Peace Country Historical Society
Box 897 Station Main
Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 3A8

September, 2022
The Fall Equinox Issue
Volume 12 - Issue 3

Promoting, Preserving, Publishing Our Heritage

Fall Colours at Kleskun

Events

The summer tours, Kleskun Ranch Lake, the Emerson Trail tour, and the Forbes Tea and Tour, were a great success by all accounts. A second tour of the Kleskun Lake Ranch was planned, but had to be cancelled. This tour will be available in the spring of 2023, numbers permitting.

The Board of Directors is currently developing events for the winter season. All things being equal, we hope to have two presentations and a film night. If enough members are interested, we would also hold a Christmas tea with an update on our Society.

Please watch for details on the PCHS Facebook page. No need to be a Facebook member to read the event notices.

President's Message

Greetings to You All;

This is the Fall Equinox edition of our Newsletter. The third edition of our twelfth year as a Society.

It has been an abundant summer for woodland plants. Saskatoon, cranberries, raspberries, and rose hips all produced heavy crops of fruit.

From the plant's point of view, the fruit is the enticement to spread the seed via insects, birds, and animals. Neat.

With the relaxation of Covid rules our Society has been able to resume in-person events this summer. We hope this can continue, but realize that things could change over the fall and winter seasons. Fingers crossed.

This edition contains reports on our summer events, archaeological work at Old Bezanson, and articles on the Cold War and water wells. As always, my thanks to the authors.

Regards,

Pat Wearmouth

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Membership Dues

- The Historical Society of Alberta has a policy on membership dues. Members will be reminded to renew lapsed dues after three months. If no renewal is forthcoming, they will cease to be a member at the six month mark.
- The due's year has also changed. Dues are now due on April 1st and expire on March 31st of the following year, or multiples thereof.
- The Society keeps the master membership list, and receives dues on our behalf.
- Please go their website, www.albertahistory.org, OR phone their office at (403) 261-3662 for details on your dues and the categories and amount of dues and subscriptions.

Peace Country Historical Society

Vision: To encourage the appreciation of the history of the Peace Country.

Mandate: The mandated area of the Peace Country Historical Society is the northwest region of Alberta

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Ron Thoreson – Facebook Forum
Charles Taws – Historic Plaque Placements
Linda Schofield – Senior's Reading Theatre
Janet Peterson – Information Table

Contact Us
Newsletter editor:
Pat Wearmouth
wearmo@telus.net
587-298-8500

What We Can Offer

- A chance to help set direction for our Peace Country Chapter at membership meetings or by other communication means.
- A chance to learn about Peace Country history during presentations and tours, through Facebook, the Newsletter, the Website, and at membership meetings.
- A chance to meet other people who enjoy history.
- A chance to contribute as a volunteer in various projects that we carry out.
- A chance to advocate for the history of our area.
- We hope that you choose to continue with, or join, our Society.

The Bear Lake/Emerson Trail Tour

Duff Crerar

Paul Balisky led the Society tour on August 6 to visit several sites on the Emerson Trail.

Paul explained the historic origins of the trail, introduced us to the history of the Canuck School, and several former students who were waiting there to share their memories of those early school days. For almost all of us there was the moment of memory and tug of emotions as we remembered our earliest school memories, favourite teachers, and the many sports days and ball tournaments.

Next Paul explained the historic role played by the Lozeron family, as progressive farmers and artists, well as Andy Lozeron's radio broadcast on agriculture in Alberta.

We then travelled on to the Scheidegger Farm, where we heard about the winter Cow Camp held on the hay meadows just north of Bear Lake, and explored the farm's many buildings and the well-kept cabins and barns. We were then served some home baking and mint tea by the family. This stop was especially important to Paul and Lila Balisky, as this was the Balisky farm, and the Scheidegger, through Lynn's side of the family, has kept it close to its Balisky roots.

After passing the old Niobe post office site, the group visited the Bethel Church in the Norwegian settlement, heard about its unique "church split" (the building, not the congregation!) when it was being enlarged, and went through the cemetery, recalling many names and observing the old Norwegian monuments gradually give way in the newer portion to the English language. Two military gravestones demonstrated the long reach of both World Wars, and the sacrifices of local men who, in one case survived a very hazardous tour with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War One, while the other revealed the dangers and risks while still training in Canada.

It was, in retrospect, an engaging visit to a portion of the Peace Region which, in its living monuments and the cemeteries and preserved country school, brought to life the lively and active founding activities and dedication of first settlers.

The Forbes Tea & Tour

The PCHS Afternoon

Charles Taws

The Peace Country Historical Society Afternoon tea was held at the Rev. Forbes Homestead in Grande Prairie at 2pm on Wednesday August 10th. The Rev. Forbes Homestead offers several afternoon tea events throughout this summer and, so far, this was the best attended one. 40 people came to enjoy the event on the lawn and to visit the historic house and hospital.
PCHS and Heritage Fair displays were set up in the dining room and various historical publications were for sale. A "guess what it is" draw was held with Lila Balisky making the first correct guess that the item was an antique bug catcher. She won a prize basket of local history books, candy, Museum water bottle and Archive's mug.
The Rev. Forbes Homestead is the oldest house in Grande Prairie, built in 1912, and incorporates the first hospital, built in 1911. Visitors commented on the primitive conditions of the hospital, but many thought the house itself was quite cozy.
The Rev. Forbes Homestead Museum offers afternoon teas, as did Mrs. Forbes long ago, every summer. The PCHS Afternoon tea has become an annual event for the Society.

Lila Balisky is presented with prize basket after correctly guessing what the mystery item was. Museum staff, Gianna Duncan, and Charles Taws make the presentation.

Enjoying the day with fellow members.

An Update on the Old Bezanson Archaeology Project

Shawn Morton, Northwestern Polytechnic
Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown, Athabasca University

Our archaeological careers have been dominated by research on ancient Maya peoples and places, particularly of the Classic Period (ca. 250-900 CE). Since 2014, our efforts have focussed on bringing to light the peoples and processes associated with the relatively rapid development and eventual abandonment of an ancient townsite in Belize. This work has in part drawn inspiration from similar patterns of rapid settlement growth or boomtown development in Alberta's more recent past. When we moved to Grande Prairie in August 2019, we began to kick around the idea of starting up a community-based, archaeological research project in north-western Alberta that would complement this research. We quickly focused on a relatively recent settler-historical site known as the Old Bezanson Townsite (OBT) in the southern reaches of the Peace Country—just a short drive from our home and located within a municipal park. This recognized archaeological site was provided the Borden designation GgQn-2 in the 1980s.

British-Canadian Ancel Maynard Bezanson (1878-1958) of Halifax, NS, was by all accounts an optimistic, energetic, and charismatic individual. These traits served him well in his efforts to establish and promote his eponymous townsite on the banks of the Smoky River in the early 1910s. The first subdivision map visualizes Bezanson's grand design and unshakable faith in the town's potential. News articles from 1914-1916 describe the town as having one and two-story residences, a flour mill, a restaurant and bakery, a livery and stable, various shops, a blacksmith, multiple general and provision stores, a jewelry store, a bunkhouse, a Presbyterian church, a post office, and more. OBT was clearly on its way to becoming the quintessential example of a late-period Alberta frontier boomtown and thus brought our research interests full circle.

Unfortunately, the OBT boom was short-lived when the much-hoped-for railway bypassed the community. The town continued to grow for a time, and residents even built a new school in 1919. Eventually, the lack of a railway and economic and demographic pressures imposed by the Great War effectively quelled interest in the town. The final blow came in 1921 when the ferry washed downriver and was not re-established. The townsite was abandoned by 1926, and buildings were subsequently removed or collapsed. A new hamlet of the same name was established closer to the present highway.

Where do we come in? With permission from Alberta's Archaeological Survey and the County of Grande Prairie No. 1, and with the help of community partners and volunteers, our 2022 field season stretched over twenty-four days in July and August. Our in-field efforts were focused on the vicinity of A.M. Bezanson's house. The locale is situated at the end of a short promontory and offers breathtaking views of the Smoky River near its confluence with the Simonette. It provided ample space for the primary residence, a cellar, icehouse, warehouse/ office, and surrounding yard. The foundation berm upon which the house (and later, post

office) once sat is easily visible and clearly signed. The cellar was dug into the terrace edge and is also visible. The other features have yet to be archaeologically located. We chose this location for our first season of excavation for several reasons. These include association with the town founder, an extended period of use (one of the first areas of the townsite to be developed and one of the last abandoned), and ease of access. It is also the best documented historically (e.g., photographs), against which we might compare archaeological signatures. In all, ~31 m^2 were excavated, revealing previously unrecorded structural details of the house and yard, and yielding belongings that provide insight into the lives of those who occupied it. While recovered belongings speak to broader issues of boomtown development and decline, perhaps the most rewarding finds are those that bring lives and events into sharp focus. Gail Schau, one of our volunteers, excavated a pile of bent nails that had been left just outside what would have been the house's front door. You can picture the frugal Maynard as he sat on his step, hammering them straight again for later use. Perhaps you or your ancestors did the same? Near one of the corners of the front porch, Riley Freidel, one of our student field assistants, found a cast iron toy. This was part of a firefighter's ladder wagon that probably once included a team of horses and may well have been owned by young Frank or Jim Bezanson. Revealing a deeper past, Isabelle, our other student field assistant, was the first to find a stone (lithic) tool that speaks to the lives of pre-settler Indigenous peoples at this location.

How Can You Become Involved? We would like to thank our many volunteers from this season (we had 19 total) and express our gratitude to the helpful staff of the South Peace Regional Archives and Grande Prairie Museum for their insights and direction. We would also like to thank Wanda Zenner for her generosity, knowledge, and constant encouragement. You can follow along and catch up with our activities at site by checking out our Facebook and Instagram feeds (@obaparky). You can also find presentations and reports of our activities on the Discover Bezanson website. You can read more about *last* season's (2021) archaeological work at the townsite in a wonderful article written by Pat Wearmouth and Wanda Zenner for the September 2021 issue of this newsletter. In the meantime, before returning to the field in 2023, we will occupy ourselves with documenting, analyzing, and reporting on this season's findings in our lab at Northwestern Polytechnic. We happily accept help from volunteers. If you are interested, please contact us at obaparky@gmail.com.

Preparing for the Long Day After

Peace Country Civil Defense

As viewed from holdings in the South Peace Archives
1951-1965
Duff Crerar, Ph.D. South Peace Historical Society

Part One

Things could have been much worse that May 1958 Day.[1] *The nuclear catastrophe had been mitigated by weather, Civil Defense, and some dumb luck. Wet ground limited wildfires, and the attack by the Tupolev-95 bombers had not been a complete surprise. Media reports and the Canadian government already had warned Albertans that things did not "look good". The Arctic radar, and warning from the Beaverlodge Pinetree as well as the Canadian-built Mid-Canada Lines directed Royal Canadian Air Force all-weather fighters from Penhold, and supersonic interceptors from United States Air National Guard right to the bombers. The duel ranging from High Level and Cold Lake south to Whitecourt was without mercy. Soviet radar jamming failed, and bombers fell in flaming pieces on muskeg, into lakes and the wet fields below. Strategic Air Command and NATO already had retaliated: the dreaded second and third waves of Soviet bombers never materialized. Across the Peace, empty parachutes lay discarded, their passengers eventually rounded up (or assisted, if they were on the right side), by police, the Militia, Legion of Frontiersmen, or veteran groups (some sporting weapons they had brought back from service overseas).*

The air battle was over by noon, but Grande Prairie Civil Defense (hereafter CD) had their hands full. Amazingly, the electricity stayed on and the local AGT mostly functioned. Fire Chief Pete Eager and his team, sporting new equipment bought by the Grande Prairie Kinsmen, were on the phones. F.W. Bearsto, A.J. Balfour and R. Borstad were coordinating engineering, transport, and communication. Rob Field had ham radio operators organized. R.J. Mills had the city RCMP ready, L.G. Little oversaw the ambulance. Mina Pool managed Welfare, with retired nurses on call, with Dr. P. Rowan and the Salvation Army ready to aid. All had completed their basic CD training. With supervision from S.M. Dunbar, CD headquarters was a vital communications hub. Boy Scouts and Cadets ran back and forth delivering notes from operators to section directors, including the Militia (Sam Griffiths). A tense calm prevailed: they had rehearsed this before, warned that stray bombs and debris, owing to battle damage or shoddy Soviet workmanship, posed little threat. But not for the unlucky living between Peace River and Clear Valley. A 5-Megaton bomb had left fifteen miles of utter destruction around what had been Hines Creek -- Ground Zero.

[1] The following account is based on the contents of the File Labeled "Government – Municipal-Civil Defence" 510.10.043" South Peace Regional Archives. The fictional passages (italics) are descriptions of the simulations involving civil defense personnel of the Grande Prairie Zone headquarters of the Wapiti, later Peace River Zone of the Alberta Civil Defence (later Emergency Measures) Organization, as reported in the *Grande Prairie Herald Tribune*, deposited in this folder.

As forest fires raged on the blasted perimeter, radioactive dust rose in the spring breeze, carrying death and sickness directly eastwards. A few survivors, many burned and begging for water (a familiar cry in the following days) miraculously made it to places with working telephones. Operators repeatedly reached out to Civil Defense Provincial Headquarters (ominously silent). At least Grande Prairie could mobilize their crews to head out to the rescue. But as the day wore on, reports came in that the bomb had triggered disasters elsewhere, tying up every other CD team in the South Peace. The highway bridge over the Smokey was either down or unsafe; police and local highway workers had not reported yet. Word came in that the bridge at High Prairie was also damaged; a train had gone off the tracks, somewhere up there, while landslides along the banks at Peace River had taken some houses with them. There was no electricity at the Peace River hospital: the generator had failed.

Later that day word finally came from the outside. General George Hatton, Canadian head of Civil Defense, got through by radio, followed by Alberta director Air Vice Marshall Housman, reassuring listeners that the federal cabinet, tucked away (underground at Army base Petawawa) was safe and monitoring developments. Government had survived, and order would be restored. Grande Prairie was notified that the Alberta CD and Disaster Act had been proclaimed. Anarchy and martial law had been averted. Heartening or not by this, the rest of the news was grim: many Canadian cities were "leveled", but some places had escaped destruction because of bombs not fully detonated (technically called "fizzles)". Still, high levels of Edmonton's fallout were reported from Morinville, Fort Saskatchewan, and Millerville. Grande Prairie was advised to prepare for several thousand refugees heading for Valleyview, burned, ill, injured or traumatized. Though help was promised, and Army Engineers would be flown in to help with bridges, for the next few days, Grande Prairie was on its own.

Later, unexpected help arrived from the Militia: Major Van Straubenzie from Edmonton showed up at the Armory, bringing useful knowledge and military authority, while Dunbar's 30 trained volunteers worked in shifts. The Lutheran Church women brought in food and coffee. On Day 2, a message came in that a World War II Bailey Bridge was coming for the Smokey River crossing, while Fish and Game boats were moving people across or up and down the river. Some of the Legion of Frontiersmen delivered their captives, who were placed under armed militia guard. They also brought in a few Canadian pilots. Though most of them seemed eager to get back to a squadron – any squadron – they would have to wait for posting from the South.

The CD staff tasked with food, logistics and other resources was working out meal allotments. It looked like starvation rations, at first – CD workers got 2000 calories per day, refugees only 400, but CD planned an orderly descent upon local stores and warehouses. Four first aid teams were already out with wounded (two teams from High Prairie). County engineering and workers had six "cats" on the Peace riverbank, and more were coming from local mills and rigs. Thanks to a local company, Peace River hospital got its generator replaced. Later, Grande Prairie workers heard the welcome drone of propellers, as transport aircraft – somehow RCAF Cold Lake was carrying on - landed at the Grande Prairie Airport. The next morning, a few private aircraft trickled in, providing transport to and from private strips landing rescuers and resources. Two days in, at least for the Peace River District, everything was not utter chaos. Dunbar allowed himself a few hours' sleep.

Mock H-Bomb Blast Tests Civ
Organization Across Peace Riv

. . . civil defence workers sift reports reaching headquarters in city

THE HERALD-TRIBUNE

The Home Paper Of The Peace River Country

SECTION TWO THE HERALD-TRIBUNE, TUES., MAY 6, 1958 PAGE 7

Courtesy South Peace Archives

All of this, of course, never happened. It was a crisis planned on paper as a preparedness test. This had been one of the earliest exercises for the young Peace River CDzone.

What you are reading is an experiment: without access to federal, military, provincial or municipal records, would it be possible to reconstruct and evaluate the Civil Defense work in the Peace during 1957-1963, the peak crisis years of the Cold War? While the story of radar defenses and tales circulate about "bomb shelters" under the old (now demolished) Grande Prairie Provincial building (and the Northern Addiction Centre), much less is known regarding the general Civil Defence preparations, and who in the Peace played leading roles in preparing for nuclear war. Turning to regional archives, the subject files from the *Herald Tribune*, as well as a handful of letters and pamphlets filed under "Civil Defence, Municipal" help fill the gap in our social memory.[2] This one fond (collection) has unlocked a remarkable story, of what just might have happened, when the outside world threatened nuclear war.

Peace River CD hailed back to 1950, when representatives (some Second World War veterans) from Beaverlodge met with CD Alberta representatives at Dawson Creek in December. The following autumn, a larger group, including the Beaverlodge representatives, County of Grande Prairie and City municipal officials, Legion members and the Grande Prairie Fire Chief met with Air Vice Marshall Howson, Alberta CD coordinator, his assistant, Lt. Col. Lavoie, and the provincial fire commissioner. They set up a volunteer Northern Alberta (with Dawson Creek and Fort St. John attached) CD unit. Premier Manning had been informed by Ottawa that Soviet bombers would fly over his province. The federal government had opened a CD college in

[2]See South Peace Regional Archives, Government – Municipal – Civil Defense, 510-10-043, passim.

Arnprior, taking trainees from across Canada, and Alberta was establishing its own CD Technical Training School at Olds (offering a three-week course).[3]

By the next spring the County and City had formed a civil defense partnership, under A. Stewart, with two municipal counselors from each council, plus representatives of the four largest villages, and liaison from Edmonton CD headquarters. A First Aid course would begin in May, and at least twenty volunteers had registered with the CD Control Committee in Grand Prairie. Men and women were invited to join, with a few restrictions for men: only men over the age of 36 and physically unfit for front line service in the Canadian Armed Service.[4]

The project appealed to ex-servicemen and municipal fire and ambulance personnel, but quickly provincial and municipal civil servants joined, led at first by local Immigration officer E. Leger. The committee ambitiously called for at least 150 recruits to take a variety of courses.[5] Momentum gradually built up over the winter and spring of 1954, with a local Ham radio operator from his Grande Prairie basement connecting with other ham operators and with Edmonton CD Headquarters. Grande Prairie was designated one of five key communication nodes in the province. Dubbed "Operation Exercise Alert", the first training began with warnings of incendiary bombs landing in Grande Prairie, later an atomic bomb in Edmonton. In the post exercise briefing, Air Vice Marshall Howson and provincial CD authorities told reporters they were very pleased with the results.[6]

A steady flow of pamphlets and briefing notes, schedules for First Aid, Firefighting and Rescue classes began to flow through CD headquarters, including "Survival Instructions Number One" ("Note: Do not Destroy! Read and Heed!") giving Alert Siren Codes, informing citizens and especially CD staff, to head straight to their radios for instructions, or take cover underground or in their cars. Five minutes of steady siren blasts and bells from local churches was the signal for fallout. The All-Clear, however, would only be sounded by radio, as many with World War II experience might mistake the sirens for the old all-clear signal.[7] An ominous bulletin noted that under the Authority of the Provincial Government, proclamation of the Alberta Civil Defense and Disaster Act of 1955, and Chapter 43 of the revised statutes of Alberta of 1955, would establish emergency law and order in the event of war. Albertans were told that when the official "Warning" was declared, they should already have taken as many CD courses as possible, kept their radio batteries fresh (telephones were reserved for emergency use), ensured that vehicle gas tanks were at least half-full. All professional must immediately register with CD offices (the list included doctors, dentists, Registered Nurses, first aiders, home nurses, stenographers, switchboard, and equipment operators). There were penalties for non-compliance. The public "Warning" state could be declared by the Province, the Mayor, or local CD director, if government at higher levels was neutralized. [8]

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[3] *Grande Prairie Herald Tribune (*hereafter *Herald Tribune)*, 20 Sept 1951.
[4] *Herald Tribune*, April 1952.
[5] *Herald Tribune*, 19 March, 1953.
[6] *Herald Tribune*, 14 June 1954.
[7] Burtch, **Shelter**, 100.
[8] An early example is entitled "Your Evacuation Pack" by Civil Defence Canada, Health and Welfare, 1958, urging a 7-day supply of food and water, etc. be always maintained. Ironically, it was already known that the minimum time required to get past the peak of deadly fallout would be at least twice that long. Interestingly, Civil Defense began

Under the hesitant leadership of the St. Laurent government (with reluctant and somewhat resentful responsibility taken by Health and Welfare), four main priorities were identified (fallout protection, evacuation, evacuee reception, and removal of people from contaminated areas). The survival stakes had been raised by nuclear technology. The 1954 preparations were based on World War II experience, for atomic bombs in the kiloton range. After 1955, in the age of thermonuclear, city-obliterating weapons, especially if detonated on the ground, would throw up massive amounts of radioactive dust which, as fallout, contaminated with lethal radiation, killing anyone for miles downwind for weeks afterwards, dooming anyone not sheltering underground for weeks to a slow and miserable death. CD shifted to using whatever warning time was available (a few hours for bombers flying over the Arctic, but only minutes if missile-delivery ever was developed – as it was after Russia launched Sputnik in 1957 – effectively killing the St. Laurent era Avro Arrow interceptor) to orchestrate massive evacuations out of target areas and fallout zones.

Canadian CD officials experimented (unhappily) with evacuation exercises, culminating with the largest, "Operation Lifesaver", staged in 1955 Calgary (demonstrating the real-world limitations of mass evacuation in Canadian weather). Beginning in 1957, under new Prime Minister Diefenbaker, who did take the nuclear CD challenge seriously, more would be expected from citizens.[9] Since massive evacuations and flight from fallout zones seemed effective, the new policy was for individuals to prepare their own emergency fallout shelters, stocked and equipped to hold out until radiation levels dropped. Ottawa bluntly informed Canadians that while provincial CD authorities would provide information for them to evade bomb blasts and evacuation where possible, when it came to fallout protection; heads of households (meaning men) were responsible for planning, preparing and operating shelters in their homes. In the next few years, CD booklets for citizens, from city to farm, advising them as to shelter building, farm fallout-proofing and personal survival began to flow into Grande Prairie CD mailboxes. [10]

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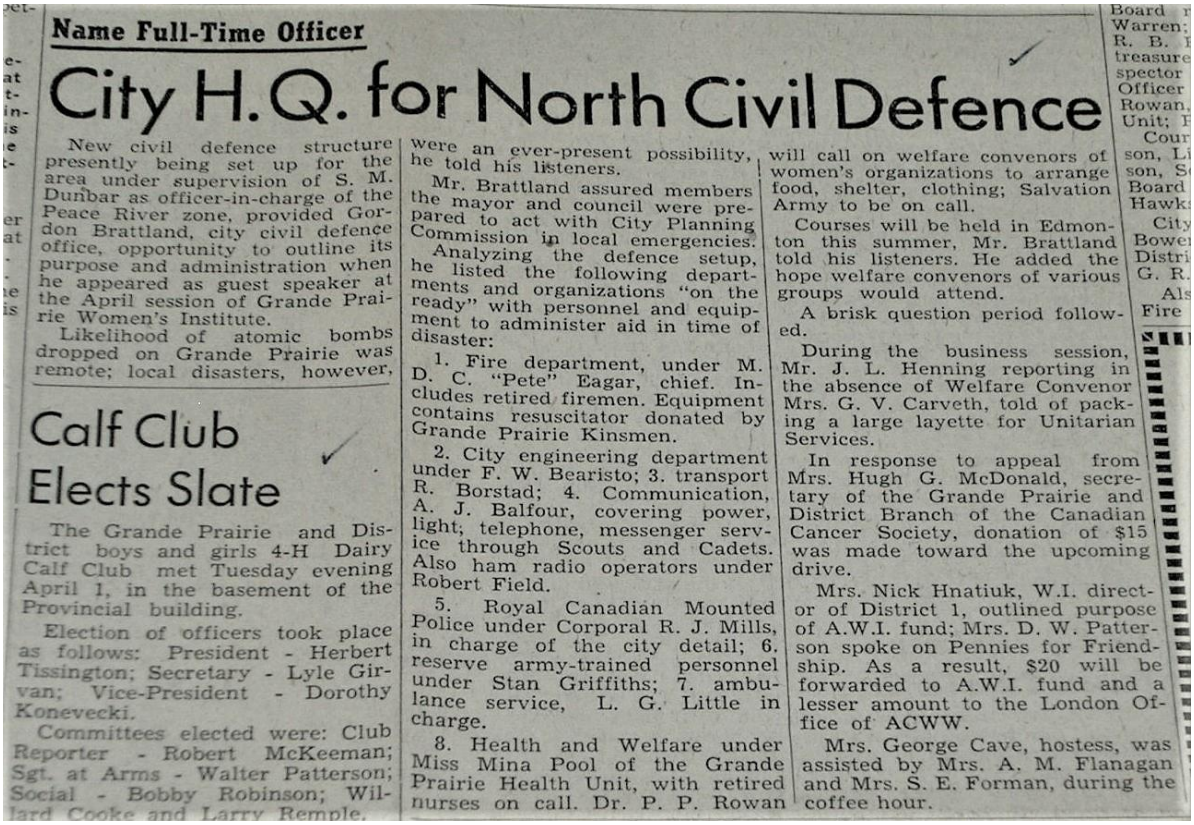
under the umbrella of the department of Health of Welfare in Ottawa, a decision which was not welcomed by the unmilitary Minister, Paul Martin Sr.

[9] One of the earliest histories of Operation Lifesaver was written by a University of Alberta Student, and Grande Prairie Regional College graduate, Frances Reilly, see "Operation "Lifesaver": Canadian Atomic Culture and Cold War Civil Defence", University of Alberta in http://civildefencemuseum.ca/operation-lifesaver. A more recent and easily obtained account and analysis is Andrew Burtch, **Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence**, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012) 88-105.

[10] "Eleven Steps to Survival" introduced by Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Queen's Printer, 196, "Fallout on the Farm" (Blueprint #3) April 1961, signed Alwin Hamilton, Minister of Agriculture, "Survival in Nuclear War", signed by John Diefenbaker, Queen's Printer, 1961, distributed by Alberta Emergency Measures Organization, "Welfare Tips for Survival", 1961 (this edition carried practical winter survival hints and promoted having a full 14-day supply of food and water, as well as instructions on having an evacuation plan ready when nuclear war threatened.) Finally, a revised (thermonuclear cognizant) 1959 copy of "Eleven Steps to Survival" remained on file.



Name Full-Time Officer

City H.Q. for North Civil Defence

New civil defence structure presently being set up for the area under supervision of S. M. Dunbar as officer-in-charge of the Peace River zone, provided Gordon Brattland, city civil defence office, opportunity to outline its purpose and administration when he appeared as guest speaker at the April session of Grande Prairie Women's Institute.

Likelihood of atomic bombs dropped on Grande Prairie was remote; local disasters, however, were an ever-present possibility, he told his listeners.

Mr. Brattland assured members the mayor and council were prepared to act with City Planning Commission in local emergencies.

Analyzing the defence setup, he listed the following departments and organizations "on the ready" with personnel and equipment to administer aid in time of disaster:

1. Fire department, under M. D. C. "Pete" Eagar, chief. Includes retired firemen. Equipment contains resuscitator donated by Grande Prairie Kinsmen.

2. City engineering department under F. W. Bearisto; 3. transport R. Borstad; 4. Communication, A. J. Balfour, covering power, light; telephone, messenger service through Scouts and Cadets. Also ham radio operators under Robert Field.

5. Royal Canadian Mounted Police under Corporal R. J. Mills, in charge of the city detail; 6. reserve army-trained personnel under Stan Griffiths; 7. ambulance service, L. G. Little in charge.

8. Health and Welfare under Miss Mina Pool of the Grande Prairie Health Unit, with retired nurses on call. Dr. P. P. Rowan will call on welfare convenors of women's organizations to arrange food, shelter, clothing; Salvation Army to be on call.

Courses will be held in Edmonton this summer, Mr. Brattland told his listeners. He added the hope welfare convenors of various groups would attend.

A brisk question period followed.

During the business session, Mr. J. L. Henning reporting in the absence of Welfare Convenor Mrs. G. V. Carveth, told of packing a large layette for Unitarian Services.

In response to appeal from Mrs. Hugh G. McDonald, secretary of the Grande Prairie and District Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, donation of $15 was made toward the upcoming drive.

Mrs. Nick Hnatiuk, W.I. director of District 1, outlined purpose of A.W.I. fund; Mrs. D. W. Patterson spoke on Pennies for Friendship. As a result, $20 will be forwarded to A.W.I. fund and a lesser amount to the London Office of ACWW.

Mrs. George Cave, hostess, was assisted by Mrs. A. M. Flanagan and Mrs. S. E. Forman, during the coffee hour.

Calf Club Elects Slate

The Grande Prairie and District boys and girls 4-H Dairy Calf Club met Tuesday evening April 1, in the basement of the Provincial building.

Election of officers took place as follows: President - Herbert Tissington; Secretary - Lyle Girvan; Vice-President - Dorothy Konevecki.

Committees elected were: Club Reporter - Robert McKeeman; Sgt. at Arms - Walter Patterson; Social - Bobby Robinson; Willard Cooke and Larry Remple.

Herald Tribune, 8 April 1954, courtesy of South Peace Regional Archives.

The story of Civil Defense and its national ups and downs, financially, organizationally, and politically, has been well told elsewhere.[11] In the Peace District, the immediate effect was a shift from enthusiasm and volunteerism to a more businesslike approach. World news, from the beginning of the Berlin Crisis in 1958, lent greater relevance to CD even in Northern Alberta, which was being being integrated with the national scene. A CD Extension School Orientation was held in March 1957, by George Pringle, Chief Officer for the Northern CD Zone and L.O. Jones, his staff officer. Meeting at the York Hotel, the class included Fire Chief P. Eager, J.F. Dobbyn, Ralph Cornell (representing County CD) as well as representatives from Beaverlodge and Hythe. Lectures and films began the course, which adjourned to the High School shop classroom for practical exercises. Four syndicates were formed from the forty who attended, and Lt. Col. Lavoie, from Edmonton announced that similar classes would soon open in Peace River. The course concluded with some basic firefighting lectures and instruction to use the old-World War II relic, a stirrup pump for fire hoses. Obviously, more and better equipment was needed.

[11]See the survey by Burtch, "Simple Shelters? Monitoring Radioactive Fallout Across Canada, 1959-19 **Canadian Military History,** Vol. 20, No. 4, Autumn, 2011 49-62. See also Burtch, **Give Me Shelter**," *passim*. A probing and witty account of the development of protection and "continuity of government" shelters is Sean M. Maloney, "Dr. Strangelove visits Canada: Project Rustic, Ease, and Bridge, 1958-1965". **Canadian Military History** 6, 1 (1997) 41-56. In 2015, researcher Scott Falkingham located photographed of one of the long-abandoned Fallout Reporting Posts for the Manitoba Historical Society, see "Historic Sites of Manitoba: Fallout Reporting Post GH3 (Northern Manitoba)", Historic Sites of Manitoba Web-Page, prepared by Scott Falkingham, Jim Burns and Gordon Goldsborough. 18 December 2020, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/falloutpostgh3.shtml.

Provincial CD officials were back in Grande Prairie that August when the Extension CD School resumed. Lt Col. Lavoie presented eight different "scenes" for each syndicate to work through. Detailed planning for Police and Fire followed, including designation of assistants to maintain law and order, casualty care, community health measures, and ambulance assistance. Local heavy equipment would be commandeered for rescue work, while local psychological workers were assigned to care for the distressed and traumatized. Local Engineers, with help from military staff, would take over some emergencies and lead in reconstruction. Welfare centers would provide shelter, food, and emergency clothing. Police measures included emergency communication, transport and "intelligence' gathering, (revealing the old fear that secret Communist sympathizers might commit sabotage). Two local nurses instructed on wound, and especially burn care.

This must have been a sobering experience. Although several dozen volunteers previously had taken first aid courses, or travelled to Edmonton to take CD training, and the city Fire Department had given some firefighting instructions (Grande Prairie and Peace River took turns hosting an extra fire pumper Edmonton CD provided), word of the seriousness of the training combined with the news media raised volunteer rates. CD meetings discussed adding another fire pumper, a rescue vehicle from Edmonton, and a high frequency radio. A widely publicized national Civil Defense Day, with its displays and demonstrations of rescue and firefighting, shelter construction and other measures in both Peace River and Grande Prairie, (with visits by CD officials) from Edmonton was advertised by the local press.[12]

Such expanded CD measures called for funds from municipal governments and more local leadership. Edmonton and Ottawa, both stipulated that this called for a full-time Director in the city, with a recommended salary of $3600, half paid by Provincial CD the rest by the Grande Prairie City Council. The part time supervision by Fire Chief Pete Eager was becoming too much. Fallout fears had sent two local volunteers to the radiation monitoring course in Edmonton. They soon would head out to the national training college at Arnprior. May's successful Exercise Alert proved the Peace CD was ready.

Grande Prairie CD was tested again in April 1959, by Exercise "Cooperation III". This time Demmit, on the road to British Columbia, received the bomb: over the next 24 hours CD staff worked in two shifts to manage the crisis, as the fallout cloud this time swept over Beaverlodge and southwards. Having successfully weathered this test, the Peace Zone was rewarded with more work. The Zone was enlarged to stretch from the Northwest Territories border south to Fox Creek, and from Dawson Creek to Kinuso and Slave Lake.[13] In October a three-way cost-sharing agreement between Ottawa, Edmonton and Grande Prairie confirmed the creation of a permanent CD officer, who would also serve assistant city fire Chief, and pay for his travel and training to both Edmonton and Arnprior.[14] CD in Grande Prairie and the District was readying to meet the demands of thermonuclear war.
Air, Sea, and Army Cadets, as well as Boy Scouts swelled their ranks, while the St. John Ambulance and Red Cross immediately were taken into CD plans. In November, Plane Spotter

[12] *Herald Tribune*, 20 Sept 1957. A second Civil Defense Day was held 19 Sept 1958, in Peace River. Grande Prairie's turn was to be in 1959.
[13] *Herald Tribune* 9 Sept. 1958.
[14] *Herald Tribune*, 28 October 1958.

awards were presented to the Ganzveld family at Buffalo Lake, for faithfully reporting and identifying aircraft to Edmonton for confirmation.[15] The next year the Spotters group grew, placed under R.C. Smith and Murray Ford (a senior Grande Prairie Air Cadet) as Chief Observer, with thirteen more at Teepee Creek and Bezanson. In 1958 the Air Cadets at Sexsmith and observers at Glen Leslie and Wembley were linked to the Beaverlodge radar station and supervised by the United States Air Force.[16]

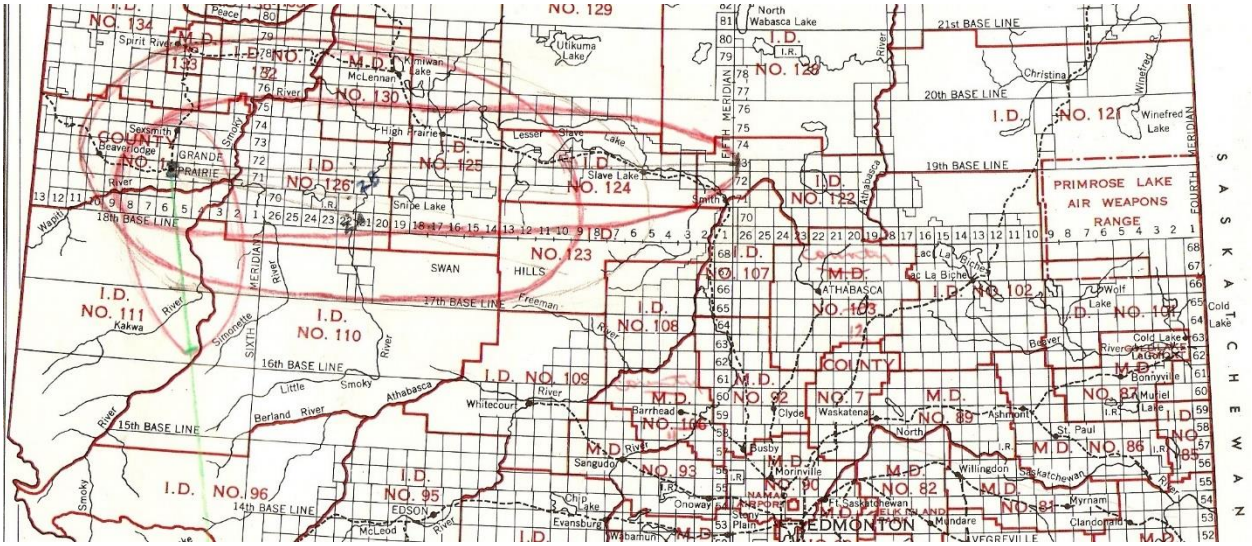
Peace region CD adjusted plans for care of survivors. Mrs. T. McFetridge was appointed to take over Welfare responsibility for evacuees, or refugees, from Edmonton. The new CD Director was announced as Sam Dunbar, who would plan for survivors needing medical care and shelter. Provincial CD authorities stated that up to a third of Edmonton, the sick, elderly and children, would first be moved out before hostilities. When the actual Warning sounded, the rest of the city's people would fan out to at least 50 miles from any reported attack or fallout. Those who escaped would be advised to keep going as far as possible, rest in municipal shelters when they could, and report to CD for resettlement. While most would find succor (it was hoped) upwind of the capital, realistically, several thousand or even more would probably get north of Whitecourt, even Valleyview, to Grande Prairie, and Peace River. The new CD Director needed a supply warehouse, stockpiled with food and goods.
TOCSIN, the next exercise was planned in secret, as a "top drawer" scheme to test CD leaders. Planned to last for ten hours, TOCSIN (the traditional name for alarm bells) tested communications across the country, involving over 100 municipalities. The surprise alert caught some unprepared, a few trickling in an hour late to their posts in the Anglican Church Hall. The traditional three-hour bomber warning came in from the DEW line, but soon another bulletin announced missiles incoming while the dogfight with the bombers was just beginning over Alaska.

"The events described in bold are based on the events set up by the scenarios to test the Civil Defence team in the Peace. While they never happened they might have happened in the event of a real nuclear emergency".

By then, the city CD headquarters had assembled rrepresentatives from the Health Unit, Welfare Department, as well as Highways and Agriculture, the RCMP, a representative of the Provincial Secretary, someone from Peace River Alberta Government Telephones, Captain W.C. Barrey from the Militia, and Dunbar with his team. At 9:50 Prime Minister Diefenbaker addressed all participants by radio, a demonstration of Ottawa's seriousness. That afternoon Edson was obliterated by a nuclear bomb, the railway trestle over Bear Creek failed, evacuees began to stream in from Valleyview while an enemy bomber had been shot down near Sexsmith, with its crew at large. The Smokey River Bridge became unsafe, endangeringg refugees and relief convoys west of Valleyview. Fortunately for Grande Prairie, previous inventories had been made of gasoline and a supply sequestered, as well as food stocks. Dunbar had space, he reported, for 3,000 evacuees, to be housed in the curling rink and hockey arena. Even so, rationing would probably be needed. CD officials higher up now proposed that survivors needed to shelter for up to 30 days. Although a fan-out phone network had triggered the first alarm, phone lines later were declared disabled, but short-wave radio

[15] *Herald Tribune*, 8 Nov. 1957.
[16] *Herald Tribune*, 30 May 1958.

kept Grande Prairie in touch with Edmonton (although officially, Edmonton was levelled by a bomb). Welfare workers engaged successfully with the requests for clothing and water, while truck drivers and mechanics marshalled to provide transport. Hospital beds were made available, while drugs and nurses stood by. By the end of the test, some order had been achieved, but there was clearly room for improvement. Documents from the exercise were to be duplicated and send to CD Edmonton for grading and evaluation.[17]



Sketch CD fallout map (author's collection). Three scenarios, depending on wind speed and direction, are noted. All three, significantly, have Ground Zero near Beaverlodge, site of the Pinetree Line radar base at the time.

The *Daily Herald Tribune* published a strongly worded editorial a few days later. Despite the tendency to take the exercises lightly and laugh off the chances of disaster, the editor reminded readers that Civil Defense was a serious matter: active citizens needed to be ready for any disaster, not just nuclear ones. Albertans should take the training seriously. The Peace needed a trained force for peacetime tasks, which, in case of fire, flood or weather, accident or other catastrophe, would justify the expense and inconvenience that some complained about. Readers might resist thinking dark nuclear thoughts, but if that were the only way to get them thinking and preparing for other peacetime crises, it was worth it. Nevertheless, the editor clearly wanted Albertans not to be scared into CD training, but to develop an organization – demilitarized – which would appeal to the public.[18] That summer the *Tribune* reported how CD training played a crucial role in a serious traffic accident on Highway 43. CD volunteers Jack Roy and his wife had appeared at the scene, applied first aid, and evacuated wounded from the wreckage when a propane tank ruptured.

Over the summer both Dunbar and Jack Roy, city (later county) CD director, cited Canadian and United States statistics, urging citizens to get busy at their personal fallout shelters, guided by Ottawa's booklet, "Your Basement Fallout Shelter". Roy went to Ottawa for meetings with CD

[17] *Herald Tribune* 29 April 1960. TOCSIN was described and assessed by Sean Maloney, p. 43 and 50, and Burtch, 175-178.
[18] *Herald Tribune*, 4 May 1960.

officials. Dunbar arranged a cutaway shelter for display at the fall fairs. Someone had given him the outrageous figure that 80% of urban Canadian had started their shelters, and both Edmonton and Calgary were intended for large blast shelters. The real number was far lower: the prospective cost of 500$ was a huge share of the Canadian's average annual income, made even more unwelcome with rumors that such "improvements' would lead to higher municipal tax rates! Ottawa moved quickly to discourage such notions, and a small number of developers offered to build shelters into their new projects, but even a small proportion of the two thousand or more built in Southern Canada was never approached in the Peace. [19]

Meanwhile, nuclear radiation monitoring courses continued, with graduates receiving certificates, and the September CD gathering featured Dunbar and Roy meeting with Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Wembley, and Hythe to constitute a larger CD group under the new Federal Emergency Measures Organization of Canada. Headquarters was now relocated from Speke Hall in the Anglican Church to Storcer Hall.[20] Meeting again in October, Dunbar presented the new national plan that the Peace Region was integrated with. Peace Country was now a Zone with Militia personnel attached for National Survival Training, while the regular Army would provide rescue, communication, radiation monitoring and re-entry instruction and equipment.

Despite this enhanced professional support, warned the leaders, the small size of the armed forces meant that there was still a lot for the civilian to do. In fact, the County needed a parallel committee to the City's, authorized by its own country by-law, with councilors from each district of the municipality plus representatives of rate payers, and their own CD director. Knowing that the inclusion of ratepayers might raise financial concerns, Roy and Dunbar pointed out that the County, assessed a paltry fee per head for each citizen, and would only cover half the costs, Ottawa half the county cost, and Alberta half the federal assessment. A total of $31,000 would finance a fully equipped and free-standing County EMO team. A committee would assess costs and take tenders to County Council for approval, then pass them on to the EMO headquarters in Edmonton. No financial grumbling was recorded at the meeting.[21]

A 10-week series (one night per week) began on CD Orientation, Welfare and Communications on Wednesdays, while Thursday classes covered Communications with AGT, Department of Transport, telegraph, and teletype equipment, joined by the Beaverlodge CD group. Credit for this course went towards a provincial radio operator certificate for ham broadcasters. The Seventh Day Adventists took charge of blankets and clothing.[22] The emerging problem was space: a new and larger training headquarters was needed, but it was clear, but when voters vetoed plans for a new City Hall, that another plan was needed. The back of the fire hall was not going to work any longer: Eger's old table and jumble at the back of the hall would have to go, to make room for the new fire engine. Dunbar frankly stated to the press that the city had to provide the solution, not Ottawa or Edmonton. Early proposals to rent from the Boy Scouts or the new Alberta Motor Association basement already had been vetoed by Ottawa.[23]

[19] Burtch, **Shelter**, pp.165-172.
[20] *Herald Tribune*, 30 Sept 1960.
[21] *Herald Tribune*, 11 October 1960.
[22] *Herald Tribune*, 14 and 25 October 1960.
[23] *Herald Tribune,* 25 October 1960.

Back in the Anglican Church Hall, the December meeting featured Alberta Cabinet EMO representative, L.C. Halmrast, who was an enthusiastic backer of CD. Other speakers included deputy EMO official Major J. Beaumont, the Nuclear Staff Officer, explaining how the Army would take over nuclear responsibilities, other topics included Municipal Emergency preparations, fallout shelters and communication plans. [24] Halmrast appeared again at the next large EMO meeting in town, attended by 46 volunteers. He spoke to the new concern of the federal and provincial government: the "continuity of government". Focusing on the need for law and order in a crisis, he emphasized traffic control, reception of the needy, medical arrangements in hospitals, public health, highways, the support of utilities, firefighting, and the need for more CD Wardens. Major J. Waldie, General Staff Officer 2 of Western Command, covered the new military role in the EMO. War must not decapitate Alberta society: maintaining order and calm on a large scale was now the main priority. Cards printed with the warning signals would soon be coming from Edmonton. Local Militia Officers and NCOs were in attendance. It would be their job, if CD failed, to get a grip on the population.

Halmrast's forceful speech had immediate repercussions. Growing interest drew volunteers from as far away as Berwyn and Falher for lectures. Grimshaw and Wanham councils passed by-laws to establish CD committees, along with the County of Grande Prairie. The course offered in Edmonton was over-enrolled. Fortunately for the local EMO the Provincial Building was provided for training. Rumor was that the building one-day would be their permanent home. [25]

End of Part One. To be continued in the next Newsletter.

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[24] *Herald Tribune*, 9 December 1960.
[25] *Herald Tribune,* 7 February 1961.

No Life without Water

Reflections on the Struggle for Safe Water, by Ron Thoreson

The earliest settlers that arrived in the Peace Region knew that a homestead farm site without a reliable supply of water was a sure plan for sleepless nights and likely eventual failure. Early arrivals had first choice of location, and if they arrived with horses or oxen, they needed feed for their working animals (which could be transported fairly readily), but more important was the need for daily access to water.

This often meant locating beside a nearby watercourse where a few days of hard work could stop up enough fresh water for possible home use, and also for the animals. It was always easier to move the animals to the water, than moving the water to them, using barrels on a stone boat. Household water often became a struggle for a wife who had to use a balky team of horses that could be prone to bolting and spilling the water barrel off the stone boat.

The early settler might be able to occasionally choose to ignore the constant noise from thirsty animals in the yard, but if the complaints came from the partner in the bed beside him (who had to refill tipped barrels to get a full one to the house), sleepless and uncomfortable nights were much more likely. Setting up a homestead was done by completing a series of urgent tasks. Shelter for the family and animals was often rudimentary depending on the urgency of the arrival of winter, the number of workers, and their skills at the task. With the best of circumstances, a good neighbour was occasionally generous enough to help a family with some form of shelter while new buildings were made liveable.

That good neighbour may then have someone to share some of the load when needed in the future. One task might be a hand-dug well, a nearly impossible project for a single worker. Cribbing the well with timbers as it deepened prevented cave-ins of the walls, but was a poor substitute for a brick or concrete lining that would not eventually decompose or allow surface water contamination.

On completion, the well could deliver water with a hand cranked windlass, or later, even a hand operated pump. Either way, water was available both summer and winter. A carefully fitted cover on a dug well could also allow the lowering of farm products such as containers of milk or cream to a level near the water, where constant cool storage was available year-round. A very versatile hole in the ground! A windmill over the pump could fill troughs for watering larger herds.

While later water quality issues could be serious, there were deadly events that could happen when the well was being dug. An experienced miner may have recognized that danger as black damp (from the German word *dampf* or vapour). Well known deadly mining gases were termed

firedamp (methane), whitedamp (carbon monoxide), blackdamp (carbon dioxide), and stinkdamp (hydrogen sulphide).

Odourless, carbon dioxide is 1.5 times heavier than normal air, so it will pool in the lowest level of a mine or deep hole. With a person working in the bottom of a deepening well, their heavy exertion will increase the levels of CO2, and the natural body response is to further increase breathing rate to even higher levels, thus compounding the danger. A second person descending to rescue a digger, who had become unconscious, would quickly meet the same fatal end.

While researching in *Along the Wapiti*, an account of settlers along the Wapiti between Flying Shot Lake and roughly the Beaverlodge River, with the intention of finding more of the history of one of the earliest water well drillers from the Wembley area, there was a notation from the Spring Creek Dimsdale history of a 1916. It was a story of a sad ending, and as a consequence, a necessary beginning.

Two recent arrivals, Norwegian-born men who moved to the area from Minnesota, Ole M. Sundahl (41), and Elling Anderson (26) were to dig a well for Paul Larson on SW-1-71-7-W of 6, a neighbour directly south of Sundahl's own quarter, where he had filed in 1913, two and a half miles east of the church. Though the community account of the event notes "drill a well," Ole's family tree lists a "well digging accident." They would have started to dig with hand tools, and a likely rescue attempt ended with both past any help. The epitaph is brief, but the tombstone of Elling Anderson is inscribed, "In Their Death They Were Not Divided." In 1917, Sundahl's wife Anna was granted title to her husband's homestead, for which he had paid such a heavy price. His epitaph, inscribed on a similar stone to Anderson's had the words "When the Morning Dawns We Will Meet Again."

In 1916, Sundahl and Anderson were the first burials in the cemetery east of the Presbyterian Spring Creek Church, which had been established by Reverend Alexander Forbes in about 1913. When the original building fell into disrepair in the 1940's, it was removed in 2017, and replaced by an accurate period re-creation in 2018-2020, with generous support from local businesses and volunteers. It is a beautifully done tribute to the early settlements of Dimsdale and Flying Shot Lake. The County of Grande Prairie, had assumed title of the cemetery from the MD of Bear Lake in 1942, and obtained title to the church property itself in 1977. The cemetery was reopened in 2007. The care of both were vested in a committee of local residents, and the site was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2012. Posted historical information can

be viewed inside the church building. It is open for visitors to reflect on, with dignity and respect due its heritage, and those commemorated there. Visitors are watched over by the steady gaze of an early portrait of Reverend Alexander Forbes.

When the railway arrived in Grande Prairie, and then pushed onward to Dawson Creek, mechanical equipment capable of boring rural wells was brought in and went to work. They were not readily recognizable as “drilling rigs” by today’s standards but they were a big step forward. Sherman Wagar had settled in Wembley in about 1929, and went to work. When rural electrification spread through the south Peace, in about 1954, my father called him in to drill a well on our family homestead that included the hamlet of Huallen.

As a young boy I spent considerable time watching him work to bring in our well, with his rig set up beside our house. It could not be called a drilling rig, as the method of boring the well was done with the repetitive dropping of a chisel style bit at the end of a weighted string of pipe. The only rotation that was done, was by Sherman seated at the bore hole with a bolted-on wooden handlebar on the drill stem that allowed him to rotate the bit position slightly by a few degrees with each strike, as it slowly chewed up chunks of the rock below. A settling pan was nearby, holding water mixed with some bentonite to thicken it, that a brought cuttings to the surface where they settled out, and the water was directed back down the well. Eventually, a rising level from produced water was easily spotted.

While it may seem primitive, that’s because it was. The Chinese had used percussion “drilling” for 3 to 4 thousand years by that time. Major strides forward were eventually made in metallurgy, wire cable, types of applied power, then portability. Though his rig was pre-1920s era, and wooden framed, the core working parts were iron and steel: bits that needed hard facing welds, gears, pulleys, and power systems that advanced from steam through to belt-driven combustion engines. Sherman was well prepared with formal training in welding, steam engineering, and motor mechanics.

That large wooden wheel was a memorable sight for a young boy as it slowly turned, while a grizzled man hunched over the handles to adjust bit angle and read its progress by feel. The cables had to be carefully maintained, and ran from the cable drum to a wooden derrick of two timbers that could be raised on site, and a pulley fed cable down to the bore hole.

The 1912 Armstrong "spudding unit" above is a good representation of the technology of that time, and comparable to the claim of 1914-1916 origin for the John Oszust rig below. The flywheel and a number of the other pulleys were made of wood, and the bits were rebuilt with hard facing as they wore down. The "customized" steel wheels had riveted treads, readily sourced from failed and discarded early tires.

Early Water Well Equipment Was A Challenge For Even Mechanically Gifted Operators

After two or three days of work, the well was cased to about 70 feet where it had tapped into a soft water aquifer, and in later years it served for over a hundred head of dairy cows. It could pump over 20 gallons a minute indefinitely, or as the expression goes "until the cows come home." It is still producing (of course needing an occasional change of a jet pump or submersible electric pump). Sherman's crew of one, usually watched over by an audience of curious children, provided wells throughout the Peace region for over 30 years. He decided to retire from heavy work at 80 years of age, and that last well was done for my aunt Gyda Romkey in 1960.

Having arrived in the Peace as a young man with his wife and family, his wedding picture (May 3, 1906 in Wetaskiwin) shows a man unrecognizable to those who saw him on the job in later years. Retired, Sherman Wagar would enjoy his garden in Wembley another 10 years until his passing, just a few days shy of 90 years. His wife Margaret survived a further 6 years until 94, and both are at rest in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.

After an extensive search that didn't turn up any remnants of his rig that he was said to have parked 6 miles south of Wembley, on his or his son John's land, a wider request for information brought a response from the South Peace Centennial Museum near Beaverlodge. Janet Peterson had the curator, Carmen Sweder, contact me to say that they had an old piece of similar equipment on their grounds, and indeed they did.

It was not Sherman Wagar's pre-1920 rig as I expected, but another from the very same era: a wooden frame, wooden flywheel cable tool rig with a selection of bits, on the original steel wheels (though with old tire treads riveted on, to quiet the noise during transport). Originally designed to be horse-drawn, then upgraded to be pulled with a truck, like Wagar's, it also bored wells in the region.

First owned and operated by John Oszust, it was later owned by Ken Dixon who gifted it to the museum on his passing. While we continue to search, does anyone know if Sherman Wagar's rig is still out there?

The work goes on today, but is now performed by modern truck mounted water well rigs. They also travel on rubber tires, but use the fully inflatable version. The industry still performs that vital service of delivering access to clean, safe water supplies in rural locations.

Sources: 1912 Armstrong rig from 2001 PowerPoint, *History of Cable Tool Drilling*, Roger E. Renner, MGWC
Photos of John Oszust rig by Ron Thoreson, courtesy of South Peace Centennial Museum
Wagar wedding photo, *Along the Wapiti*, 1981, Wapiti River Historical Society