



DOWNTOWN
GRANDE PRAIRIE

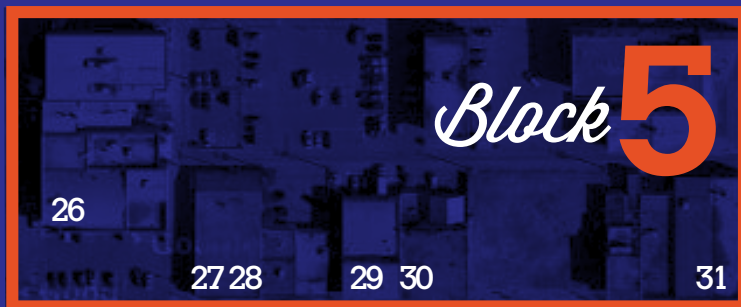
presents

Memory Lane

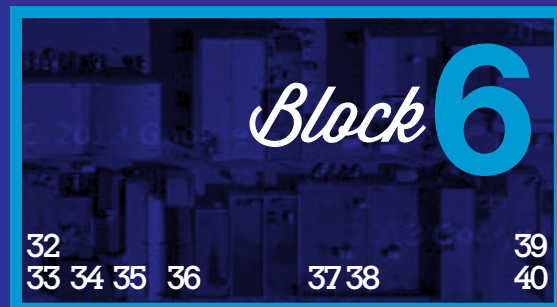
A History of Downtown Grande Prairie from **1914–2014**

Memory Lane Walking Tour Map

101 Avenue



100 Avenue (Richmond Avenue)

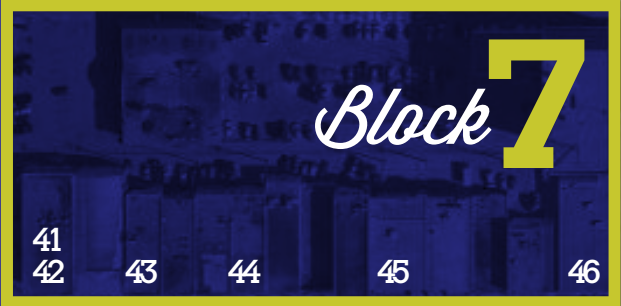


99 Avenue



102 Street

101 Street



99 Street

98 Street (Resources Road)

Take a walk down *Memory Lane*

In celebration of the City of Grande Prairie's 100th Anniversary in 2014, the Downtown Association invites you to experience the history of Grande Prairie by taking a walk down *Memory Lane*, the Downtown Association's legacy to the history of Grande Prairie.

Stroll down 100th Avenue, from 99th Street to 102 Street and you will find 36 large photos displayed in store windows, and 15 permanent plaques on buildings, depicting Downtown Grande Prairie over the last 100 years. This tour book offers historical facts and information about many of the buildings, businesses and events you will see on the tour. You can also follow along on your smartphone at www.GPTour.ca.

Memory Lane is a collaborative effort between the Downtown Association, South Peace Regional Archives (SPRA), Peace Country Historical Society and Image Design.



Where the Action Is!

Downtown Grande Prairie from 1914–2014

You might wonder why Grande Prairie's downtown developed where it did, not on the broad Main Street (today's 102nd Street) and First Avenue (now 102nd Avenue) that were surveyed in 1910.

At the time, the Spirit River Trail was the main road leading into the community from the north, entering the city at approximately 101st Street; and in 1911, the first government road was surveyed along 3rd Avenue South (today's 100th Avenue). It appears to be at the junction of these two roads where the business section began

to develop with the construction of Salmond's Hotel, Selkirk Trading Post, a Pool Hall, and others.

Another issue affecting development was the fact that many of the first business owners lived out in the country. After all, you could get a $\frac{1}{4}$ section of land for \$10.00, but you had to establish a residence on it to gain permanent patent. By 1914, almost every quarter section of land for miles around Grande Prairie had a residence on it. The two main roads which led out into the country became the main thoroughfares. These were the road which led west to





Richmond Hill, and therefore commonly known as Richmond Avenue, (today's 100th Avenue), and the road which went north to Clairmont, commonly known as Clairmont Road (today's 100th Street). Eventually, the streets were re-named. Third Avenue South became 100th Avenue, and Second Street East became 100th Street.

These two precedents set the pattern for growth, and the town grew quickly. By 1914 there were buildings up and down 100th Avenue. This was where the action was with three hotels, each of which included a restaurant, a bakery or an ice cream parlour as well as a livery barn for the horses; two extra livery stables for anyone doing business in town; a flour mill and a lumber mill down by the creek; two butcher shops and a packing plant; two blacksmith shops; three hardware stores; about five general stores for dry goods and groceries; one bank; entertainment venues such as the theatre, a skating rink and two pool rooms; a boot and harness repair shop; two churches; specialty shops such as a barber, cigar shop, confectionary, millenary, jeweler, piano shop, tailor and a men's clothing store; and a row of grain elevators. For many years, the downtown was the only business district, and national chains like Hudson Bay and Woolworth's eventually settled in among the many local-

ly-owned small businesses. Downtown was the place where you did all your work and your errands, came for your entertainment, and met your friends at places like Joe's Corner Coffee Shop.

The industrial buildings were the first to move. As trucking replaced the railway, the elevators disappeared from the downtown, as did the warehouses along the railway, to specially zoned industrial parks to the north and west of the town.

Car dealerships and gas stations soon followed. These found expanded sites along the highway industrial land. At about the same time, in the early 1970s, the trend in retail turned to shopping malls and away from the downtown core.

The City quickly realized that these changes threatened

the viability of the downtown core, and formed the Central Business Association in 1974. In 1983, it was re-zoned as the Downtown Business Revitalization Zone. It became the area where locally-owned businesses found a niche, and where community events happened. Beautification projects, such as building-sized murals, brick sidewalks, summer flower baskets and winter lighting, brought life and beauty back to the area.



1

To the south of the Co-op location, four grain elevators formed the skyline. South of the elevators, a row of warehouses housed wholesale firms such as Horne & Pitfield and Marshall Wells. In front of them was the railway line and station, the hub of transportation. This photograph, taken ca. 1930, must have been for the arrival of a dignitary, for there appears to be a guard on duty, and the cars look remarkably clean. The elevators began to disappear during the 1960s, and the last one was moved to the agricultural industrial park north of Grande Prairie in 1980. They have since been demolished.





From the corner of 99th Street and 100th Avenue, the view south was of this Railway Depot built by the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway in 1916. The arrival of the railway was a crucial event in the development of Grande Prairie. Other communities, such as Lake Saskatoon, died when the railway by-passed them. From 1916 until the 1950s, the train was the most efficient mode of travel in the Peace Country. Once roads began to be graveled and paved, and plowed in the winter, the necessity for train service diminished. This station was replaced in 1970, and passenger service ended in 1974.

3

The city block now occupied by New Horizon Co-op was once covered in homes and gardens. This is a rear view of 9823-100th Avenue, the home of the Charles Turner family, ca. 1930. The closest building is the first Turner & Sons Construction Co. workshop. Turner & Sons built a significant part of the infrastructure in Grande Prairie, including the D Coy Armoury Training Centre during World War II, the spillway and dam on the reservoir in 1947, and many public buildings and family homes. The company, now with a third generation of Turners, still exists as a partner in TurCon Construction.





After the first houses were built in the late 1920s, they were gradually replaced by larger homes. Jeweller Harry Watcher built this house in 1953, about where the Co-op Car Wash is now. The first phase of the Grande Prairie Co-op took up the west quarter of the block in 1970, leaving this residential section in place until 1980. When the Co-op once again expanded, the remaining houses were torn down.

5

In 1970, the Grande Prairie & District Co-operative Association opened a large new store on this block. This Co-operative was established in 1937 and began operations in “a one-room, ramshackle store where the receipts of the business were counted into a cigar box.”* As membership increased they were able to build a modern new store in 1949, and, outgrowing that space, expanded again on this site in 1970, then enlarged the store in 1980. The 1970–1980 store, seen here in 1997, was replaced by the New Horizons Co-op ca. 2000.

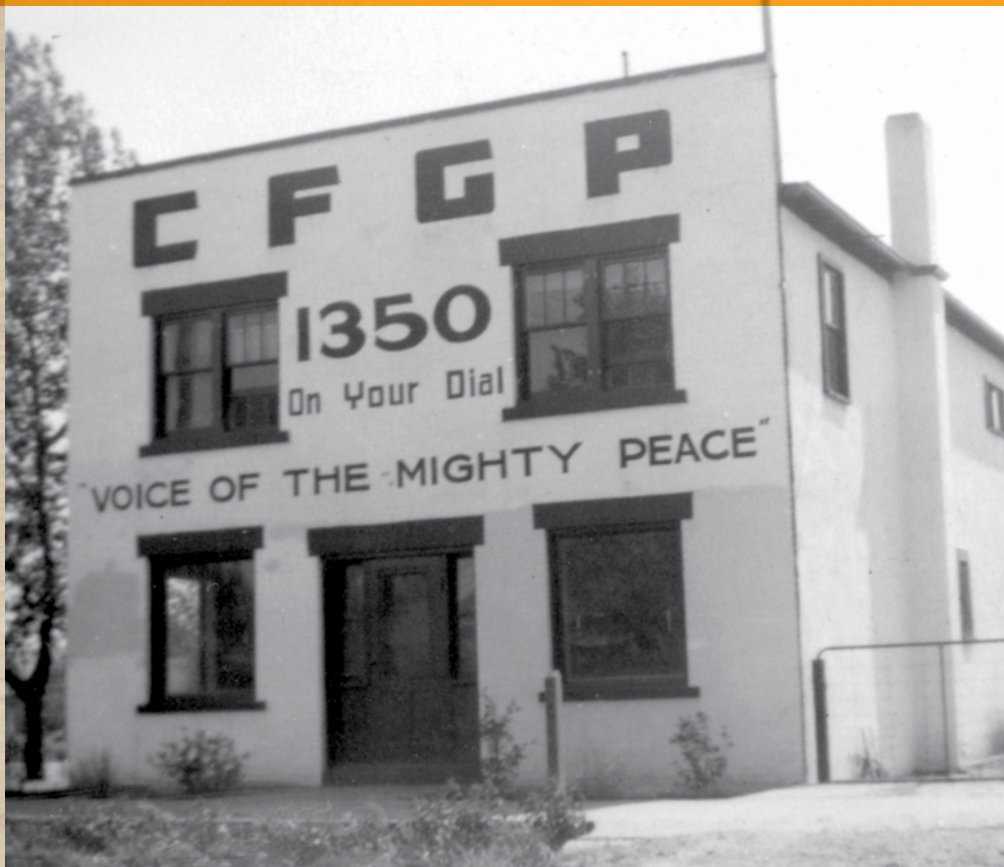
*GP & Dist Co-operative Assn, 1987, Celebrating 50 Years of Progress p. 3



6

SPRA 256.01.21 Schenk family fonds

CFGP was established in 1937, the first radio station north of Edmonton and the most northerly station in the British Empire at the time. They moved to this building on the corner of 99th Street and 100th Avenue in 1941. Public Service broadcasting was a key role for CFGP—not just the weather and local news, but school broadcasts, church services for shut-ins, radio dances for community fundraisers, emergency communications for natural disasters, radio plays with the Little Theatre, and local bands and musical groups for programming. This building was replaced by the new Grande Prairie Herald plant in 1952, CFGP having moved one lot south.



7

Woolworth's was one of the first big department stores in Grande Prairie when it opened in 1957. Beside it was the Herald Tribune's new brick printing plant built in 1952 by the Bowes Brothers. After the Herald was moved to larger premises on 106 Avenue, Woolworth's expanded to the corner. It closed in 1992, along with most of the Woolworth's stores across Canada. The building was eventually purchased and renovated to create the current strip mall.



8

SPRA 460.077 City of Grande Prairie fonds

This photo of the Donald Hotel was taken on December 29, 1936, just after the hotel had been constructed. It was built by hotel magnate Frank Donald who owned a chain of hotels throughout the Peace. "There was steam heating throughout, it was air-conditioned, an electric clock and tubular lighting added the modern touch, the lobby fireplace was panelled and goldfish sported in a fountain tumbling down a miniature mountain in the men's beverage room."* The crowning touch was artificial palms in the foyer and in the men's and women's beer parlours. The Donald Hotel lasted for thirty years, but burned to the ground in November 1967. *Herald-Tribune November 3, 1967



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A photograph of the 99th Street block ca. 1918 shows several houses and the Murray Hotel and Rooming House. Built in 1917 by Mrs. Nan Murray, the hotel had 30 rooms. When prohibition ended on May 10, 1924, Mrs. Murray applied immediately for a beer license, as reported in the May 13th paper. When it was being demolished in 1966, the newspaper described the Murray Hotel as “a favourite meeting place for senior citizens where cribbage, among other card games, was enjoyed along with checkers.”* The Metropolitan store, a large department store similar to Woolworth’s, was built in the empty lot. It is now Bama Furniture. *Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, September 20, 1966.





SPRA 2007.42.09 Alf Van Shack fonds

In 1948, three blocks of 100th Avenue were paved, from 102nd Street to 99th Street. This was a real pleasure for residents, until the mud from either end started to swallow up the newly paved section. Following shortly after was the start of the building boom of the 1950s, which saw the small wooden buildings between the Pletcher Block and the Murray Hotel replaced by the brick buildings still there today. They housed stores like Harmony Music Bar, Turi Ann Shop, Lynn's Travel Agency, Northern Glass, Salem Stationary, Panda Camera and Styles & Smiles Hair Design.

Birds Store, selling dry goods and groceries, was established in 1930 along with this unique building - built about the same time. Many of the early stores offered credit, allowing customers to put purchases on a tab which was paid at the end of the month. Birds Store, however, was “cash and carry” and based on the ability to “sell goods at reasonable prices, depending on low profits and a quick turnover...” The model was apparently successful, for the store was expanded just two years later and operated until 1958, when CIBC purchased the building. *Grande Prairie Herald, Sept 5, 1930





Although there had been a Hudson's Bay Company fur buying post in the Grande Prairie area since 1880, it was not until 1948 that a Hudson's Bay Department Store opened in Grande Prairie. This same building was destroyed by fire in 1952, but immediately re-built. In 1957 it expanded to twice its original size. The Bay was a draw for the downtown until the company purchased Zellers in 1978. HBC chose to retain the Zellers store in the Prairie Mall and closed this outlet in 1980. It was taken over by The Brick for many years, then renovated to the strip mall of today. This photograph was taken in 1955. In the background is the Grande Prairie water tower, purchased second-hand from the City of Edmonton in 1917 and a fixture downtown until the late 1950s.

After World War II was over, the Canadian military formed Operation Muskox to test equipment and travel in a northern environment. In 1946, a convoy of army vehicles and armoured personnel carriers (called Penquins and designed for winter use) trekked from Churchill, Manitoba through the Northwest Territories to the Alaska Highway, and back to Edmonton through Grande Prairie. This photograph shows the tail end of that convoy, followed by a pack of keenly interested boys. It attracts the attention of everyone on the street: people getting into their cars, shoppers at P V Croken General Store, waitresses in the Royal Palace Café, and business men coming out of the Grande Prairie Hotel.



SPRA 1993.61.02 Grande Prairie Museum fonds



The Grande Prairie Hotel was constructed in 1917 by Charles Spencer, who designed most of the early public buildings. It was purchased by Frank Donald in 1918, one of six hotels that he owned. This was where the elite visitors stayed, including the Governor General and his wife. As soon as prohibition ended in 1924, Mr. Donald applied for a liquor license, and a beer parlour was added to the east side of the hotel. The Grande Prairie Hotel was demolished in 1960, and replaced by a large retail space that housed first the Saan Department Store, then Ernie's Sports Centre, now Cash Canada.

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Looking west from the middle of the block ca. 1925, the Grande Prairie Hotel is still the major landmark. Grande Prairie looks like a busy, homey place with places to sit on the street, Spicer's Bakery, the Club Café, a bowling alley and many other businesses. Cars on the street include a racing car, soft tops, and an early version of the pick-up truck. Are the large metal containers with expansion hoses attached (in the right foreground of the photo) an early version of the fire hydrant ?





In 1916, Barney Michaels established the Grand Theatre on 100th Avenue. This was not the first theatre in Grande Prairie, for the Pioneer Theatre opened in 1913 and offered “a moving picture show every Saturday evening with a complete change of pictures each week.”* These were all silent movies, as “talkies” were not invented until the 1930s. Next door to the Grand ca. 1920, when this photograph was taken, was the American Bowling Alley. Neighbouring businesses included Bell-Fleming Hardware and MacDonald’s Meat Market, with Grande Prairie Com Co. further west. The Grand Theatre was destroyed by a fire in 1921, and Curry’s Jewelers is now on that site. *Grande Prairie Herald, Nov 18, 1913.

From the west end of the 100th Street block, two anchor buildings, Morrison's Department Store and Thomson's Hardware, can be seen on the edges of this photograph taken in 1935. Although this was in the middle of the Great Depression, it does not appear to have affected the downtown business district, for few empty buildings can be seen. The dray wagon on the street was at this time still the most common way to transfer goods between the train station or warehouses to the various businesses. A company called City Transfer Co. Storage & Draying was located on this block of 100th Avenue.





SPRA 2005.06.04 Bev Whalen photo

The village of Grande Prairie was incorporated in 1914, about the time this photograph was taken. The population was almost 100 people. Most of the businesses were on the other side of 100th Avenue, across from the Salmond Hotel. The nucleus of the business district was around 101st Street and 100th Avenue, where the original wagon road from Flying Shot Lake to Smoky River crossed the townsite. The Salmond Hotel was built in 1911, the first modern hotel in the village with proper beds and meals. Across 101 Street west was J Spaner's Men's Wear Store and a barber.

In the 1920s, a major occasion was the Northern Winter Carnival, a three-day event which featured hockey, ice racing, a skating carnival, mixed comic hockey, a curling bonspiel, ski jumping, street events, continuous movie performances at the theatre, a musical concert, an oratorical competition, a local talent variety concert, evening dances, a Carnival Queen contest, a Grand Ball, and a Grand Carnival Parade, which met the incoming passenger train. This 1928 parade float carried the Carnival Queen down 100th Avenue. In the background is the Bank of Montreal and City Laundry.





SPRA 2005:71.03 Ken Ayre photo

Here is another view of the east end of the south side on the 101 Street block ca. 1952. On the south side of the street is Frank's Barber Shop and Yee Lee Laundry, established in 1913 by Lee Young and purchased by Yee Lee in 1928. The laundry operated until about 1960. The site is now a vacant lot beside Turcon Construction. in the distance is a delivery truck for Coca-Cola, which began to be bottled in Grande Prairie by Northern Bottling in 1938.

As 100th Avenue developed, the 101st Street block (seen here in 1936) became a service area, with laundries, electric companies and car suppliers. You may wonder why so many identical vehicles are parked on this street. In the 1930s, there were far fewer choices for vehicles. They came in one colour—black—and there were only a handful of models. Most of these are Model A Fords, sold by the Grande Prairie Garage Co., with a sprinkling of Dodge cars, sold by Crummy Garage.



This 1937 photograph, looking east from the 102 Street intersection shows more clearly the entertainment options available in this district, including the Waffle Shoppe, Alberta Rooms, and the Capitol Theatre in its original location. The Waffle Shoppe was opened in 1933, a popular confectionery, lunch room and music shop. Alberta Rooms is advertised as early as 1916 as “the place to stop when away from home or while in town.”



Two car dealerships still flank the west end of the 101 Street block in this 1965 photograph. By this time, the Capitol Theatre had been replaced by the Park Hotel which was built in 1957 and included amenities such as a shoe shine stand, an exclusive sports shop, and a Canadian Pacific Airlines office in the lobby. At street level, with outside entrances were the Park Hotel Restaurant, the Park Beauty Salon, and the Park Barber Shop. When this photograph was taken, several additional businesses had been added, including Fred Walsh Massage, Avis Rent-a-Car, Engineered Homes Ltd., Riendeau Construction, United Cabs, and Yellow Cabs. The Park Hotel is still standing in 2013, although no longer occupied.





SPRA 1991.9.2 Elizabeth Dunlap fonds

In 1918, only four years after the incorporation of the Village of Grande Prairie, the skyline from the west side of Bear Creek shows a substantial community which included (left to right) Montrose School, the Empress Hotel, Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company, the water tower, the Anglican Church, three grain elevators, and the beginnings of executive homes on Carriage Lane. Down by Bear Creek we can see some of the homes that once filled the valley, as well as the industry which depended on the creek to operate, such as the Voz's Flour Mill and Cooke's Lumber Mill.

"Hotel Breeden was one of the first buildings in the future City of Grande Prairie. Typical of other stopping places along pioneer trails, Hotel Breeden was a one-room log cabin with a stove, a table, some benches and one bed; the hotel guests slept on the floor. In such crowded conditions, bed-time was when the owner decided to go to bed, and morning was when he got up—in George Breeden's case, as early as 4:00 a.m. in the summer. Meals were made from what was available, which could be anything from rabbit to bear."*

*Grande Prairie: Capitol of the Peace





SPRA 1969.59.353 Grande Prairie Museum fonds

The Crummy brothers arrived in Grande Prairie in 1915 and established a mercantile business just east of this location. That store burned in 1928 and was not rebuilt, for they had a new interest in a Chrysler franchise. The J.M. Crummy Garage was built in 1929. This photograph from ca. 1940 shows two Texaco gas pumps outside the J.M. Crummy Garage Co. Ltd., selling and servicing Dodge-Desoto cars. This building is still standing on its original site, occupied after Crummy's Garage closed by Menzies Printers, then as a business condo.

This view from the 102nd Street intersection on 100th Avenue shows men grading the road in 1917. Most likely this would have been volunteer labour, for the Village had one employee, the secretary-treasurer, who was also expected to “take up the duties of village overseer, constable and health officer.”* The McDonald Land & Trading Co. Ltd., which was located a few lots west of the 102 Street intersection, advertised itself as “The Store of Quality” carrying “hardware, furniture, groceries, shoes, clothing, dry goods, gents furnishings, Ford cars and accessories”. In 1918 it became Crummy General Store, but burned down in 1921. What happened in the intervening years is not clear, but in 1948 a modern new Co-operative Store was built on this site. *Grande

Prairie Herald, March 8, 1917.



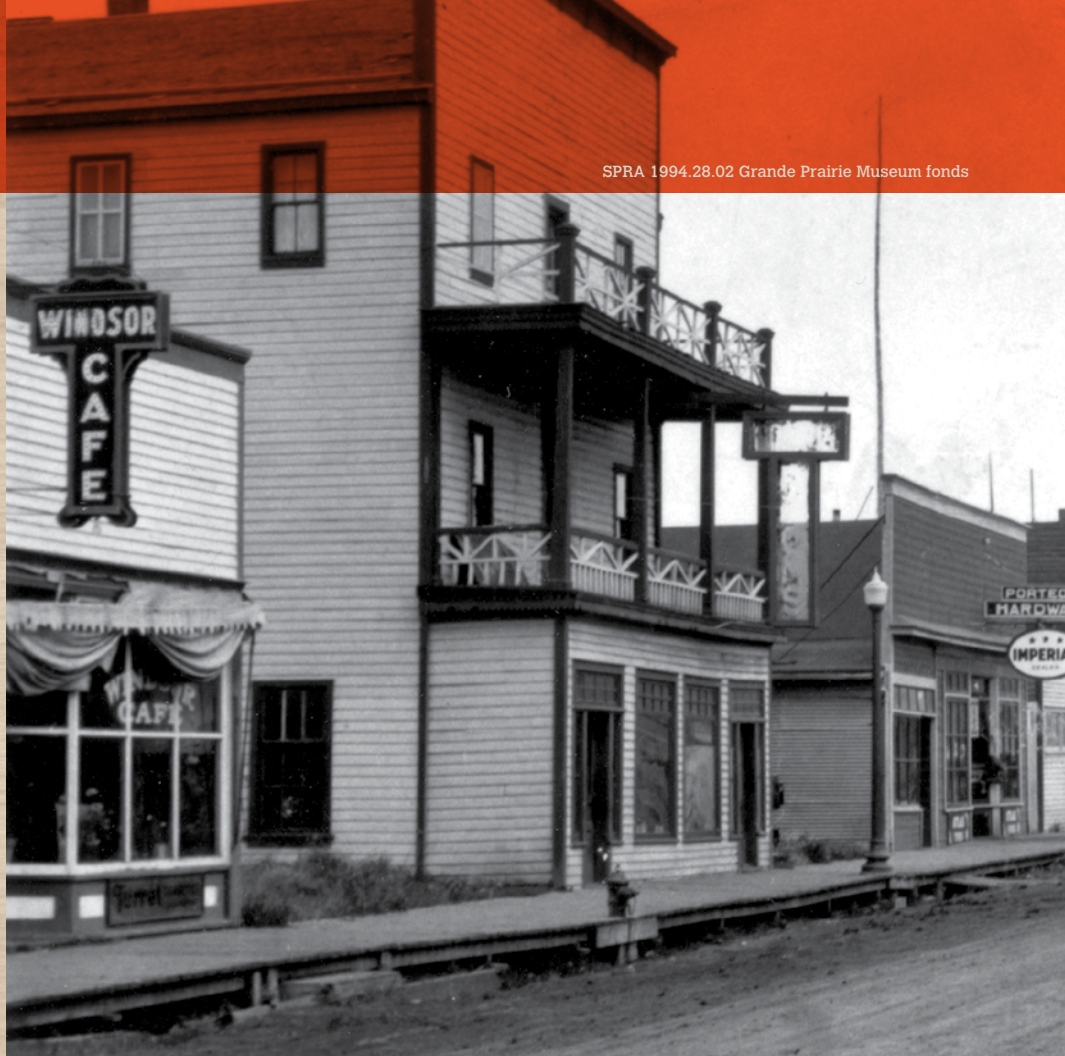


The Grande Prairie & District Co-operative Association was formed in 1937 and first operated across the Avenue from this building, beside Alberta Rooms. With an increasing membership and a better economy, in 1949 they were able to build this modern new store, seen here ca. 1960. The store included hardware, clothing, and home furnishings on the top floor and a large food floor and cafeteria downstairs. It also included a children's nursery so that mothers could shop in peace, unhampered by unruly children.

In the centre of the 101st block of 100th Avenue was the Empire Hotel, a three-storey hotel built in 1913. It included "25 bed rooms all of a good size, a large rotunda, a ladies' parlour on the second floor, a well-equipped kitchen and dining room with a seating capacity of 40."* Behind the hotel was a large log stable which provided a warm stay for the horses as well. In 1921 the Empire was re-named the Royal George, and in 1928 the Corona Hotel. It burned down in 1937. The Windsor Café, beside the hotel, offered another venue for meals. *Grande

Prairie Herald, Dec 23, 1913

SPRA 1994.28.02 Grande Prairie Museum fonds





SPRA 430.01.43 Leslie family fonds

Just a few doors down from the Empire Hotel was Porteous Hardware & Harness, which opened in July 1915. Hardware stores provided the steel goods and parts needed for farming. As all farming and most travel was done using horses, this was an important store. Porteous' store was established before the railway arrived in Grande Prairie, which meant that all of the hardware had to be brought in over the Long Trail or Edson Trail. At best, the trip took one week and with heavily loaded wagons could take up to a month. Porteous Hardware moved one block east in 1939 and closed in 1957.

This view from the east corner of the 101st Street block in 1918 shows an impressive array of vehicles and demonstrates how the village had grown. Three major Canadian banks built substantial brick buildings in Grande Prairie from 1918 to 1920: the Union Bank seen here (changed to the Royal Bank in 1925); the Merchants Bank (now the Bank of Montreal) across the Avenue; and the Imperial Bank of Commerce. Also visible are the Empire Hotel and the Royal and Windsor Cafes.





SPRA 0344.02.50 Frank Earnest Hardy fonds

From the west end of the block, about 1918, the entire north side of the 100th Street block of 100th Avenue can be seen, from Thompson's Hardware to the Imperial Bank of Canada. The building signed Owens & Johnson is the original Selkirk Trading Post built in 1914. It still exists today (with a different facade) as Al's News. Also visible midway down the block is the hip-roofed Royal North West Mounted Police barracks. The telegraph poles which line the street were installed about 1914, but there was a telegraph office in Grande Prairie ca. 1910. This was the major source of communication with the outside world, especially for world news.

This photograph was taken ca. 1950, when the population of Grande Prairie was just under 3,500. After the war, Grande Prairie had a major building boom and population increase, but most of it was in public buildings like the post office, on the corner of 100 Street and 101 Avenue, and the provincial building, on the corner of 100 Street and 99th Avenue. Another great improvement was the paving of 100th Avenue.





By 1918, the north side of 100th Avenue had considerably more buildings, with two single lines of electrical power running from Voz's Flour Mill in the Bear Creek Valley up along the south side of the avenue. The demand for power was much greater than the mill was able to supply, so in 1918 the Grande Prairie Electric Co. was formed to create more reliable power. After the plant was built and became operational in 1919, electricity was available from 5:00 a.m. to sunrise and from sundown to midnight. The rate was 25 cents per kilowatt hour.

This is the 1913 Selkirk Trading Company which now houses Al's News, the oldest existing building on 100th Avenue. It was built by William Caldwell, a wealthy young Irishman, and his partner John McAuley, an experienced fur buyer. The new building was noted in the first issue of the Grande Prairie Herald on March 25, 1913 (in Selkirk's own ad) to be "one of the best on the prairie" lit with "the most modern gasoline Pitner Lighting system." It was only the Selkirk for five years, after which it became Owens & Johnson, then J.J. Lamb, Plumber and Tinsmith, then Ludbrooks Variety Store, and finally Al's News.





This photograph is verified to be a parade during the July 19, 1919 Peace Celebration. Why is the town celebrating Peace eight months after the war ended? Perhaps they waited until the soldiers were home again, for the line is led by a parade of men, most likely returned soldiers. Although isolated, Grande Prairie received daily news on the war by telegraph, delivered by the numerous lines and poles so prominent in the photo.

A close-up of some businesses east of the Pool Room ca. 1920. The corner of Crerar's Fruit Store can be seen on the left (where The Rabbit Hole is today), then McPhee & Patterson, Turner's Store for Men, the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Morrison's Cash Store which began at the first Bezanson townsite in 1910 and moved to this spot in 1919, and the Spencer Block which was torn down to build Macleod's and then became Midwest on Main.





World War I volunteers line up in front of the Royal North West Mounted Police barracks on 100th Avenue in Grande Prairie in 1915. The Mounties, trained in arms, were some of the first to enlist in the War, so depleting the forces that the Alberta Provincial Police was formed to take over. The hip-roofed barracks was moved and converted to a home, and its place was taken by the Spencer Block in 1919, then by Macleod's Store in 1953. The Macleod's Store was later renovated for Midwest Home Furnishings.

This photograph shows the most recognizable historical building in Grande Prairie, soon after it was built in 1918. Then it was the Imperial Bank of Canada, with professional offices (often doctors, dentists and lawyers) upstairs. In 1961, the Imperial Bank combined with the Canadian Bank of Commerce to become the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and located kitty corner across the street, where it still exists. This building became Central Jewellers and finally a specialty store. The substantial building on the left side of the photograph is the Spencer Block, which contained business offices downstairs and apartments upstairs.





SPRA 2005.14.10 Thomas Wilson Lawlor fonds

The Imperial Bank of Canada still holds the anchor spot on 100th Avenue, on the northwest corner of the intersection with 100th Street. This photograph was taken during World War II, ca. 1940. Platoons of soldiers from the D Coy Training Centre south of town (today's 90th Avenue area), are accompanied by a brass military band, a group of officers and cadets, and hundreds of on-lookers. Perhaps this is the conclusion of their training, and they are being sent on to the Loyal Edmonton Regiment or overseas.

This photograph of Bill's Real Good Food Café, on the north-east corner of 100th Street and 100th Avenue bears a map of the Alaska Highway, dating it to 1942 when the Alaska Highway was being built. Bill's Café became Joe's Corner Coffee Shop in 1948 when it was purchased by Chinese restaurateur Joe Mark. Neighbouring businesses include the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co. and the Yukon Southern office which was founded in 1933 as United Air Transport by 24-year-old Grant McConachie. This was the first airmail and passenger transport service between Edmonton and Grande Prairie. The company was purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1941 and re-named Canadian Pacific Airlines, and Grant McConachie became president of CP Air in 1947.





SPRA 190.02.01.0094.01 Panda Camera fonds

The photograph shows Joe's Corner Coffee Shop in 1966, shortly before it was closed down. Joe's Corner Coffee shop was a Grande Prairie landmark in the post-World War II years and underwent a large-scale renovation in 1955-56, adding the Pagoda Room and expanding its seating space to 230. Many clubs, such as the Women's Institute and the Kinsmen, regularly met at Joe's Corner. It was also a convenient and informal place to meet friends for coffee. The building was demolished to make way for a branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank in 1969. The bank building was also demolished in 1997 to accommodate the widening of 100th Street.

In 1949, the Gaiety Theatre was built on 100th Avenue. This was a dedicated, fully modern theatre, not a venue which served as dance hall and auditorium as the old theatres had been. It's curved roof, disguised with a false front from the street view, made it easily identifiable. Inside, there was a sloped floor, the luxury of air conditioning and comfortable seating for 500 people. After it closed in 1991, it served as a Youth Mission for a time before it was torn down in 2012.





An aerial view of Grande Prairie looking east down 100th Avenue, most likely from the top of the new Grande Prairie Hotel in 1917, shows the Gordon & Thompson Garage, Bagley Bros. Livestock Dealers, the first Imperial Bank Of Canada building. Prominent in the background is the newly built Montrose School on 99th Street and 101st Avenue, which was at the time the largest brick building north of Edmonton. The block that is now the 99th Street business district on 100th Avenue was, at this time, strictly residential.

This photograph of the Yellow Cab office and three cabs taken ca. 1955. This house was built in 1918, and is listed in the 1920 tax records as belonging to Henry Gallivan, a member of the Alberta Provincial Police, and Grande Prairie's town constable. In the transition from residential to business district, some of the houses on this block were used as offices. After Yellow Cab moved to the Park Hotel ca. 1962, the house was demolished and replaced by a duplex storefront which is now home to Forbes & Friends Flair Boutique and Eternity Fine Jewellery & Heirlooms.





SPRA 0050-08.02.17 Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce fonds

This view of 100th Avenue looking west in 1965 shows many businesses in the 99th Street block, including Moore's Beauty Parlor, HFC Loans, Capitol Billiards & Bowling, McKenzie Stationers, Bamboo Restaurant, Bank of Nova Scotia, Gaiety Theatre, and Joe's Corner Coffee Shop. By the 1960s, Grande Prairie's main streets, including 100th Avenue, had been paved, parking meters and fire hydrants installed, public telephone boxes and garbage cans placed, a speed limit posted, and many of the original buildings demolished to make way for larger, more modern structures. Many changes had occurred to the face of Grande Prairie's business district in the first fifty years after it incorporated as a village, as many have taken place in the fifty years following.

Windsor Motors Ltd. was established in 1946 by Les Longmate and Robert Millar, who arrived in Grande Prairie after serving in World War II. In 1947 they built their Chrysler Plymouth dealership on this corner, complete with shop, offices and a car lot. In 1962 it became Windsor Ford when they joined the Ford Motor Company. After Windsor Ford moved to a new location in 1978, Windsor Court was built on the north end of the lot. The Bank of Nova Scotia and the current strip mall were built ca. 1980.





As Grande Prairie continued to grow, high-rise office towers became a part of the downtown landscape. In 1978, this 42,000 sq. ft. office block was built and named Windsor Court, seen here in 1997. It was designed by Field & Field Architects, who still have offices in the building, and built by Carington-O'Brien, who had also built Nordic Court across the road.

CFGP Radio also established headquarters in Windsor Court. In the mid-1980s, when they were planning the 50th Anniversary of radio in the Peace, Manager Gord Percy extended an invitation to the British Royal family to participate in the celebrations. And so it was that on July 25, 1987 the Duke and Duchess of York, Andrew and Sarah, came to Grande Prairie to open the new CFGP Radio station in Windsor Court. CFGP began airing on FM frequency in 1997 as SUN FM and is now Rock 97.7

SPRA 005.09.14 CFGP Radio fonds



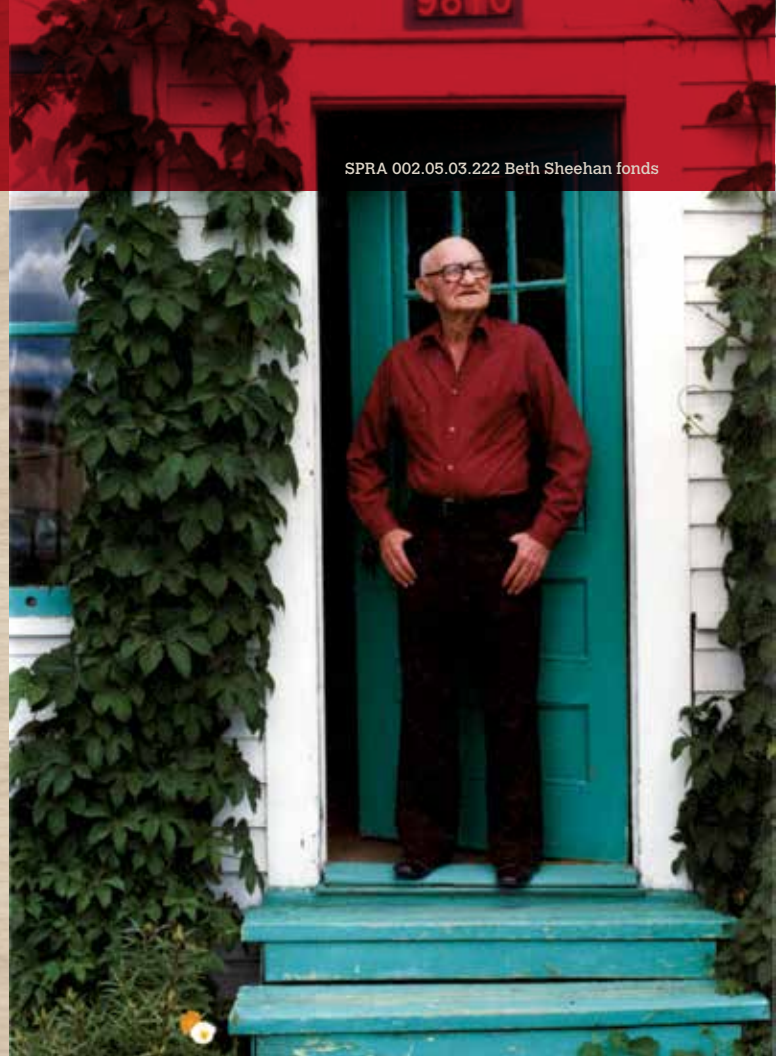


SP1A 254.14 Medlock-Evenrude fonds.

During World War II the north-east corner of 99th Street and 100th Avenue was still vacant, as seen in this photograph of a D-Company Army Training Exercise, ca. 1942. Magnus Evenrude and Charles Turner (first and second from left) are two of the trainees who have established themselves in a shallow foxhole and are demonstrating the use of a machine gun, while a child watches from the sidewalk. The first courthouse can be seen in the background.

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Only one of the original houses remains on this block, now occupied by D.Luxe. In 1983, when this photograph was taken, it was still a residence, home to 84 year-old Johnny MacDonald. City of Grande Prairie tax records identify this house as being built in 1928, and it could well have been by John and Sylvia MacDonald who at the time were working at the Immigration Hall just south of here. Johnny was known as “Mr. Hockey”, manager of the Wapiti Rink (Grande Prairie’s first covered rink), coach to the Red Devils and the Athletics, organizer of ice carnivals and skating clubs, and champion of minor hockey. Since Johnny died in 1984, this house has been occupied by several businesses, while maintaining it’s original 1020s character.



SPRA 002.05.03.222 Beth Sheehan fonds

Memory Lane is in celebration of the City of Grande Prairie's 100th Anniversary.



Memory Lane is the Downtown Association's legacy to the history of Grande Prairie, and is a collaborative effort between these partners:



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