell, and in it a man, the owner of the two bright eyes I had seen.

"What are you?" came a whisper.

"Canadian," I answered; "in for trying to escape."

By putting my ear to the crack, I could hear when he whispered.

"I am a Frenchman," he said in perfect English;

"Malvoisin is my name... That's a good cell you have. I was in that cell the last time, and I fixed it up a little."

"What did you do to it?" I asked.

"There's a built-in cupboard over at the other side, where you can keep your things!"

"Things!" I said—"what things? I've nothing but a pencil and a string."

"The boys will bring you stuff," he said; and then he gave me instructions.

"Write a note," he said. "Here's a piece of paper," showing a frag-

ment of newspaper through the crack. "Write a note addressed to one of your friends, tell him you are in cells, but get out every day to lavatory in Camp 8—they'll bring you food, and books."

"Books!" I said. "What good would books be to me in this black hole?"

"I am just coming to that," he whispered back;

"there's a crack like this with a movable batten over on the other side. You can stand on the platform, pull down the strip of wood, and get in quite a decent light from the other cell. It is a light cell like mine; and right above it you'll find the board that is loose in the ceiling; you can pull it down and slip your book into the space and then let it up again."

I stepped over to the other side, and found everything just as he said. Life grew brighter all at once, and the two weeks of "cells" were robbed of a great part of their terror.

I set to work to pull a nail with my cord, and was able to do it after considerable labor, but there was no hurry at all. It all helped to put the long hours in! With the nail I made the reading-crack larger, in anticipation of the books which were to come, but was careful not to have it too big for the strip of wood to cover when it was swung back into place.

When morning came I got my issue of bread, the fifth part of a small round loaf, which was my allowance for the day. Then for ten minutes we all swept out our cells and were taken out to the lavatory. I had my note ready, and when the guard was not looking, slipped it into the hand of a Frenchman who was standing near me.

The lavatory was in the same building as Camp 8 Lavatory, and was divided from theirs by a wall with an opening in it, through which parcels might be passed

between the strands of barbed wire.

The Frenchman delivered my note quite safely, and the next morning I found several little packages on the floor of the lavatory. Bromley and I managed to get out at the same time, and as the guard did not understand English, we were able to say a few words to each other.

The boys sent us things every day—chocolate, biscuits, cheese, cigarettes, matches, and books. We wore our overcoats to the lavatory each day, so we could use the pockets to carry back our parcels without detection. We were also careful to leave nothing in the cell that would attract the attention of the guard, and Malvoisin and I conserved matches by lighting one cigarette with the other one, through the crack.

Bromley had no reading-crack in his room, but with a nail and string soon made himself one.

Standing on the platform, I could open the reading-crack and get several inches of light on my book. I read three or four books in this way, too, making them last just as long as I could.

On the fourth day I had light in my cell. The two windows were opened and the cell was aired. On the light day I got more to eat, too, coffee in the morning, and soup in the evening. On that night I had a mattress and blankets, too.

Toward the end of my two weeks I had hard luck. The cell next to mine, on which I depended for the light to read by, was darkened. I was right in the middle of "The Harvester." I tried it by the crack between my cell and that of Malvoisin, but the light was too dim and made my eyes ache. However, after two days a light-cell prisoner was put in, and I was able to go on with my story.



Above: Portrait of Private Mervin Simmons, featured in *Three Times & Out*.

Building A Book

Drafts & Manuscripts in the Archives

With books, we generally see the finished project, already polished and published. But looking through the Archives' collection lets us have a unique glimpse into the process those books go through to get there. In this article we will be focusing on history books in particular.

The first stage in producing any history book is, of course, research. Looking through someone's research notes allows you to see what sources were used and also follow their thought processes to see how they reached different conclusions. For example, in preparation for his book *Foulest of Murders*,

Wally Tansem compiled extensive research files on the people, places, and circumstances of the 1918 murders. Not only do his files contain copies of case reports, interviews, and forensics, there are also some handwritten notes with his interpretations. These even include hand-drawn diagrams of the crime scene as he tried to visualize the crime years later (SPRA fonds 012, Wally & Doris Tansem fonds).

To prepare for their book *Smoky River Triangle*, the Eaglesham History Book Committee circulated questionnaires in the community, asking residents about their experiences, which can now be found in their research files. This gives us a chance to see the gathered information in its original form, with its original wording, beyond what was in the book (SPRA fonds 612, Eaglesham History Book Committee fonds).

Once the research has been compiled, you can begin drafting the book. Sometimes, this might include handwritten drafts like the foreword we have for *Pioneers of the Peace* (SPRA fonds 287, Grande Prairie District Old-Timers' Association fonds). More often in our collections, these drafts are typed on a typewriter or computer. A book may go through several drafts, such as Wally Tansem's work where we have several different versions of the same chapter. All of the drafts we have in our collection show evidence of proofreading and revisions, with notes in the margins. While these are usually small corrections such as proper punctuation, they show the amount of work

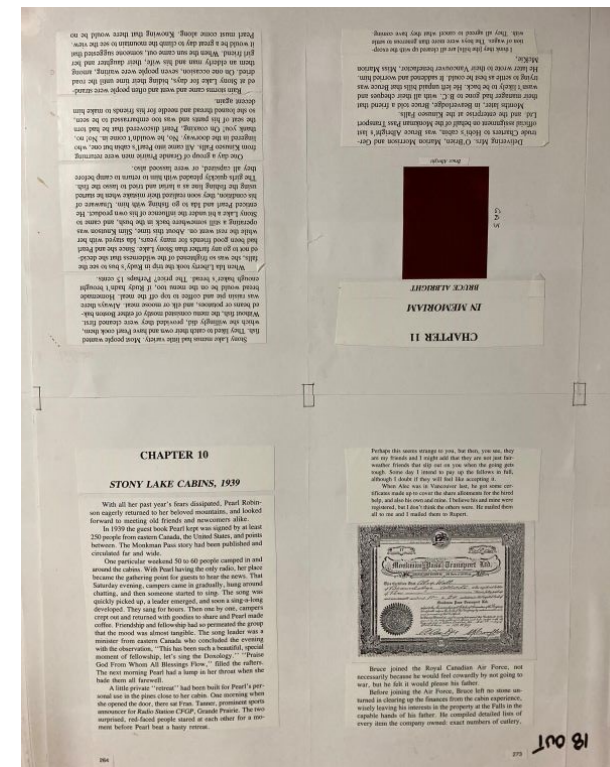
Left: A page of Wally Tansem's research notes. (SPRA Fonds 012, Wally and Doris Tansem fonds.)

and thought that went into drafting the book. Some of the corrections may be a little more pointed, however, such as one on the proper spelling of Beaverlodge on the draft of *Pioneers of the Peace*.

Once all of the revisions are completed and you have a finished manuscript, it is time to move into the actual publishing of the book. The focus now turns to the physical layout. Many of the manuscripts in our collection have handwritten codes in the margins which are spacing codes. These are meant to show the publisher where spaces should go, where new paragraphs start, and other similar information.

Once the layout is set, the publisher may send out proofs to ensure that everything is perfect. From the Beaverlodge and District Historical Association we have two proofs of the book *People of the Pass*. The first is on 11"x17" paper, with different segments of the book pasted on almost like a collage. This proof contains some notes from one contributor stating that the cover was still a little plain and that they would like to add some details. The second proof is later in the process and printed in segments on 20"x24" paper, each showing 16 pages. They can be folded so that each section becomes its own little flipbook to page through. It also includes a full-colour print of the cover, which has added the oval shape indicated in the earlier notes. Comparing these two proofs, you can see the subtle changes that were made between proofs (SPRA fonds 592, Beaverlodge & District Historical Association fonds).

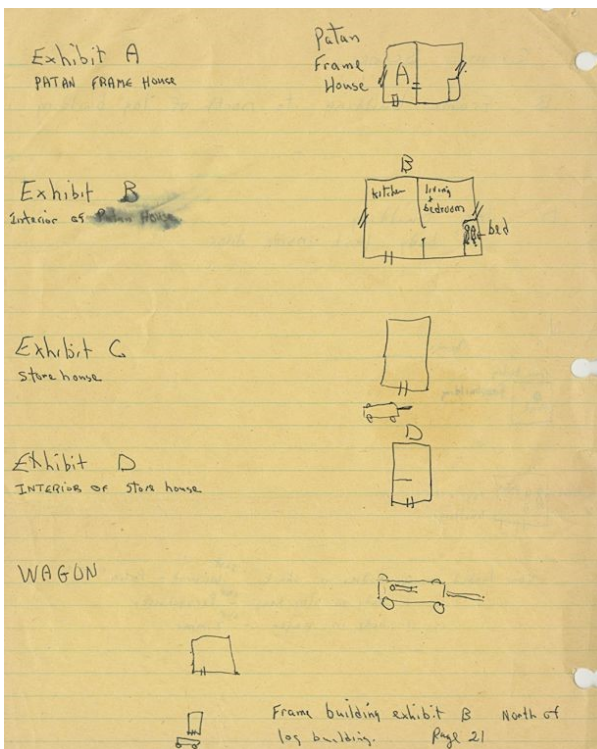
Images are also a crucial part of final publications. Many of our manuscripts do not include images, but instead mark the places where images should go with a number and have images and captions in a separate file or document. One exception to this is the *Peace Past Project* from the Peace River Archaeology Socie-



Above: A page from the proof of *People of the Peace*. (SPRA 592 Beaverlodge & District Historical Association fonds.)

ty, where the photographs to be included had been pasted directly onto the page (SPRA fonds 003, Peace River Archaeology Society fonds). In most cases, images are added in the proof process. In the first proof we have from *People of the Pass*, the images are not included but their location in the layout is marked by a box, with the image number written beside it. But by the later flipbook stage, the images were included and the book was ready to print.

While so often we only see the finished product of a book, archival collections can give us a behind-the-scenes look into how books are made. From the research to the writing, images, layout, and cover designs, all of these segments show the massive amount of work and dedication that went into each and every publication.



Hitting the Books

As demonstrated by these photographs, reading is a pastime that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and in any place, whether the library, the kitchen, or the great outdoors.



Above: Edna Hodgson standing outside reading a book by a tree. The Hodgson home and car are in the yard behind her. Ca. 1955. (SPRA 630.08.102)



Left: A group of children at the library looking at books. Photograph likely taken for use in an edition of the Herald Tribune. Ca. 1955. (SPRA 032.08.08.0185)

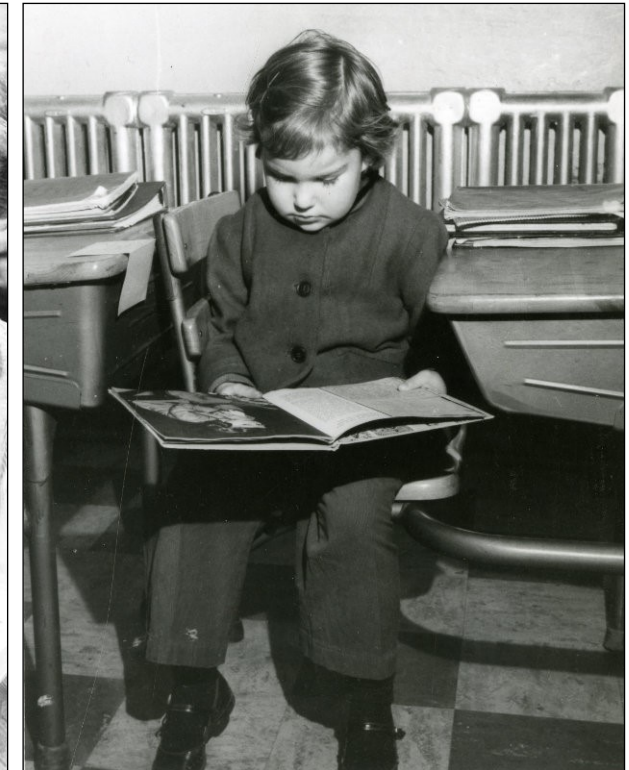
Below: Mary Jean, Jim, and David looking at a book together in the Carlisle living room, 1941. (SPRA 399.01.45)



Facing page, top: An unidentified woman sitting at a kitchen table under a window, reading a newspaper, ca. 1908. (SPRA 679.01.06)

Facing page, bottom left: Librarian Amy Soltys and I.O.D.E. member Marg Longmate making a donation to the library, ca. 1985. (SPRA 111.04.213)

Facing page, bottom right: Unidentified child seated at a desk and looking at a picture book. Photograph likely taken for use in an edition of the Herald Tribune. Ca. 1955. (SPRA 032.08.08.0172)



Literary Connection

A History of the Grande Prairie Book Club

The following article was contributed by SPRA Society member Margaret Bowes. It originally appeared in the Peace Country Historical Society's summer 2022 newsletter and Margaret has agreed to let us feature it here to build on our literary theme.

The Grande Prairie Book Club held its first meeting in September 1939 at the home of Mrs. Tracy. The purpose of the club was to circulate books amongst its members. Members initially decided on meeting monthly, that membership would not exceed twenty ladies, and to exchange books every two weeks. The first executive included Mrs. Tracy, President; Mrs. Pickard, Vice-President; and Mrs. Swanston, Secretary-Treasurer. Mrs. Carlisle and Mrs. Fawcett made up the book buying committee, and books were protected with plastic covers. Twenty books were purchased from book dealers in Edmonton each term; in 1939, membership fees were \$2.50, in 1968 membership fees of \$6.00 covered the cost, \$120.00, of twenty books, and by 1979 fees had risen to \$15.00. (In 2022, fees are now \$30!)

At each monthly meeting the hostess provided lunch, assisted by several other members. A program committee was established to provide entertainment and education at the meetings, which often involved a guest speaker or a presentation.

Over the years many diverse guest speakers have been hosted: Archie Calliou, the founder of Grande Prairie's Friendship Centre; Evy McBryan, who documented the building of the Alaska Highway with Euphemia McNaught; Glen Patterson, the manager of

Canfor when the new industry of plywood was introduced; the émigré Baron Fausenhausen and his delightful wife, who prepared a fruit soufflé on the stove; and Bill Sargent, who spoke about and showed slides of a trip on the Nahani River. Many Grande Prairie residents have presented on local history, including Gerald Carveth, who compiled a history of Grande Prairie and Rycroft, and Pete Eagar during the centennial celebrations in 1967 when the Bear Creek Park entrance gate was officially opened. In 1967, Roma Gauk gave a demonstration of Ukrainian Easter egg decorating. In 1968 and in 1971 respectively, memorials were held for members Dorothy Caldwell and Marion Evans.

In 1969, Mrs. Patterson presented a 25-year history of the book club written by Mrs. Swanston. But in 1972 the question of the historical record's location and discussion of importance of preservation arose. In that year a constitution was written (using the minutes from previous years) which included the purpose: "...to circulate among members the books selected by a book buying committee; and to present nine programs a year for the edification, entertainment, and fellowship of the members."

In the June 1979 meeting, it was noted that attendance was dropping as a result of members' involvement with other activities, and Margaret Bowes' proposal of having four dinner meetings a year instead of twelve lunches was accepted. As a result, the first dinner meeting was held at the Bowes' residence on September 5, 1979, with a full membership of 21 and



Above: Grande Prairie Book Club members (Back) Jane Wiebe, Margaret Bowes. (Front) Phyllis Bearisto, Chris Henderson, Jean O'Brien, 1993. (SPRA 444.01.03)

2 guests, and with hostesses Margaret Bowes, Margaret Simpson, June Murray, and Doreen MacDonnell. In December 1979, the club celebrated its 40th anniversary with Rose Patterson, the last remaining charter member.

In January 1989, the new club secretary, Alice Lorenz, reminded members in writing of their duty according to their constitution to pass books on or before the dates printed on the list inside the cover of the book.

President, Vice-President, and Secretary positions are voted to office, as they always have been. The book buying committee comprises three members chosen alphabetically each year. All members contribute their annual fee at the September meeting to the book buying committee, and, should there be a surplus, it is given to the succeeding book buying committee.

The committee spends a lot of time checking out the reviews of new books, and considers members' suggestions. When the 21 books are chosen the commit-

tee then, as the first committee did, wraps them in plastic. A secure space is left inside the cover for a 'Critique' sheet where each reader writes a few lines regarding the book and rates it from 1 to 10. The committee also has to prepare a list for each book that is distributed in September. Each list has all the names and the exact two-week date (except three weeks in December) that the book is to be delivered to the next person. The last book received in June belongs to that recipient.

The quarterly host committees are chosen by drawing names at the September meeting. Each host committee chooses what format the meeting will take: a potluck dinner at one of their homes; dinner prepared by the hostesses; a dessert; or eating at a restaurant where each member pays their way.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, two bring-your-own-lunch meetings have been held at Susan and Arnie Meyer's hangar where it has been easy to maintain social distance. The meetings are usually held the first Tuesday in September, December, March, and June. By September, each member will have given their 'Critique' sheet to Betty Grunau who does an excellent job of summarizing the comments and ratings of each book. She identifies which books were the favourites, and presents her findings at the December meeting.

Records for the Grande Prairie Book Club were donated to the South Peace Regional Archives in 2010. The fonds (SPRA 444) contains minutes, financial records, by-laws, and other records and can be viewed in the SPRA reading room by appointment.

New at the Archives

In our last issues of *Telling Our Stories* we gave updates on different projects going on at the archives. This included work like the revamp of our website or the development of a QR labelling system.

With these projects now completed, the archivist has been focusing on processing records donations to reduce our backlog and free up space. This has resulted in new accruals to existing fonds as well as the creation of new collections like Fonds 700: *For the Record Research Collection* and Fonds 697: *Grande Prairie Century Play Society*.



Above: Donation of Pastor William Kuziw's Records

While we are currently asking donors to hold on to their records until we move to Centre 2000 if they are able, we are accepting some donations if a donor does not have safe storage. Please contact us to discuss any archival donations before bringing your records in.

One particularly interesting donation we received was from Audrey Nikiforuk. This donation included two suitcases from William Kuziw, who served as the pastor of the Ukrainian Baptist Church near Blueberry Mountain in Saddle Hills County.

Thank You for Contributing to our Building Fund

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

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

- City of Grande Prairie
- County of Grande Prairie
- Municipal District of Greenview
- Government of Canada

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