

RITCHIE & BARBARA McRAE

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada



Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie McRae and family



A pioneer Grande Prairie couple have entered their 51st year of married life.

Mr. and Mrs. **Ritchie McRae**, who were married in Grande Prairie in 1914, marked their golden wedding anniversary at a celebration at the York Hotel banquet room.

They were married by Rev. A. Forbes, a pioneer Grande

Prairie Presbyterian minister.

Mrs. McRae came to Canada at the age of five with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C.T. Twombly. They came to the Peace River district over the long trail via Slave Lake and Dunvegan, settling near Clairmont.

Mr. McRae came to the district over the Edson Trail in

1911. He homesteaded four miles from Clairmont and the couple still live there.

Five of the couple's six children are still living. They are Mrs. Ethel Penson, of Kelowna, Elma Boe, Grande Prairie, Edgar, Vancouver, **Ritchie**, Grande Prairie, and Frances, Fort St. John.

There are 14 grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

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Parlee - McRae

An afternoon double ring ceremony performed by Reverend Grymaloski recently, united in marriage Clara Vivian McRae, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie McRae, and Alfred Philip Parlee. The ceremony was performed in the Bethel Baptist Church, in Grande Prairie.

The bride, given in marriage by her father, entered the church wearing a gown of faille taffeta, with nylon lace bodice, and slender lily point sleeves. Over the full skirt a scalloped nylon lace overskirt ended in a graceful train. She carried a cascading bouquet of pink roses.

The bridal attendants, Esther Schadeck, Diane Schlosser and Charlotte Bauman, wore lace covered street length taffeta dresses with matching accessories in pink, yellow and mauve respectively.

Groomsmen were Joe Kish, Al Schlosser and Dan Parlee. Ushers were Larry Boe, and Paul Grymaloski.

During the signing of the register, Mrs. Wayne Garant and Linton Parlee, brother and sister of the groom sang "When God Gave Me You."

At a banquet reception in the Park Hotel, the bride's mother greeted the guests wearing a gown of gold lame, with a white

corsage. Mrs. Parlee, Mother of the groom wore a double knit suit of deep rose, accented by a white corsage.

Master of ceremonies was Wayne Garant. The toast to the bride, proposed by Herb Crerar, was responded by the groom.

After a honeymoon, spent in Banff, Jasper, and points in the Okanagan, the newlyweds will make their home in Sexsmith.

PIONEER DAYS



LAKE SASKATOON ANNUAL PICNIC 1936 — Standing back row (left) L. V. Macklin, Jim Somerville, Mrs. J. Somerville, next person not known, Mrs. Paul Flint, Paul Flint, Jim McFarlane, and

Charles Cowpar, Seated front row (left) Alice Lozron, Jim Somerville's daughter Rosemary, Mrs. Jack Sutherland, Walter McFarlane, Mrs. **Ritchie McRae**, Fred Roberts, Mrs. Henry Roberts, Mrs. Elsie

Bessent, Pauline Johnson, Henry Roberts, Alec Monkman, Mrs. Fred Roberts, Mrs. Alec Monkman, and George Tate. Seated in the car are Bert Bessent and twin sons, Bob and Bill. — Photo courtesy G. V. Carveth.

By MARY DYKSTRA

If you ever sit down with an oldtimer just for a chat, a lot of history will unfold.

And that's what the Grande Prairie and District Oldtimers' Association is all about.

Secretary of the association Gerald Carveth of the city puts it this way:

"When they began the organization in 1928, it was mainly to get a record about all the oldtimers in the district ... to collect pictures and stories from them. It was also to keep in contact with them in later years."

At that time the association had 46 members. Two years later it had the largest number of oldtimers ever in the 33 years of its establishment, 327.

In 1964 it tapered off to only 17 members, with a steady climb since.

"During the past three years, we've had a great increase in the association," Mr. Carveth said. "In 1968

there were 239 persons who joined, with an additional member joining the following year. Last year we had 221 members."

The reason for the increase, Mr. Carveth explained, was because the younger succeeding generations of the oldtimers were allowed to obtain the Oldtimer's Scroll.

"It was just an addition to the original constitution," he said.

Approximately 50 per cent of the members now with the association are those descendants of the oldtimers.

"The young people are really showing a lot of interest now, but we still have a few more oldtimers than we do of the succeeding generations," he said.

"Perhaps one day the younger members will outnumber the older people."

Since the 1971 Age of Majority Act reduced the adult age to 18 years, persons of that age and over are

able to join the Association. Prior to the Act becoming effective the first of this month, members had to be 21 years or older.

Oldtimers eligible for the scroll are those who came into the Peace Country before March 1916 or before the construction of the railway.

"We are having a few problems with this deadline," Mr. Carveth said. "Some of the members feel that if a person has been in the country for 50 years now, they should be considered an oldtimer."

He added that some men who came before 1916 are considered oldtimers, but their wives who came just a few years later, are not considered oldtimers. Yet their grandchildren are eligible for the Oldtimer's Scroll, because they are descendants or part of the succeeding generation.

"However, we have to draw the line somewhere and with the railway coming in then, 1916 seems to be a

definite cutoff."

Three of the original 1928 officers are still living. These are W.L. Caldwell who was the first president, Mrs. Hugh Allen of Beaverlodge and Hilmar Johnson of Northfield, who were two of the first directors.

"We still have members who are now living in England, California, Ontario and B.C.," Mr. Carveth said. "It's just that they pioneered here at one time and just want to keep their membership because they are proud of it."

Pride is the main reason why many members of succeeding generations belong to the association also, he added.

Mr. Carveth came into the Peace Country in the spring of 1912. He travelled over the Edson Trail with an ox team and wagon.

"It took us three weeks to come up here. In a lot of places, particularly the hills, it would take the better part of a day to go over

them. We had four teams and four sleighs and on the hills we'd have to hook all teams on each sleigh ... some of those hills were a couple of miles long."

Mr. Carveth's wife did not arrive in the district until 1913.

The association covers the South Peace, while Fairview association covers the North Peace.

"Throughout the years we've collected a lot of good stories from some of the oldtimers, which we hope to someday make into a book. However, in the first year, they did not do any writings at all ..."

The association was organized by J.J.E. Clark and Mr. Caldwell and 43 years later the constitution with a few revisions, still stands.

Throughout the years the association has issued more than 900 scrolls. Today it has 116 pioneer members.

Only during the depression years, was the fee reduced to 50 cents.



Mr. and Mrs. **Ritchie McRae**

Mark Diamond Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. **Ritchie McRae** celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in Grande Prairie recently.

Mr. **McRae**, now 83, first came to the Peace Country in 1909 from Selkirk, Man. and met Mrs. **McRae**, now 78, who arrived here with her parents from the United States in 1911.

They were married in a

small log cabin just east of Clairmont Lake Dec. 30, 1914, and then farmed a homestead three miles northeast of Grande Prairie, where they still live today.

One of the highlights of the anniversary celebrations was the presence of Nicole Smart, aged two months, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Smart of

Kelowna, B.C., the only great-great grandchild of the **McRae's** and as such represented five generations.

Congratulatory telegrams were received from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Prime Minister Trudeau, Governor-General Jules Leger, Premier Peter Lougheed and John Diefenbaker.



Charlie Wales (left) and **Ritchie McRae** handle the sawing chores while Bob Rycroft Sr. wields a paint brush as a rest area of the new fairgrounds takes shape.

Site for Oldtimers Picnic

Rest area at fairgrounds

BY GARY HICKLING
of our staff

The Grande Prairie and District Oldtimers Association is patting the finishing touches to a haven for tired feet at the new fairgrounds southeast of the city.

Construction of a 30 by 40 foot rest area just west of the grandstands and east of the midway and loggers bowl is proceeding with volunteer labor. The new structure, featuring a kitchen and restrooms as well as a place to rest weary bones, will also be the site for the annual Oldtimers Picnic July 11.

The 55th annual picnic, started in 1928 and traditionally held at Lake Saskatoon or, in earlier years, at Bensons Point, features many aspects of old-fashioned fun such as tug of wars, three-legged races and an oldtimers dance.

Participants bring their own picnic baskets, but tables and coffee will be available. Another tradition features the music of the Beaverlodge Band which has played at the picnic for a number of years.

The event is an opportunity to meet friends and visit. It will start around 1 p.m.

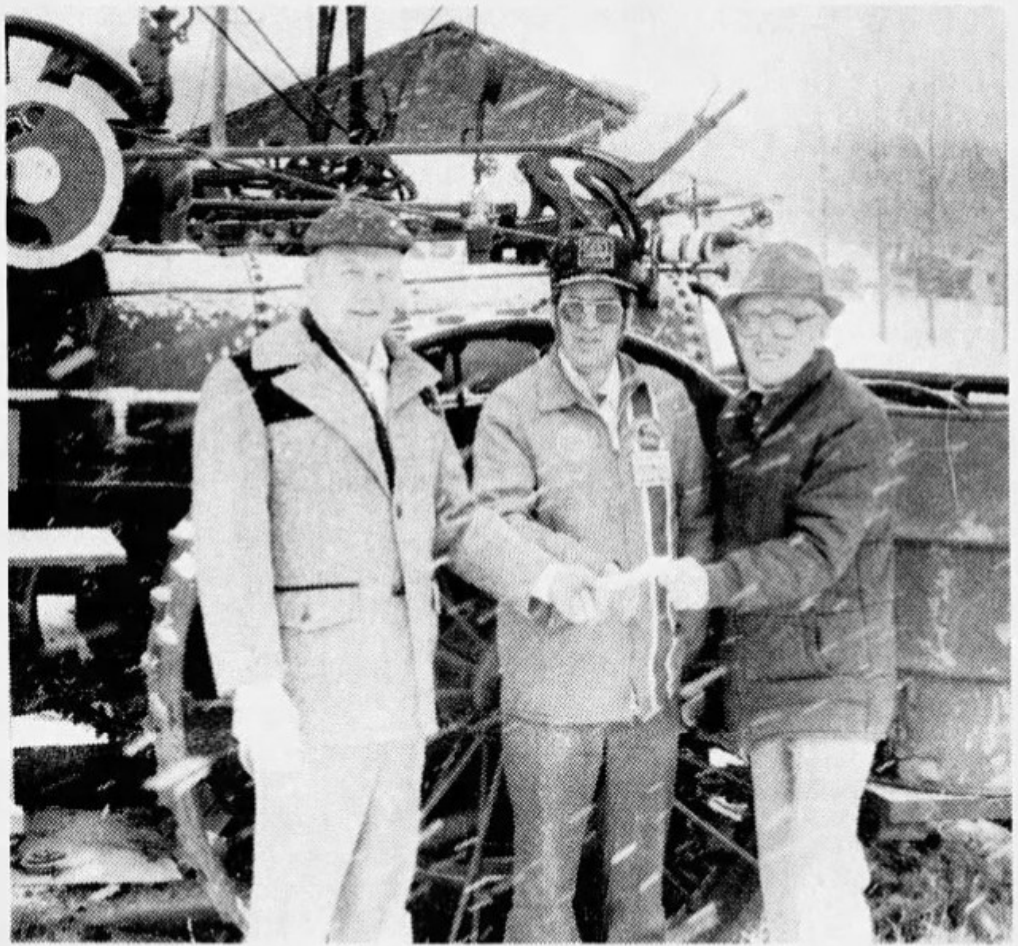
The association has built up funds over the

years for a building it can call its own, and, as one member said "it's been a long, long time".

More information about the picnic may be obtained from any member of the executive including president Graham McFarland, secretary Violet Patterson, vice-president Kathleen Mackey or the board of directors including past president Gordon Moon, Charles Wales, Richard McRae, Jean Rooney, Bob Rycroft Sr., Oscar Gudlaugson, Ivan Badger, Frank Stoll, Mary McKeeman, Jack Gaudin, Don Sherk, Alf Moon and Earl Lossing.

Museum donation

Ritchie McRae (left), president of the GP and District Oldtimers' Association, presents a \$1,000 cheque to Gordon McLean of the South Peace Centennial Museum along with oldtimer Oscar Gudlaugson (right). The money will restore a snowplane originally built in Clairmont in the mid-1930s and which saw extensive use as an emergency vehicle under the ownership of Rudolph Olson of LaGlance. Once restored it will be displayed at the South Peace museum, near Beaverlodge.



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Putting it back together...



Assessing what will be a several month's project are Frank Stoll and Doug Clarkson (standing behind Frank) in the field last fall.

...old threshing machine presents challenge

A working restoration of a vintage threshing machine is evolving from a pile of rusted metal and rotted wood.

Originally built about 1890, the machine was donated to Grande Prairie's Pioneer Museum last fall, and a crew of volunteers took on the project of dismantling and organizing the various parts.

"It was a full days' work for four of us," said Charlie Wales, one of those on the expedition to donor Alton Peebles' farm.

The crew of museum society members and volunteers includes Wales, Frank Stoll, Walter Head, Clarence Boyer, Ritchie McRae, Doug Clarkson and Guy Ireland.

Over the winter, the crew has steadily replaced each wooden part, painstakingly reproduced from the original remains or from period photographs of the machines. The metal gears, main cylinder and joints have been sanded and refinished.

The project, which should be completed about the end of March, was made possible through a \$2,450 grant from the Alberta Museums Association.

When complete, the threshing machine will be 18 feet overall, with a 12-½-foot-long box. It was a stationary machine, having no wheels, and was fed by hand.