



Keeping History Current

ISSUE Dedicated to Mary Nutting- Mentor and inspiration



Subject: Scenes of the Peace

- a photo of where the Simmonette flows into the Smoky approx. location NW 21 71 2 W6
- submitted by – Wanda Zenner

Index of this issue

Scenes of the Peace	p. 1
President's Message	p. 2
Directors & Officers	p. 2
Starvation on the Grande Prairie	
Winter 1842	p. 3
Monuments, memorials, cairns	
Edson Trail	p. 6
Memorial	p. 7
Celebration of Mary Nutting	
Various submissions included	
Emails from - Chinook Country, HSA, and Julie DeWinter	p. 8
Leslie Gordon (with photos	p. 9
Wanda Zenner	p. 11
David Leonard	p. 11
Fran Moore	p. 12
Pat Wearmouth	p. 12
HSA Information	p. 14

Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting – Covid – 19 Post-poned from April 18, 2020 to June 27, 2020 hoping to have outdoor meeting with masks and social distancing (bring your lawn chair and picnic lunch.)

June 27, 2020 10:00 am – Kleskun Hills meeting a Boyer Hall for an outdoor PCHS AGM meeting. Bring your lawn chair and a picnic lunch for yourself, coffee will be supplied. Rsvp by June 12th so AGM packages can be sent out prior to meeting to Janet at jlscreations@telus.net

Any other events and ideas will come from AGM

President's Message

As the vice-president I received a call from one of our members in March notifying me of Mary Nutting, health down turn, my next job was to contact our PCHS board of Directors and the HSA president to let them know. Then we needed to find a way to carry on with the added stress of Covid-19 regulations; as well as waiting to hear about Mary. So after agreeing to be acting President and put out the Summer 2020 (June) PCHS newsletter; until we were able to have an Annual General Meeting we shared many email meetings and David Rhody was kind enough to host a couple of Zoom meetings; within this time we lost Mary.

During the first week of June I will finalize a location for the PCHS AGM and get the information out to one and all by June 8, 2020 at the latest.

Loss of Mary Nutting

The Peace Country has lost another shining star.

As one of the original members of the Peace Country Historical Society and even one of the presenters at the initial Symposium in October of 2008 speaking on the importance of preserving our living history through South Peace Regional Archives.

Observing Mary's grace, drive and support for all aspects of our collective culture, history and heritage, accompanied with her ability to clearly see all angle, then follow through with a smooth clear path to achieve Peace Country Historical Society goals and plans without leaving bruised egos.

Mary was an enlightened leader and mentor. We will never be able to fill her shoes, but following her example we will try not to let her vision down as we try to carry on.

Janet L. Peterson – Acting President PCHS

Peace Country Historical Society

P.O. Box 687 Station Main
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 3A8

[Facebook.com/peacecountryhistoricalsociety/](https://www.facebook.com/peacecountryhistoricalsociety/)
www.pc-hs.ca

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

Mandate: The mandated area of the Peace Country Historical Society is the Alberta portion of the Peace River Country.

Board of Directors

Janet L. Peterson – Acting President (Vice- President)

Wanda Zenner – Treasurer

Josephine Sallis – Secretary (retired)

Charles Taws – Director – (Acting secretary)

David Leonard – Director

Dave Merriam – Director

David Rhody – Director

Susan Thomson – Director

Al Bromling – proposed Director

Interim Advisors due to Covid – 19 and Loss of Mary

Irene Nicolson – Phoning, memberships

Pat Wearmouth – Nominations Committee

Daryl White – Past member

Tim Marriot – HSA President

Fran Moore – Member – Past President

Contact Us

Acting President:

Janet L. Peterson 780-354-3634 – leave message

jlscreations@telus.net

Contributions to Newsletter

Contributions to this newsletter are gratefully accepted. If you have a family story you want to tell, a memory you think would inspire others, or a snippet from the history of the Peace Country you want to share, please contact Janet at the email above, must be in word for me to be able to use it. We do reserve the right to accept and edit (with your approval) all contributions. Thank You

Starvation on the Grande Prairie

The terrible winter of 1842

by David W. Leonard

With the establishment of the fur trade post at Dunvegan in 1806, small bands of the Beaver First Nation on the Grande Prairie began to make regular excursions to this post to effect trade. In time, other Native bands, mainly Cree and Iroquois, began to make their way to the region to take advantage of the hunting and trapping opportunities, thus



competing with the indigenous Beaver. The result was the over-exploitation of big game, which caused considerable distress and even starvation. One particularly bad time was the winter of 1842, as was revealed in the journals of the Chief Trader at Dunvegan, Francis Butcher.

At the time, the Grande Prairie was home to several bands of Beaver people, led by such chiefs as La Glace, Pouce Coupé, and Fantasque. The principle chief was Tranquile, who had just taken over from his brother, Mayari, and now maintained seven lodges. The following selected entries from Butcher's journals disclose the plight of Tranquile and others on the Prairie as they struggled to stay alive during this time. The entries are here presented just as Butcher wrote them.

1842

Monday 7th [February] Lalonde arrived from the Grand prairie; he fell in with Tranquile & a large band of Indians there seven lodges in all. From his account they have not done much in the way of fur hunting Lalonde has taken only one Wolverine during his trip & found it impossible to do anything there, the Indians having their traps set in every direction Tranquile talked of visiting the Fort soon

Sunday 13th The arrivals of yesterday got a little ammunition for their party & departed they are to join the band of Tranquile

Wednesday 16th about midnight last night arrived the wives of Mayaze Tranquile Brulé & Pouce Coupé with a lad they are sent by their husbands to ask for some thing to eat being by their account at the last extremity from famine & beg that I will exchange them an Ox for a horse. Sent off Blondin with the Cancre's Son with provisions for the Chiefs party viz. 50 lb dried Meat 20 lb Beat Meat some potatoes & the meat of a small Calf which we killed it having a defect in the leg for life, they are told also that they must better themselves for it is utterly impossible that we can give them further relief that I look to their assistance without which there is every probability of our being in the same predicament.... In the evening Chastelains brother and the deceased Fantasque[s] step son arrived from the Gros Tete's party they have no Furs and have much a do to keep themselves from starving

Thursday 17th Chastelains brother & companion were supplied with a little ammunition for themselves & party and they departed, they were commissioned to tell the Gros Tete to try and kill a few animals for the Fort. The Indian women lately arrived started also to return to their lodges except Tranquile's wife and the Boy the latter is too weak to return & the former says she was told by her husband to remain at the Fort.

Saturday 19th Blondin and Cancre's Son arrived from Tranquiles who had returned to his lodge two days before & sent again to the Chief[s] camp, but his messengers could not find any traces of him Blondin therefore left the provisions for himself & party in charge of Tranquile who is to send off in quest of him immediately - Mayaze has already killed and eaten three of his horses.

Wednesday 23rd Men employed as yesterday In the afternoon Olivier & Pemise arrived from the Hunters. Since he has been with them they have killed two small Moose deer & a Red Deer which they have eaten they have nothing for the Fort

Thursday 24th Late arrived Pouce Coupé & 3 women they bring Tranquile's sick wife with them with the intention she should remain at the Fort, her husband not being able to hunt & drag her about.

Friday 25 Pouce Coupé got a little ammunition for himself & Tranquile & left with 2 women

Monday March 7th 1842 Weather continues fine & cold. Tranquile with Pied de Cariboux's mother & 2 youths came to pay a visit to the Fort being camped not very far off. Our Fort Hunters have joined Tranquiles band, & they have kept the Buck Moose mentioned on Thursday last for themselves.

Thursday 10th A woman from Tranquile's arrived to take care of his sick wife here.

Wednesday March 16th Pouce Coupé arrived from Tranquiles whose little daughter is dead, she died the day she left the Fort (Monday last) he begs as a favour we will send for the body to bury it at the Fort.

Thursday 17th Bodreau & McGillivray started for their lodges & Blondin with Pouce Coupé for Tranquiles child it being close by where the child died.

Thursday 24th Late arrived Azillay from Tranquile & Netloe's Mother with Lestey's wife & son the former comes to announce that Tranquile has sent his sick wife to the Fort & the latter who

have separated from Tranquile come to beg as usual being by their account reduced to the last extremity from starvation

Friday 25th Tranquile's wives arrived in the afternoon

Saturday 26th Departed Azillay & Pemise Arrivals our Two Fort Hunters & Pouce Coupé with their families Starvation brings them to the Fort

Thursday 7th About mid day Blondin arrived with the meat of a Doe Moose killed by Tranquile Tranquile is starving & Blondin was obliged to give him the neck

Tuesday 19 Pemise & companion returned this morning.... Tranquile accompanied them to the Fort which is the cause of their light loads for they were obliged to feed him and his family along the road they being destitute of anything to eat.

Sunday 23rd Tranquile returned not having been able to find the horses. Two Envoys from La Glace & Manger de Lard arrived this morning, they have done nothing this winter only 8 MB [made beaver] & complain of having starved too much to look after Furs

Tranquile and most of his people managed to survive that awful winter, with Tranquile himself living until 1893, dying at Dunvegan at age 100.

For a profile of Tranquile, and conditions on the Grande Prairie in the 19th century, see David W. Leonard, *The Grande Prairie during the Fur Trade Era* (Grande Prairie Museum, 2002). The journals of the chief traders at Dunvegan have also been published. The above entries were taken from David W. Leonard & Michael Payne eds., *Dunvegan Post Journals for 1834 to 1845* (Edmonton: Peace Heritage Press, 2019).

Monuments, memorials, cairns

Monuments Section

Submitted by Wanda Zenner

Edson Trail Cairn

The idea behind the “cairn” was to honour all of those who travelled over the infamous Edson Trail. The cairn was built out of rocks from the homesteaders’ property with their names, year of arrival, etc. carved into the rocks. One hundred and sixty-four rocks were delivered to Les Bignold of Suncrest Signs Ltd. for computerized engraving to take place on the rocks. Shortly thereafter, the monument was constructed on land on which



the original Edson Trail crossed. The location is across the road to the south of the Kleskun Hill Heritage Village that is located within the Kleskun Hill Park. The cairn was dedicated by the Honourable Mel Knight on June 12, 2011 with approximately 400 people in attendance.

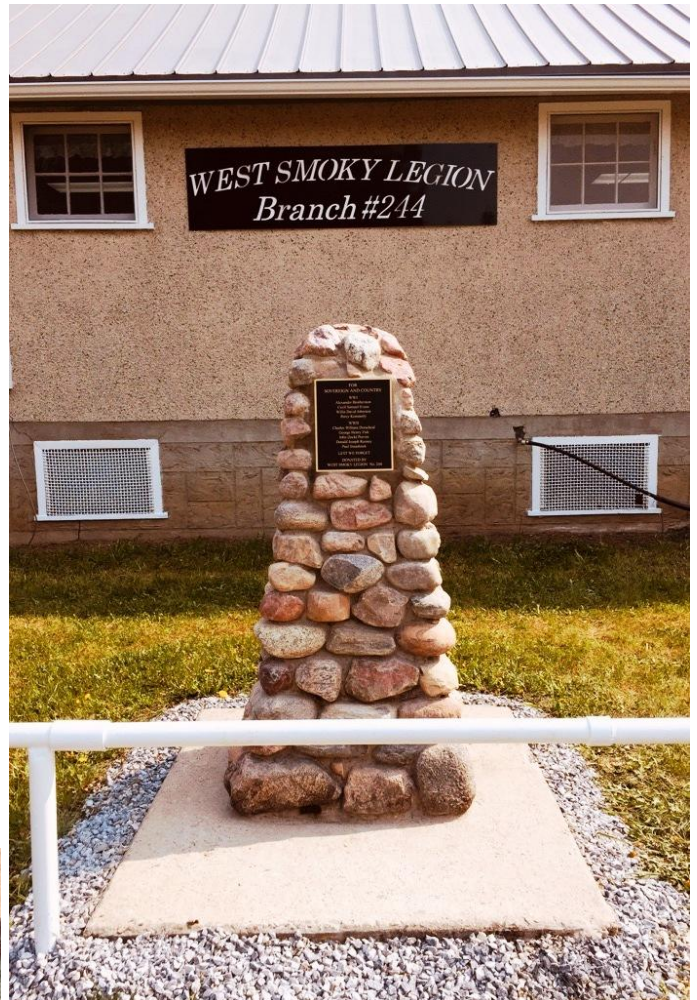
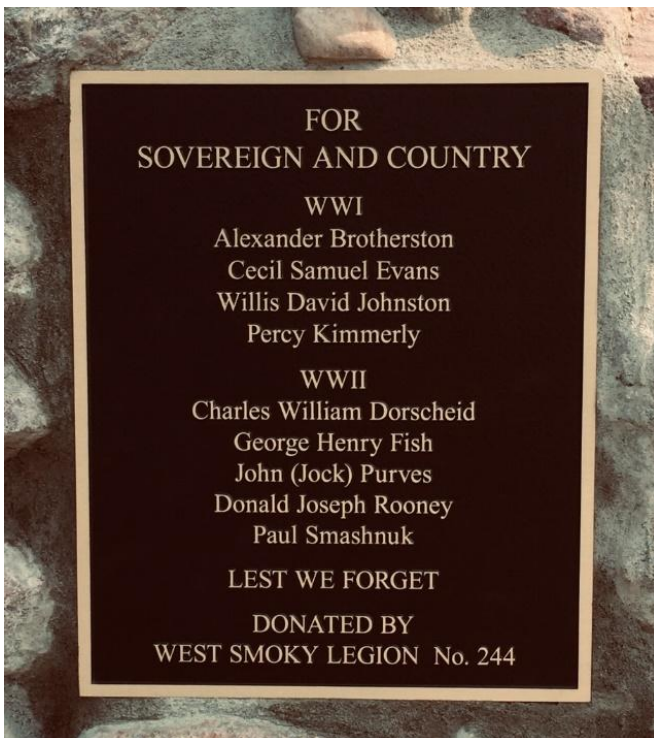


Monuments, memorials, cairns

Memorials Section

Submitted by Wanda Zenner

The Memorial, that consists of a rock cairn and brass plaque, was originally erected and dedicated by the Royal Canadian Legion West Smoky Branch No. 244 in 1992. The Plaque was updated to include all of the young servicemen who lost their lives in WWI and WWII and re-dedicated during a special "Fallen Heroes Event" in 2019. Inside the Legion building is a "Wall of Remembrance" where a local couple, Earl and Allie Weegar, had acquired and framed pictures complete with name plates of many of the young men and women from the Bezanson area who had enlisted in WWI and WWII. Those for whom a picture could not be found were honoured with a brass name plate. Another wall, the "Wall of Honour" holds the "Fallen Heroes Memorials" that were unveiled during the same event that



the cairn was re-dedicated. The Memorials, that honour the young men who lost their lives in WWI and WWII, include a picture, a brief biography of their short lives and a picture of the area where they lost their lives. The project was undertaken as a partnership with the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation.
Wanda

Celebration of Mary Nutting

Janet and Peace Country Historical Society

Please accept our deepest sympathy on the passing of Mary, especially in this difficult time in the world. She will be missed in your chapter and in our greater Alberta history community. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

From: Jackie Kleiner and Chinook Country Historical Society

From: Tim Marriott <danieltimothymarriott@gmail.com>

Sent: 22 April 2020 11:13

To: HSA council

Subject: Sad News/ business repeated

Sad News-Mary Nutting:

Our colleague Mary Nutting passed away a few days ago; Janet Peterson called me about it on Monday, but I waited to inform you until she had informed the Peace Country Board first. Janet telephoned me a few minutes ago to say that she had done that except for David Leonard. Co-incidentally I had a note from David last night about Mary, and indeed, I expect some of you have heard about Mary already.

Mary succumbed to the cancer from which we knew she was suffering. I have asked Janet to prepare a note about Mary for History Now, which she has sent me. Mary was a very quiet, but a huge force in PCHS, and also many good things in Northern Alberta. I know you will join me in condolences to her family and many friends. Janet has told me that the next PCHS newsletter will include thoughts about Mary.

Janet is acting President of PCHS.

I sit here with tears in my eyes yet a small smile on my face and a warmth in my heart, this was the affect of knowing Mary. I worked with her over 13 years at the Museum and my some of my best memories involve Mary. We were a close knit group and Collections (Gary Thate, myself) and Archives (Mary Nutting and Karen Burgess) worked hand in hand every day. When I started it was on the end of the grant on minimum wage position, three months later it became a career as we were all planning and building a new Museum were Collections and Archive worked as one to build our dream. We imagined and created a space like no other where Collections and Archives worked as one. Every coffee time was met with sore muscles and a lot of laughter, with Mary always the mother that kept us (or tried to) in line. At Christmas we had a full meal cooked by the staff to celebrate Christmas together, why, because we were family. When disaster hit, as it always does, we stood together as one. I will always cherish my memories of that time and place, God bless you dear Mary, forever loved by us all. We had a dream and we made it a reality.

Julie DeWinter

Memories of Mary: A Personal Reflection
donations 2011, PCHS 2012, Heritage Fair 2012

submitted with photos Leslie Gordon – Mary picking up

I first “met” Mary Nutting over the phone when she and Karen Burgess interviewed me for an Assistant Archivist position at South Peace Regional Archives. I was in my final year of a Master of Archival Studies program at the University of British Columbia and I needed a job, preferably one back in my home province (I didn’t always see eye to eye with my classmates and society at large in the lower mainland!). I remember both ladies being very friendly during the interview and, after I had been offered and accepted the job, giving me good advice about finding rental accommodations in a city I had never even visited before.

I met Mary in person a couple of months later. We were both attending the Association of Canadian Archivists conference, which was held in Calgary in May 2009. I think she went out of her way to find me amongst the delegates. A few weeks later, on June 1, 2009, I started work at SPRA. Or rather, I was supposed to start on June 1. Mary had compassion on her new archivist, who was also new to town, giving me my first day off so that I would be able to move into my new apartment. For those of you who knew her well, you will know that this was not out of character. Mary was a very sympathetic boss and I could tell she really cared about me. Not every young archivist is fortunate enough to have that experience. Mary was also the donor of my first television set!

Mary did me the honour of trusting in my abilities as a trained archivist, while giving me guidance and opportunities to grow further. She gave me interesting projects to work on and let me run with them and was patient with me as I settled in to real archives work after years of theory at University. Although I was still new to the profession, when she was ready to step down from the Archives Society of Alberta board, she suggested that I take her place. It was a wonderful experience and started me on my career of joining historical boards. When Campbell Ross approached me a few months later regarding the Peace Country Historical Society, I was already primed!

Both Mary and Karen took me under their wing and made sure I had a good grounding in the area and its history. Early on in my time in Grande Prairie, they took me on a driving tour that included a walk at Saskatoon Island, the viewpoint at Saskatoon Mountain, and supper at the Beaverlodge Motor Inn. Within my first year we also took a lot of trips around the entire South Peace, making presentations about the Archives. These trips always featured long drives with lots of time to chat and get to know one another better. The highlight trip for me, which I still look back on with fond memories, was in the summer of 2010 when we went up to LaCrete and Fort Vermilion with Spirit of the Peace. I’m sure some of the readers of this magazine will remember it as well! It was always a pleasure to travel with Mary. She knew so much about the history and people and was as eager to share that knowledge as I was to soak it all up.



It was in my first year of working at SPRA that Mary started the ever popular “Telling Our Stories” newsletter. It was important to her that the stories in the Archives made it out and could be enjoyed. She

often talked about not wanting the material we were entrusted with to disappear into the “black hole of the archives”. We also did a lot of outreach activities like the Film and Story Night and Cemetery Tours to help those community stories get out there.

I attended my first PCHS meeting in the fall of 2009, encouraged to attend by Mary and Karen. Over the next couple of years, I served as a board member, including vice-president, starting in April 2011. I also had a stint editing this newsletter, which Mary supported by allowing me to use SPRA resources and some work time. Mary and I went together to the second PCHS symposium in Fairview a couple of years later.



In a way, I can also credit Mary with having a hand in seeing me happily married. It was Mary who found an advertisement in her church newsletter for a singles group and encouraged me to go. It was Mary who then had to ride along with me on the rollercoaster of courtship, early marriage, and step-kid stuff. She was one of my trusted support people and continued to be my friend after my new family and I moved away from Grande Prairie in 2016. We visited with her and Jeff on our trips back to Grande Prairie and she was always so hospitable, welcoming us into her home for lunch and to catch up. I probably also have Mary to thank for a good reference, which allowed me to get my current job at the Northwest Territories Archives here in Yellowknife.

Perhaps not many of you know this, because it’s not the sort of topic that usually comes up in meetings,

but Mary was a strong Christian. She might not have said it in so many words, but the way she treated people and the way she lived is a testament to the faith that underpinned her life.



Mary’s interest in history reached far beyond her professional responsibilities and showed itself in many ways, one of which was her involvement in PCHS, particularly after her retirement from SPRA. She touched this community in so many ways. I am blessed to say that she was both my colleague and my friend.

In Memory of Mary Nutting

I first met Mary when she was the Executive Director of the South Peace Regional Archives. Mary's expertise in that capacity was nothing short of phenomenal. It always amazed me how she knew everything that was on deposit at the Archives. She would go above and beyond to find out additional information/resources regarding any topic that was being researched. Mary certainly spurred my interest in recording the history of my local area – a community in which I have lived all my life. She was there to coach, teach and more importantly, to encourage in a way that only Mary could do.

I was so pleased to hear that Mary had retired; however, I knew she would not be idle for long. The Peace Country Historical Society is what it is today thanks to Mary. She ensured that policies and procedures were in place, recruited board members (including me) and increased memberships substantially. I could go on and on.

In closing, it was the utmost pleasure and privilege to have worked with Mary. Her knowledge of the history of area and her willingness to share this knowledge has inspired many of us to preserve and record the history of our local Communities. She had a very special way of interacting with everyone – she was a leader among leaders. Mary was one in a million and will be sadly missed by everyone who was fortunate enough to have known her.

Wanda Zenner Friend, co-volunteer, Treasurer
PCHS

Mary Nutting A personal Recollection – David W. Leonard

I first met Mary Nutting when interest began to grow about the establishment of an archives for the Grande Prairie area, about 20 years ago. I knew then she could be an important player in the cause due to the informed nature of her comments at public meetings. Then, when I learned that she had been appointed the first director of the South Peace Regional Archives, I was delighted because she combined the three essential criteria necessary for a successful director – dedication to the archival profession, dedication to the community, and dedication to preserving and revealing an understanding of the history of that community. Mary combined them all.

Mary's interest in the history of the south Peace River Country seemed to grow with her service to the Archives. This was telling in the substantial newsletter she produced, *Telling Our Stories*, which emphasized how even small archival collections could reflect aspects of the rich history of our region. Her interest led her to publish several histories of the south Peace. *A Grande Education* in particular stands out, detailing the development of each of the various school districts in the County of Grande Prairie during the early-mid 20th century.

With her sharp analytical mind and knowledge of history, it was not surprising that Mary should have emerged as the president of the Peace Country Historical Society upon her retirement from the Archives. She was a dynamic director, elevating the profile of the society with publications, public presentations, and administrative expertise and initiative. She continued as a strong president even after the first infliction of cancer, and continued in this capacity until finally befallen by disease in late April.

A Story of Appreciation - ‘Dedicated to Mary’ By Fran Moore

As a child of the South Peace, I was very interested in our joint Peace History. The opening of the Archives in 2000 was a red-letter day, and by 2007 it had become the South Peace Regional Archives.

Leading the way was Mary Nutting, and with a board of good like-minded persons, she led the way, with knowledge and energy. She was dedicated to the business of collecting artifacts from all across the South Peace. She also led the way to the enjoyment of the process, organizing functions of many kinds. Functions for fun, and for fund raising for the society.

I learned much from Mary and appreciated her hard work in this big job of starting our local regional archives, and her ability to bring the folks together to celebrate our history. Her dedication was exceptional.

I was fortunate to be one of the people who was able to spend time in Mary’s presence while I was working for the DeBolt & District Pioneer Museum, the Spirit of the Peace: Museums Network and the Peace Country Historical Society.

Being on the executive of these associations with Mary, I was so very privileged to spend time with her. At her dining room table when we were working on some project, or another. Over a cup of coffee and probably a cookie, we would work out reports and agendas for our common historic interest.

My daughter, Bernice Gerwatoski, reminded me of our trip to Dawson Creek and Tumbler Ridge for a Spirit of the Peace meeting. Mary always tried to attend these regional quarterly meetings, wherever they were in the museums across the Peace

I also spent some time as her passenger, touring our local area cemeteries, and was always impressed with her knowledge of every area of the South Peace. She knew ever little road and the stories that went with them.

She has left us too soon, and not of her choosing, her health just gave way. She still had the great knowledge and the Spirit of the Peace, to share with us. We will miss her, forever.

Mary Nutting Remembered

Pat Wearmouth

Mary and I first met in the late 1990s at a lecture on Peace Country history given by Dr. David Leonard. Some years later we met again when I began to volunteer at the South Peace Regional Archives. Mary by then had become one of the founders of the Archives and its Director. Later still, the Peace Country Historical Society was formed, and we then had another point of contact. My remembrances of Mary come from working with her in those two organizations.

Mary was at home in the Archives. She was surrounded by the many local stories told in the documents and photographs to be found there. As others have noted as well, she often spoke about the importance of those stories, and was determined that they would be remembered, recorded, and told again. She

steadfastly worked towards fulfilling these goals. Besides managing the Archives and staff, Mary herself either wrote or was involved in several publications that featured those stories.

She was also very effective at managing volunteers who worked at the Archives. You knew that Mary always had a plan in mind for the work needing to be done. But she took the time to find out a volunteer's interests, and encouraged them to choose and take ownership in a project that interested them.

I was lucky in that respect. I expressed an interest in getting out and about, so my first assignment from Mary was to write articles for the Archive newsletter. Mary had started a series in the newsletter about the small communities that had thrived during early years of settlement in the South Peace. Although now diminished, she understood their importance of their place in local history. I was able to travel to various locales, and to talk to people who knew the historical details, a task I very much enjoyed.

Mary hand drew maps that went along with these articles. She did this to encourage people to go for a drive and see for themselves, the history in these places. Mary would also give guidance in her quiet way by lightly editing the articles. But she often stated that she did not feel it was her place to change the writing style. Would be writers were encouraged to learn what worked for them. It was always a work in progress.

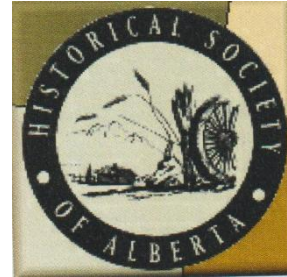
When the Peace Country Historical Society was formed, Mary found another avenue to use to in promoting local history. She eventually took the President's role, and worked to expand the Society's objectives and goals. She was particularly interested in developing presentations that could be given to the public, and thereby spread the word. She continually looked for stories that would work in that forum.

An example of Mary's determination and perseverance in this regard was a presentation developed about the death of two young men while fighting a forest fire near Webster in 1944. Although the story had been written about a few times over the years, Mary became interested in developing a presentation for a public talk. She worked on and off for at least three years to bring a new version of the story to light. A large audience heard that story in 2019, the 75th anniversary year of the fire. Others made the presentation, and although Mary was acknowledged, perhaps not many in the audience understood how much of her work had gone into it. She sat quietly to one side of the room that day.

These are some of the things that I will remember about Mary. I appreciated her very much as a mentor within the history community. I feel very fortunate in having known her for the time that I did. She was a fine person.



Membership Information



This membership is ___ new ___ a renewal

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Publication preference (Newsletters and Alberta History) Postal _____, email _____

Individual Membership: \$15.00 \$ _____

Alberta History Subscription only: \$25.00 \$ _____

Membership and *Alberta History* Subscription: \$35 \$ _____

Family Membership: \$25 \$ _____

Alberta History Subscription only: \$25.00 \$ _____

Affiliate Membership (school/ museum/library) \$55 \$ _____

Affiliate Membership (corporation/foundation) and subscription \$120.00 \$ _____

I wish to donate to the: PCHS Projects \$ _____

HSA Endowment Fund \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to:

The Historical Society of Alberta
and mail to

P.O. Box 4035 Station "C"

Calgary, Alberta T2T 5M9