Humans: Their Demographics, Employment, & Infrastructure

Chapter 6

Prepared by David Leonard, Brad Stelfox, and Bob Wynes

Summary Points

- People have resided in northwest Alberta since the retreat of glacial ice sheets 7–10 thousands years ago. In the 18th century, the predominant culture of northwest Alberta was the Beaver Nation. To the west were Sekani and to the north were Slavey, all of them Athapascan in origin.
- Prior to the mid-1800's nearly all people in northwest Alberta were aboriginal (primarily Beaver and Cree) and lived a lifestyle characterized by small, dispersed, nomadic communities. In 1899-1900, Treaty 8 was signed by the First Nations of the region, and scrip distributed to the Metis. Aboriginal people are now mainly sedentary and occupy Indian reserves and Metis settlements which vary from small (<100 ha: Jackfish Point Indian Reserve) to very large (>170,000 ha: Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement). Today, many aboriginal people choose to live off reserves.
- The fur trade brought vast changes to the life-style of the Beaver, particularly in social organization which was no longer tribal. The Beaver suffered much by way of disease and starvation throughout the 19th century, and many thought they would not survive as a people. By the turn of the century, there were fewer than 500 Beaver in the Peace River Country.
- Euro-Canadian people, initially attracted by fur-trading, prospecting, and agricultural opportunities have increased steadily in number during the last 1.5 centuries and now outnumber aboriginal people by 10–12:1.
- Transportation has always been a concern to people in the Peace River Country. The first arteries of the region were the rivers, in particular the Peace River. Initially, land travel had been on foot, but, by the 1820's, horses were common in the area, and were used by the Indians. During the early fur trade era, york boats were common, but, with their limited carrying capacity, they came to be replaced by scows and barges. In 1882, steamboat traffic began on the Peace east of Fort Vermilion. By the 1880's, most travelers used the Athabasca Landing Trail from Edmonton, then went up the Athabasca and Lesser Slave Rivers to Lesser Slave Lake, and then, from the west end of the lake, took an old trail to Peace River Crossing. The Peace was then crossed, and the travelers proceeded on land to Dunvegan.
- Prior to the mid-1960's, the Euro-Canadian population of northwest Alberta was largely rural in distribution and dependant on an agricultural lifestyle. While agriculture continues to be an important direct or indirect employer, farms have become progressively fewer and larger, and populations residing in urban settings are now approximately equal to those living on farms or rural settings.
- The people of northwest Alberta, in comparison to the rest of Alberta or Canada, are relatively young, have high birth rates, and low death rates. The young population of northwest Alberta is attributed to immigration episodes related to the emergence of the energy and forestry sectors.
- In terms of work force size, the larger employers in northwest Alberta are, in declining order: agriculture, retail trade, education services, health services, construction services, and the oil and gas sector.

Table of Contents

Summary Points....1

Table of Contents....2

List of Tables....3

List of Figures....3

The Human Population....4

- The First Nations – A Historical Overview....4
  - Reference Sources....16
- Historical Trends in Human Populations....18
  - Population Size....18
  - A Transition from Rural to Urban Distribution....18
  - Towns and Cities....19
  - Indian Reserves and Metis Settlements....19
- Human Resource Values....30
  - Significant Historic Sites....30
- Age Class Structure....31
- Natality, Mortality, and Rates of Change in Human Populations....35
- Employment Structures....37

Transportation and Utilities Infrastructure....39

- The History of the Transportation Network in northwest Alberta....39
- Current Road and Railway Network....58
- Aviation Network....60

Electrical Grid Network....60

Communications and Utilities; A Historical Review....63

References....70

- General Cited References....70
- Archival Sources Cited....70
- Reference Sources....71
- General References on Human Populations....72

List of Tables

Table 1. Human population trends in Alberta, northwest Alberta, and Indian Reservations between 1921–1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 20

Table 2. Population size of towns and villages in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 23

Table 3. Population size of rural municipal districts in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 24

Table 4. Distribution of human population in northwest Alberta (1961–1991). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 26

Table 5. Trends in urban and rural populations in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 26

Table 6. Trends in urban and rural populations in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 27

Table 7. Location and date of incorporation of communities in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency. 27

Table 8. Area, population, relevant treaty and establishment of Indian reserves and Metis settlements in northwest Alberta. Whereas reserve area only includes that portion north of 56° and west of 114°, band size includes all residents and not just those north of 56° and west of 114. Data Source: Gov. of Alberta. 28

Table 9. Frequency of historic sites of each human resource value (HRV) found in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Historic Site Services, Alberta Provincial Government. 31

Table 10. 1991 Age class structure of northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 32

Table 11. Indices of aging in the Mackenzie Region, Alberta, Canada, and the towns, villages and municipal districts (M.D) of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 33

Table 12. Human demographics indicators (child/1000 women, natural rate of increase, and crude death rate for northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada in 1991. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 35

Table 13. Length of low and high grade roads in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. 59

List of Figures

Figure 1. A wikiup, or summer lodge used by the Beaver Indians. Data Source: GAA NA 938-10. 12

Figure 2. A Beaver Indian camp in winter. Data Source: GAA 1315-23. 12

Figure 3. A Cree encampment along the Shaftesbury Trail. Data Source: PAA A. 3489. 13

Figure 4. Signing Treaty 8 at Peace River Crossing in 1899 was Duncan Tustawits, here with his wife and daughter. C. 1910. Data Source: GAA NA 1440-8. 13

Figure 5. Slavey Indians from the Hay River at Fort Vermilion in 1900. Data Source: GAA NA 4035-109. 14

Figure 6. Treaty time in the Peace River Country, 1904. Data Source: GAA NA2617-49. 14

Figure 7. The Chief at Sturgeon Lake in 1912 was Mr. Hamelin. Data Source: 15

Figure 8. The Reserve surveyed at Sturgeon Lake showing land in severalty. Topographic Survey of Canada, 1914. Data Source: 15

Figure 9. Map of Treaty 8 in western Canada, 1900. Data Source: 16

Figure 10. Trends in human population in Alberta and northwest Alberta between 1921 and 1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 21

Figure 11. Trends in human population on Indian reservations between 1921 and 1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 21

Figure 12. Municipal districts of the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 22

Figure 13. Municipal districts of the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 22

Figure 14. Municipal districts of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 22

Figure 15. Changes in human populations in towns of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 25
Figure 16. Changes in human populations in villages of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 25
Figure 17. Changes in human populations in rural municipal districts of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 25
Figure 18. Changes in human population growth rate of urban and rural communities in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 25
Figure 19. Distribution of human population in northwest Alberta in 1991. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 26
Figure 20. Changes in populations of urban and rural settings in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 26
Figure 21. Contribution of urban and rural settings to total human population in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 26
Figure 22. Human population trends in Indian reserves, and rural and urban communities. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 27
Figure 23. 1991 Ranking of population size of towns, Indian reserves, and improvement districts in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 27
Figure 24. Settlements in the P1 and P2 FMUs. Data Source: DMI GIS Library. 27
Figure 25. Settlements in the PRPD FMA. Data Source: DMI GIS Library. 28
Figure 26. Settlements in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library. 28
Figure 27. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI Woodlands Department. 29
Figure 28. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in the PRPD FMA in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library. 29
Figure 29. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library. 29
Figure 30. Frequency of historic site categories in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Historic Site Services, Alberta Provincial Government. 31
Figure 31. 1991 human age class distribution in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 33
Figure 32. 1991 human age class distribution in Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 33
Figure 33. 1991 human age class distribution in Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 33
Figure 34. Index of aging (# people 65+ yrs / # people <14 yrs)*100) for the Mackenzie Region, Alberta, and Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 34
Figure 35. Index of aging for towns, villages, and municipal districts of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 34
Figure 36. Children/women ratio in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = # of children (0–4 yrs) / 1000 women (15–44 yrs). Data Source: Statistics Canada. 35
Figure 37. Crude human death rate in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = ((# of births – # of deaths) / total population)*1000. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 36
Figure 38. Natural rate of increase in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = (# of births / total population)*1000. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 36
Figure 39. Number of full-time and part-time male and female employees in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 38
Figure 40. Average income of full-time and part-time male and female employees in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 38
Figure 41. Ranking of work force in different occupations in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada. 38
Figure 42. A route proposed for the CPR. CPR Annual Report, 1879. Data Source: 51
Figure 43. The Vermilion Chutes, c.1900. Data Source: PAA B.3017 51
Figure 44. The Knistineaux war road, drawn by Alexander Mackenzie, 1801. Data Source: 52
Figure 45. A red river cart. Data Source: PAA A.1321 52

Figure 46. The Chalmers Trail, 1900. Data Source: GAA NA-4035-108 ... 53
Figure 47. The *SS Slave River* in 1912. Data Source: PAA A10,172 ... 53
Figure 48. A prairie schooner. Data Source: PAA A.5380 ... 54
Figure 49. Petitioning for a road to Grande Prairie, 1906. Data Source: PAA 67.303/35/8 ... 54
Figure 50. From Mundy's "Northern Directory", 1913. Data Source: ... 55
Figure 51. Newspaper article describing planned rail development in Alberta. Data Source: ... 55
Figure 52. A derailment on the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Line, c.1920. Data Source: PAA A.2232 ... 56
Figure 53. Bringing the first car into Grande Prairie, 1913. Data Source: GAA NA-3869-21 ... 56
Figure 54. On Alberta Highway #2 en route to Grande Prairie, 1934. Data Source: PAA A.6905 ... 56
Figure 55. Mile Zero of the MacKenzie Highway, c.1906. Data Source: PAA A.11,179 ... 57
Figure 56. Total distance of roads in PRPD FMA. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 59
Figure 57. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 58. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade roads in the PRPD FMA. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 59. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade roads in northwest Alberta. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 60. Major road and railway network in P1 and P2. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 61. Major road and railway network in the PRPD FMA. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 62. Major road and railway network in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 63. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 64. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 65. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 60
Figure 66. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 61
Figure 67. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 61
Figure 68. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset. ... 62
Figure 69. The mail stage of J.B. Taft at Beaverlodge (Lake Saskatoon), 1911. Data Source: PAA A. 7178. ... 67
Figure 70. Reading the mail in the Peace River Country, C. 1912. Data Source: PAA A. 2535. ... 67
Figure 71. The telegraph station at Peace River, 1914. Data Source: PAA A. 8136. ... 68
Figure 72. An oil well west of Peace River, late 1920's. Data Source: PAA P. 5950. ... 68
Figure 73. Building the new Grande Prairie Post Office, 1952. Data Source: PAA A. 5318. ... 69

The Human Population

The First Nations – A Historical Overview

Since at least 9,000 years ago, the region now comprising northwest Alberta has been occupied by people. Atop Saskatoon Mountain and in a cave near Charlie Lake, British Columbia archaeologists have uncovered not only fireplaces and stone tools, but even what appears to have been a bone bead dating from between 8,000 and 9,000 years ago. The latter find is particularly intriguing in that it indicates, even during this early period, that people in the region were decorating themselves.

Until a few years ago, the conventional theory on the human inhabitation of the region, and indeed all of North America, was that people had made their way from Siberia across an ice bridge, then headed south along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The eastern slopes then provided a corridor between the mountains and the remnants of vast glaciers which still occupied the boreal regions. However, recent discoveries further southward indicate the presence of human activity there as early as 15,000 years ago, when the ice-free corridor did not exist. This has led some scholars to the theory that at least some of the people who had crossed over the Siberian ice bridge had continued southward along the Pacific coast, and then penetrated the Rockies and settled the continent from the West. By this theory, the first people of northwest Alberta would have been migrants from the South.

Regardless of their origin, by 4,000 B.C., people were occupying the northwest portion of Alberta in large numbers. This was subsequent to the Mazama volcano which had devastated life all over the western portion of North America in about 4,800 B.C. Arrowheads found in the area, dating from various times during the next several millennia, reveal a nomadic people, for few of these artifacts were from rock indigenous to the region. This indicates the possibility of large scale pre-historic trade in the West.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, various Athapascan peoples made their way westward from the land around Lake Athabasca to settle in the upper Peace River region. Some, such as the Sarcees and the Apaches, continued southward and settled in the foothills of what is now southern Alberta and the southwestern United States respectively. By the end of the 18th century, the upper Peace River Country was occupied by bands of Beaver Indians, with a number of Sekani west of them in the foothills, and some Slavey to the north around present day Fort Nelson and Hay River. All of these people were of Athapascan origin, closely related to the Chipewyan.

The first documented account of these people was by Alexander Mackenzie, who traveled through the Peace River Country during 1792-93 on his famous voyage to the Pacific Ocean. While wintering at Fort Fork, some 10 km southeast of present day Peace River, Mackenzie made observations of, and was told many stories by, the resident Beaver population. Mackenzie's account reflects a cultural bias no doubt prevalent during his day. While his original writings might be seen by many as inflammatory, a picture emerges of polygamous relationships, hard working women, and agile male hunters. Those wishing to read Mackenzie's description of the Beaver People are directed to Voyage to the Pacific Ocean (1931).

By Mackenzie's time, the upper Peace River had, for years, been visited by bands of Cree from the East. According to Mackenzie, the Cree had:

> proceeded west by the Slave Lake on their war excursions, which they often repeated, even until the Beaver Indians had procured arms, which was the year 1782.... All the European articles [the Beaver] possessed, previous to the year 1780, were obtained from the Knisteneaux and Chipewyans who brought them from Fort Churchill. (Mackenzie, p.37)

This story would appear to have some foundation, for, ever since the Hudson's Bay Company had established York Factory on Hudson Bay in 1684, bands of Cree had made their way westward, seeking fur from the native populations. They would take this fur back to trade at York Factory or Fort Prince of Wales (Churchill). In time, bands of Iroquois from Quebec would also make their way west to engage in the same occupation. In 1778, the Company itself moved further inland to undertake trade from Cumberland House. This move had a rippling effect in that the Cree and Iroquois parties would themselves travel further westward to trade, and make more frequent incursions into the upper Peace River Country.

In 1788, Fort Chipewyan was established by Roderick Mackenzie on Lake Athabasca on behalf of a rival trading operation, the North-West Company, with a smaller post also erected at Fort Vermilion. With the successful excursion of Mackenzie to the Pacific coast five years later, the Nor'westers decided that the region of the upper Peace was ripe for the location of a series of trading posts. In 1801, a post was established at Rocky Mountain Portage (Hudson's Hope), and, during 1805-06, Dunvegan and Fort St.John were founded. Their principal clients were bands of the Beaver Nation, by now the dominant culture of the upper Peace River Country.

The success of the Nor'westers eventually drew the attention of their eastern rival, the Hudson's Bay Company, and, in 1815, the HBC built Fort Wedderburn on Lake Athabasca. In October, John Clarke led a party of HBC men up the Peace River in search of game and trading possibilities. Learning of this, the Nor'westers at Fort Vermilion dispatched an advance party of men up the river to scare away big game animals and warn the Indians not to trade with the HBC men. Clarke was forced to turn his trade goods over to the Nor'westers for food, and several of his followers defected. The others made their way back to Fort Wedderburn as best they could, with 16 of them reportedly dying of starvation. The following autumn, Archibald Macleod of the North West Company invaded Fort Wedderburn and dispatched Clarke and his men out of the country. (Morton, pp.516-18)

Undeterred, the Hudson's Bay Company sent over 100 men into the region in the spring of 1817 under Colin Robertson, and trading posts were erected at Colville House east of Fort Vermilion, St. Mary's House at the forks of the Peace and Smoky, and Fort d'Epinette east of Fort St. John. Tensions were high along the Peace River, and, in the fall of 1818, Nor'wester Samuel Black managed to capture Robertson and hold him captive at Fort Vermilion. In the spring, however, Robertson escaped to the safety of St. Mary's House from where he continued to direct business. Hostilities continued until the fall of 1820, when the two companies finally called a truce. The next year, they amalgamated under the single name of the Hudson's Bay Company. With the merger, several of the competing trading posts, such as Fort d'Epinette, St. Mary's House and Colville House, were shut down.

The effects of the conflict had reverberated in the native community, where various bands were associated with either one or other of the rival trading companies. Even prior to the rivalry, records reveal hostilities breaking out when certain native bands would enter the territory of others to effect trade. Tension did not immediately subside with the amalgamation, for the absence of competition meant that the HBC could stick to a set, and reduced price for fur. The fewer number of posts also meant that greater distances had to be traveled by the Indians in order to trade. When the HBC announced the pending closure of Fort St.John in 1823, trader Guy Hughes and four of his men were massacred, allegedly by a band of Beaver Indians. Outraged, the HBC closed Dunvegan for four years, after which time hostilities were noted to have subsided. With the re-opening of Dunvegan in 1828, the familiar pattern of trade resumed, with bands of Beaver Indians coming in, usually during spring and fall, to barter their meat and fur for the trade goods which were rapidly becoming a necessity.

Indeed, the fur trade period was bringing a traumatic alteration to the lifestyle of the Beaver. During the 18th century, these people are believed to have congregated in large numbers, with their principal source of food being the bison which roamed the prairies and parklands of the region, including the flats of the Peace River. As hunting the bison with spears, bows and arrows was best achieved by large parties of braves, it is probable that the Beaver then lived in tribal social structures. This appears to be confirmed by archaeological evidence of relatively large campgrounds. However, with the acquisition of firearms, hunting bison became relatively easy, so easy in fact that, during the early 19th century, this staple food source disappeared. As a result, the Beaver were forced to rely on non-herd woodland animals, particularly moose and deer. Killing these animals with firearms was not best achieved by large hunting parties, but rather by one or two braves, where stealth was of the essence.

This may have led to social disruption, for, by the 1820's, it is evident from the journals of the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company that the Beaver were then not living in tribal social units, but in small, independent bands, roaming wherever the prospect of food and fur would take them. Their acquisition of horses in the 1820's would have augmented their mobility and further encouraged social dislocation. As their staple prey was no longer the herd bison, these people were constantly on the move in search of fresher hunting grounds. Subsequent observers commented on their apparent lack of social organization, many referring also to "physical and moral collapse." (Faraud, p.7)

The arrival of the traders in the early 1800's may have contributed to social breakdown among the Beaver, for the more dependent they became upon European trade goods, the less dependent they were upon each other. As early as 1809, Daniel Harmon noted that "the great part of them are now clothed in European goods." (Harmon, p.153) By the 1820's, the Beaver chiefs were used to making regular excursions to Dunvegan, Fort St.John and Fort Vermilion for tea, flour, bacon, and other foods, as well as clothing, knives, axes, traps, tin pails, guns and ammunition. They also dealt directly with Company servants or freemen, usually Metis serving on behalf of the traders, at outposts of the forts. They bartered fur from their traplines or meat from their hunts.

Social disruption and a growing dependency upon European trade goods were compounded by the ravages of European diseases, and hunger caused by excessive game exploitation. This was in addition to the brutality of a harsh northern environment. By the 1840's, it appears that the Beaver were no longer the hearty people "afflicted with but few diseases" earlier described by Mackenzie. (Mackenzie, p.40) The early 19th century saw extreme havoc wrought upon these people as, year after year, stories about their wretched condition filled the journals of the Company traders at Dunvegan and elsewhere.

As early as 1802, a "disorder", or disease, was detected among the Beaver of the upper Peace River. (Wood, p.118) This was followed in 1803 by an "endemic disorder". In 1820, Colin Robertson noted that the Beaver near the forks of the Peace and Smoky Rivers had "naturally a delicate constitution," and that "nine out of ten dies of a rapid decline. The first symptom is the hollow cough, and when this once seizes them, four or five months puts a period to their existence." He noted that, of the Beaver doing business at Dunvegan the previous autumn, "there were only two men in that number that could be termed aged, and neither of these exceeded fifty or sixty years." (Wood, p.118)

Throughout the 1820's, "consumption" was detected on the upper Peace River, and, in 1827, whooping cough arrived, with nine Beaver dying at Dunvegan alone. (Wood, p.118) In the late 1830's, influenza was prevalent throughout the Northwest, and, in 1838, smallpox struck, causing the Beaver "a great state of excitement owing to sickness and death among them." (Campbell, 15 April, 1838) In 1851, an epidemic of influenza apparently killed at least 50 people in the region. (Krech, p.156)

Epidemics of influenza, smallpox, measles, whooping cough, scarlet fever and tuberculosis occurred periodically throughout the century, compounding the most persistent affliction of all, hunger. As early as 1821, "distressing news of starvation" was reported from the upper Peace River. (Connally) With the introduction of freemen into the region by the Hudson's Bay Company, the competition for fur as well as food became intense. By 1836, there were as many as 76 freemen trading at Dunvegan alone. (Wood, p.202) The year before, Colin Campbell recorded that the freeman, Bastonais, "arrived and informed me that they have seen nothing all winter owing to sickness and starvation." (Campbell) In 1841, the Company put a ban on the trapping of beaver which would last three years, but this did nothing to rectify the scarcity of other game. In 1843, from Fort Chipewyan, it was noted that the "news from Peace River are really distressing, we hear nothing but starvation and cannibalism." (Wood, p.126)

Periods of famine would plague the Beaver throughout the century. In 1859, Father Faraud noted from Dunvegan that "by their faces and gaunt and sickley complexions, one suspects that these people are on the path to decrepitude." (Faraud, p.7) In 1869, Father Tissier observed that "Everywhere one sees orphans abandoned to misery, the widows mourning the recent deaths of their husbands, making lugubrious and heart-rending cries." (Tissier) Three years later, the adventure writer, William Francis Butler, visited the area and predicted that the Beaver would "soon be extinct." (Butler, p.176) This was still the situation in 1890, when Chief Trader Ewen McDonald reported that:

> the situation among the Indians is a most serious matter and should be forcibly brought to the notice of the government, especially the Indians on the Peace River; they not only starve but in many cases are almost nude, and I fully believe a severe winter would sweep many of them from the face of the earth. (MacDonald)

The following year, Richard Hardisty the younger observed that:

> the Beaver Indians are disappearing very fast. In the last five years more than half of them died and very few children are growing up. They are highly scrofulous and consumptive and for a few years back suffered severely from starvation. Between this post [Dunvegan] and Grande Prairie outpost there remain only 25 hunters (men and boys). (Hardisty)

The actual population figures for the Beaver at this time are difficult to ascertain, for, by the turn of the century, many had migrated westward into British Columbia. Of those who remained in northwest Alberta, many had intermarried with, or were culturally assimilated by the Cree. During 1899-1900, 162 people described as Beaver Indians took treaty at Fort Vermilion, while 118 did so at Dunvegan. In 1905, a Beaver Reserve was surveyed north of Dunvegan, while several reserves were surveyed for the Beaver at Red River, Boyer River and Fort Vermilion during the 1920's. In the national census of 1901, which did not include Treaty Indians, only five individuals, in surveys conducted at Fort Vermilion, Peace River Crossing, Dunvegan, Spirit River, Sturgeon Lake and Grande Prairie, listed their mother tongue as Beaver, while 261 listed theirs as Cree.

Like many natives, the Beaver were to be ravaged by the international Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-19. So rapidly did they die off during that winter that, at certain locations, such as the reserve north of Dunvegan and at George Lake near present day Hines Creek, their corpses were simply wrapped in tarp and placed on platforms in the woods. The following spring, mass graves were dug for them. The Beaver were still noted for their fecundity however, and, during the 1920's, their population steadily grew. In 1929, they were estimated to be 590 in number, and, in 1970, at 719, with slightly more than half of them living in British Columbia. (Riddington, p.351)

In Alberta, most people who identify themselves as Beaver continue to live on reserves near Fort Vermilion. The large Beaver Reserve north of Dunvegan was sold in 1928 to accommodate incoming white settlers, as the railway had just arrived at the site of Fairview. This was probably not too traumatic an initiative, for few Indians were living on this open Reserve land, preferring instead the woodlands further north and west where they could continue their traditional livelihood of hunting, fishing and trapping. For some of these people, a small reserve was surveyed at Eureka River.

The other Beaver Reserve in the area was located at Horse Lake west of Hythe. This was surveyed in 1915 for the Indians on the Grande Prairie who had taken treaty at Dunvegan in 1900, and who were then thought to be living nearer Dunvegan. Today, these people still recognize their ties with the Beaver near Eureka River, and, in 1988, several families from the Horse Lake Reserve moved to join their cousins in the district east of Worsley. The mother tongue for these people is, however, Cree.

The Cree inhabitation of northwest Alberta had actually begun long before Alexander Mackenzie was told of their war and trading excursions to the region. Indeed, by this time, they were virtually the sole aboriginal occupants of the district around Lesser Slave Lake. As the 19th century progressed, bands of Cree continued to enter the Peace River Country to engage in the fur trade. By century's end, they would constitute the dominant aboriginal population in the region. Though the Beaver had been reluctant to intermarry with the Cree, they had, early on, adopted elements of Cree culture. Mackenzie noted that the religion of the Beaver "was of a contracted nature, and I never witnessed any ceremony of devotion which they had not borrowed from the Knisteneaux [Cree], their feasts and fasts being in imitation of that people." (Mackenzie, p.139)

During the middle part of the century, communities of Cree were to be found at the west end of Lesser Slave Lake, along the Peace River southeast of Peace River Crossing, and at Snipe Lake and Sturgeon Lake. With a severe smallpox epidemic breaking out in 1870 along the Saskatchewan River, several bands of Cree from that district made their way to the Peace River Country to avoid the plague. According to William Bompas at Dunvegan, "there are about 150 Cree Indians having arrived there this spring from the plains, having left their own country on the Saskatchewan through fear I think of the small pox there." (Bompas) Five years later, Donald Ross reported on "the wretched face of Dunvegan since the country began to be overrun by the Saskatchewan Freemen and Indians." (Ross) They were, however, now beginning to intermarry with the Beaver, particularly along the Peace River southeast of Peace River Crossing. (See Gordon, p.202)

Like the Beaver, the Cree hunted, fished, trapped, and engaged with the traders or their agents at the Lesser Slave Lake post and Dunvegan. They were less nomadic than the Beaver, and would prove more adaptable to agriculture. West of Lesser Slave Lake, a number of Cree were cultivating gardens by the 1870's, and, in 1879, George Dawson noted that the Cree at Sturgeon Lake were growing potatoes and other vegetables, and even some barley. (Dawson, pp.116-17) This barley would have been the first grain to be grown in northwest Alberta beyond the banks of the Peace River.

At Shaftesbury, 25 km southeast of Peace River Crossing, Reverend John Gough Brick established a farm in 1887, intended, ostensibly, to encourage the Cree along the Shaftesbury Trail towards farming. Although Brick expressed optimism at first, he soon became disappointed with the lack of response to his efforts. When he retired to New York in 1894, few of the Cree along the Trail could be described as farmers. (Leonard, 191-200) A similar operation had been instituted by Erastus Lawrence at Fort Vermilion in 1879, but the Irene Farm and Training School produced few farmers native to that district. As elsewhere in the Northwest, aboriginal acclimatization to agriculture would be a slow and incomplete process.

The first successful grain farms on the prairie lands of the region were undertaken by two Metis on the Grande Prairie during 1901-02. Alex Monkman, originally from the Red River, opened a trading post at Lake Saskatoon for the firm of Bredin & Cornwall in 1899; within three years, he was cultivating wheat along with his garden. Louis Calliou was a Metis of Iroquois descent who began cultivating wheat in the Highland Park area of present day Grande Prairie at about the same time. Calliou had recently settled on the southern edge of the Grande Prairie, to where, at mid-century, a number of what Fathers Tissier and Grouard called "Iroquois Metis" had migrated. (Tissier, 15 April, 1859; Grouard)

These Iroquois had moved to the area from settlements around Jasper House and Lac Ste. Anne. They were descendants from Iroquois bands from Quebec who had come west to join the fur trade in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. During the 1820's, their presence began to be noted by the chief traders at Dunvegan. By the twentieth century, many had married members of Cree communities and had effectively adopted Cree culture. Their Francophone names such as Cardinal, Gladue, Calliou, L'Hirondelle, Courtreoille, Challifoux and Bisson are among the most common amongst the natives of northwest Alberta today. During the 1890's, another wave of these people made their way to this area from Lac Ste Anne and settled around Flyingshot Lake, effectively beginning the community of Grande Prairie.

For all people in the region having some element of aboriginal ancestry, it was not until 1899 that the government sought to obtain an extinction of any native claim of ownership of the land by initiating Treaty #8. Delay of this undertaking had been due to several factors, the major ones being the relatively few numbers of natives, the considerable distances separating these people, and the fact that they did not live in tribal social structures, but in small, independent bands, and therefore did not recognize any 'chiefs' who could speak unequivocally on their behalf. However, by the spring of 1898, hordes of Klondikers were entering the region. Having no stake in the northern communities and pressed by difficult travelling conditions, many of these Klondikers took considerable liberty in a land bereft of law enforcement. Wild rumours were circulating about theft, horse stealing, dog poisoning, assault and even murder. Feeling that the North could be on the verge of large scale development, the federal government was persuaded that a settlement with the native peoples of the region was now imperative.

On 23 May, 1899, two commissions set out from Edmonton to the west end of Lesser Slave Lake. One was to negotiate a treaty, while the other was to issue scrip to people of mixed blood who had occupied the region for generations. Scrip notes would entitle the holders to either 240 acres of land or a valuation of $240 to be used towards the eventual purchase of Crown land. Conceptually, scrip was intended only for the Metis. However, because there were so many people in the region who did not know whether they had traces of European ancestry, provision was made for all people with any Indian blood to take either treaty or scrip.

During the summer of 1898, the Government had sent out missionaries and police to various Indian camps to explain that a treaty would be in their best interest. The missionaries had special incentive to do this, for the promise of education in the treaty would mean Government grants for church run schools. At first, it appeared that the northern Indians and Metis were opposed to a treaty. From Lesser Slave Lake, Sergeant Hetherington reported that a delegation headed by Colin Ghostkeeper and Sam Cunningham had approached the police to state their opposition, largely out of "fear of the game and fishing laws being enforced." (Hetherington Report, p.37) Also from Lesser Slave Lake, Reverend George Holmes reported that "the Indians both here and elsewhere are at present determined to refuse either 'treaty' or 'scrip' and to oppose any European settlement in this country." (Holmes) Father Constant Falher would later recall a similar mood from Wabasca. (Fumoleau, p.67) At Fort St. John, Reverend Henry Robinson announced that "none of the Beavers are in favour of the Treaty," while, at Peace River Crossing, Sergeant G.D. Butler reported that the Indians there "will fight before they take treaty." (Robinson, 10 July, 1899; G.D. Butler, p.76)) At Dunvegan, trader George Harvey reported that the Commissioners "will see only about 5 or 6 men here. The rest do not want treaty and are all out on the hunt for some months." (Harvey)

The natives were genuinely concerned that their traditional way of living would be disrupted. Reserves in particular were decried as it seemed they would limit their right to dwell where they pleased. Not living in tribal infrastructures, these people were opposed to the idea that their bands should be made to reside in close proximity to each other. They were also fearful that game laws would restrict their hunting and fishing practices. As Robinson explained, they "have been led to believe that if they took treaty they would be corralled like animals and not allowed to hunt only when the government gave them permission but that would not be for some years." (Robinson, 19 September, 1899) There was even a rumour afloat that taking treaty would subject the natives to the British military draft.

On the point of game laws, the government reserved the right to enforce them to protect various species, but, as to the location of reserve land, Interior Minister Clifford Sifton was willing to compromise, pointing out that "conditions in the North may make it desirable to depart from the old system, and if the Indians are agreeable, to provide land in severalty for them to the extent of 160 acres to each...." (Sifton) The people were also assured of their safety from the military draft and also exemption from taxation.

For other treaty provisions, broad discretionary powers were given to the Chief Commissioner, David Laird, who had considerable experience in dealing with the natives of western Canada. He had introduced the First Indian Act in the House of Commons and had served as both federal Minister of the Interior and Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories. In 1877, he had successfully negotiated Treaty #7 with the Blackfoot Confederacy. The other Commissioners were James Ross, Minister of Public Works in the Territorial Government, and J.A. McKenna, Private Secretary to the Superintendent-general of Indian Affairs. The Half-breed Scrip Commission was headed by Major James Walker, a retired North-west Mounted Police officer, and Arthur Cote, an administrator with the Department of the Interior.

Attached to the Commissions were various other officials and police, as well as the venerated Oblate priest, Father Albert Lacombe. Lacombe was joined at Lesser Slave Lake by Bishop Emile Grouard, while Reverends George Holmes and G.D. White were there to represent the Anglicans. All persuasive powers were put into effect, for the failure to secure a treaty at Lesser Slave Lake would no doubt reverberate throughout the North and hinder acceptance there as well.

The negotiations were begun on the morning of 20 June, when a throng of Cree from the region began to gather in front of the tents of the Commissioners just west of Willow Point. It was noted, however, that the Cree from Whitefish [now Utikuma] Lake had not come, while from Sturgeon Lake, only 22 people were present. After formalities, Laird explained his terms, and emphasized that the treaty was a “free offer; take it or not, just as you please. If you refuse it, there is no harm done; we will not be bad friends on that account.” (Mair, p.56) He further stressed that “you will be just as free after signing a treaty as you are now.” He went on to promise reserves to the extent of 640 acres for each family of five, or 160 acres for individuals opting for land in severalty. Each individual was to receive a signing bonus of $12, and $5 each year thereafter. The chiefs were to receive $25 per year, and councillors $15. The chiefs were also to be given a silver medal and a flag, and, every three years, a new suit of clothes; each councillor was also to be given a new suit of clothes every third year, “only not quite so good as that of the chief.” Equipment, supplies and training in farming were also a part of the package, as were medical treatment, police protection, and basic education for the children.

Following Laird’s speech, it was time for the Indians present to make comments and ask questions. Stepping forward was Keenooshayo, who had been elected to represent the resident Cree as Chief. In words translated by Albert Tate, he expressed caution, but promised, “I will consider carefully what you have said.” (Mair, p.60) Others then spoke, generally in favour of the terms, although some with reluctance, such as the Captain from Sturgeon Lake who said, “I am old now. It is indirectly through the Queen that we have lived. Others may think I am foolish for speaking as I do now. Let them speak as they like. I accept. “ (Mair, p.61)

Commissioner Ross then re-affirmed that there was “no intention to make you live on [reserves] if you don’t want to.” (Mair, p.61) He was followed by Father Lacombe who offered the traditional reassurance that “your forest and river life will not be changed by the treaty, and you will have your annuities as well, year by year, as long as the sun shines and the earth remains.” (Mair, p.63) After this promise, all who consented to the proposed treaty were asked to stand up. As reported by the Edmonton *Bulletin*, a local Headman named Felix Giroux then threatened to club anyone who would not stand up, whereupon, amid some laughter, all those present who wished to be identified as Treaty Indians stood up. (The Edmonton *Bulletin*, 6 July, 1899)

That evening, the terms of Treaty #8 were written down. When they were read aloud the next day, however, apprehension again surfaced. Apparently, Chief Keenooshayo rose and began to make a speech when, perceiving gestures of dissent from some of his people, he abruptly stopped and sat down. Reassurances were again provided as to reserves and game laws, after which the issue was put to a verbal vote. According to Henry Round who was present, this resulted in a “general shout of approval.” (Round) At about 6:00 p.m., six local leaders inscribed their ‘x’ on the Treaty document, becoming the first natives of the region to concur with the inevitability of settlement by outsiders. These included Keenooshayo, Moostoos, Wee Chee Way Sis, Felix Giroux, Charles Nesuetasis, and the Captain.

The warning by Commissioner Ross that, whether they signed or not, “the Whiteman is bound to come in and open up your country,” no doubt was a determining factor in this concurrence. (Mair, p.61) Without the Treaty signed, they would have received nothing. Another factor was the pressure exerted by so many northern Metis who wanted to take scrip; the Commissioners were insistent that no scrip could be issued unless a treaty was signed.

Following the signing, the Treaty Commission, which was two weeks behind schedule, split in two, with Commissioners Ross and McKenna heading straight for Dunvegan and Fort St.John, while David Laird and his party proceeded on to Peace River Crossing and Fort Vermilion. When they learned that the Beaver at Fort St.John had left to pursue their summer hunts, Ross and McKenna returned to Dunvegan where 34 Beaver accepted treaty under the signature of Chief Tatooses. The Commissioners then went on to take adhesions at Red River, Smith's Landing, Fort Chipewyan, For McMurray and Wabasca, while Laird took them at Peace River Crossing, Fort Vermilion and Fond du Lac. Signing at Peace River Crossing for some 47 of his people was the Cree Chief, Duncan Testawits, while, at Fort Vermilion, Treaty was taken for 150 Beaver by Chief Ambrose Tete-Noir and Headman Pierot Fournier. 65 Cree from the district also entered the Treaty when it was signed by Chief Kuis Kuis Kow Ca Poohoo.

At Lesser Slave Lake, with the departure of the Treaty Commissioners, the onerous business of scrip allotment was begun for those people with elements of aboriginal ancestry who, henceforward, would legally become Half-breeds. Scrip was in two forms: land scrip, which would give the holder 240 acres of land and what was called money scrip. The latter was especially attractive in that each note entitled the bearer to a valuation of $240 towards the purchase of Crown land anywhere. Certain 'entreprenneurs' were then on hand who expressed a willingness to purchase these notes for hard cash.

It had initially been the government's intention to make the scrip notes non-transferable, or not eligible for sale by the holder. However, so great was the insistence by the local Metis that the scrip be made transferable that the Commissioners gave way on the eve of the Treaty signing and agreed to alter the notes so that they might be sold. The Metis recognized that they could settle on Crown land anyway as squatters, or later as homesteaders. Scrip therefore had value to them only if it could be sold.

In the end, 1,195 people in the Treaty area were issued notes for money scrip in 1899; this included 562 at Lesser Slave Lake, 110 at Peace River Crossing, 53 at Dunvegan, 35 at Wolverine Point and 166 at Fort Vermilion. Most of the notes were immediately sold for cash, at rates usually less than half their value of $240. Forty-eight people in the region opted for land scrip, including 33 at Lesser Slave Lake, 8 at Dunvegan, and 2 at Fort Vermilion. On the other hand, 2,217 people were on record as having concurred with the terms of Treaty #8, including 246 at Lesser Slave Lake, 23 at Sturgeon Lake, 47 at Peace River Crossing, 34 at Dunvegan, 215 at Fort Vermilion, and 66 at Red River east of Fort Vermilion.

The government, however, was still not sure that a majority of the natives in the Treaty area had been reached. Therefore, in the summer of 1900, another Commission, headed by J.A. Macrae, traveled throughout the same region taking Treaty adhesions and issuing scrip. Adhering to the Treaty that summer were 10 people from Lesser Slave Lake, 95 from Sturgeon Lake, 20 from Peace River Crossing, 46 from Fort St. John, 75 from Dunvegan, 239 from Fort Vermilion and 9 from Little Red River. Most at Fort Vermilion were Slavey from the Hay River, none of whom had settled the previous year.

When the Commission of 1900 concluded its business, Macrae was certain that "the Indian title to the tract it covers may be fairly regarded as being extinguished." (Macrae, p.xli). The Government therefore felt safe in maintaining that the region of Treaty #8 could now be declared open for development by all comers. One area, however, was noted by Commissioner Macrae to have been missed. In his report, he stated that "there remains a number of persons leading an Indian life in the country north of Lesser Slave Lake, who have not accepted treaty as Indians, or scrip as half-breeds." These included the Cree of Whitefish Lake who would eventually sign in 1909, but also the Cree of Lubicon Lake, many of whose descendants would still have their claim for a settlement on the table 100 years later.

As a result of the settlement of 1899-1900, reserve land was owing to all who had concurred with the Treaty. Establishing reserves would be a long and complicated process, for there was seldom unanimity as to where this land should be located. The first reserves were surveyed in 1901 at Sucker Creek and Driftpile, with parcels of land set off in severalty nearby. The following year saw the establishment of Duncan's Reserve west of Peace River Crossing in two large parcels, with several portions in severalty along the flats of the Peace River and at Kenzie. 1905 saw the creation of the large Beaver Reserve in one large block north of present day Fairview with a small portion in severalty on the Green Island Flat on the Peace River. In 1908, the Sturgeon Lake Reserve was surveyed, with two small portions set off in severalty, while, in 1909, the Cree at Whitefish Lake accepted Treaty and had the Atikameg Reserve marked out with three portions in severalty. The following year, reserves were created at Boyer River, Child Lake and Beaver Ranch, all near Fort Vermilion, and at Fox Lake near Little Red River.

In 1915, in light of heavy agricultural settlement on the Grande Prairie, the Horse Lake Reserve was marked out in one block west of Hythe. Further north, the need to have reserve land identified was not so great, and it was not until 1950, just after the completion of the MacKenzie Highway, that the Busche River Reserve was surveyed for the Slavey near High Level. In 1963, other reserve land was marked out for the Slavey at Meander River and Bistcho Lake, and at Amber River, Zama Lake and Hay Lake near Assumption. More recently, north and east of Lubicon Lake, reserve land has been taken by certain Cree bands in the area who now are identified as the Woodland Cree.

In 1928, at the time the Beaver Reserve at Fairview was sold, the eastern portion of Duncan's Reserve, near present day Berwyn, was also sold to accommodate Euro-Canadian farmers. This was also the case at Fort St.John, where the original reserve, on prairie land at the site of the present day city, was sold and new reserves created in the wooded areas at Doig River, Beatton River and Blueberry River. Over the years, most land originally obtained in severalty throughout the Treaty area would also be sold to incoming farmers.

For the most part, the twentieth century was not kind to native culture in Northwestern Alberta. In a period of extensive development, first by farmers and later by gas, oil and forestry interests, native traditions were not viewed as progressive, and not therefore held in high esteem. Early missionaries were of the view that, unless the natives adopted Euro-Canadian work habits and occupations, they would not survive as a people. Later settlers eschewed any type of assimilation, preferring that the Indians keep to their Reserves.

As the century wore on, much bitterness and low self-respect resulted from the inability or simple disinclination of many natives to function successfully in a white man's world. Recent times, however, have brought a new sense of self esteem among the Indians of the Northwest, reflecting a general pattern across North America. Regional Indian Councils, such as the Lesser Slave Lake and the Western Cree, have adopted a position of high regard for their Elders and their traditional ways, recognizing themselves to be among the continent's First Nations. Contrasting their values with the perceived materialism of Euro-Canadian immigrants, many are choosing to dress in traditional apparel and make reference to their position as people who were once an integral part of the wilderness landscape. Though generating a bit of a backlash in the white community, particularly in competition for employment, this has also resulted in considerable public empathy for their plight, especially among the liberal press. Today, in an environmentally conscious society, membership in a First Nation of the Northwest of Alberta is viewed as a position of status, linking the individual to the region's earliest history and beyond.

Aspects of the lifestyle and attitudes of the Dene Tha' people has been documented in Dene Tha'; Traditional Land-Use and Occupancy Study (Campbell 1997). This document is based on extensive interviews with members of the Dene Tha' band and chronicles many aspects of their landuse patterns including fixed sites (cabins, camps, settlements, graves), spiritual sites, hunting and trapping territories, and migration trails. Requests for this document can be made to: Dene Tha' First Nation, P.O. Box 120, Chateh, Alberta TOH 0S0.

Today, the number of native people is difficult to ascertain, as some Indian reserves and Metis settlements do not participate in the official censuses. However, the number of native peoples has grown slowly from 1921 to 1995 and is now about 4,000. Thus, aboriginal peoples of northwest Alberta represent about 10% of the regional population and ~0.15% of the provincial population.

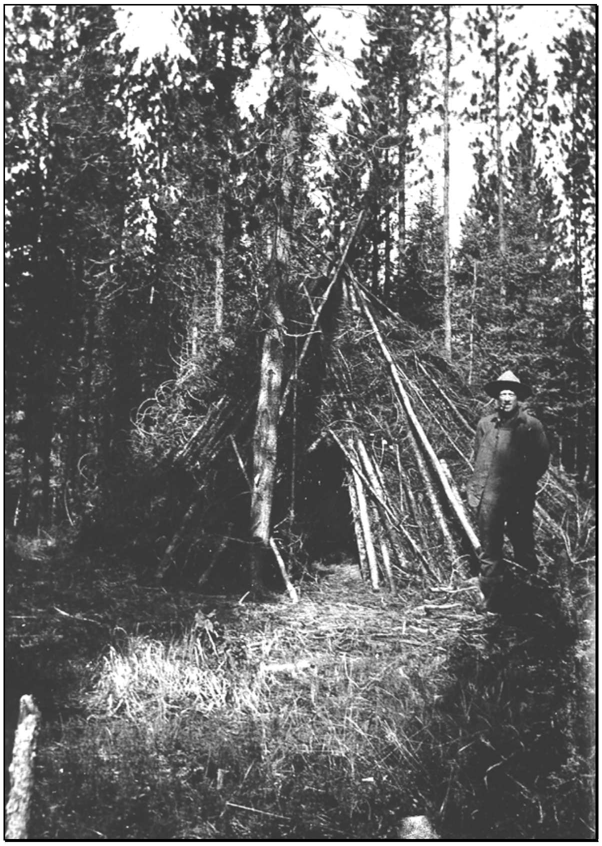


Figure 1. A wikiup, or summer lodge used by the Beaver Indians. Data Source: GAA NA 938-10.

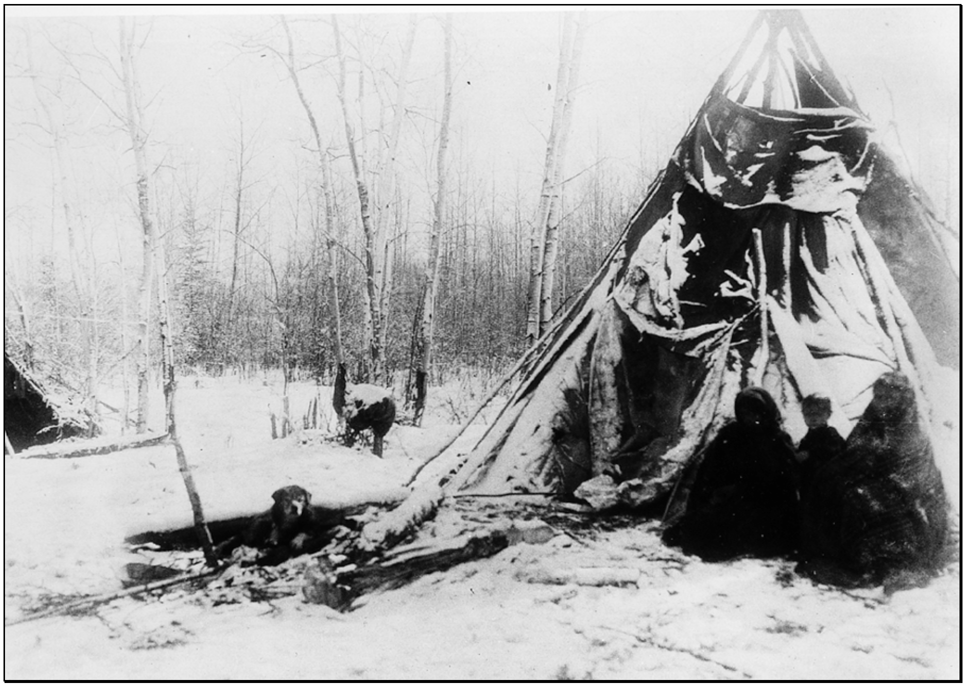


Figure 2. A Beaver Indian camp in winter. Data Source: GAA 1315-23.

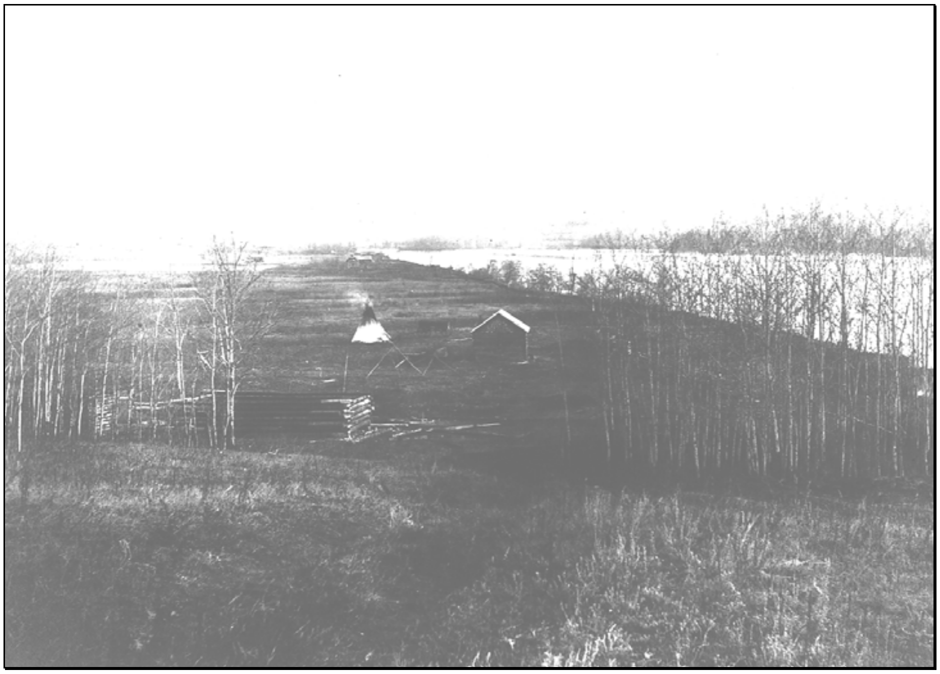


Figure 3. A Cree encampment along the Shaftesbury Trail. Data Source: PAA A. 3489.

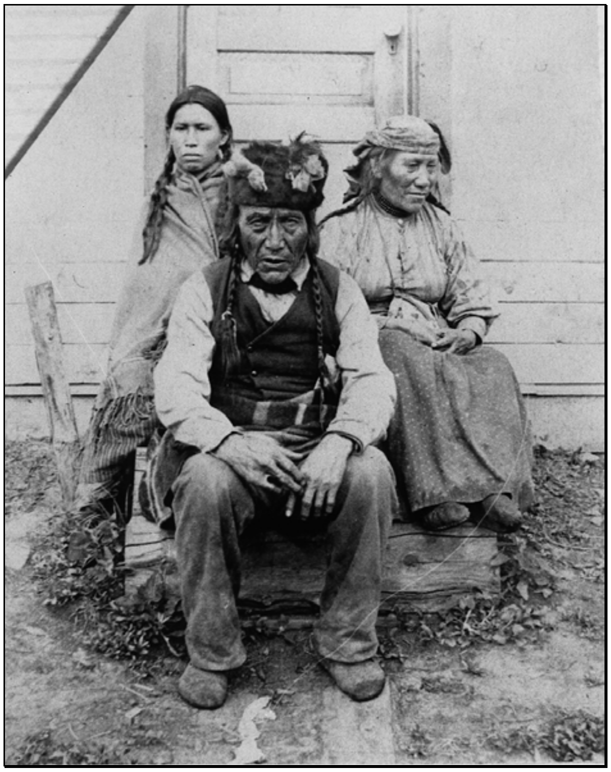


Figure 4. Signing Treaty 8 at Peace River Crossing in 1899 was Duncan Tustawits, here with his wife and daughter. C. 1910. Data Source: GAA NA 1440-8.

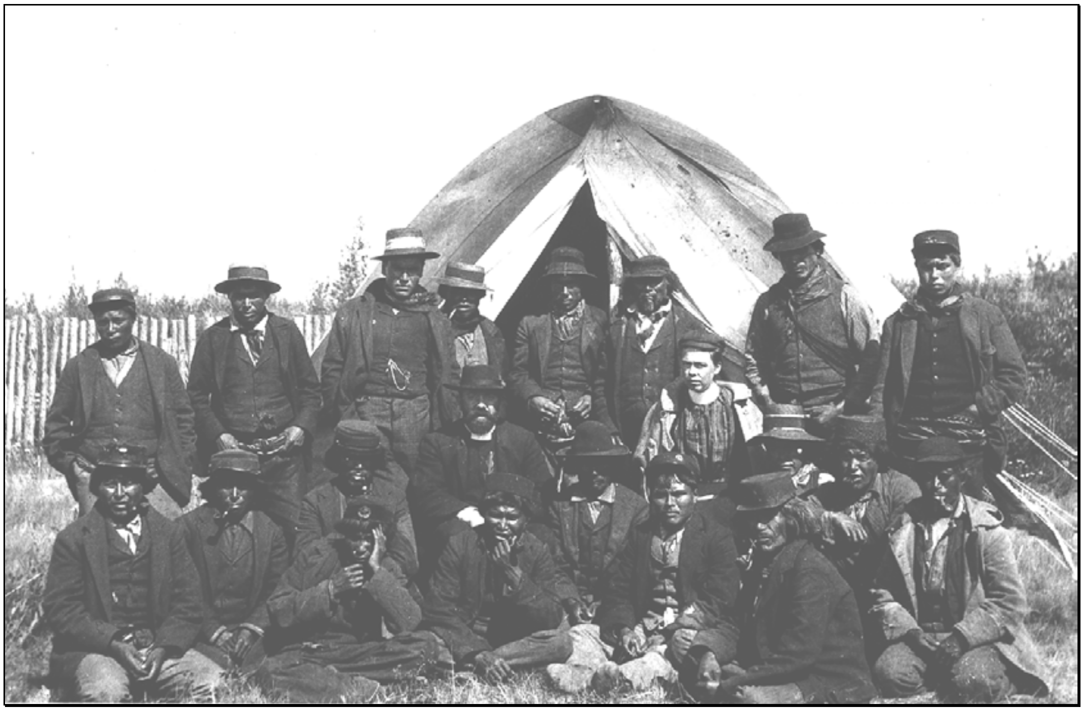


Figure 5. Slavey Indians from the Hay River at Fort Vermilion in 1900. Data Source: GAA NA 4035-109.

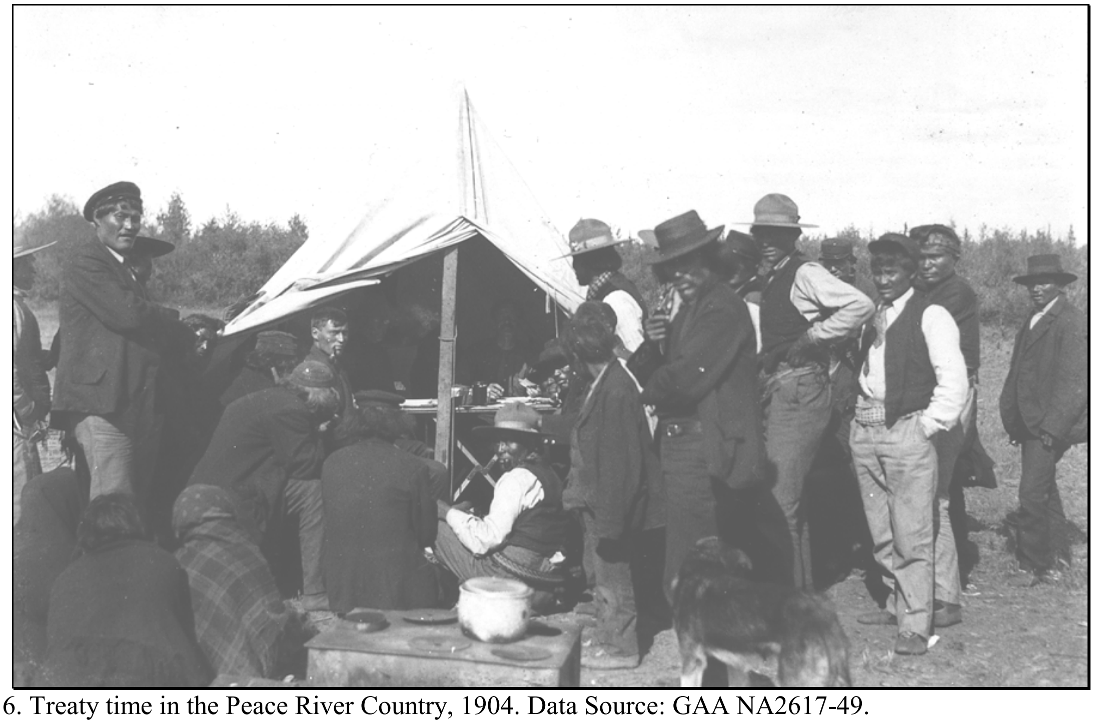


Figure 6. Treaty time in the Peace River Country, 1904. Data Source: GAA NA2617-49.

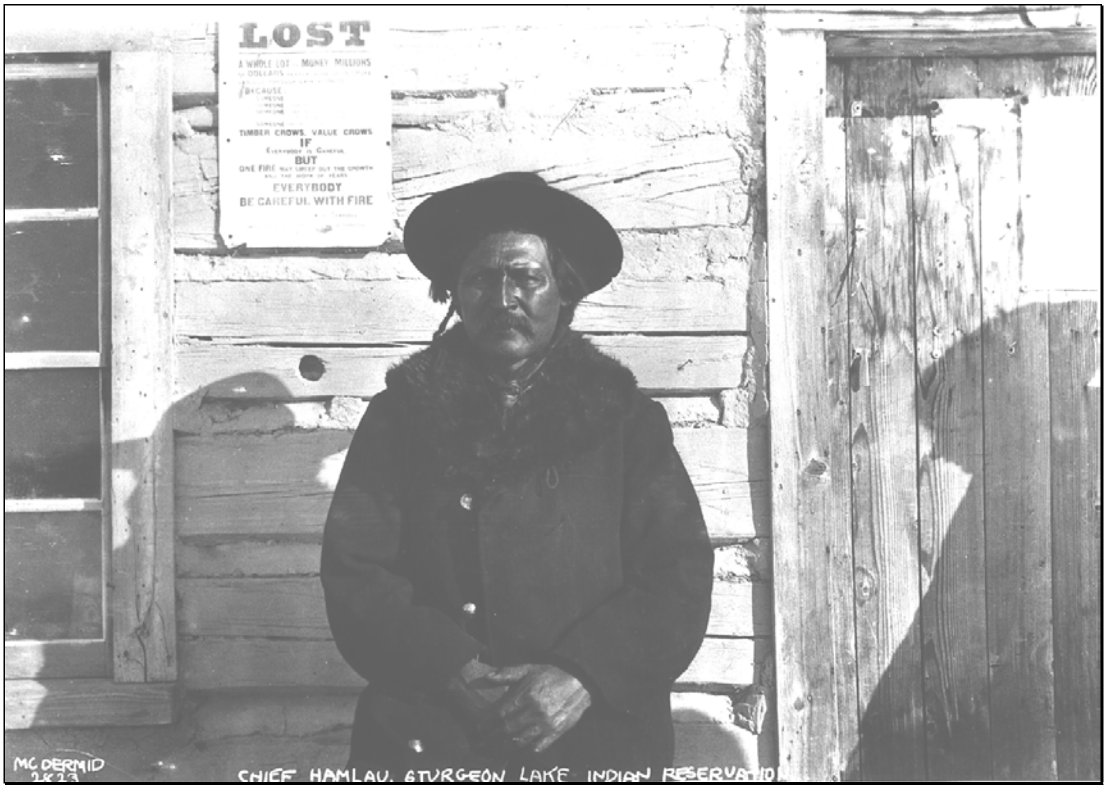

LOST
A WHOLE LOT ... MONEY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
BECAUSE
TIMBER GROWS. VALUE GROWS
IF
Everybody is Careful
BUT
ONE FIRE MAY SWEEP OUT THE GROWTH AND THE WORK OF YEARS
EVERYBODY
BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE
MC DERMID
2823
CHIEF HAMLAU. STURGEON LAKE INDIAN RESERVATION

Figure 7. The Chief at Sturgeon Lake in 1912 was Mr. Hamelin. Data Source:

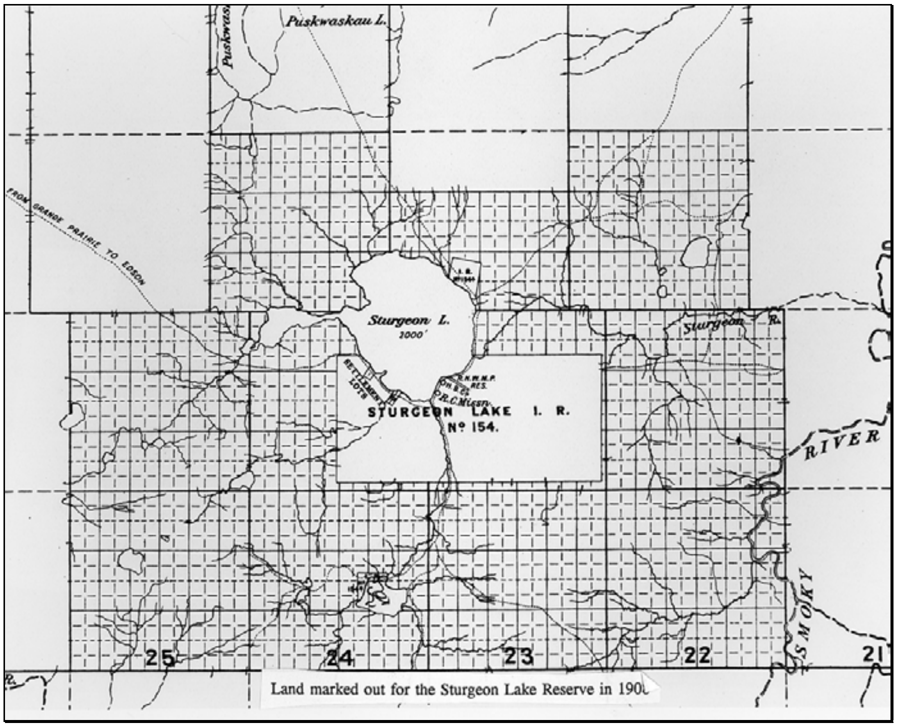

Puskwaskau L.
Puskwas
FROM GRANDE PRAIRIE TO EDSON
Sturgeon L.
2000'
SETTLEMENT LOTS
STURGEON LAKE I. R.
Nº 154.
Sturgeon R.
RIVER
SMOKY
25
24
23
22
21
Land marked out for the Sturgeon Lake Reserve in 190

Figure 8. The Reserve surveyed at Sturgeon Lake showing land in severalty. Topographic Survey of Canada, 1914. Data Source:

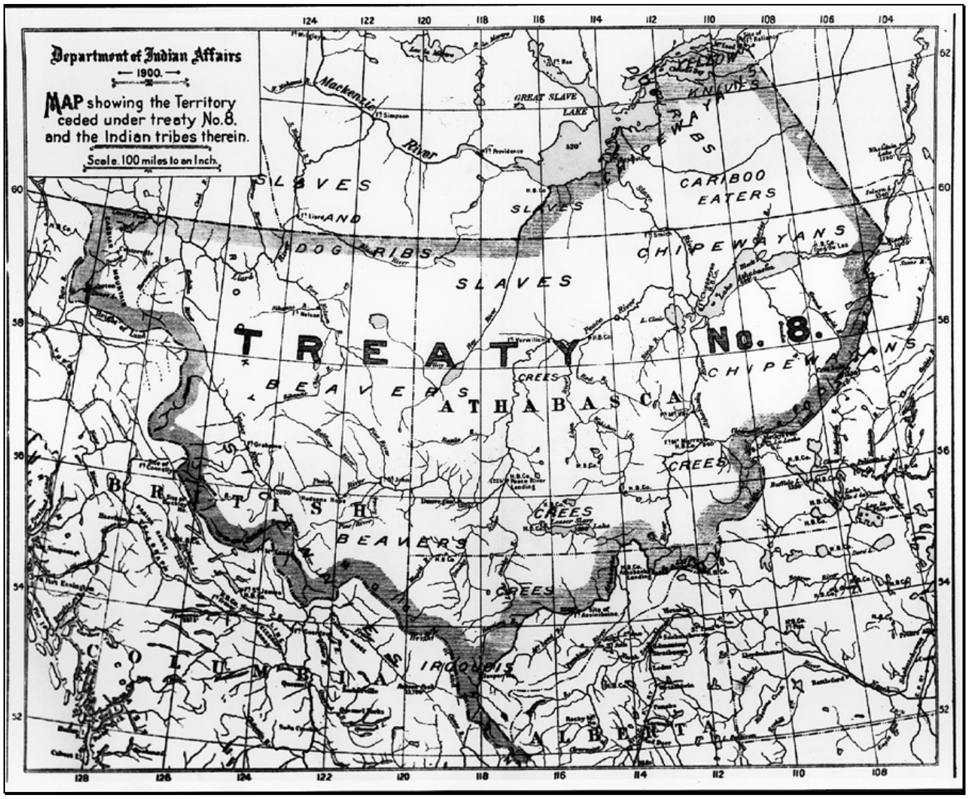

Department of Indian Affairs
— 1900 —
MAP showing the Territory ceded under treaty No.8. and the Indian tribes therein.
Scale. 100 miles to an Inch.
TREATY No. 8.
YELLOW KNIVES
DOG RIBS
CHIPEWAYANS
CARIBOO EATERS
SLAVES
SLAVES AND DOG RIBS
BEAVERS
ATHABASCA
CREES
BRITISH COLUMBIA
IROQUOIS
ALBERTA
GREAT SLAVE LAKE
Mackenzie River

Figure 9. Map of Treaty 8 in western Canada, 1900. Data Source:

Reference Sources

Anonymous. 1995. Demographic characteristics of the Mackenzie region. Prepared by the Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency.

Butler, William Francis, *The Wild North Land* (London: Burns & Oats, 1915)

Campbell, T. 1997. Dene Tha' Traditional Land-Use and Occupancy Study. Published by The Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary.

Cashman, T. 1972. *The singing wires*. Edmonton: Alberta Government Telephones.

Dawson, George, "Report" in Canadian Pacific Railway, *Annual Report*, 1880

Edwards, Oliver Cromwell, *On the North Trail* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1999)

Faraud, Bishop Henri, *Dix-huit Ans Chex Les Savauges* (Paris, Regis, Ruffet & Co., 1866)

Fraser, Simon, "First Journal of Simon Fraser from April 12th to July 18th, 1806" in Canada, Canada Public Archives. *Annual Report*, 1929, Appendix B.

Fumoleau, Rene, *As Long As This Land Shall Last* (Toronto:McClelland & Stewart, 1967)

Gordon, Daniel, *Mountain & Prairie* (London: S.Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1880)

Grouard, Bishop Emile, *Soixante Ans d'Apostat Dans L'Athabaska-MacKenzie* (Winnipeg: La Liberte, 1923).

Krech, Sheperd, *The Subarctic Fur Trade* (Vancouver: Univwersity of British Columbia Press, 1984)

Leonard, D.W. and Lemieux, V.L. 1992. *The lure of the Peace Country* 1872–1914. Detselig Enterprises Ltd..

Leonard, David, *Delayed Frontier* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995) Liberte, 1923)

Mackenzie, Alexander, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (Chicago: the Lakeside Press, 1931)

Maclean, John, *Notes on a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Company,* W.S. Wallace, ed. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932).

Macrae, J.A., "Report on Treaty 8" in Canada, *Sessional Papers*, #27, 1901

Mair, Charles, *Through the MacKenzie Basin* (Toronto, William Briggs, 1908)

Morton, A.S., *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973)

Northern Alberta Development Council 1968. *Report on the Land, Industry and related factors in the Peace River Country, Alberta*.

PFRA Peace River 1997. The cow-calf industry in the Peace Country; An opportunity for expansion. Prepared by PFRA Peace River.

Riddington, Robin, "Beaver" in *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institute, 1981).

Strathern, G. 1988. Alberta Newspapers, 1880-1982. Edmonton; University of Alberta Press, 1988.

Wood, Dallas, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Peace River Fur Trade", MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1968

Archival Sources Cited for holdings in the National Archives of Canada (NAC), the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), and the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA).

Bompas, William, "Report on the Diocese of Athabasca", 6 April, 1868, in NAC, M17, C.1/M.7, #97; also Bompas to Secretary, Church Missionary Society, 27 September, 1871, in *ibid.*, C.1/M.8.

Campbell, Colin, "Journal" for 1835 in 1835-37 in HBCA B.56/a/5, and for 1838, in PAA 74.1/120.

Connally, William, "Journal" for 1821, in HBCA B.115/a/5.

Hardisty, Richard jr., "Report on Peace River", 1891, in HBCA D.25/1.

Harmon, Daniel, "Journal" in NAC MG19, A15, vol.2.

Harvey, George, Journal of 6 June, 1899, in HBCA B.56/a/16.

Hetherington, Sergeant, "Report", June, 1899, in NAC RG 18, vol.128, p.37; also *ibid.*, vol.1395, file 163.

Holmes, Reverend George, to Bishop Young, 25 May, 1899, in PAA A281/149.

McDonald, Ewen, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 30 April, 1889, in NAC RG10, vol.3707, File 19,446, pt.3.

Robinson, Henry, to Bishop Young, 10 July 1899 and 19 September, 1899, in PAA A281/247-48.

Ross, Donald, "Report" for 1876 in HBCA D.20/4.

Round, H.B., to C.C. Chipman, 2 October, 1899, in HBCA D.20/69.

Sifton, Clifford, to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 12 May, 1899, in NAC RG10, vol.3848, file 75236-1

Tissier, Father Christophe, to Bishop Faraud, 15 April, 1859, in PAA 91.345 C-28; also Tissier to Bishop Faraud, 15 April, 1869, in PAA 91.345.

Historical Trends in Human Populations

Population Size

Prior to the mid-1800's, virtually all people residing in northwest Alberta belonged to First Nations communities. The size of their population is unknown, but was likely in the range of 1–3 thousand, mostly consisting of small dispersed groups. The Native populations were generally low density, nomadic in nature, and used natural resources in a subsistence manner (hunting, fishing, berry-picking, etc). The earliest non-aboriginal peoples to arrive in northwest Alberta were explorers and fur traders in the mid-1800's. The Euro-Canadian population thereafter increased gradually as the fur-trading infrastructure developed during the next several decades. The 1st land rush began in 1909 when the land office was opened. The period from 1910 to 1915 saw a change in the size and structure of the regional population, as the area was opened to homesteaders for agricultural landuse. This resulted in an influx of Europeans seeking free and readily tillable land. Many of these pioneers chose to establish homesteads in the Peace Country, as the prairie regions to the south were fully developed and land was unavailable. The influx of large numbers of grain farmers was facilitated by the completion of the railway to Peace River and Grande Prairie in 1916, as well as the severe drought in the southern prairie regions. A second wave of settlers came to northwest Alberta immediately following World War I, and a third during the late 1920's.

The human migration during the early 1930's was light. In 1931, the government put a ban on homesteading in the region for non-Alberta residents that lasted until 1938. A few from the drought region did settle during this period however. Steady population growth in the 1930's was due to high child birth rates of parent who arrived in the 1920's. The next noticeable change in human population occurred immediately following World War II as postwar baby boomers were born at a high rate. The 1960's and 1970's experienced a slight diversification of the economy as petroleum exploration and development became prominent in the region; further, the oil sector boom in the rest of the province led to substantially increased expenditures on government and related services, including health and education. These changes led not only to further migration to northwest Alberta, but also to a growing resident population of baby boomers and retirees. That trend has continued since 1980, albeit more slowly, as the economy has diversified even more with the growing importance of the forest industry.

The rate of population increase in northwest Alberta from 1921–1995 has been roughly consistent with that of Alberta (Table 1, Figure 10). Throughout this period, people residing in northwest Alberta have represented about 1.5–2.0% of the provincial population. The major communities and municipal districts within the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA, and northwest Alberta, are shown in Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14, respectively. Temporal patterns in populations of individual towns, villages, and municipal districts are presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Figure 15–Figure 17. Some towns have shown consistent growth during the period 1921–1994, such as Peace River, Fairview, High Level and Grimshaw. Other communities, such as Manning and Rainbow Lake, have grown less consistently or even experienced declines in populations over recent years (Figure 15). Numerous small villages are found along the transportation grid of northwest Alberta; Nampa and Berwyn have increased significantly during the period 1960–1995, whereas Hines Creek has not (Figure 16). Rural municipal district populations generally increased quickly during the period 1920–1950, and have thereafter remained relatively stable (Figure 17), with the exception of Municipal District #23 which has continued to grow.

A Transition from Rural to Urban Distribution

Much of the Peace River townsite's growth has been at the expense of outlying communities, as farms have become smaller, and the retiring population has moved away from the small communities. For example, the population in 10 of the 26 census units declined from 1986 to 1991 (Statistics Canada 1991).

Growth rates of northwest Alberta were high in the 1920's and 1930's, with most of this growth occurring in the rural regions (Figure 18). Population growth declined considerably in the early 1940's as many people left the region to go to war. Growth rates in northwest Alberta remained stable following the war (~2%), but this stability was based on an increasing urban population and a declining rural population. Northwest Alberta experienced considerable volatility in population growth during the period 1965–1975, with a significant increase during 1961–1966 followed by a downturn from 1966–1976. These phases of rapid and slow growth coincide closely with levels of exploration and development in the oil patch as seen in the disposition data presented in Chapter 8 on the petrochemical industry. In general, growth rates have been more volatile in the urban municipal districts in comparison to the rural municipal districts.

Growth rates became less volatile in the 1980's and 1990's, but population growth pulses did occur, presumably in response to immigration and emigration associated with fluctuating oil and gas prices and exploration, and in response to immigration associated with providing a workforce for the emerging forestry sector.

Almost half of the population of northwest Alberta is found in only 4 of the 26 census units: Improvement District No. 23, Peace River, Improvement District No. 22, and Fairview (Table 3, Figure 15, Figure 16). The first two account for almost 32% of the population. They each have about 7,000 people, while the majority of census units have less than 1000 people.

The distribution of the human population in northwest Alberta over the period 1961–1991 has shifted away from rural areas towards towns and villages (Table 4, Figure 18). Figure 19 shows that distribution of the human population within the region is still predominantly (49%) rural. However, assuming the trend of fast urban growth continues, the number of people residing in towns and cities will soon outnumber those residing in rural settings. While the population of the combined rural areas has continued to increase (Figure 20), the majority of the population growth has occurred in towns and cities (Figure 21). In 1961, approximately 25% of the region's population lived in towns and cities; by 1991, the proportion had grown to 40% (Table 6, Figure 22).

Towns and Cities

The locations and year of incorporation of the larger communities in northwest Alberta are described in Table 7. The relative size of human population in each of these communities and Municipal districts as of 1991 are shown in Figure 23, illustrating that the town of Peace River and Municipal District No 23 contain significantly more people than do other communities or jurisdictions. The locations of communities found in the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA and northwest Alberta are illustrated in Figure 24, Figure 25, Figure 26. These graphics indicate that many communities are located proximal to the watercourses that were so important to their early development.

Indian Reserves and Metis Settlements

As of 1991, approximately 8,600 First Nation and Metis peoples currently occupied numerous reserves and settlements that comprise approximately 354,000 ha in northwest Alberta (Table 8). The locations of Indian reserves and Metis settlements found in the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA and northwest Alberta are illustrated in Figure 27, Figure 28, and Figure 29, respectively.

Table 1. Human population trends in Alberta, northwest Alberta, and Indian Reservations between 1921–1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Year	Alberta	Northwest Alberta	Indian Reservations
1921	588,454	6,391	864
1922			
1923			
1924			
1925			
1926			
1927			
1928			
1929			
1930			
1931	731,605	13,069	901
1932			
1933			
1934			
1935			
1936			
1937			
1938			
1939			
1940			
1941	796,169	16,515	924
1942			
1943			
1944			
1945			
1946			
1947			
1948			
1949			
1950			
1951	940,000	19,859	1,184
1952			
1953			
1954			
1955			
1956	1,123,116	22,056	1,457
1957			
1958			
1959			
1960			
1961	1,332,000	25,172	1,703
1962			1,703
1963			1,703
1964			1,703
1965			1,703
1966	1,463,203	29,734	2,044
1967			2,044
1968			2,044
1969			2,044
1970			2,044
1971	1,671,900	31,130	2,447
1972	1,700,000		2,447
1973	1,731,000		2,447
1974	1,760,000		2,447
1975	1,813,900		2,447
1976	1,874,300	32,649	2,937
1977	1,953,600	33,989	3,030
1978	2,028,700	34,843	3,123
1979	2,105,400	36,937	3,269
1980	2,201,200	37,541	3,330
1981	2,303,800	38,668	3,391
1982	2,377,500	39,596	3,452
1983	2,399,300	40,187	3,577
1984	2,398,600	40,795	3,577
1985	2,411,100	40,795	2,949
1986	2,438,700	42,537	2,949
1987	2,443,500	43,188	2,949
1988	2,463,000	43,337	2,949
1989	2,504,300	45,151	4,614
1990	2,556,400	45,419	4,614
1991	2,601,300	43,771	3,366
1992	2,646,800	44,178	3,366
1993	2,686,000	44,256	3,366
1994	2,714,800	44,256	3,366
1995	2,747,000		

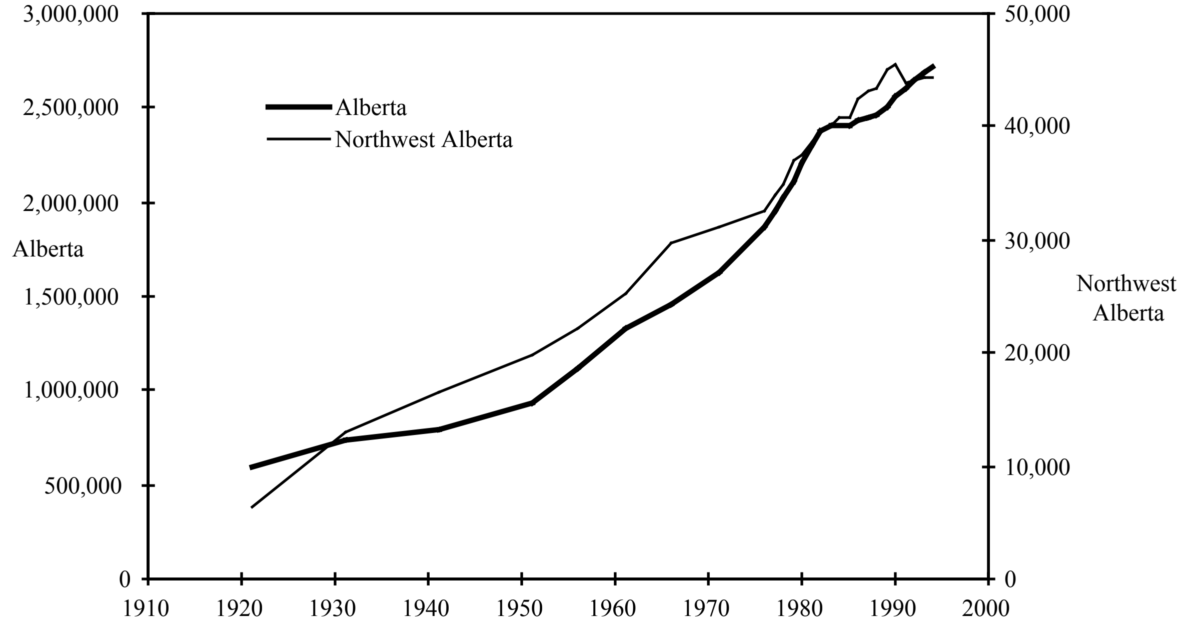


Figure 10. Trends in human population in Alberta and northwest Alberta between 1921 and 1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

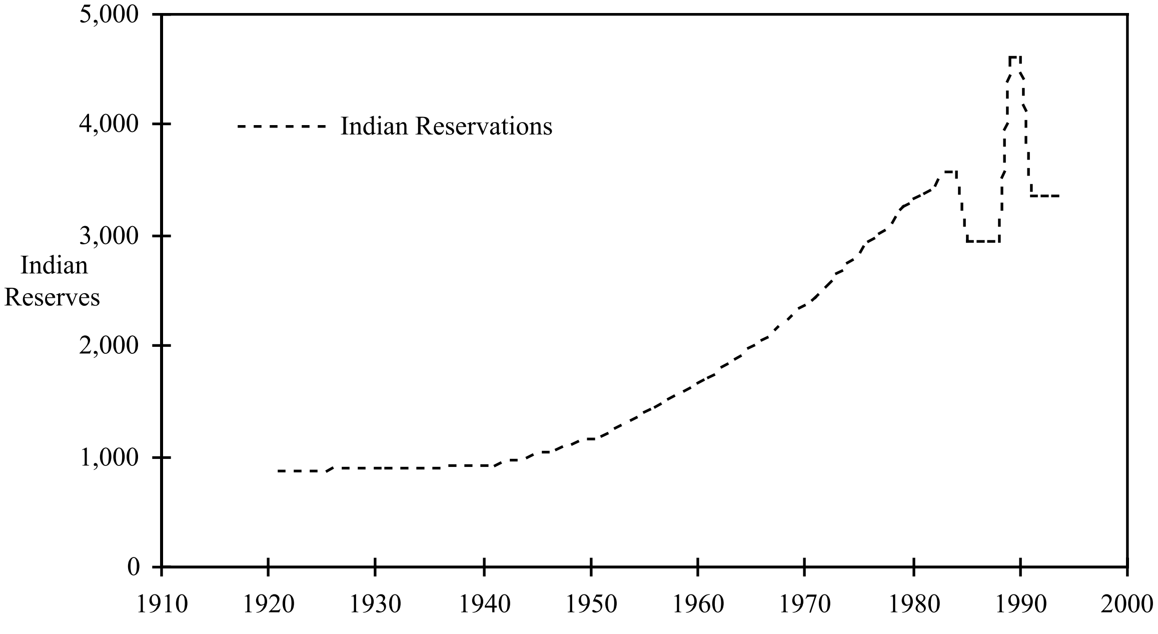


Figure 11. Trends in human population on Indian reservations between 1921 and 1997. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

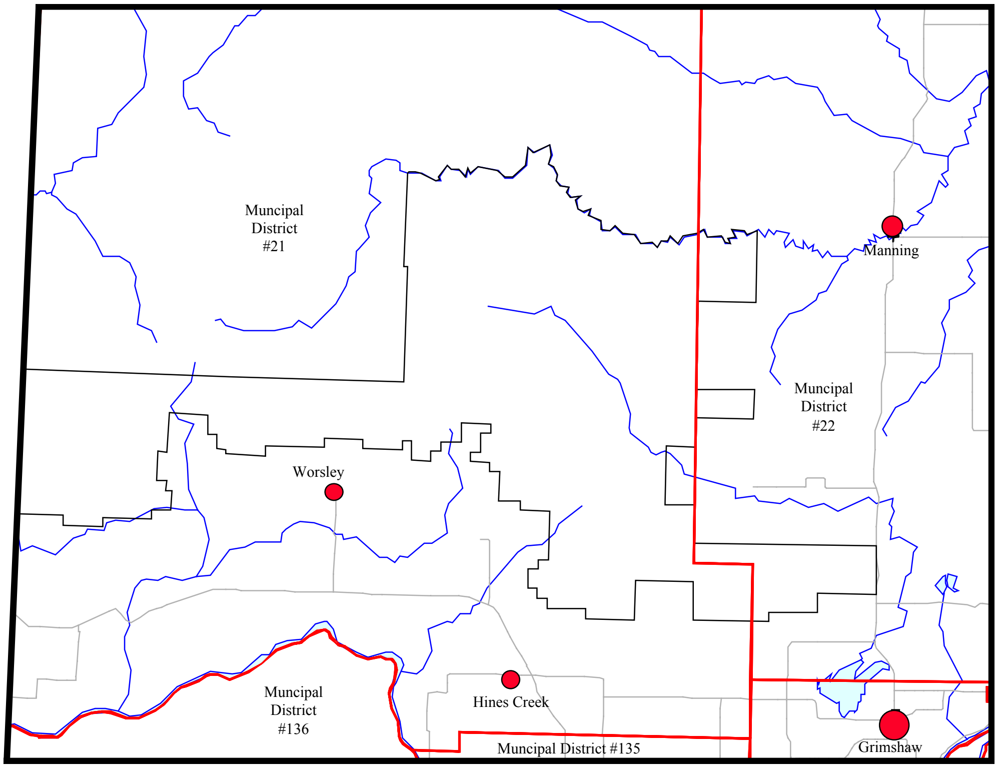

Muncipal District #21
Manning
Muncipal District #22
Worsley
Muncipal District #136
Hines Creek
Muncipal District #135
Grimshaw

Figure 12. Municipal districts of the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

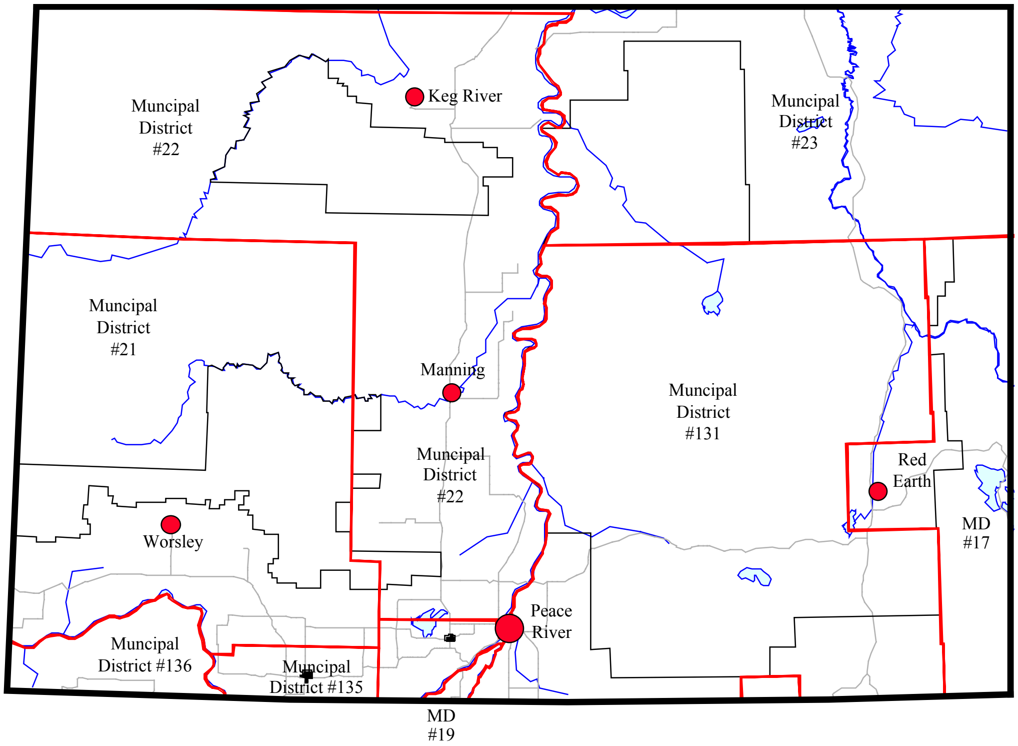

Muncipal District #22
Keg River
Muncipal District #23
Muncipal District #21
Manning
Muncipal District #131
Muncipal District #22
Red Earth
MD #17
Worsley
Peace River
Muncipal District #136
Muncipal District #135
MD #19

Figure 13. Municipal districts of the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

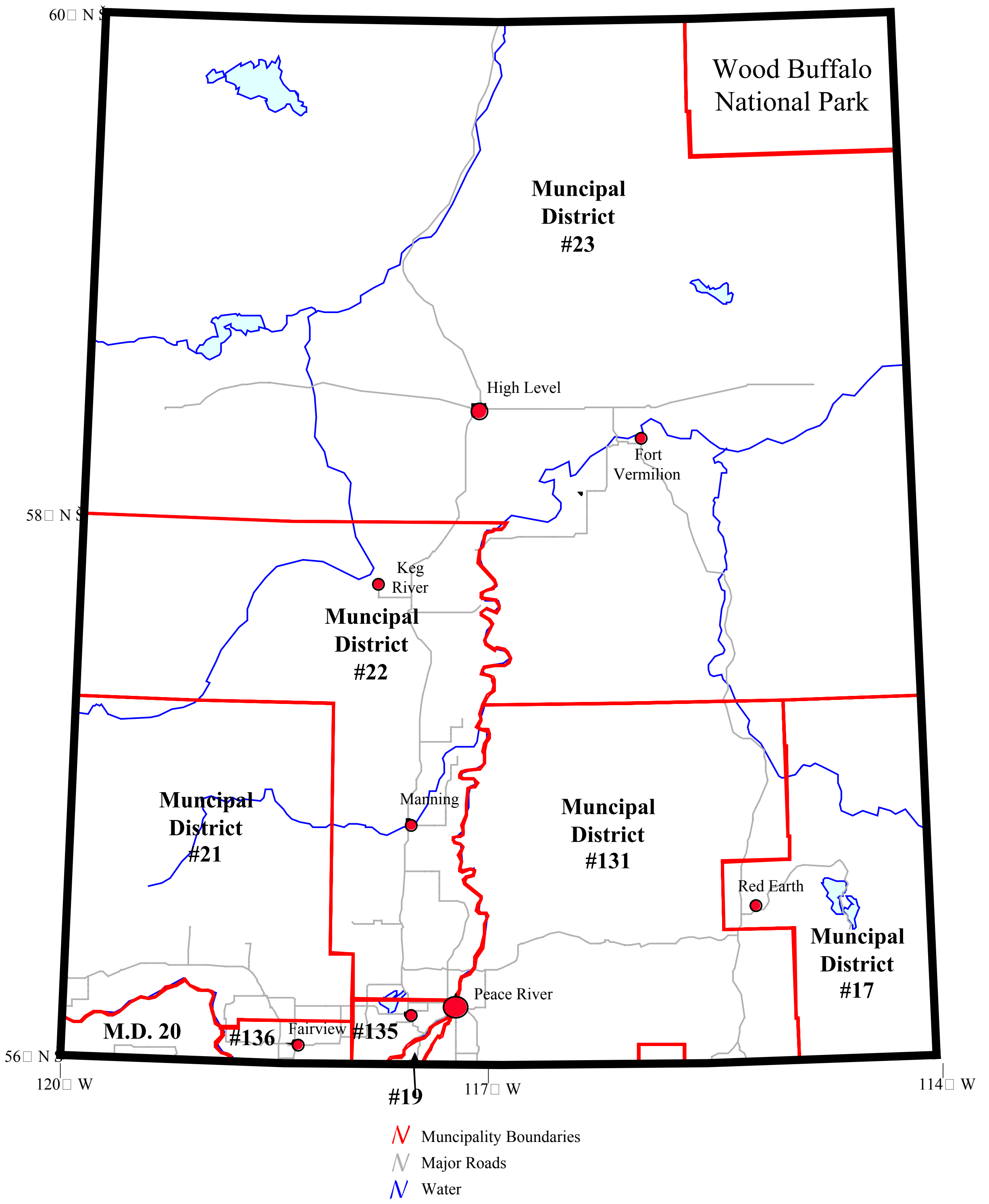

60° N
58° N
56° N
120° W
117° W
114° W
Wood Buffalo National Park
Muncipal District #23
High Level
Fort Vermilion
Keg River
Muncipal District #22
Muncipal District #21
Manning
Muncipal District #131
Red Earth
Muncipal District #17
Peace River
M.D. 20
#136
Fairview
#135
#19
Muncipality Boundaries
Major Roads
Water

Figure 14. Municipal districts of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 2. Population size of towns and villages in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Year	Fairview	Grimshaw	High Level	Manning	Peace River	Rainbow Lake	Berwyn	Hines Creek	Nampa
1921					980				
1931	262	137			864				
1941	432	189			873		208		
1951	929	564			1,672		288		
1956	1,280	904		428	2,034		342	360	
1961	1,569	1,095		896	2,543		347	398	271
1962	1,689	1,340		1,005	2,993		347	409	221
1963	1,701	1,428		1,148	3,209		378	441	261
1964	1,777	1,515		1,189	3,318		383	454	279
1965	1,777	1,515		1,153	3,417		383	425	283
1966	1,884	1,378	708	1,179	4,087		430	418	288
1967	1,884	1,490	1,551	1,322	5,204		430	460	294
1968	1,931	1,668	2,006	1,322	5,201	380	448	428	317
1969	2,093	1,789	2,004	1,322	5,384	586	455	428	317
1970	2,093	1,789	2,004	1,322	5,384	608	443	428	317
1971	2,109	1,417	2,004	1,071	5,039	355	474	438	283
1972	2,093	1,747	1,614	1,204	5,071	580	470	428	317
1973	2,358	1,747	1,621	1,204	5,071	563	470	521	263
1974	2,358	1,747	1,621	1,204	5,071	563	470	525	252
1975	2,358	1,747	1,621	1,234	5,071	607	432	503	286
1976	2,248	1,665	1,562	1,050	4,840	434	433	503	286
1977	2,594	1,667	1,562	1,140	5,044	704	463	503	352
1978	2,594	1,806	1,830	1,140	5,235	806	475	503	352
1979	3,027	1,950	2,043	1,140	5,692	806	521	503	352
1980	3,027	2,209	2,043	1,166	5,754	813	534	527	334
1981	2,869	2,316	2,134	1,173	5,907	504	557	575	334
1982	2,869	2,488	2,194	1,262	6,043	739	632	575	334
1983	2,869	2,488	2,354	1,262	6,043	847	674	529	435
1984	3,234	2,488	2,673	1,262	6,043	856	674	529	435
1985	2,998	2,488	2,806	1,262	6,043	856	674	513	435
1986	3,281	2,579	2,806	1,144	6,355	675	661	513	464
1987	3,281	2,579	3,004	1,144	6,355	1,043	661	513	464
1988	3,281	2,625	3,004	1,144	6,355	1,146	661	513	464
1989	3,281	2,625	3,004	1,144	6,504	1,146	661	513	464
1990	3,281	2,753	3,004	1,144	6,644	1,146	661	513	464
1991	3,023	2,812	2,849	1,139	6,717	817	581	423	496
1992	3,262	2,812	2,992	1,139	6,717	817	606	423	496
1993	3,262	2,812	2,992	1,139	6,717	817	606	423	496
1994	3,262	2,812	2,992	1,139	6,717	817	606	423	496

Table 3. Population size of rural municipal districts in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Year	M.D. 135	M.D. 136	M.D. 131	M.D. 21	M.D. 22	M.D. 23	MD Subtotal
1921	1,336	1,456	454	146	417	738	4,547
1931	1,990	2,264	1,082	1,867	2,728	974	10,905
1941	2,003	2,326	1,357	2,740	3,580	1,883	13,889
1951	1,741	2,031	1,578	3,007	4,210	2,655	15,222
1956	1,732	1,885	1,803	2,635	3,480	3,416	14,951
1961	2,053	1,917	1,769	2,772	3,194	4,645	16,350
1962	2,053	1,917	1,769	2,772	3,194	4,645	16,350
1963	2,053	1,917	1,769	2,772	3,194	4,412	16,117
1964	2,053	1,917	1,769	2,772	3,208	4,398	16,117
1965	2,053	1,917	1,769	2,772	3,208	4,398	16,117
1966	2,223	1,745	1,777	3,370	3,241	4,962	17,318
1967	1,640	1,745	1,777	3,370	3,203	4,922	16,657
1968	1,640	1,745	1,777	3,379	3,203	4,922	16,666
1969	1,640	1,745	1,777	3,379	3,203	4,962	16,706
1970	1,640	1,745	1,777	3,379	3,203	4,962	16,706
1971	1,624	1,615	1,790	3,160	3,209	4,188	15,586
1972	1,624	1,615	1,790	3,160	3,209	4,188	15,586
1973	1,624	1,615	1,790	3,160	3,209	4,188	15,586
1974	1,624	1,615	1,790	3,160	3,209	4,188	15,586
1975	1,624	1,819	1,790	3,160	3,209	4,188	15,790
1976	1,583	1,755	1,816	2,648	3,819	5,070	16,691
1977	1,583	1,755	1,853	2,648	3,819	5,070	16,728
1978	1,583	1,755	1,891	2,648	3,819	5,070	16,766
1979	1,583	1,799	1,928	2,648	3,819	5,857	17,634
1980	1,583	1,799	1,966	2,648	3,819	5,880	17,695
1981	1,583	1,889	2,416	2,936	4,250	5,837	18,911
1982	1,520	1,889	2,416	2,936	4,250	5,837	18,848
1983	1,520	1,889	2,416	2,979	4,250	5,837	18,891
1984	1,520	1,889	2,416	2,979	4,250	5,837	18,891
1985	1,520	1,903	2,416	2,979	4,250	5,837	18,905
1986	1,527	1,903	3,380	2,992	4,451	6,942	21,195
1987	1,527	1,903	3,380	2,992	4,451	6,942	21,195
1988	1,527	1,903	3,380	2,992	4,451	6,942	21,195
1989	1,527	1,903	3,380	2,992	4,451	6,942	21,195
1990	1,527	1,903	3,380	2,992	4,451	6,942	21,195
1991	1,481	1,812	3,833	2,903	4,259	7,260	21,548
1992	1,481	1,812	3,833	2,903	4,259	7,260	21,548
1993	1,559	1,812	3,833	2,903	4,259	7,260	21,626
1994	1,559	1,812	3,833	2,903	4,259	7,260	21,626

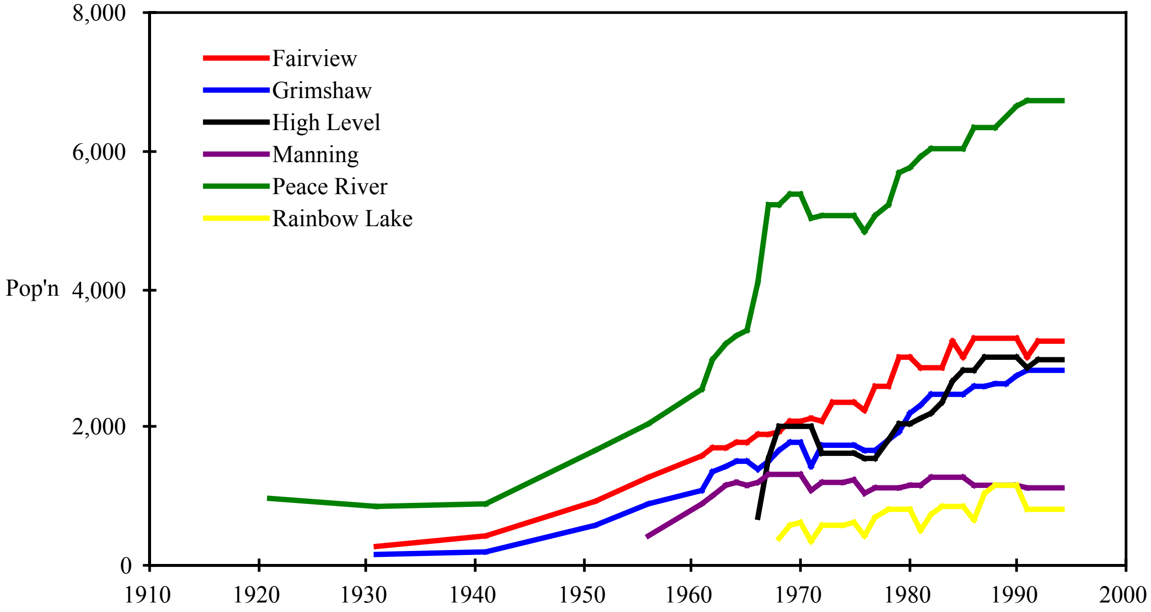


Figure 15. Changes in human populations in towns of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

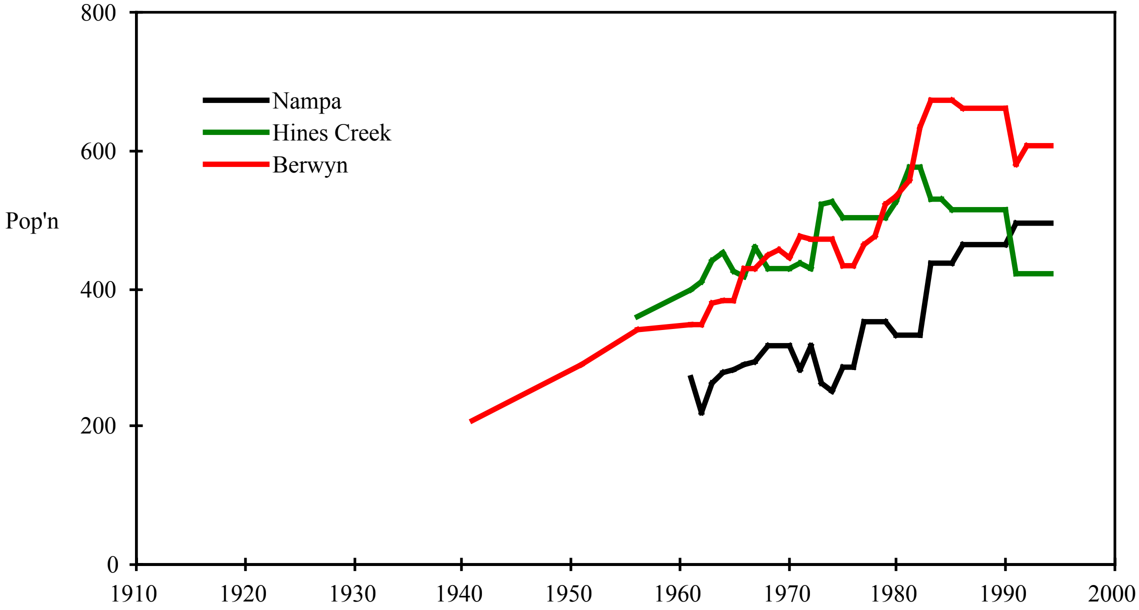


Figure 16. Changes in human populations in villages of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

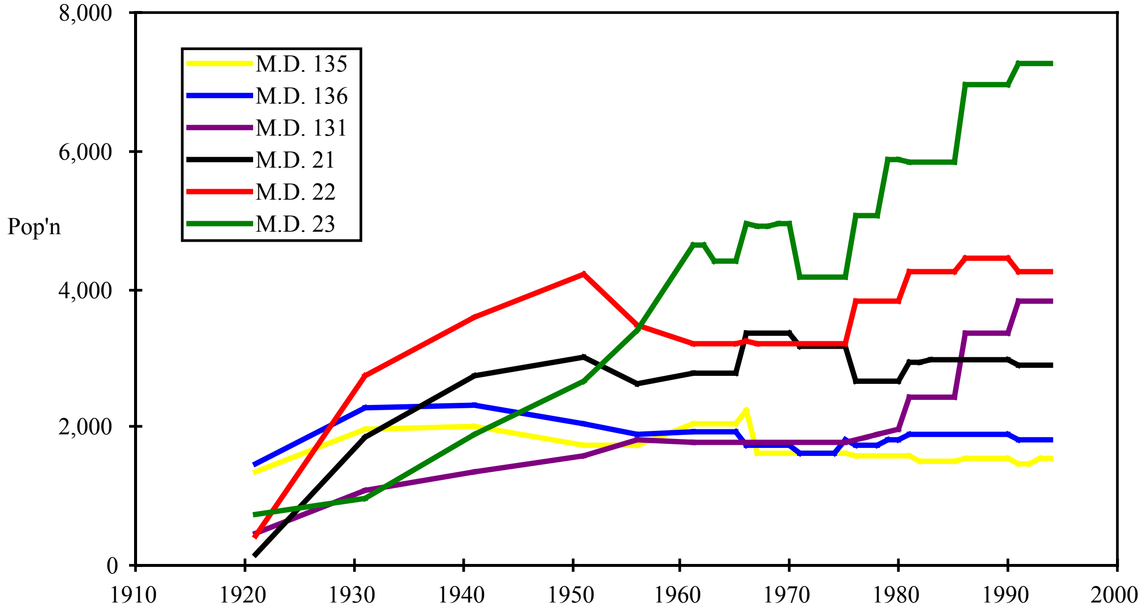


Figure 17. Changes in human populations in rural municipal districts of northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

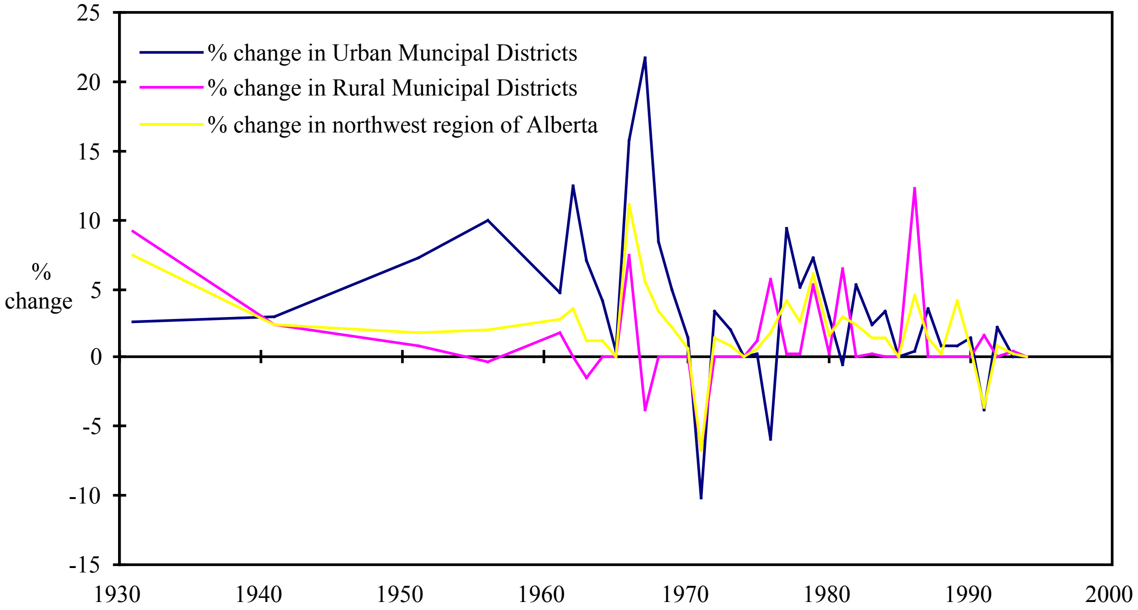


Figure 18. Changes in human population growth rate of urban and rural communities in northwest Alberta (1921–1994). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 4. Distribution of human population in northwest Alberta (1961–1991). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
Towns	6,103	9,236	11,902	11,799	14,963	16,755	17,357
Villages	1,016	1,136	1,195	1,222	1,464	1,638	1,500
Municipal Districts	16,350	17,318	15,586	16,691	18,848	21,195	21,548
Indian Reserves	1,703	2,044	2,447	2,937	3,391	2,949	3,366
Total	25,172	29,734	31,130	32,649	38,668	42,537	43,771

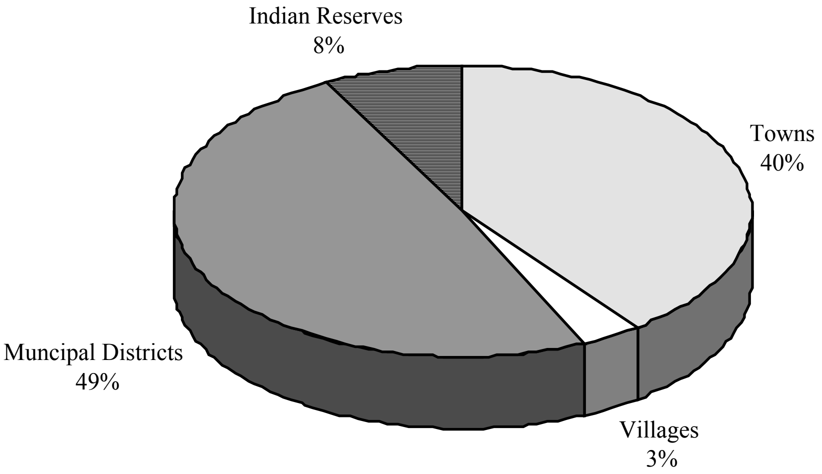


Figure 19. Distribution of human population in northwest Alberta in 1991. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 5. Trends in urban and rural populations in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Period	Urban Population	% Urban	Rural Population	% Rural
1921	980	0.15	5,411	0.85
1931	1,263	0.10	11,806	0.90
1941	1,702	0.10	14,813	0.90
1951	3,453	0.17	16,406	0.83
1956	5,648	0.26	16,406	0.74
1961	7,119	0.28	18,053	0.72
1966	10,372	0.35	19,362	0.65
1971	13,097	0.42	18,033	0.58
1976	13,021	0.40	19,628	0.60
1981	16,429	0.42	22,234	0.58
1986	18,393	0.44	23,530	0.56
1991	18,857	0.43	24,992	0.57

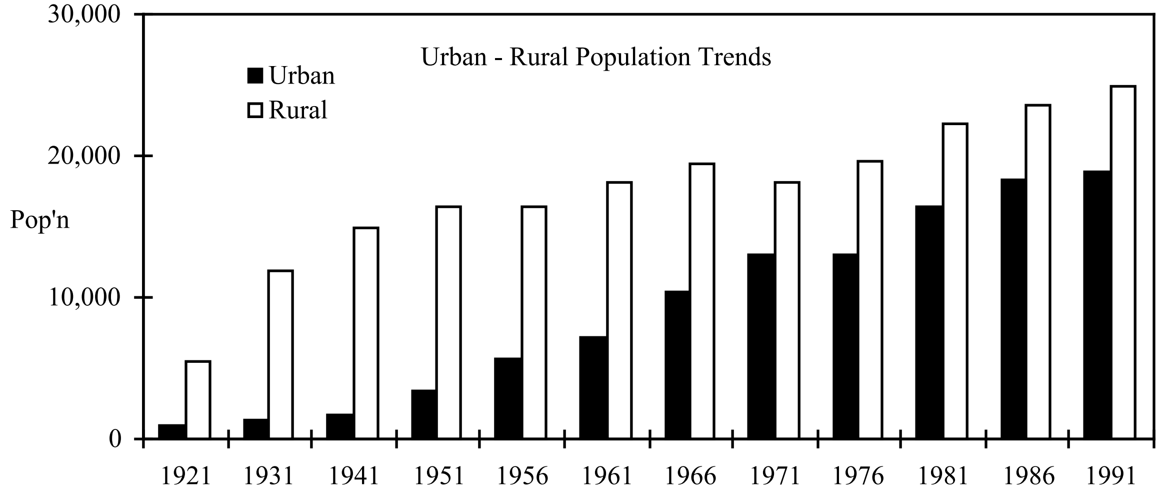


Figure 20. Changes in populations of urban and rural settings in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

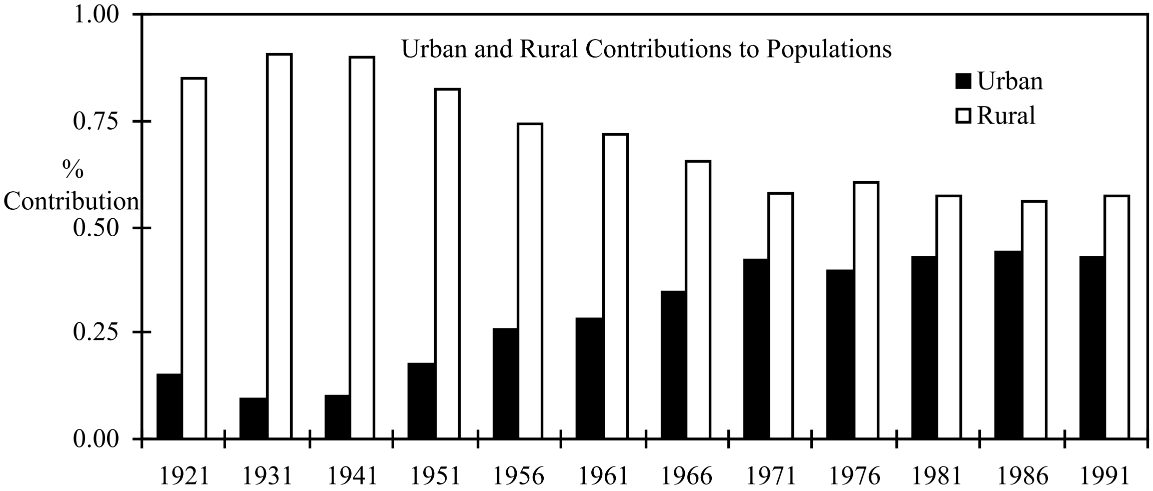


Figure 21. Contribution of urban and rural settings to total human population in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 6. Trends in urban and rural populations in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Period	Urban	Rural	Indian Reservation	Total Region
1921	980	4,547	864	6,391
1931	1,263	10,905	901	13,069
1941	1,702	13,889	924	16,515
1951	3,453	15,222	1,184	19,859
1961	7,119	16,350	1,703	25,172
1971	13,097	15,586	2,447	31,130
1981	16,429	18,848	3,391	38,668
1991	18,857	21,548	3,366	43,771

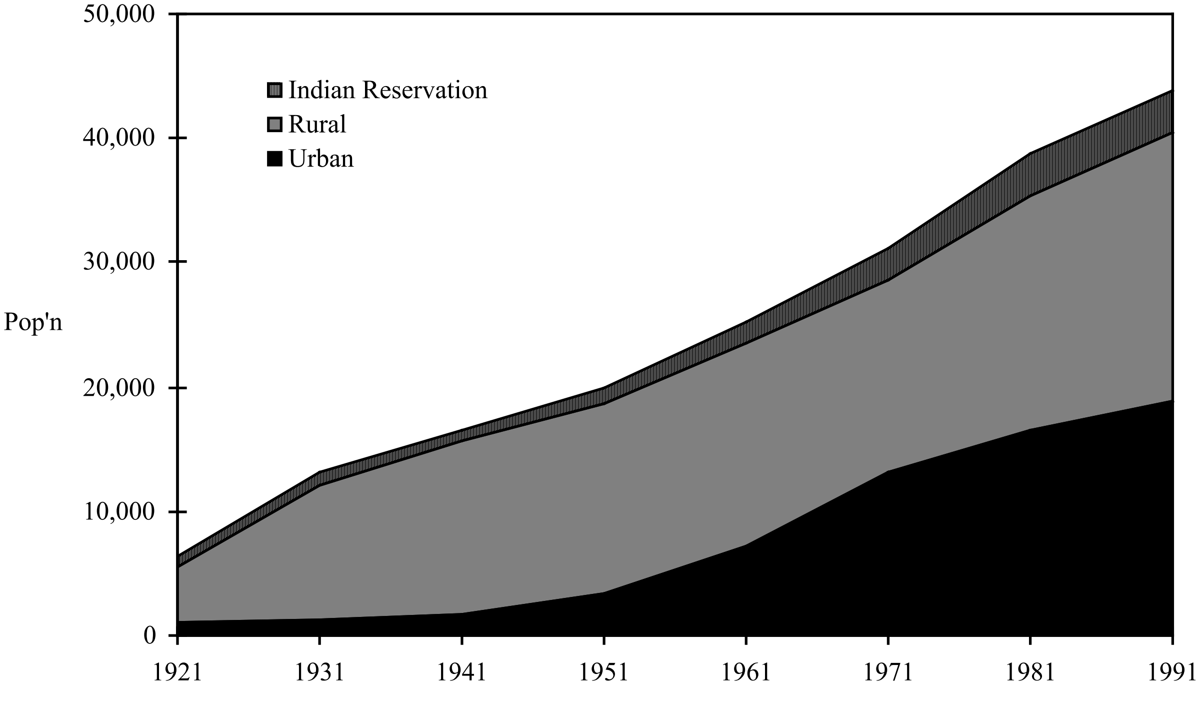


Figure 22. Human population trends in Indian reserves, and rural and urban communities. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 7. Location and date of incorporation of communities in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency.

Community	Longitude	Latitude	Year of Incorporation
Peace River	117° 16'	56° 15'	1919
Fairview	118° 23'	56° 04'	1949
High Level	117° 08'	58° 30'	1983
Grimshaw	117° 36'	56° 11'	1953
Manning	117° 35'	56° 10'	1957
La Crete	116° 25'	58° 11'	NA
Rainbow Lake	119° 23'	58° 30'	NA
Fort Vermilion	116° 01'	58° 23'	NA
Berwyn	117° 44'	56° 09'	1936
Hines Creek	118° 36'	56° 15'	1952
Nampa	117° 08'	56° 02'	1958
Zama	118° 41'	59° 09'	NA

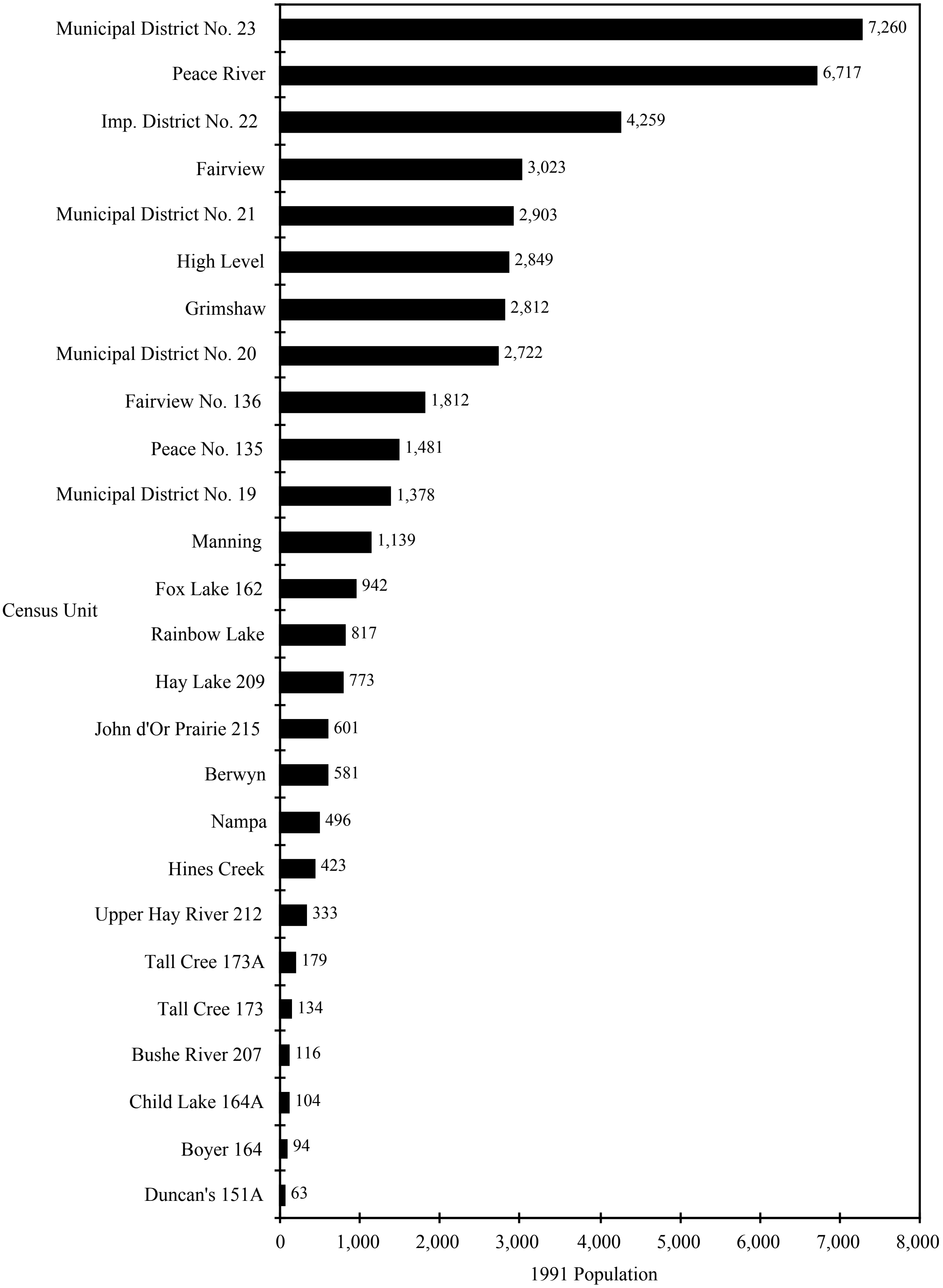


Figure 23. 1991 Ranking of population size of towns, Indian reserves, and improvement districts in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

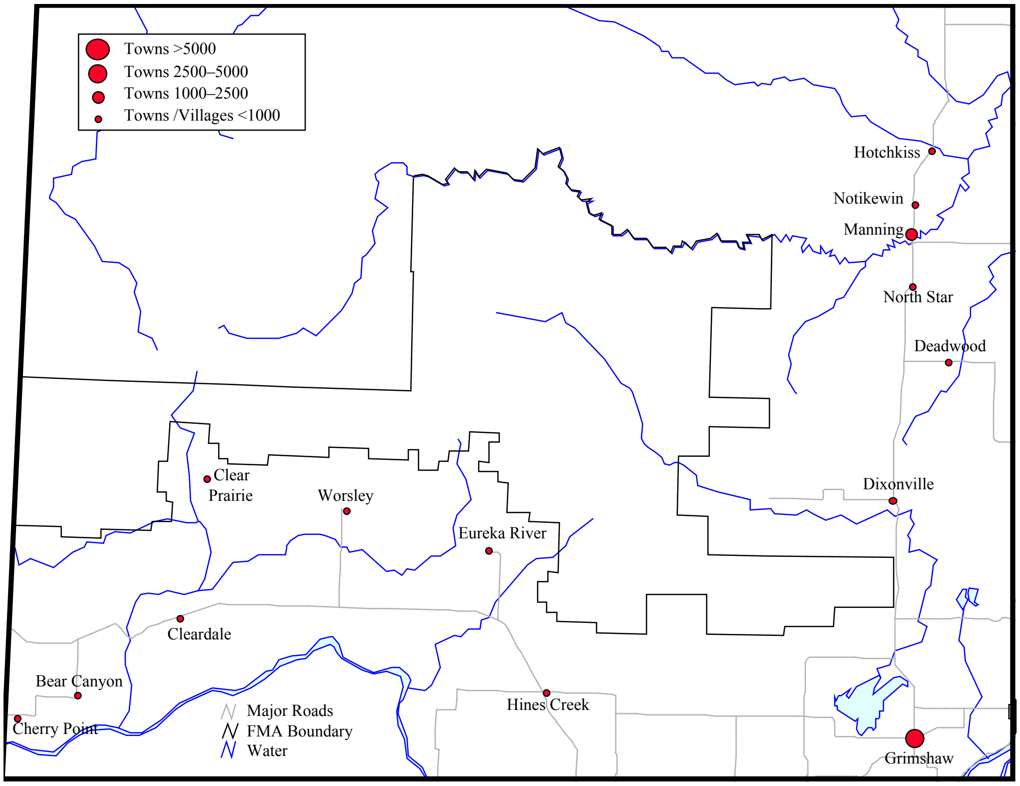

Towns >5000
Towns 2500–5000
Towns 1000–2500
Towns /Villages <1000
Hotchkiss
Notikewin
Manning
North Star
Deadwood
Dixonville
Clear Prairie
Worsley
Eureka River
Cleardale
Bear Canyon
Cherry Point
Major Roads
FMA Boundary
Water
Hines Creek
Grimshaw

Figure 24. Settlements in the P1 and P2 FMUs. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

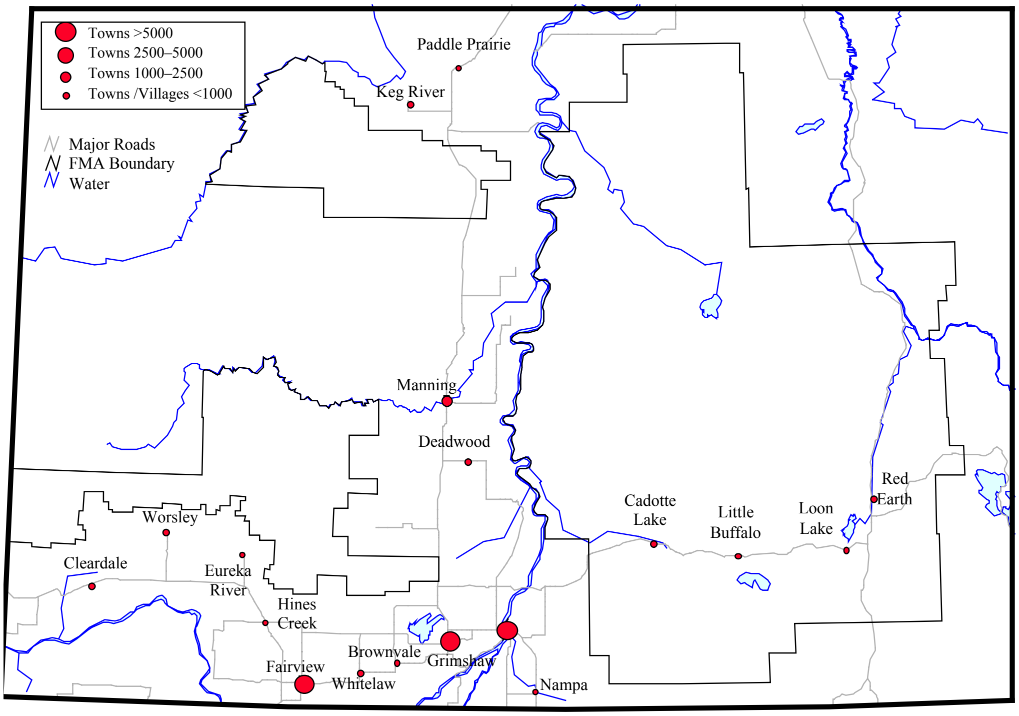

Towns >5000
Towns 2500–5000
Towns 1000–2500
Towns /Villages <1000
Major Roads
FMA Boundary
Water
Paddle Prairie
Keg River
Manning
Deadwood
Worsley
Cleardale
Eureka River
Hines Creek
Fairview
Whitelaw
Brownvale
Grimshaw
Nampa
Cadotte Lake
Little Buffalo
Loon Lake
Red Earth

Figure 25. Settlements in the PRPD FMA. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

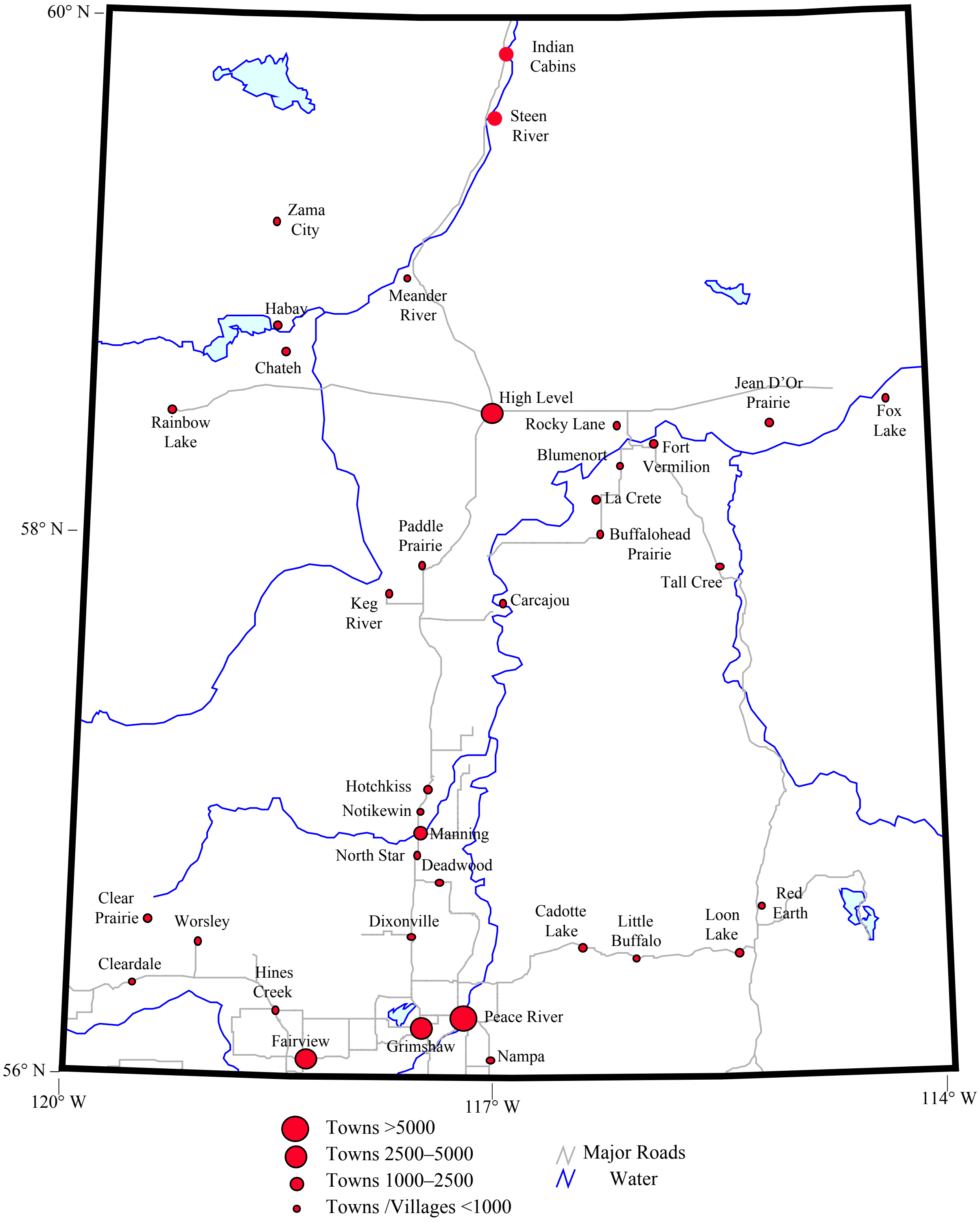

60° N
58° N
56° N
120° W
117° W
114° W
Indian Cabins
Steen River
Zama City
Meander River
Habay
Chateh
Rainbow Lake
High Level
Jean D'Or Prairie
Fox Lake
Rocky Lane
Blumenort
Fort Vermilion
La Crete
Buffalohead Prairie
Tall Cree
Paddle Prairie
Keg River
Carcajou
Hotchkiss
Notikewin
Manning
North Star
Deadwood
Clear Prairie
Worsley
Dixonville
Cadotte Lake
Little Buffalo
Loon Lake
Red Earth
Cleardale
Hines Creek
Fairview
Grimshaw
Peace River
Nampa
Towns >5000
Towns 2500–5000
Towns 1000–2500
Towns /Villages <1000
Major Roads
Water

Figure 26. Settlements in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

Table 8. Area, population, relevant treaty and establishment of Indian reserves (IR) and Metis settlements in northwest Alberta. Whereas reserve area only includes that portion north of 56° and west of 114°, band size includes all residents and not just those north of 56° and west of 114. Data Source: Gov. of Alberta.

Ethnic Group	Band Name	Pop'n	Treaty	Reserve Name	Area (ha)	Year Est'd
Cree	Woodland Cree	539	8	Woodland Cree IR 226	11,564	
				Woodland Cree IR 227	684	
				Woodland Cree IR 228	3,780	
Cree	Tall Cree	365	8	Beaver Ranch IR 163	784	
				Tall Cree IR 173	538	
				Tall Cree IR 173A	2,244	
				Carcajou Settlement 187	cemetery	
				Tall Cree IR 163A	240	Pending
				Tall Cree IR 163B	208	Pending
				Tall Cree IR 173 addition	3,386	Pending
				Tall Cree IR 173A- addition	1,595	Pending
				Ft. Vermilion IR 173B	50	Pending
				Wadlin Lake IR 173C	48	Pending
Cree	Lubicon Lake	130	8	Under Negotiation	24,606	*
Cree	Loon River Cree	282	8	Under Negotiation	18,130	*
Cree	Little Red River Cree	2,013	8	Jean D'or Prairie IR 215	14,200	
				Fox Lake IR 162	10,586	
Cree	Duncans	101	8	Duncans IR 151A	2,034	
				William McKenzie IR 151K	346	
Cree	Whitefish Lake (Atikameg)	619	8	Utikoomak Lake IR 155B	471	
Cree	Trout Lake Community Assoc.	300	8	Pending	15,540	*
Cree	Peerless Lake Community Assoc.	400	8	Pending	18,130	*
Cree	Horse Lake Band	300	8	Clear Hills IR152C	1,580	
Cree	Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement	652	8	Paddle Prairie Metis Settlem	172,328	
Cree	Gift Lake Metis Settlement	716	8	Gift Lake Metis Settlement	15,546	
Beaver	Dene Tha'	2,161	8	Bushe River IR 207	11,319	
				Hay Lake IR 209	11,685	
				Zama Lake IR 210	1,436	
				Amber River IR 211	2,048	
				Bistcho Lake IR 213	298	
				Jackfish Point IR 214	68	
				Upper Hay River IR 212	1,275	
Beaver	Beaver First Nation (Boyer River)	317	8	Boyer IR 164	4,286	
				Child Lake IR 164A	2,898	

* Currently being negotiated

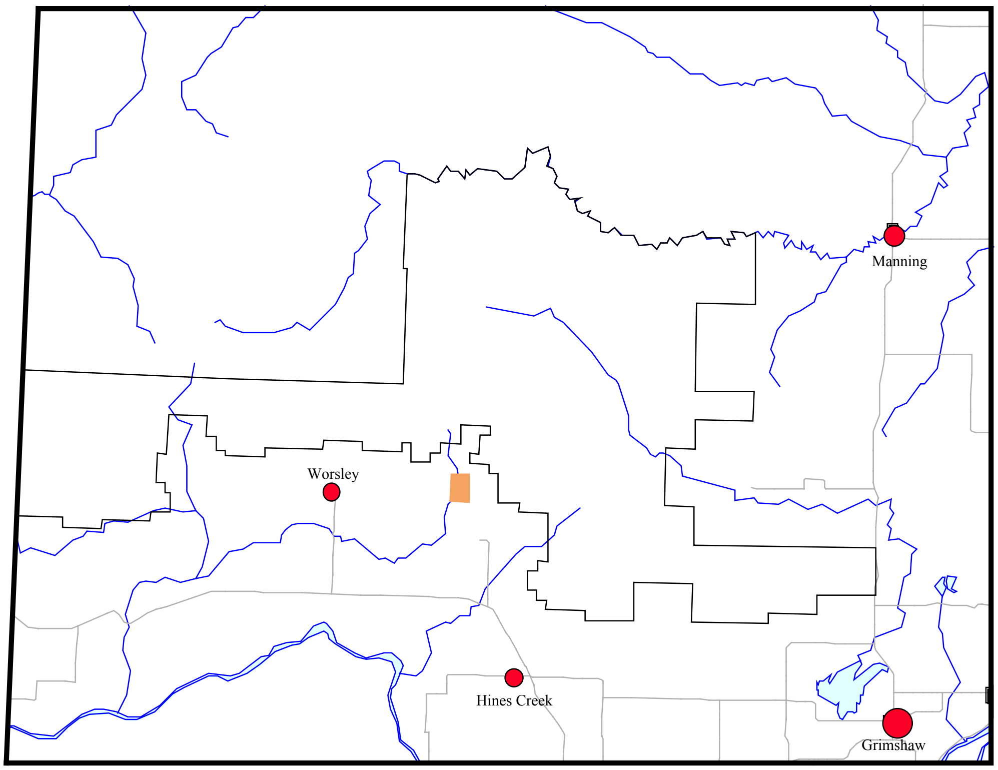

Manning
Worsley
Hines Creek
Grimshaw

Figure 27. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

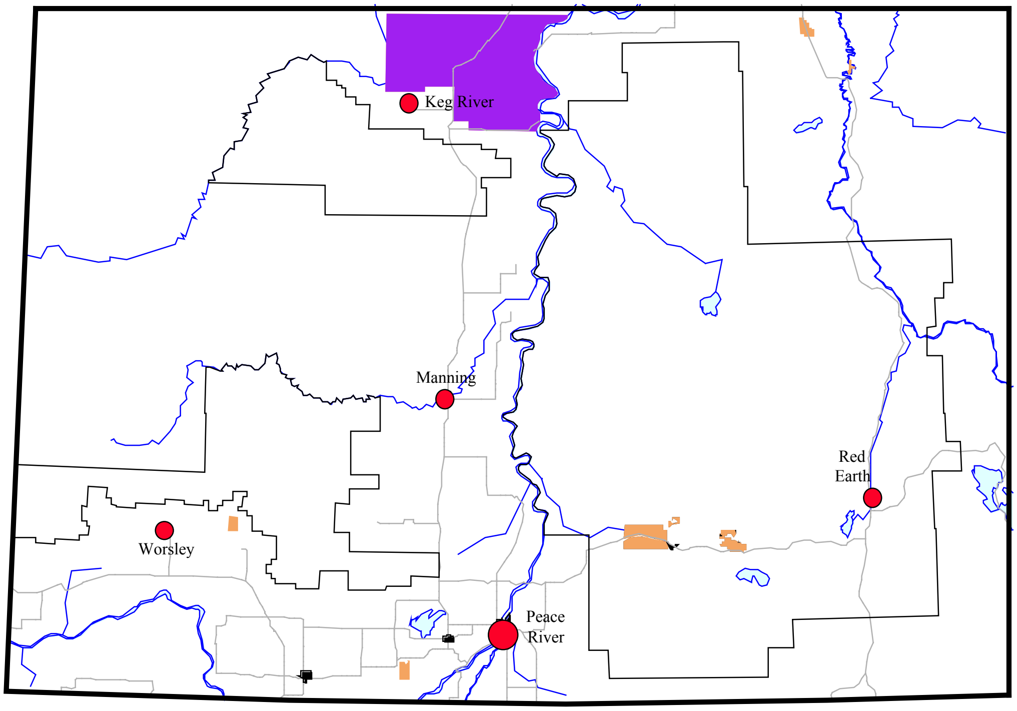

Keg River
Manning
Red
Earth
Worsley
Peace
River

Figure 28. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in the PRPD FMA in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

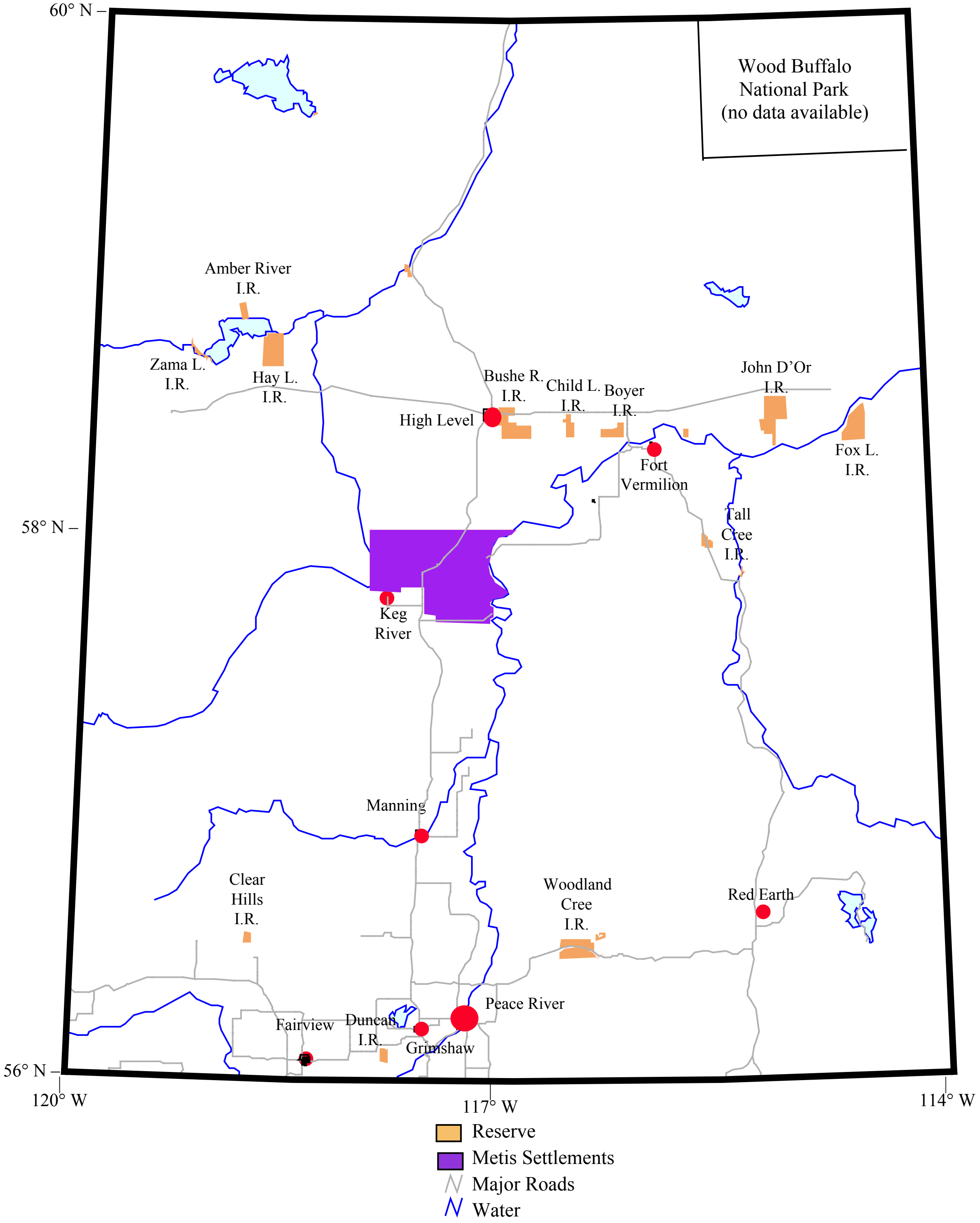

60° N –
58° N –
56° N –
120° W
117° W
114° W
Wood Buffalo National Park (no data available)
Amber River I.R.
Zama L. I.R.
Hay L. I.R.
Bushe R. I.R.
High Level
Child L. I.R.
Boyer I.R.
John D'Or I.R.
Fox L. I.R.
Fort Vermilion
Tall Cree I.R.
Keg River
Manning
Clear Hills I.R.
Woodland Cree I.R.
Red Earth
Peace River
Fairview
Duncan's I.R.
Grimshaw
Reserve
Metis Settlements
Major Roads
Water

Figure 29. Indian reserves and Metis settlements in northwest Alberta. Data Source: DMI GIS Library.

Human Resource Values

Significant Historic Sites

Historic sites of significance in Alberta are chronicled by the Cultural Facilities and Historical Resources Division of Alberta Community Development Department. The information assembled on historic sites (Table 9, Figure 30) has been used by Alberta Community Development, in conjunction with the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, to assist in the evaluation of the impact of development proposals by the energy sector (primarily well sites). Those sites which are considered to be the most important are listed as Significant Historical Sites, and are assigned an appropriate “historical resource value”. The list, however, contains only a small percentage of the total number of historical sites and areas that have been identified.

Each section of land listed has been assigned an historical resource value (HRV). This value is based upon whether the historical resource has been designated under the *Historical Resources Act*, and at what level the site has been designated.

HRV 1 = Provincial Historic Resource. An historical resource which has been designated as a Provincial Historic Resource is situated within the section. Provincial Historic Resources are not to be impacted by any petroleum and natural gas related activities. Surface access to the section will be subject to specific restrictions. An Historical Resources Impact Assessment will likely be required.

HRV 2 = Registered Historic Resource. An historical resource which has been designated as a Registered Historic Resource is situated within the section. Registered Historic Resources are not to be impacted by any petroleum and natural gas related activities. Surface access to the section will be subject to specific restrictions. An Historical Resources Impact Assessment will likely be required.

HRV 3 = Significant Historic Resource. An significant historical resource is situated within the section. The historical resources is not to be impacted by any petroleum and natural gas related activities. Surface access will be subject to specific restrictions. An Historical Resources Impact Assessment will likely be required.

HRV 4 = Buffer Zones. Lands which have been categorized as possessing an historical resources value of “4” are situated adjacent to a Provincial Historic Resource, Registered Historic Resource and /or a Significant Historic Resource. Surface access to the section may be subject to specific restrictions. An Historical Resources Impact Assessment will likely be required.

Table 9. Frequency of historic sites of each human resource value (HRV) found in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Historic Site Services, Alberta Provincial Government.

Human Resource Value	Meridian	Township	Range	Section
1	5	82	82	22
1	5	22	83	32
1	5	23	90	28
2	5	23	91	28
2	5	12	108	9
2	5	13	108	24
2	5	14	108	10
3	5	23	82	25
3	5	23	82	26
3	5	22	83	11
3	5	20	87	10
3	5	21	93	2
3	5	22	94	7
3	5	20	95	34
3	5	20	95	35
3	5	16	106	21
3	5	16	106	28
3	5	12	108	15
3	5	13	108	26
3	5	12	109	9
4	5	20	95	25
4	5	20	95	26
4	5	20	95	36
4	5	20	96	3
4	5	16	106	20
4	5	16	106	29

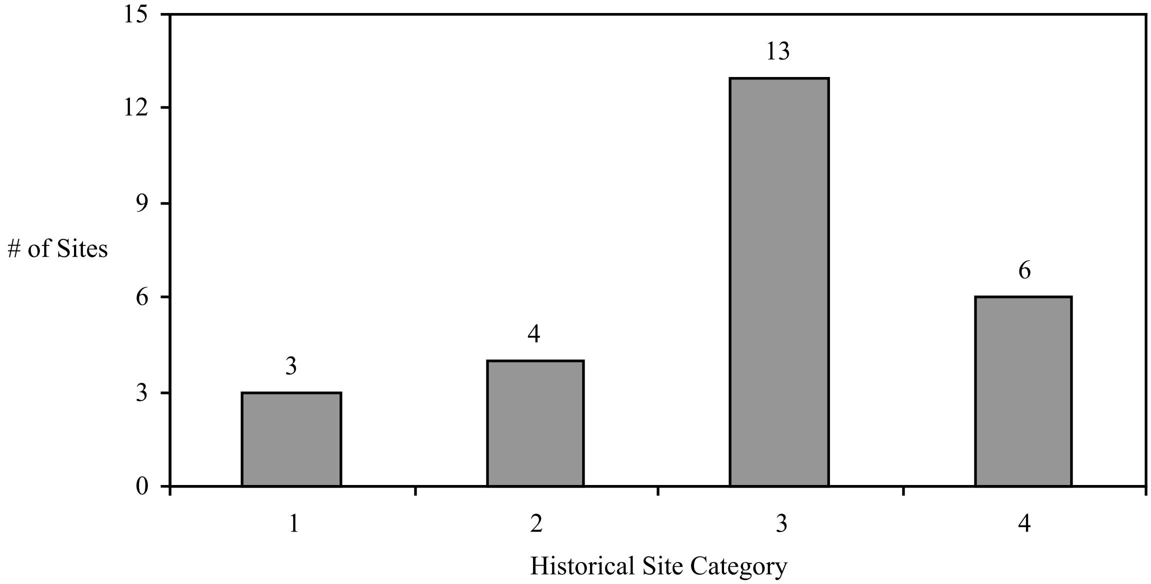


Figure 30. Frequency of historic site categories in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Historic Site Services, Alberta Provincial Government.

Age Class Structure

The age class structure of the people of northwest Alberta is typical of many other human populations, exhibiting a general decline in abundance of people of progressively older ages (Table 10, Figure 31-Figure 33). The age class structure of northwest Alberta does differ from both Alberta and Canada, however, by having proportionally greater representation of young people (0–20 yrs), a less pronounced “baby boom” bump (people born between 1945–1965), and relatively few older people (65+ yrs).

Although the differences are relatively small, males outnumber females in all age class intervals less than 75 years. Whereas elderly women generally outnumber elderly men because of higher survivorship rates, this difference is far less conspicuous in northwest Alberta than in other parts of Alberta or Canada.

Table 11, Figure 34, Figure 35 provide an index of ageing for different geographic regions from 1961 to 1991. Three major patterns emerge from these data. First, populations in Canada, Alberta, and northern Alberta have all aged significantly between 1961 and 1991 (Table 11, Figure 34). Secondly, the general population of Canada is older than that of Alberta, and the population of Alberta is older than that of northwest Alberta (Table 11, Figure 34). A third clear pattern indicates that villages in northwest Alberta have older populations than either towns or rural municipalities in that area (Figure 35).

Table 10. 1991 Age class structure of northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Geographic Region	Age Interval	Males	Females	Total
Northwest Alberta	0-4	1,930	1,785	3,715
	5-9	1,920	1,840	3,760
	10-14	1,780	1,690	3,470
	15-19	1,640	1,595	3,235
	20-24	1,370	1,265	2,635
	25-29	1,630	1,585	3,215
	30-34	1,700	1,630	3,330
	35-39	1,500	1,345	2,845
	40-44	1,175	1,050	2,225
	45-49	880	870	1,750
	50-54	815	710	1,525
	55-59	720	585	1,305
	60-64	585	500	1,085
	65-74	740	710	1,450
	74+	480	590	1,070
Alberta	0-4	106,365	101,220	207,585
	5-9	106,130	100,850	206,980
	10-14	95,835	90,710	186,545
	15-19	90,905	87,020	177,925
	20-25	97,015	96,430	193,445
	25-29	117,170	117,560	234,730
	30-34	129,675	126,090	255,765
	35-39	115,995	117,085	233,080
	40-44	95,400	91,830	187,230
	45-49	70,360	67,910	138,270
	50-54	56,110	54,040	110,150
	55-59	50,645	48,520	99,165
	60-64	45,450	44,995	90,445
	65-74	63,365	74,040	137,405
	74+	36,970	56,175	93,145
Canada	0-4	975,765	930,735	1,906,500
	5-9	978,220	929,825	1,908,045
	10-14	962,930	915,090	1,878,020
	15-19	958,400	910,230	1,868,630
	20-25	985,220	976,655	1,961,875
	25-29	1,182,575	1,192,960	2,375,535
	30-34	1,237,690	1,253,355	2,491,045
	35-39	1,133,670	1,150,810	2,284,480
	40-44	1,042,180	1,044,715	2,086,895
	45-49	824,200	816,580	1,640,780
	50-54	663,285	662,170	1,325,455
	55-59	608,085	614,840	1,222,925
	60-64	571,940	604,765	1,176,705
	65-74	851,455	1,043,615	1,895,070
	74+	478,970	795,930	1,274,900

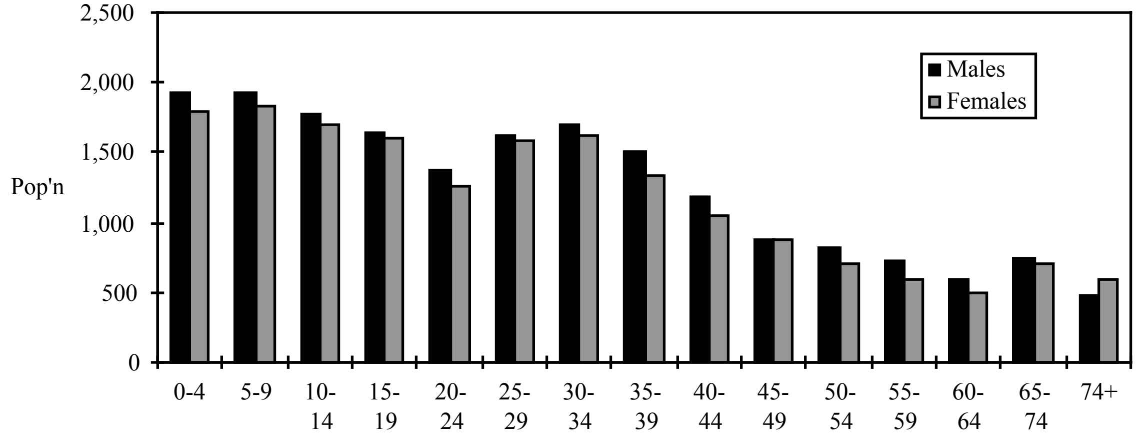


Figure 31. 1991 human age class distribution in northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

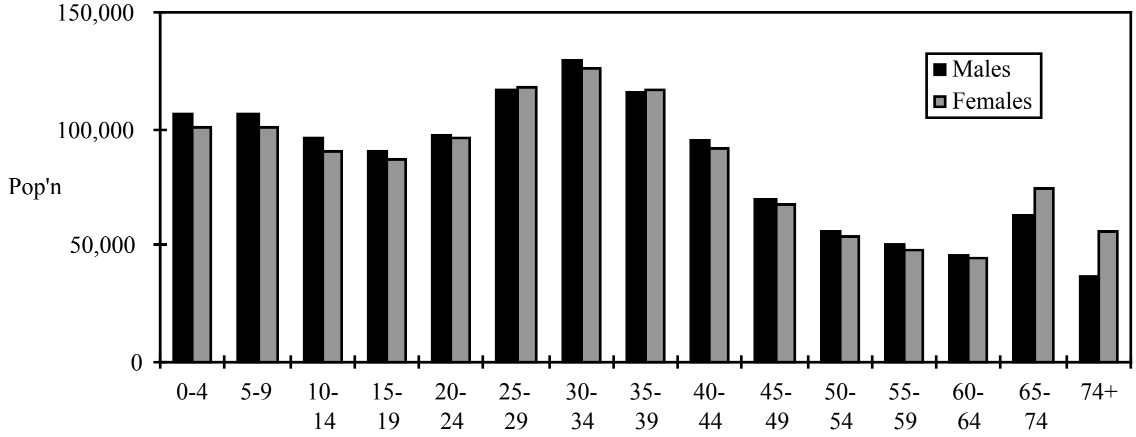


Figure 32. 1991 human age class distribution in Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

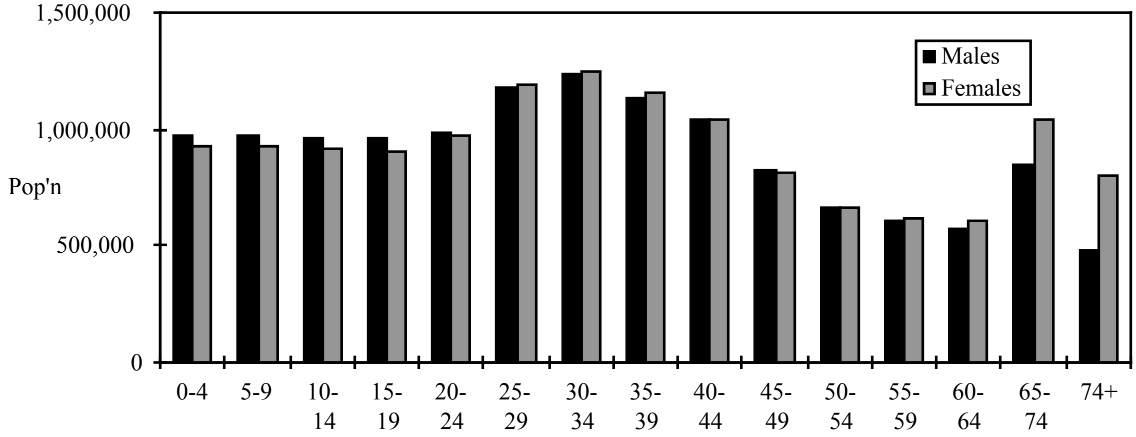


Figure 33. 1991 human age class distribution in Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Table 11. Indices of aging in the Mackenzie Region, Alberta, Canada, and the towns, villages and municipal districts (M.D) of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
Mackenzie Region	14.9	13.7	17.9	18.9	18.7	20.1	23.0
Fairview	17.9	27.1	35.8	42.9	43.0	44.6	45.5
Grimshaw	16.9	14.3	16.5	24.3	23.9	23.6	26.2
High Level		4.4	2.1	1.7	4.1	4.2	4.7
Manning	17.6	18.9	29.7	54.2	62.1	52.8	57.9
Peace River	12.1	11.7	11.4	20.0	20.2	22.3	23.3
Rainbow Lake			3.3				1.9
Ave of Towns	16.1	15.3	14.0	23.8	25.6	24.6	26.6
Berwyn	28.8	29.0	31.0	54.2	51.7	41.7	50.0
Hines Creek	24.8	49.6	60.0	40.6	30.3	37.4	24.1
Nampa	25.6	29.6	58.3	50.0	50.0	28.6	26.7
Ave of Villages	26.4	36.1	49.8	48.3	44.0	35.9	33.6
M.D. 135	21.8	16.8	29.4	28.3	30.8	31.1	46.2
M.D. 136	27.7	24.0	30.4	23.7	25.9	27.1	40.6
M.D. 131	11.2	12.1	14.1	15.4	17.5		
M.D. 21	9.5	9.0	16.2	13.0	13.1	15.1	18.3
M.D. 22	12.6	14.2	24.2	17.1	18.8	19.6	26.3
M.D. 23	7.1	6.0	7.2	8.2	9.3	9.4	11.4
Ave of M.D.'s	10.1	10.3	15.4	13.4	14.7	20.5	28.6
Alberta	19.8	20.3	23.1	27.4	30.2	34.1	38.4
Canada	22.4	23.3	27.4	34.0	43.1	50.0	55.7

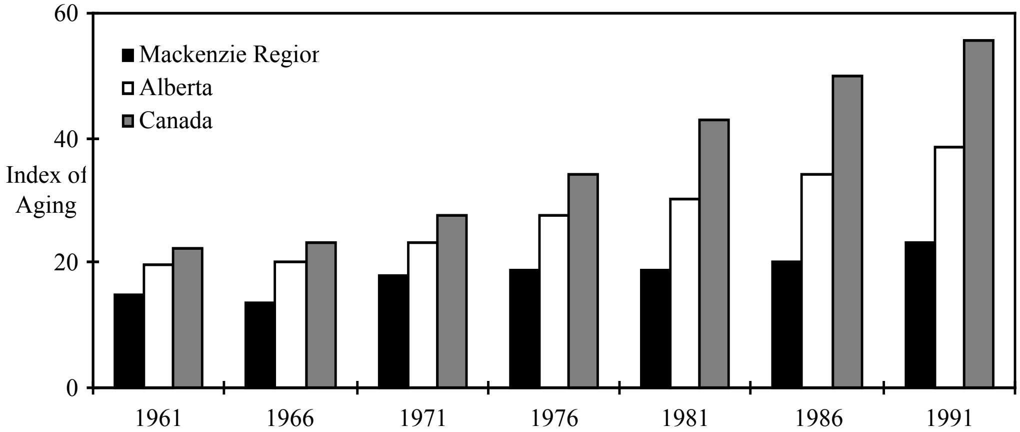


Figure 34. Index of aging (# people 65+ yrs / # people <14 yrs)*100) for the Mackenzie Region, Alberta, and Canada. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

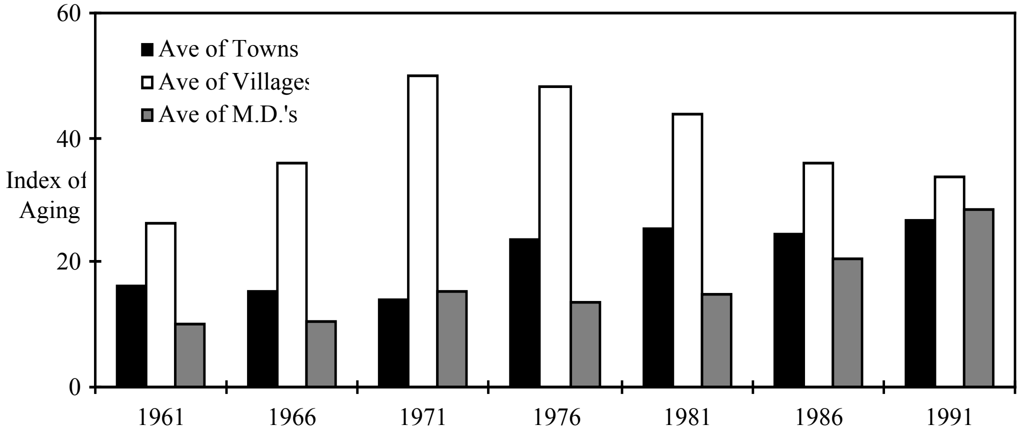


Figure 35. Index of aging for towns, villages, and municipal districts of northwest Alberta. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Natality, Mortality, and Rates of Change in Human Populations

In all geographic regions, the child-woman ratio (an indicator of natality rate) has declined during the period 1961–1991 (Table 12, Figure 36). During this period, the child-woman ratio was highest for northwest Alberta, followed by Alberta, then followed by Canada. These patterns suggest that women of northwest Alberta have a relatively high natality rate, but this rate is decreasing.

Death rates, in general, declined in all geographic regions from 1961 to 1986 (Table 12, Figure 37), and thereafter appeared to be stable (Alberta) or increasing (northwest Alberta and Canada). The increase in death rate in recent years can be attributed to a progressively aging population whose elderly people have a higher mortality rate than do younger people. Death rates were highest for Canada, intermediate for Alberta, and lowest in northwest Alberta. The low death rate in northwest Alberta can be attributed to a proportionally younger population.

The natural rate of increase in a population can be calculated as the difference between birth rate and death rate. The natural rate of increase was highest for northwest Alberta, intermediate for Alberta, and lowest for Canada (Table 12, Figure 38). The high natural rate of increase in northwest Alberta can be attributed to the relatively high natality rate and low death rate associated with a younger population. Whereas the natural rate of increase appears to be slowly declining in Canada, it is variable in Alberta and northwest Alberta, with no clear indication of increase or decline.

Table 12. Human demographics indicators (child/1000 women, natural rate of increase, and crude death rate for northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada in 1991. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

	Period	Northwest Alberta	Alberta	Canada
Child / Woman Ratio	1961	803.9	664.7	606.3
	1966	824.6	580.7	530.1
	1971	541.2	432.0	390.1
	1976	548.4	356.1	326.9
	1981	506.8	332.7	303.1
	1986	477.0	341.5	293.9
	1991	438.6	326.4	292.0
Crude Death Rate	1971	5.6	6.5	7.3
	1976	6.1	6.2	7.3
	1981	5.1	5.7	7.0
	1986	4.5	5.7	6.5
	1991	5.3	5.7	7.2
Natural Rate of Increase	1971	16.6	12.3	9.5
	1976	16.1	11.8	8.4
	1981	17.8	13.3	8.2
	1986	17.2	12.7	8.2
	1991	17.1	11.7	8.0

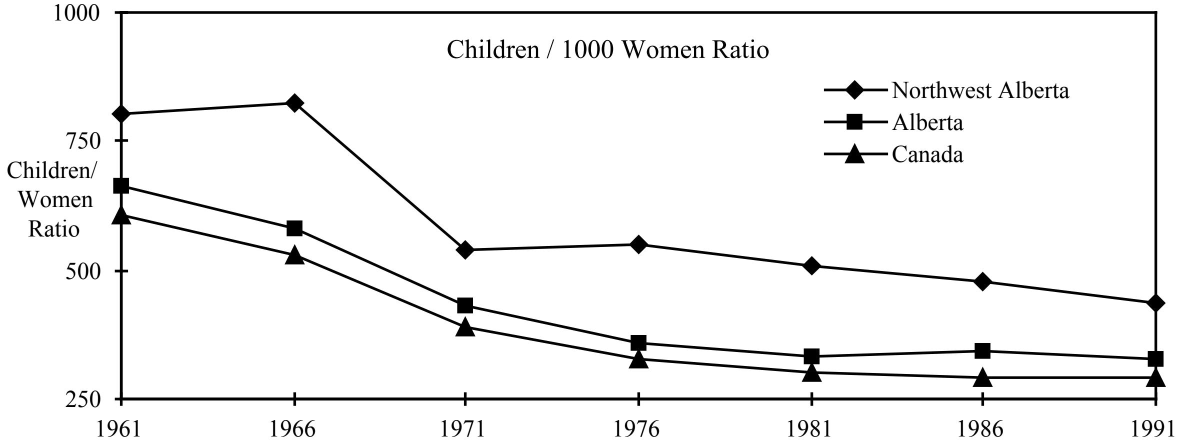


Figure 36. Children/women ratio in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = # of children (0–4 yrs) / 1000 women (15–44 yrs). Data Source: Statistics Canada.

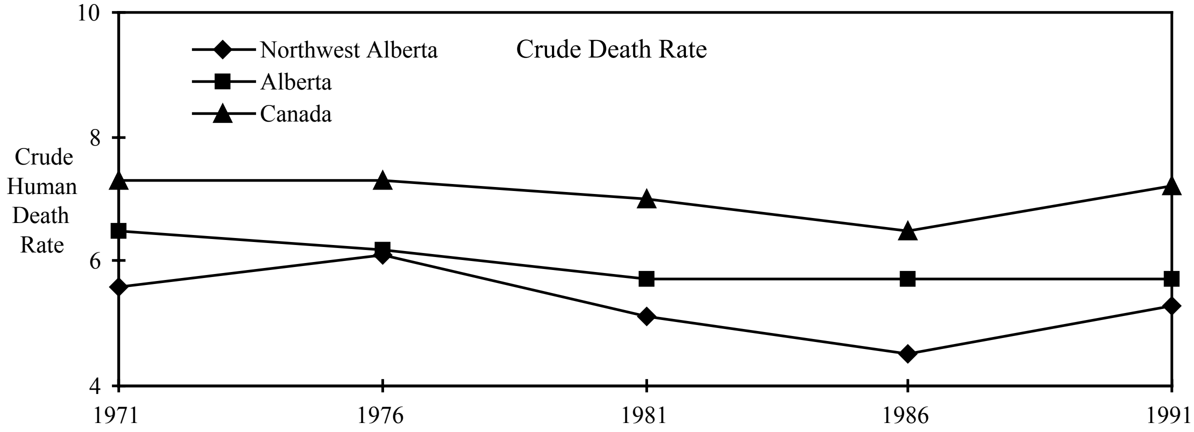


Figure 37. Crude human death rate in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = ((# of births – # of deaths) / total population)*1000. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

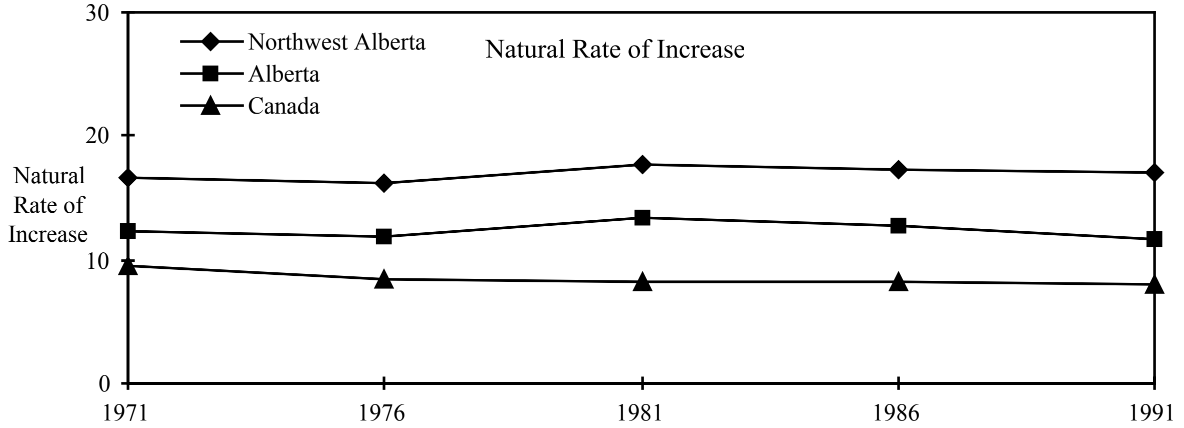


Figure 38. Natural rate of increase in northwest Alberta, Alberta, and Canada. Ratio = (# of births / total population)*1000. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Employment Structures

More men than women are active in the “traditional” workforce as employees in northwest Alberta (Figure 39). While there are more full-time male employees than female employees, the number of part-time women employees outnumber the number of part-time male employees. Average income of females in northwest Alberta is lower than for males in all categories: total, part-time, and full-time (Figure 40). Female full-time income is 67% of male full-time income while average total female income is 56% that of males. This difference reflects the lower full-time and part-time wages of females relative to males, as well as the fact that part-time income is a greater percentage of females' total earnings (59%) than of males (43%). The relatively low participation of females in the full-time workforce is due in large part to family and other lifestyle considerations.

Agriculture-related employment, either direct or indirect, remains important in northwest Alberta (Figure 41). About 13% of workers are employed in agriculture and related service industries, and the four next most important employment categories (retail trade, educational services, health and social services, government services) depend to a large extent on the boom in the agriculture-related population in the 1960’s. However, the agricultural industry of northwest Alberta has ceased its impressive growth during the last three decades, while petroleum exploration, and more recently forestry, have gained relative importance. As modern farming leads to fewer and larger farms, the latter industries are likely to provide much of the employment needed by the younger population, while service industries will continue to benefit from both the old and new resource industries.

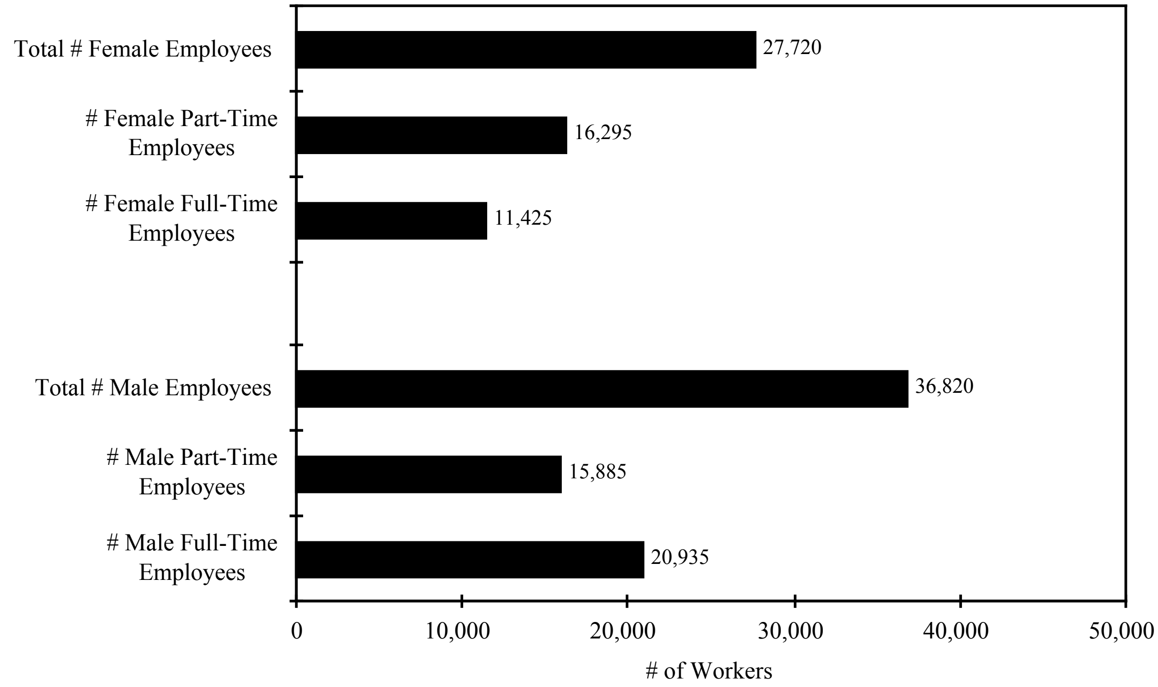


Figure 39. Number of full-time and part-time male and female employees in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

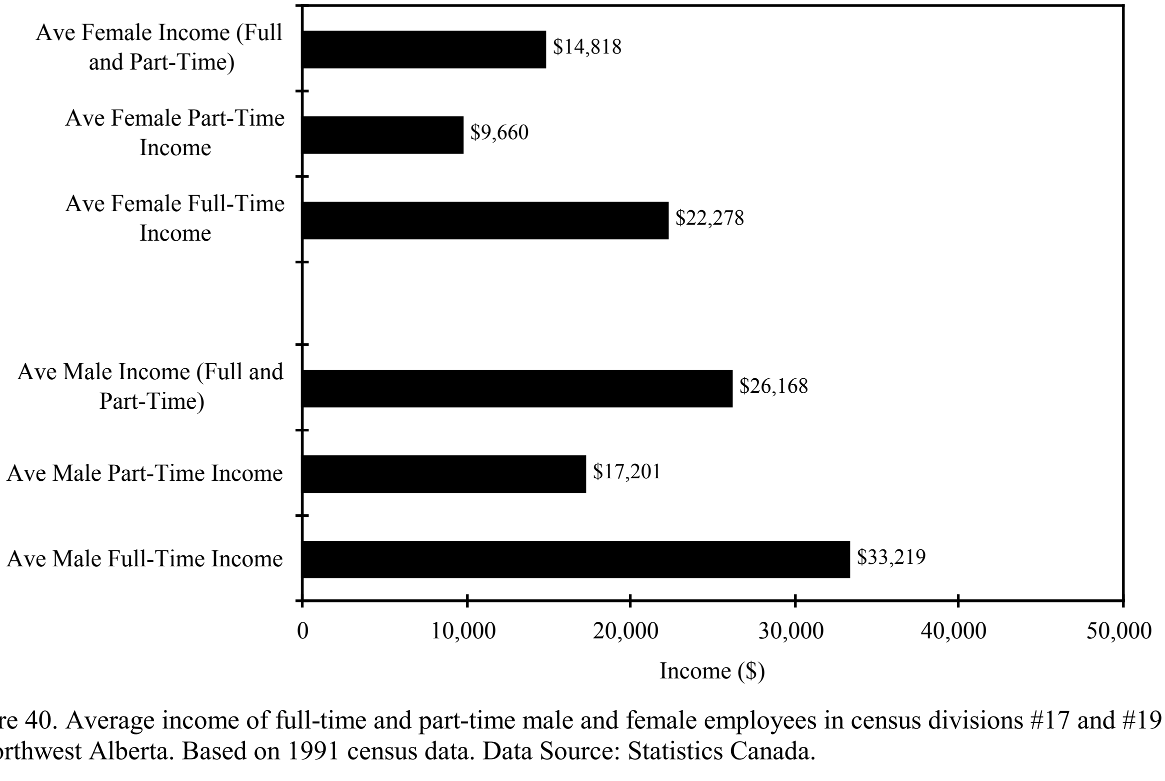


Figure 40. Average income of full-time and part-time male and female employees in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

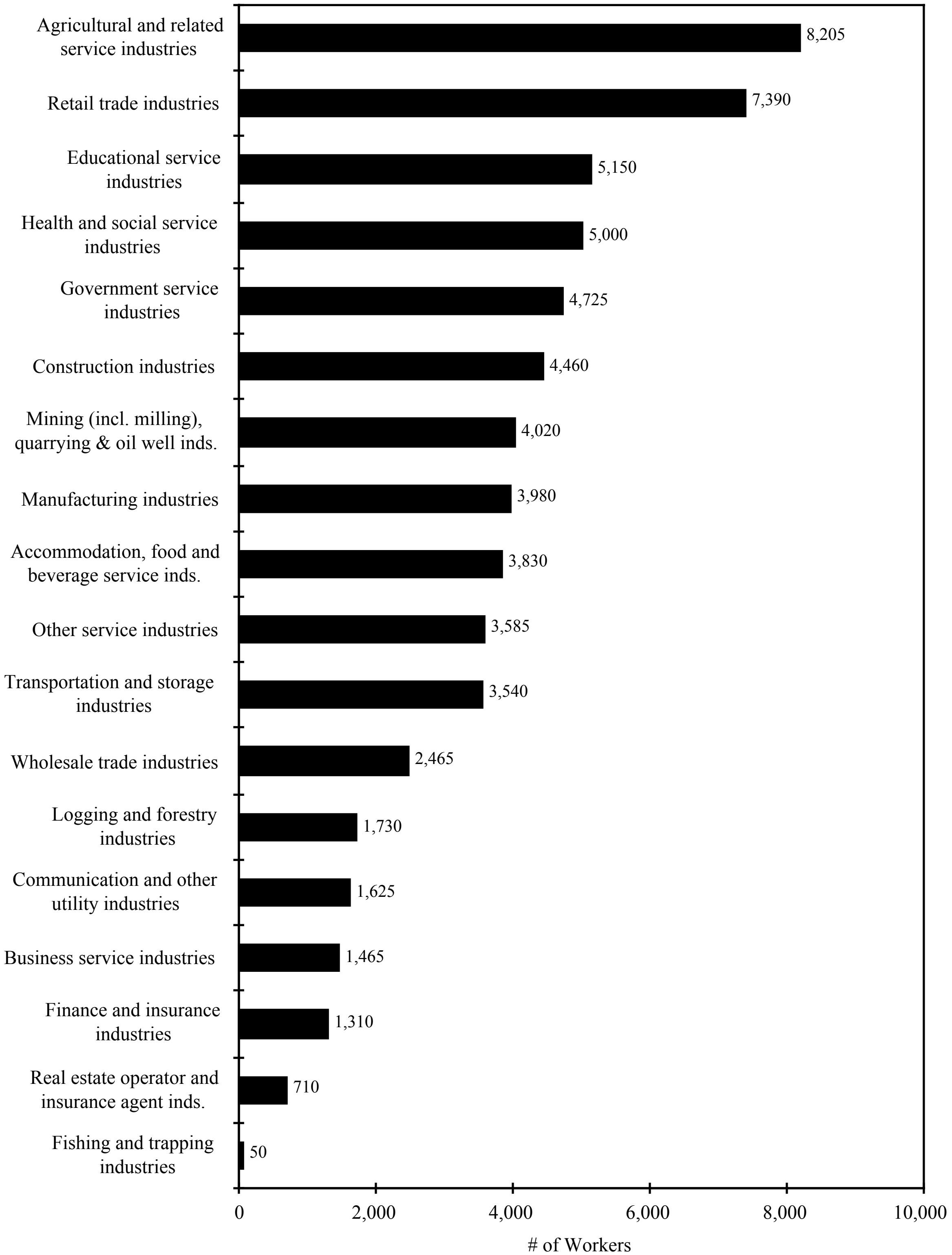


Figure 41. Ranking of work force in different occupations in census divisions #17 and #19 of northwest Alberta. Based on 1991 census data. Data Source: Statistics Canada.

Transportation and Utilities Infrastructure

The History of the Transportation Network in northwest Alberta

When the Peace River region began to be recommended for large scale agriculture in the 1870's, it was recognized that, for this to occur, an adequate transportation system would have to be put in place, in particular a railway. In the years that followed, the absence of a railway would prove to be the main detraction to the development of commercial farming there, as an impassable 300 km stretch of muskeg and forested hills separated the area from the parkland around Edmonton. Therefore, not only would it have been extremely difficult to bring in settlers, the export of farm produce would have been virtually impossible. The only market would have had to be domestic, and this would not have been sufficient to sustain homesteaders. As a consequence, running parallel to the campaign to settle the Peace River Country was another one to bring in a railway.

In 1872, an expedition was dispatched to the region to examine the country and report on the possibility of the Canadian Pacific Railway being extended there. Sanford Fleming of the CPR had just read a pamphlet by Archibald McDonald who had traveled along the Peace River in 1828 with fur trade governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company. McDonald calculated that the pass along the Peace and Pine Rivers was only 1,800 ft above sea level, and he suggested that it was a "practicable gateway to the Pacific Slope." (McDonald, p.iv) From this, Fleming deduced that this pass could possibly accommodate a railway.

The expedition of 1872 was led by Charles Horetzky. Upon his return, Horetzky proposed that "the probability that the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway will be diverted through the Peace River Country offers the only solution to the difficulty [of settlement], and presents a key to this beautiful country." (Horetzky, p.17) Other promoters at the time, such as John Macoun and William F. Butler, publicly supported the view that the CPR be brought to this region, and, for a while, Fleming toyed with the idea. It was suggested that the railway swing northwest from Brandon, Manitoba, intersect Fort Saskatchewan, and proceed on through the Peace and Pine River passes into the interior of British Columbia, and then on to Vancouver. However, in light of American expansionism and the rapid population growth west of the Mississippi River, the cause for settling the southern prairies stood foremost with Ottawa. Thus, even what emerged as the preferred route, through the Yellowhead Pass, was abandoned in 1880 in favour of a more southerly one through the Kicking Horse Pass.

With this decision, thoughts of settling the Peace River Country were put on hold, and large scale settlement of this land would not begin for another 30 years. In the meantime, farming schemes were put forward, and attempts were made at group settlement, but nothing concrete would occur until statements during the provincial election campaign of 1909 indicated that a government backed railway was almost certain. That same year, a federal land office was established at Grouard and the land survey begun in earnest on the Grande Prairie, while ferries were installed at Athabasca Landing, Dunvegan and Peace River Crossing. In 1916, the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway finally arrived at Grande Prairie, and the Central Canada at Peace River. Shortly thereafter, the export of Peace River wheat was begun.

With the coming of the railway, the demand for improved transportation did not stop. Indeed, in the years that followed, this would become the most pressing concern for the newly arrived settlers. Be it improved rail traffic, bridges, more and better roads, an outlet to the west coast, or simply freight rates, the subject of transportation would come to dominate public debate. In every federal and provincial election, virtually every candidate would make some aspect of transportation a central part of his or her platform. The cause would serve to solidify public opinion and contribute to a regional identity which, at times, would even result in serious thoughts of provincial autonomy.

Long before the settlement period, and long before a railway was even considered, the main arteries for travel, either to or within the Peace River Country, had been the rivers. Initially, most travelers had entered the region on the Peace River, west from Fort Chipewyan and south from Fort Vermilion. This was the route over which, for decades, the Hudson's Bay Company had brought in supplies and shipped out fur. The only major obstacle were the chutes, or rapids east of Fort Vermilion. Significantly, when Allie Brick became the first Member to represent the riding of Peace River in the Alberta Provincial Parliament, the only issue he publicly espoused was undertaking a channel around the Vermilion Chutes.

From Fort Chipewyan, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) fur trade route extended south to Fort McMurray on the Athabasca River, then east on the Clearwater River and over the Methye Portage to Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay. From here, fur was shipped directly to England. During the 1860's, commercial traffic also began to extend along the Peace River from the west, as independent traders like Peter Gunn, Dan Carey and Twelve Foot Davis now competed with the HBC. The independents were stocked with supplies by outfitters in Quesnel, such as Pete Dunlevy, who had recently been attracted there by the Caribou gold rush. From Quesnel, this fur was taken to Vancouver, and, from there, shipped to England.

Along the river, the traders employed flatbottomed scows or simple barges for shipping cargo. Earlier in the century, york boats had been common. However, the limited carrying capacity of the york boats eventually curtailed their use. For individuals or small parties, birchbark canoes had been developed by the Indians long before the crew of Alexander Mackenzie used them for its historic journey to the Pacific Ocean during 1792-93. Canoes continued to be a familiar sight along the Peace River and its tributaries for over a century after that. During the late 1800's, the birchbark crafts largely gave way to manufactured Peterboro canoes. In 1882, steamboat traffic began along the Peace River when the Hudson's Bay Company constructed the *SS Grahame*. Based at Fort Chipewyan, the *Grahame* plied the waters of the Athabasca, Slave and Peace Rivers, and would ascend the Peace as far west as the Vermilion Chutes, to a point known as Little Red River.

For land travel, journeys both to and within the Peace River Country during the 18th century had been undertaken on foot. This was how Cree and Iroquois trading and war parties initially entered the region from the south and east, some over what Alexander Mackenzie described as the "Knistineaux [Cree] War Road." (Mackenzie, p.29) The first horses at Dunvegan were brought in by the North West Company sometime before 1821 when it was noted by George Simpson that the 100 to 150 horses then there "were the most important service" to the traders who "thereby rarely know what a scarcity of provision is." (Rich, p.380)

During the 1820's, horses were acquired by the Beaver Indians trading at Dunvegan; the parties of Cree and Iroquois then entering the region also frequently did so on horseback as well. It was also at about this time that wagons, primarily red river carts, came to be used for overland travel by the traders, although seldom by the Indians. As on the southern prairies, red river carts were preferred because the wide diameter of the wheels allowed for better traverse of the gullies and furrows of the primitive trails, while the rear extension of the carts served to balance cargo.

A major problem for the carts was their limited carrying capacity and the fact that the old Indian pitching trails had been intended for individuals or horses to travel in single file. These trails therefore were single track. For two wheeled carts or wagons, the trails had to be widened, and wagon traffic in the Peace River Country during the fur trade era was, as a consequence, minimal. The most heavily used roadway in the region was the trail on the north side of the Peace River between Dunvegan and the Smoky River outpost, located on the Peace River near the mouth of the Smoky. This trail would later extend to the site of Peace River Landing along what would later be known as the Shaftesbury Trail. In 1878, the entire trail was reported to have been greatly improved by an HBC employee identified as 'Old Macdonald'. (McDougall) For years, Indian trails had extended to Dunvegan from the Grande and Spirit River Prairies to the south, over which Beaver Indians had brought fur and meat to trade. When an outpost of the HBC was erected on the Grande Prairie in 1880, a crude wagon road was cut out to this site from Dunvegan and past the outpost at Spirit River. In 1888, the HBC opened a ranch at Spirit River to accommodate the anticipated growth of traffic in the south Peace River Country. The fur trade was in decline however, and, in 1894, the ranch was sold to Charles Bremner and Peter Gunn. Horses occasionally strayed from the ranch, and, in later years, bands of wild horses would be noted on the Spirit River Prairie. The trail southward fell into disuse during the 1890's, and, in later years, both Jim Cornwall and David Sexsmith would claim to have been responsible for opening a new trail into the Grande Prairie during 1898-99. (Sexsmith)

After the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Assiniboine in 1823, wagon travel to the Peace River Country occasionally took place from this post to Fort Waterloo at the west end of Lesser Slave Lake, and from there to the Smoky River outpost. Traffic over this trail picked up during the mid 1870's when Dunvegan was made the headquarters of a Peace River Trading District, and Lesser Slave Lake brought within its jurisdiction. In 1876, the trail was more thoroughly excavated by Harrison Young. The following year, the HBC improved the old trail from Fort Edmonton to Athabasca Landing, and, when the Peace River Trading District was disbanded in 1885, and

Dunvegan made reliant on Fort Edmonton for goods, much traffic bound for the Peace Country would begin on the Athabasca Landing Trail. This trail also served the entire MacKenzie Basin.

From Athabasca Landing, travelers to the Peace River Country would proceed up the Athabasca River to the mouth of the Lesser Slave River, where a stopping place called Mirror Landing provided a rest. Crude trails also came to parallel the Athabasca River to this spot on either side. From Mirror Landing, travelers proceeded up the Lesser Slave River to the east end of Lesser Slave Lake to a place called Sawridge. The Lake was then crossed, and the journey continued up to the Smoky River outpost. In 1888, the HBC constructed a sternwheeled steamer, the *SS Athabasca,* at Athabasca Landing, which could take cargo and passengers up the Athabasca and partially up the Lesser Slave River. After 24 km on the Slave, however, a series of rapids began, and a portage had to be made before the journey to the west end of the lake could be made on scows.

From the west end of Lesser Slave Lake, two other ancient Indian trails began to be extensively used during the late 19th century. One extended west from Buffalo Bay to Spirit River, crossing the Smoky at a shallow point called Pruden's Crossing near present day Watino. It eventually became the main route to Spirit River. The other trail extended southwest from the lake to the Cree community at Sturgeon Lake. When the HBC erected an outpost at Sturgeon Lake in 1883, this trail was upgraded to accommodate wagons.

Prior to the settlement period, all maintenance of the northern trails was undertaken by the Hudson's Bay Company which was the principal user of them. Such maintenance consisted of little more than clearing the paths of fallen trees and corduroying marshy gullies with poplar poles. The HBC also provided a freighting and passenger service in the North which was not regarded as cheap by those who used it. In the late 19th century, its most frequent users were missionaries who often complained to their superiors about high shipping costs. In 1880, for example, the HBC charged Alfred Garrioch $562.44 for a full stock of goods and supplies, of which $225.18 was for shipment alone. (Garrioch) Five years later, John Gough Brick remarked:

> We have been accustomed to use from 20 to 25 bags of flour per year, and I am
> sure my folks would think it strange living without bread at every meal. Outside
> you can purchase 10 parcels of sugar for a dollar, and you can have it sent out and to the same,
> but it will cost me from $1.50 to $2.00 to bring that Dollar's worth in, and when it
> arrives, perhaps one half will be gone. (Brick)

The independent traders naturally depended on their own resources for travel and shipping, and frequently shared with each other. In 1882, Twelve Foot Davis was even contracted to provide a freighting service for the HBC. The independents also used the roads which were maintained by the HBC. There was no way of stopping them, and, besides, in the North West Territory, these roads were over Crown land. After 1870, the roads in Ruperts Land were also, for the most part, over Crown land. When the HBC faced renewed competition from free traders during the late 1880's, it was because these traders were now being supplied by merchants in Edmonton, the roads out of Edmonton having been sufficiently upgraded by the HBC to make it profitable for them to carry on trade in the Northwest.

Such was the circumstance of travel to and within the Peace River Country when the Klondike gold rush put an entirely new perspective on northern development. By the turn of the century, northwest Canada was no longer seen as simply a land of ice and snow with nothing but the fur trade for an economy. With hordes of Klondikers embarking up to the Peace Country on the 'all Canadian' route to the Yukon, the federal government decided, for the first time, that public assistance should be provided to improve transportation in the Unorganized District of Athabaska. By this time, the more heavily populated, and 'organized' Districts of the southern North West Territories were responsible for maintaining their own roads.

The first federally sponsored transportation project was conceived in the fall of 1897, this being to build a better road between Fort Assiniboine and Lesser Slave Lake. During this time, the first wave of Klondikers were setting out from Edmonton. Local advertisements, including a special Klondike pamphlet by the firm of McDougall & Secord, were strongly urging them to travel through the Peace River Country. Though Treaty #8 had still not been signed, an engineer named T.W. Chalmers was commissioned to survey and cut out what would become known as the Chalmers, or Klondike Trail. From Fort Assiniboine, it extended approximately to the site of the present town of Swan Hills. It then angled north and followed the Swan River to Lesser Slave Lake. Excavation of this trail was undertaken during the summer of 1898, while private ferries were installed at Holmes Crossing near Fort Assiniboine, Belvedere on the Pembina River, and at the "Narrows" between Lesser Slave Lake and Buffalo Bay. The following year, these ferries would be taken over and regulated by the federal government.

The crude Klondike Trail would prove to be a nightmare for travelers, and, in particular, their horses, for it extended over the highest point in the Swan Hills. A party of Klondikers from Fresno, California, for example, began the journey with 96 horses, but ended it with only 17. Another traveler, Cornwallis King, reported:

> The government should not have issued a map calling the blazed streak from Edmonton to Lesser Slave Lake a wagon road. Between Edmonton and Lesser Slave Lake we passed seventeen outfits, one outfit had left Edmonton on the 2nd of March with six men and twenty-five horses. We passed them in the Swan Hills, their outfits in three sections, nineteen of their horses were strung out along the trail, Government wagon road, dead. We passed one outfit 120 miles out. They had left Edmonton on the 23rd of May, six men, eight oxen and four horses. They had six oxen left and no horses. They were in two sections. They were averaging about three miles per day on the "Government Wagon Road". (King)

Within three years of its construction, the Chalmers Trail fell into virtual disuse. Aside from the condition of the road, it was, by now, obvious that the preferable way to the Yukon gold fields did not lie through the Peace River Country. Indeed, there are no documented accounts of any Klondikers having reached the Yukon by this route, although some did follow the Peace River to Lake Athabasca, and the MacKenzie River to Fort McPherson and then across the MacKenzie Mountains to the Yukon. Others traveled up the Peace to the mouth of the Finlay, and then continue northward. A North-west Mounted Police Party led by J.D. Moodie finally did reach the Yukon through Fort St. John and Fort Nelson in 1898, but, when it returned, it was to strongly advise that no one else attempt the excursion. After the turn of the century, the Klondike craze began to subside, and journeys to the Peace River Country would henceforth be made for other reasons.

Other government support for northern travel came in the form of assistance to private ventures. This was the case with the Edmonton, Yukon & Pacific Railway, to which the government provided bond guarantees, and for which, almost exclusively, it built the Low Level Bridge in Edmonton in 1900. Incorporated in 1899, when the gold fever was at its height, this railway was effectively a Canadian Northern Railway operation, being owned by the firm of Mackenzie & Mann. It was intended to extend from Edmonton all the way to the Yukon through the Peace River Country. Though it would barely make it out of Edmonton, the E,Y & P did cross the Low Level Bridge in 1902 and seemed to give prognosis of further northern development.

Leading the publicity campaign for improved northern transportation at this time was the Edmonton *Bulletin* which carried many stories about prospects for northern railways, and people venturing to the North. Another northern promoter emerging at this time was Jim Cornwall, whose commercial partnership with Fletcher Bredin was rapidly generating large profits. In 1904, Cornwall decided to enter the transportation field himself, and, with a partner named James Woods, he incorporated the Northern Transportation Company (NTC). Based at Athabasca Landing, this company began to operate with a paddle-wheeled steamer called the *Midnight Sun*. Constructed by Charles Barber, the *Sun* measured 60 meters by 8 meters and had room for 35 passengers and 45 tonnes of freight. The captain was Barber himself who also became an investor in the NTC.

On its maiden voyage, the *Sun* attempted, but failed to traverse the rapids on the Lesser Slave River near the mouth of the Saulteaux. The portage therefore continued to be necessary. To accommodate the passengers and freight, the NTC decided to construct another steamer, a side-wheeler called the *Northern Light*, on Lesser Slave Lake. When completed in 1906, this boat was able to descend the Lesser Slave River as far as Saulteaux Landing at the western end of the rapids and carry passengers and cargo all the way to the west end of the lake. Here the Lesser Slave Lake Settlement was growing in population due mainly to increased travel to the Peace River Country. For the travelers, the NTC also provided a transportation service past the Saulteaux Rapids.

Now committed to northern travel, the federal government appropriated $15,000 in 1906 to widen the channels in the Lesser Slave River in order that steamers might get through. During the next two years, 26 separate dams were constructed of rock and timber, costing twice the initial estimate. When the dams were completed, however, the NTC steamers could still not traverse the rapids, for, although the channels had been widened, the water was simply too shallow. The government then decided to dredge portions of the rapids so that a depth of at least one meter of water would extend the entirety of the river. For its part, the NTC undertook to build another steamer with a shallower draft named the *Northland Call*. In September 1910, this boat became the first steamer to travel all the way from Athabasca Landing to the Lesser Slave Lake Settlement unimpeded.

With this development, as well as the beginning of agricultural settlement in the Peace River Country, a brief period of extensive river travel began between Athabasca Landing and Grouard, which was incorporated as a village in 1911. Stops were made at Mirror Landing, Saulteaux Landing and Sawridge. Now directed by Charles Barber, the NTC added the *Northern Echo* to its string of boats. In 1912, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to provide some competition by constructing the largest boat to ever ply the Lesser Slave River, the *SS Slave River*. By now, however, the tracks of the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway were beginning to extend northwards out of Dunvegan Yards in Edmonton. Within two years, they would skirt the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake and reduce to a trickle the use of steamboats on the lake and the river which drained it.

Within the Peace River Country, the first steamer was the *SS St. Charles*, constructed by the Oblate fathers at the St. Augustine Mission on the Shaftesbury Trail in 1903. Two years later, the Hudson's Bay Company built the *SS Peace River* which began to carry passengers and cargo all the way from Fort Vermilion to Hudson's Hope. With the coming of the railway, Jim Cornwall incorporated another company called the Peace River Navigation Company which intended to operate boats on the Peace River, and, in May 1915, the new *Northland Call* was launched, with Captain Magar as the pilot. At the same time, the Hudson's Bay Company steamer, *SS Athabasca River*, was taken up the Peace River to the Vermilion Chutes, and hauled over the Chutes in winter to begin a new life on the Peace.

In June 1916, these two boats were joined by the largest steamer to ever operate on the Peace River, the *D.A. Thomas*. Constructed at Peace River by Lord Rhondda (D.A. Thomas), this sternwheeler measured 162 ft x 37 ft, with a hull 6.3 ft deep. It was intended mainly to exploit mineral resources along the Peace River, but, as it turned out, was used mainly for passengers and cargo. In 1920, it was bought by the Lamson & Hubbard Company which had brashly announced its intention to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company for trade north of Peace River. The HBC promptly renewed and restocked its northern posts, and, in 1924, managed to buy out Lamson & Hubbard, including the *D.A. Thomas*. The steamer would continue to operate until 1931 when, due mainly to the Depression, river traffic along the Peace River slowed. However, other boats would provide commercial traffic on the upper Peace until the completion of the Mackenzie Highway in 1949.

The improvement of river travel in the North affected only a portion of the early settlers in the Peace River Country. Even prior to the coming of the railway, most of the homesteaders did not avail themselves of the transportation services on the Lesser Slave River. Indeed, for those bringing in large quantities of equipment and supplies, the crude roadways were often preferred, due mainly to the high cost of freighting on the river. From 1909 to 1911, the most widely used land route still began over the trail from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing. At the Landing, a ferry took some travelers across the Athabasca River where another trail to Sawridge began. The government had expended funds to improve this trail in 1907, along with another one on the other side of the river. In 1908, both roads were surveyed, and, for the next six years, both would be upgraded on an annual basis. Also in 1908, the government constructed a pile bridge across the narrows between Lesser Slave Lake and at Buffalo Bay for those who intended to travel to the Lesser Slave Lake Settlement by land.

In summer, many settlers bound for the Peace River Country traveled in prairie schooners. Although cumbersome, these wagons could carry considerable cargo. For those travelling light, democrats were often preferred. Those intending simply to scout the countryside in the Peace Country usually traveled there on horseback with pack horses for supplies. Many of the first settlers preferred to travel in winter as snow provided greater mobility for horse drawn cabouses. In these cases, traffic proceeded over the ice on the Athabasca and Lesser Slave Rivers as well as Lesser Slave Lake. Along the trails, a number of stopping places provided travelers with basic overnight accommodation and, occasionally, meals. Most stopping places were little more than expanded log cabins with dirt floors and a stable at the rear, and were usually the dwellings of local trappers.

From Grouard, most homesteaders initially took the old trail north to Peace River Crossing which grew to some size as a result. At the Crossing, the Peace River was traversed on the newly installed government ferry. Most travelers then usually proceeded west towards whatever lands they wished to settle. The majority of the first homesteaders crossed the Peace River again on the ferry at Dunvegan and headed south to the extensive grasslands of the Grande Prairie. In 1907, the provincial government began to maintain the trail south from Dunvegan, past Spirit River, and onto this highly publicized prairie.

In June 1906, a number of squatters on the Grande Prairie petitioned the new provincial government to built a road from Edmonton directly to the Prairie where the government was openly encouraging farmers to begin a new future. In December 1907, a delegation from the Prairie consisting of Jim Brooks, G.F. Mcleod and Alex Monkman, traveled to Edmonton to meet personally with provincial Public Works Minister, H.W. Cushing, to reiterate their case for a direct road. At this time, the argument was tempered by the belief that either the Grand Trunk Pacific or the Canadian Northern Railway, or both, would soon be extended into the region. When, at the end of 1909, it was learned that this would not happen, at least not for some time, pressure was renewed for a road to the Grande Prairie. The extension of the GTP straight west from Edmonton during 1909-10 made the concept of such a road much more feasible, as it could begin at some point along this rail line.

In early 1910, public meetings were held in Edmonton, and a committee struck to ascertain "the shortest and most feasible route to Grande Prairie together with an estimate of the cost." (Edmonton *Bulletin*, 20 February, 1910) A new newspaper called the *Peace River Pilot*, edited by Thomas Piche, now appeared in Edmonton, and was devoted to campaigning for the completion of this road. At the Alberta Provincial Parliament (Legislature Assembly), the new MPP for the Peace River riding, Jim Cornwall, also began to advocate this cause, while the MPP for Pembina, H.W. McKenny, tabled a bill calling for the expropriation of $10,000 towards the project. On his own initiative, Cornwall arranged for residents on the Prairie to begin the road by improving the old trail which then extended from the Grande Prairie Townsite to Sturgeon Lake.

There were forces against the idea, however, one being Education Minister J.R. Boyle through whose riding of St. Albert the Athabasca Trail ran. Another opponent turned out to be Public Works Minister H.W. Cushing of Calgary. The Rutherford government was then embroiled in the widely publicized Alberta & Great Waterways Railway scandal in which Jim Cornwall was implicated. The principal accusers on the Liberal side were Cushing and Boyle, and, in the heat of debate, the Grande Prairie road bill was defeated.

Cushing contended that the road to Grande Prairie would be mainly over Crown land, and therefore should be a responsibility of the federal government. By June, 1910 however, Cushing was out of office, as was Rutherord, and the new Premier, A.L. Sifton, seemed more favorably disposed to a Grande Prairie road. Fortunately, Sifton had also assumed the Public Works portfolio. Another delegation consisting of Henry Roberts and Harry Adair therefore journeyed to Edmonton where Deputy Minister John Stocks virtually assured them that a direct road into their country was imminent.

The question remained as to what route to take. Stocks was convinced that it should extend north to Sturgeon Lake, and not follow the more westerly Hinton Trail as some people around Beaverlodge were advocating. At the new railway community of Entwistle, citizens forwarded a petition to Stocks advising that this community would be ideal for the beginning of a road through the area of present day Whitecourt and on to Sturgeon Lake and Grande Prairie. Stocks then contracted the services of an engineer named A.H. MacQuarrie to investigate the possibility of such a route. During the summer of 1910, MacQuarrie surveyed the area all the way to the approximate site of present day Fox Creek. When he returned, however, he learned that Stocks was looking at another route that would begin at Medicine Lodge some 45 km west of Edson. This route was being promoted by a Dominion Land Surveyor named Maurice Kimpe who had gathered a consortium and established a townsite at Medicine Lodge.

Stocks then asked MacQuarrie to examine the terrain north from Medicine Lodge. This MacQuarrie found to be rugged but acceptable, and so, that fall, work began on a road north towards Sturgeon Lake. It included a number of bridges and three ferries. However, at Edson, which the GTP had made its district headquarters, the newly formed Board of Trade took the initiative of cutting out an easterly bypass to intercept the southerly portion of the government road. As this bypass soon proved far more convenient for travelers, Stocks decided to make Edson the official beginning of the trail to Grande Prairie. At Medicine Lodge, Kimpe and his consortium were soon forced to abandon their dream of a district metropolis.

When completed in April 1911, the Edson Trail immediately attracted countless travelers, while Edson itself saw its population jump to 1,233 by September, 1912, when it was incorporated into a town. The trail itself however turned out to be a major disappointment. Travelling it with all the equipment and supplies needed to homestead proved to be a nightmare, and could take an entire summer, although, on horseback, the trip could be accomplished in less than a week. Some prospective homesteaders intending to scout lands on the Grande Prairie chose to travel this road by foot. Almost all who took the trail later commented on its atrocious condition. For five years, however, it saw constant use as the south Peace River Country began to experience its first wave of Euro-Canadian settlement. Following the completion of the railway to Grande Prairie in March 1916, the trail would gradually fall into disuse, and accommodate mainly horseback riders.

With the arrival of the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway at Grande Prairie, and the Central Canada at Peace River, a long and cherished dream seemed to be fulfilled. From the beginning, however, the dream had been fraught with false hopes, fraudulent publicity, and corporate and governmental intrigue. It was hardly the first railway venture to have been intended for the Peace Country. Following the incorporation of the Edmonton, Yukon & Pacific Railway in 1899, no less than ten other railways were chartered for the region in this era of railway speculation. This was in addition to the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern which spoke openly of entering the region. Even the Canadian Pacific considered the idea, and, in 1908, sent William Pearce to explore the terrain and report on the prospects of a line there.

Pearce reported in negative terms, and the CPR decided not to venture north from Edmonton. The GTP and CN likewise held back and instead concentrated on their mutual race to the Pacific Ocean. This in spite of the fact that the CN lines which reached Onoway and Athabasca in 1912 were advertised as being on their way to Grande Prairie and Peace River, respectively. Indeed, the CN had even obtained bond guarantees from the provincial government to undertake these extensions. The GTP had also obtained a loan guarantee from the federal government to build a line to Dunvegan.

With these decisions, the Alberta government became concerned, for the first settlement wave was in full swing, buoyed with the anticipation that some railway was on its way to the northwest reach of the province. Furthermore, Premier McBride of British Columbia had just announced that the Pacific Great Eastern Railway would soon be extended out of Fort (now Prince) George to the Peace River Block. Fearing that Vancouver might corner the Peace River market, Premier Sifton now turned to the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway (E,D+BC). Incorporated by Dominion statute in 1907, the E,D & BC had been chartered to run "by the most feasible route to a point at or near Dunvegan." It was then intended to follow the Peace River to the mouth of the Parsnip, then head down to Fort George. Like most northern railway schemes, however, nothing concrete had occurred, the owners preferring to wait to be offered government backing.

In 1911, the charter for the E,D & BC was acquired by a Winnipeg contractor named J.D. McArthur. Having had just completed several successful projects for the GTP, McArthur now appeared to be Sifton's last hope. In return for bringing the line into the Peace River Country, he was given bond guarantees to the extent of $20,000 per mile for 350 miles of track. This seemed like a golden opportunity, and McArthur immediately contracted Henry Dimsdale to make a reconnaissance of the region and determine an appropriate route. By the time Dimsdale's report was completed, the contract was signed and construction about to begin from a station at Dunvegan Yards at 107th Avenue and 121st Street in Edmonton. McArthur also obtained assurances from his friends at the GTP that they would not avail themselves of the federal loan offer to enter the Peace Country.

For the next four years, McArthur's crews worked feverishly, building 650 miles of track. Part of this was for the Central Canada Railway which McArthur incorporated in 1913, and for which he received bond guarantees of $20,000 per mile for 100 miles of line. This was to extend north from the west end of Lesser Slave Lake to Peace River. By January 1914, the E, D & BC was at the site of Smith where a townsite was subdivided in close proximity to the old river community of Mirror Landing, now called Port Cornwall, which soon began to deteriorate as a result and eventually disappear. The railway then proceeded to the east end of Lesser Slave Lake where a new railway town called Slave Lake soon replaced Old Sawridge at the mouth of the Lesser Slave River. By the end of the year, the line extended over the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake and west to the site of McLennan where another townsite was subdivided by McArthur.

To the consternation of the people of Grouard, the E,D & BC bypassed their town where a real estate boom had ensued in the belief that either the railway would enter from the north shore of the lake, or that at least a spur line would be extended there from the south. In light of high real estate prices, McArthur did neither, but instead erected sidings which would become the hamlets of Joussard, Arcadia and Enilda. He also built a station at a point near the small farming hamlet of High Prairie. East of the station, he purchased land at a reasonable rate and subdivided another townsite which eventually became the district metropolis of High Prairie. On the other hand, Grouard, with a population of 2,000 in 1914, soon receded as a community, a fate which would be the experience of many others which the Railway would eventually choose to bypass in the Peace River Country.

The divisional point of the E,D & BC and the Central Canada was McLennan. In December 1915, the Central Canada reached the north bank of the Peace River above the recently incorporated Village of Peace River. On board as one of its passengers was Premier A.L. Sifton. On 22 March 1916, the E,D & BC reached the new Village of Grande Prairie. The following summer, the Central Canada line was extended down the hill at Judah to its station in Peace River. In 1917, with a federal grant of $175,000, a combined rail and traffic bridge was begun across the Peace River at Peace River. It was completed in October 1918, and, in 1921, was extended west to the site of Berwyn. In 1924, it would reach Whitelaw, in 1928 the site of Fairview, and, in 1931, Hines Creek. In the south Peace Country, the line would extend to Wembly in 1924, Hythe in 1928, and Dawson Creek in 1930.

From the beginning, the E,D & BC had been mired in difficulty. It was an expensive venture, and McArthur took as many cost cutting measures as he could, for which he and the provincial government paid dearly in the end. The decision to proceed along the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake, for example, though economical at the time, eventually proved to be unwise. In serving as the north drainage basin for the entire Swan Hills, this terrain was always susceptible to flooding, as it is today. Over the years, the railway would encounter countless washouts and derailments along this route. McArthur also provided insufficient ballast along the rail line while using comparatively light (60lb) rails and untreated rail ties made of soft wood, usually local spruce. This contributed to an excessive number of delays as the ties often failed to hold spikes in place. In the Peace Country, a term soon became fashionable for the E,D & BC, “Extremely Dangerous & Badly Constructed”.

During its first few years, the E,D & BC would make two round trips per week and take 37 hours to get from Grande Prairie to Edmonton provided travel was unimpeded, a rate of 11 mph. In the aftermath of World War I, excessive use resulted in a collapse of service. McArthur had unwisely chosen the steep, but less costly hill north of Judah to begin the descent into Peace River rather than the more lengthy valley of the north Heart River. Land slides therefore became common along the rail line and would halt traffic for considerable periods of time. In the summer of 1919, the line between Spirit River and Grande Prairie became unusable for it had been left unballasted. The frozen ground during the following winter allowed for some service, but it was stopped again in the spring by large land slippages in the Smoky River Valley near Watino and also down Judah Hill.

Aside from bond guarantees, McArthur had been assisted by the province in other ways. In 1917, he was provided with a loan of $2 million against bonds which he could not sell because the war was interrupting the international financial market. He was granted large timber leases in the North where he established a lumber company which provided wood to the E,D & BC at substantial rates. He also obtained permission to charge freight rates far higher than those in place on the southern prairies. He nonetheless reported a $1.4 million loss for the E,D & BC at the end of 1919, and was forced to relinquish the railway, along with this other northern Alberta lines, the Central Canada and the Alberta & Great Waterways, the latter not yet completed. They were taken over by the provincial government quite reluctantly, as an investigator estimated that repair costs would total $950,000.

Repair work on the northern lines was nonetheless begun and would eventually cost the province $2.5 million. Premier Stewart then tried to have the lines incorporated within the national CN system, but was unsuccessful. Finally, in 1921, he was able to lease the lines to the CPR to operate. Maintenance and upgrading costs, however, continued to balloon, and the total cost to the provincial government eventually rose to $4,750,000, which was considered astronomical at the time since the entire annual operating budget of the province was $13,000,000. Since the CPR was soon making a profit by operating the northern lines, the new Premier, John Brownlee, would terminate its lease in 1926. Management of the lines was then turned over to the provincial Department of Railways and Telecommunications.

The settlement boom of the late 1920’s increased profits for the northern railways, but Brownlee was still anxious to divest his government of them, negotiating with both the CPR and CN. In January 1928, an offer of $22,420 was turned down by both CN and CP, and profits continued roll into the provincial coffers. Finally, in November 1928, the northern Alberta lines were purchased jointly by CN and CP for a cost of $25,000,000 and an agreement by the partners to build 100 miles of new track. CN and CP agreed to operate them through a subsidiary railway company, and, on 14 June 1929, the Northern Alberta Railway (NAR) was incorporated.

The sale was conducted at an opportune time for the Alberta government, for the early years of the Depression soon brought financial hardship to all railway companies in Canada. Financial losses meant layoffs and reduced services, although the government did manage to get the freight rates lowered. In July 1931, passenger service, which had been daily, was reduced to twice weekly. In 1935, severe flooding along the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake curtailed rail traffic for most of the summer. During the late 1930's, bountiful crops brought increased usage, and even though the grain prices were low, service gradually increased.

In 1937, management of the NAR was taken over by J.M. MacArthur, and soon began to turn a profit. The outbreak of war brought new demands for natural resources, and, when the decision was made to construct a highway from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks, Alaska, the NAR geared up for a period of unprecedented traffic. Though no new lines were constructed, existing lines were upgraded regularly, and overall service was much improved. At long last, the trains again ran daily.

Following the war, another settlement wave ensued in the Peace River Country, while mineral exploration, mainly for oil, rose to an all time high. This all meant continued heavy demand for rail service, and for a while, the NAR prospered. The demand, however, was ultimately for more and better services than the NAR could provide, and, in time, the long anticipated competition was on the scene. In 1952, the John Hart Highway at last provided the Peace River Block of British Columbia with an outlet to the interior of the province. Six years later, the Pacific & Great Eastern Railway was extended into the district from Prince George. More critical to the NAR, however, was the completion of the Whitecourt-Valleyview Cutoff (Highway 43) in 1955, which was a great boon to the trucking industry, but greatly reduced the need for rail service between Edmonton and Grande Prairie. Even the Grande Prairie Livestock Co-operative Marketing Association acquired their own trucks and shipped hogs and cattle to Edmonton via Highway 43. By this time, the Railway was again running a deficit.

During the early 1960's, the federal government undertook a railway from Grimshaw to Great Slave Lake. The NAR was used to bring in equipment and materials, and this temporarily put the NAR back into the black. After the completion of the Great Slave Lake Railway, however, the lead and zinc which it brought down from the mines at Pine Point were not so extensive as to generate large profits for the NAR which carried the ore from Grimshaw to Edmonton. By the end of the decade, the Railway was again in the red. By then it had given up its passenger service, as busses were cheaper and could go to more places. The NAR even had to relinquish its service to the federal Post Office which was now using its own vehicles in northern Alberta.

In 1969, another threat was posed to the NAR when the provincially owned Alberta Resources Railway (ARR) was extended from Grande Cache to Grande Prairie. Though the ARR would never be heavily used, its existence did mean that, when tapped, the extensive natural resources south of Grande Prairie would not be taken out over NAR rails. In 1981, the CPR interest in the NAR was purchased by CN which also took control of the ARR. The lines have operated as part of CN's national system ever since, although nowhere near to the capacity of the early 1950's.

The management of the NAR, and, before it, the E,D & BC, had always been a constant source of irritation to the people of the Peace River Country. In the regional newspapers, however, just as much editorial ink was devoted to the condition, or absence of roads. By 1912, automobiles could be seen on the streets of Grouard, and, in December 1913, Maynard Bezanson, J.A. Davidson and Bill Milford accomplished the impossible and brought an automobile over the frozen ground of the Edson Trail. After the railway reached the Peace River Country, however, the Grouard and Edson Trails saw limited use and were not kept up let alone improved. Motor traffic was nonetheless becoming common in the South, and these trails were not equipped for it. With the post World War I settlement wave therefore came new demands for an adequate highway, demands made even more valid by the rail problems of 1919-20.

In 1921, the provincial Department of Public Works began to excavate a road from Athabasca to Slave Lake, and along the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake to High Prairie, McLennan and Peace River. From Peace River, it was soon extended west to Dunvegan, south to Grande Prairie, and northwest to Rolla, BC. The road was then mostly ungraded, and was totally ungravelled except for stretches of about 30 km west of Peace River and about 50 km west of Grande Prairie. In good weather, however, a well conditioned automobile could make the trip from Edmonton to Grande Prairie in less than a week. By the end of the decade, this road would be entirely graded, and also gravelled from Athabasca all the way to Grimshaw, but no further. It was then identified as part of Alberta Highway #1.

To help satisfy the people in Grande Prairie, a crude, ungraded bypass was cut out from High Prairie to the tiny settlement of Valleyview during 1930-32. From Valleyview, it was extended past Sturgeon Lake, and over the government ferry on the Smoky River at Goodwin. From here, it wound westward to Grande Prairie. The people there were hardly satisfied however, and they continued to clamor for more road improvements as well as bridges at

Watino, Dunvegan and Moody's Crossing near Goodwin. In 1935, various regional boards of trade banded together to form a 'Gravel the Road to the Peace Association'. It was noted that, of the projects for Depression relief workers, none were earmarked for Peace Country roads. To the disgust of many, the government was then building a major road west from Edmonton to the resort town of Jasper.

The coming of World War II eventually saw much improvement on Highway #1, soon to be renamed #2 in deference to the TransCanada system. A ferry was also now installed at Watino, although the best route to Grande Prairie remained that from High Prairie past Sturgeon Lake, which was now fully graded and, by war's end, partially gravelled. Gravel also covered Highway #2 all the way to Peace River and on to Fairview. By now, many of the townships of the Peace River Country were divided by municipally constructed dirt roadways. The Depression had provided much local manpower prepared to engage in road construction for the M.D.'s at minimal pay. A look at the official provincial road map at this time reveals, however, that many more municipal roads were developed in the Peace River Block of British Columbia than in Alberta.

The war spurred other transportation projects in the Peace River Country as well, including aviation. Though a few flights had been made to the region in the early 1920's by Wop May and Punch Dickins, service was not common until the late 1920's, when May's Western Canada Airlines began to make regular excursions to Grande Prairie and Peace River. However, the aircraft could carry but one passenger and a little mail, and during the early 1930's, flights were discontinued. They were picked up in 1934 by Grant McConachie who obtained a contract with the Post Office. Two years later, he began running a monthly service between Edmonton, Grande Prairie and Fort St. John. In 1937, McConachie incorporated the Yukon Air Service and began to fly a twin-engine plane which could carry ten passengers as well as mail and even some cargo.

In 1940, the Northwest Staging Route was established by the federal government, to monitor enemy activity in the north Pacific, but also to provide possible assistance to war operations in Asia. Although the service was strictly military, the airports at Grande Prairie and Peace River became busy places. Of course, business picked up even more with the beginning of construction on the Alaska Highway. With the end of the war, commercial air service to Grande Prairie and Peace River was resumed at a greater pace than before, and has continued ever since. Unlike more remote centers such as Yellowknife and Whitehorse, air t ravel was never a critical element in the economic development of the Peace River Country, and certainly never drew public demands in the manner of railways, roads and bridges. During the boom period of the late 1970's, provincial airports were constructed at Donnelly, Fairview, Eaglesham, Grimshaw, Beaverlodge, High Prairie, Hines Creek, Manning, Spirit River, Valleyview and Worsley. Though still operational, they are mainly used for recreational travel.

Instead of aviation, the demands for improved transportation following World War II were for better roads, and with much justification. Indeed, by 1948, portions of Alberta Highway #2 were still ungravelled between Sexsmith and Woking, and from Beaverlodge to the British Columbia border. The discovery of oil at Leduc the year before meant more revenue for the provincial government, and soon, increased expenditures would be made on transportation throughout the province. It was at this time that the MacKenzie Highway was undertaken between Grimshaw and Yellowknife, a highway which would, at long last, facilitate motor transport for the many farms on the Battle River Prairie which had been carved out during the late 1920's, and also the settlement around Fort Vermilion. At the same time, the communities of Manning and High Level were born.

Another post war measure by the government was the construction of a bridge across the Smoky River at Goodwin near the old ferry at Moody's Crossing. This was completed in the summer of 1949. Six years later, a bridge would be laid across the Smoky at Watino. The bridge across the Peace River at Dunvegan would follow in 1960. Paving began in the region in 1951, when stretches were laid between Peace River and Grimshaw, and from Grande Prairie to four miles north, and also west to Wembly. The years that followed would see the steady extension of pavement along Highway #2 until, by 1965, the entirety of the road would be paved, along with the full stretch of the Whitecourt-Valleyview Cutoff. A trip from Grande Prairie to Edmonton could henceforth be accomplished in less than six hours. Highway #49 between McLennan and Spirit River was paved in the late 1970's, while a new highway, #64, was completed between Fairview and Fort St. John. This too would be paved during the early1980's, along with several secondary highways.

These arteries that opened up the Peace River Country and expanded its internal development had never been easy to build or maintain due to the rugged terrain and extreme variations in weather. They all came with many stories of hardship and endurance. Just as interesting, however, are the stories about those highways and railways that were planned but never undertaken. Over the years, many grandiose schemes were concocted to counter the isolation of the Peace Country. The subject of improved transportation facilities was always on the public mind, and there were seldom times when the people of the region were not anticipating the coming of some new highway or railway. Just as predictable was their collective disgust when promises fell through.

Always important was the prospect of an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, a dream born with the advocacy of Charles Horetzky and John Macoun in the early 1870's. Most people in the region were well aware that an outlet directly west to the Pacific would bring them closer to an ocean terminal than any other wheat growing district in western Canada. The anticipated completion of the Panama Canal in the early 20th century brought further validity to their case. As it was, Peace River farmers had to pay approximately 30% more than farmers on the southern prairies to have their grain shipped east to the Lakehead at Sault Ste. Marie.

Most railway schemes that intended to enter the Peace Country from Edmonton did have, as their ultimate goal, further extension through the Pine Pass to either Vancouver, Prince Rupert or some point further up the Pacific coast. The Edmonton promoters, and indeed the provincial government, were not, however, too anxious to have the Peace River market taken over by British Columbia. The announcement, in 1912, by Premier McBride of British Columbia that the Pacific Great Eastern (PGE) was about to extend its line to the Peace River Block had done much towards the Alberta government's support for the E,D & BC, but the bond guarantees from Alberta were not earmarked for the BC part of the equation, at least not past Dawson Creek. In 1918, the PGE collapsed anyway, and, with the takeover of the E,D & BC by the Alberta government the following year, maintaining this line into the Peace Country was about the only railway matter Premier Stewart cared to think of for the northwest part of the province.

With the post World War I settlement boom in the Peace River Country, however, other parties had different ideas. In 1921, Henry Thornton of the Canadian National Railway announced that he intended to build a line south from Grande Prairie to the main CN line at Brule, intersecting the Hoppe coal fields. This would allow produce from at least the south Peace region to be shipped to Prince Rupert. CN surveyors were then dispatched to the area north of present day Hinton. Fearing a CN monopoly in the Northwest, CP now sent its own surveyors to plot out a line through the Pine Pass, and also to explore the coal fields around Hudson's Hope. Prime Minister Mackenzie King supported the idea and had plans to make the Peace River Country the focus of a renewed immigration campaign. In Alberta, the United Farmers of Alberta won the provincial election of 1921 and they stood for assistance to farmers throughout the province. This, of course, included the Peace River Country which was the riding of the new Premier, Herbert Greenfield, although his home was in Westlock.

As always, the issue of new railways involved the matter of public financing, and, as the E,D & BC was soon proving to be such a burden on the Alberta taxpayer, the UFA was loathe to provide any support for a northern railway into British Columbia. Mackenzie King also now backed away from the idea. The plight of Peace River farmers was common knowledge, however, particularly in light of the grain price collapse of the early 1920's. A meeting on the subject of railways for the Northwest was called for 9 January, 1925 between the Prime Minister, the Premiers of Alberta and British Columbia, and the presidents of both CN and CP. Though little was then concluded, all parties, including Alberta's new Premier, John Brownlee, agreed that the Peace River Country should be provided with some rail outlet to the Pacific coast. Engineers from the two rail companies were therefore instructed to meet and prepare a proposal on the matter.

That spring and summer, the engineers made careful analysis of the various mountain passes of the region, including the Pine, Wapiti and Monkman. Their report concluded that a railway through either of them would never be cost effective, and that, if one were built, the E,D & BC would be ruined as a result. All parties backed off, to the great resentment to the promoters of the Peace River Country. In Peace River, the Mayor and editor of the *Peace River Record*, Charles Frederick, now called for the creation of a separate Province of Peace River, which would include the Skeena region of British Columbia and extend west to the Pacific Ocean. (see the *Edmonton Journal*, 27 November, 1927) The number one priority of this new province would, of course, be a railway to the Pacific coast.

The resentment over the decision not to proceed with a coastal railway was tempered by the roaring economy of the late 1920's and the lower freight rates applied by the E,D & BC which was now operated by the provincial government. With the Depression, everyone recognized that such an undertaking at public expense would probably be too costly. In Parliament, however, the MP for the region, D.M. Kennedy, continued to press the matter, as did the local newspapers.

Though not as momentous as the railway plans, there were also ideas afloat about a road through one of the mountain passes into the northern interior of British Columbia. In 1921, Alex Monkman traveled southwest from Nose Mountain to Prince George and observed that the pass through which he traveled appeared to be lower than the Yellowhead. He then approached the BC government with a proposal that it undertake a road through this pass. Though the BC government held off in light of the current coastal railway proposals, it did keep the idea in mind and named the pass after Monkman.

Another individual to express interest in a road west from the Peace River Country was the international industrialist and financier, Charles Bedaux, one of the richest men in the world. He fancied himself to be an expert on transportation through wilderness areas and had once made an excursion over the Sahara Desert. In 1927, he vacationed in the Peace River region and expressed surprise that the United States had not built a road to Alaska and that Canada had not built a northern road to the Pacific Ocean. In 1933, when the Depression was at its worst, he announced that, with some backing from the federal and British Columbia governments, he was prepared, with his own resources, to push a road west from Fort St. John over the Cassier Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. That April, amid much publicity, he and a large crew made preparations in Edmonton, and then set out to Fort St. John to begin the preliminary trek. His principal device was a Citroyen, a truck equipped with caterpillar tracks recently devised in France. The northern wilderness, however, was too much for Bedaux, and, when faced with the Cassier Mountains, he gave up and headed south, leaving much equipment behind, along with many colourful stories.

The failure of the Bedaux expedition resulted the renewal of interest in the Peace/Pine River Passes for a road. In the federal election campaign of 1935, the Liberal candidate for Prince George, J.G. Turgeon, made this cause part of his campaign. It naturally saw much support in the Peace River Block as well, and also in the north Peace region of Alberta. Government support, however, was not forthcoming. In the meantime, in the south Peace region of Alberta, the earlier plan of Alex Monkman had not died. With the collapse of the Peace/Pine road proposal, interest grew and it was again put forward to the British Columbia government. A Monkman Pass Highway Association was incorporated in Vancouver, with a regional office in Prince George.

This time, the regional supporters of the project were not going to stand idly by. As the Depression had left people with much time on their hands, a number of residents from the Grande Prairie began to build this road southwest from Beaverlodge on a volunteer basis. Dances and other socials were held to raise money for the project. The hope, of course, was that at least one of the provincial governments, and possibly the federal government, would pick up on the initiative, and that support would soon be forthcoming. At the same time, in the north Peace River Country, local residents began to cut out a road between Hines Creek and Rose Prairie, hoping that the Alberta government would come to their aid. The cash strapped governments, however, held back, and public support for both projects failed to materialize. Before long, the outbreak of war in Europe began to divert regional attention, as well as manpower, to other matters.

By war's end, the decision to construct the John Hart Highway had been made, and all other projects for a road into the BC interior were put to rest. This Highway went through the Pine Pass rather than the Monkman, for the BC government was naturally more interested in serving the residents of the Peace River Block than those on the Grande Prairie. The completion of the PGE to Dawson Creek and Fort St. John in 1958 likewise curtailed thoughts of a railway to the west coast. The shipment of Peace River produce westward would henceforth be accommodated by these two arteries. By this time, Prince Rupert on the CN line was serving as a coastal shipping point. In the late 1970's, for the service of all western farmers, the Alberta government agreed to cover 80% of the cost of a large grain terminal at Prince Rupert. This would henceforth serve as the main coastal outlet for Peace River grain.

In recent years, the demands for transportation improvements both to and within the Peace River Country have not involved new roadways or railways, but rather the upkeep of the existing ones. Extensive development during the 1970's and 1990's has resulted in extreme overtaxing of the system. Consequently, transportation has continued to be a major concern for the people of the region. Perhaps sensitive to this, the provincial government has, over the past 20 years, appointed three MLA's from the area as Ministers of Transportation, Marvin Moore, Al Adair and Walter Paszkowski.

This has probably resulted in better service, for, even during the recent period of fiscal restraint in Alberta, construction on the main and secondary highways did not subside, including the current project to twin Highway #2 to the British Columbia border. This has assisted in the even greater extraction of natural resources and has brought the region into a position of relative prosperity. Rumors about the further curtailment of rail service, however, have thrown open to question the capacity of the highways to endure added freighting in large trucks, which are already seen as hazardous and too great a burden on the roads. This indicates that transportation will remain a concern for the people of the Peace River Country for many years to come.

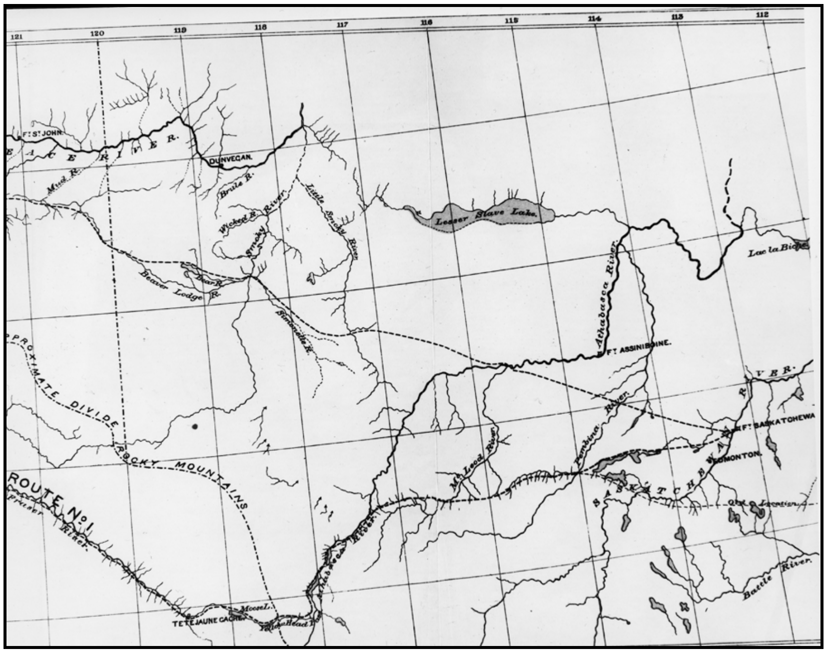

121
120
119
118
117
116
115
114
113
112
FT ST JOHN
PEACE RIVER
DUNVEGAN
Mud R.
Brule R.
Wicked R.
Smoky River
Little Smoky River
Lesser Slave Lake
Lac la Biche
Bear R.
Beaver Lodge R.
Simonette R.
Athabasca River
FT ASSINIBOINE.
APPROXIMATE DIVIDE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
ROUTE No 1
Fraser River
Pembina River
McLeod River
FT SASKATCHEWAN
EDMONTON.
SASKATCHEWAN RIVER
Old Location
Athabasca River
Moose L.
TETE JAUNE CACHE
Yellow Head Pass
Battle River

Figure 42. A route proposed for the CPR. CPR Annual Report, 1879. Data Source:

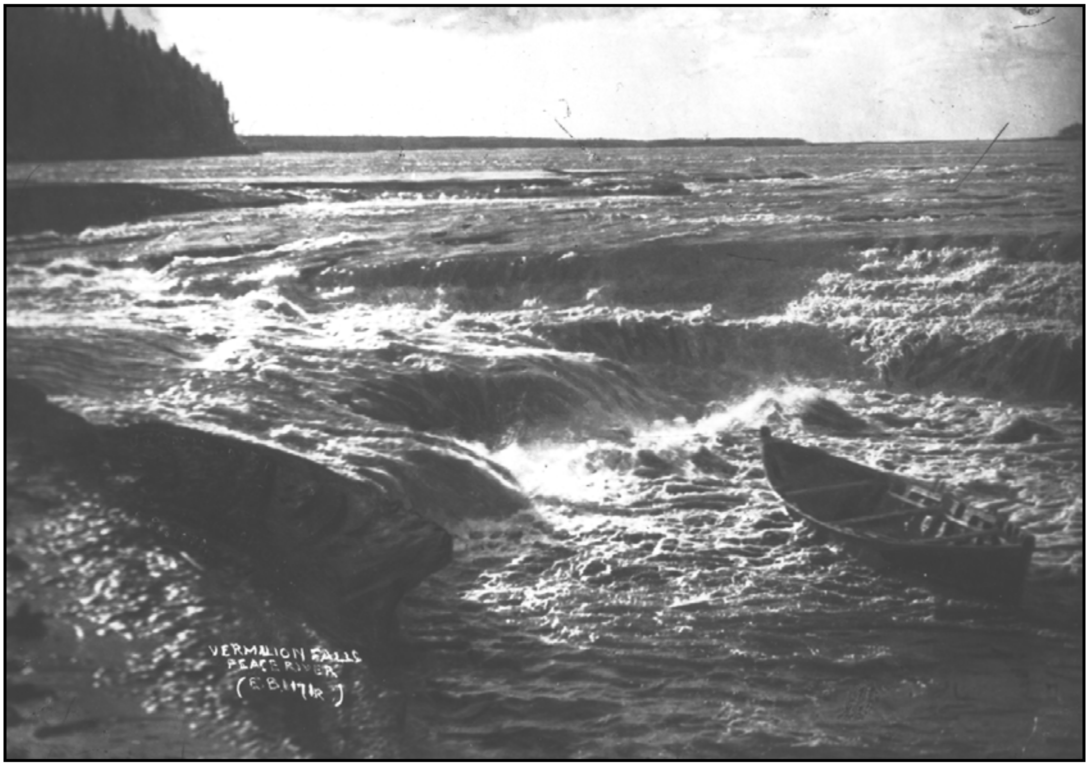

VERMILION FALLS
PEACE RIVER
(E.B.117R.)

Figure 43. The Vermilion Chutes, c.1900. Data Source: PAA B.3017

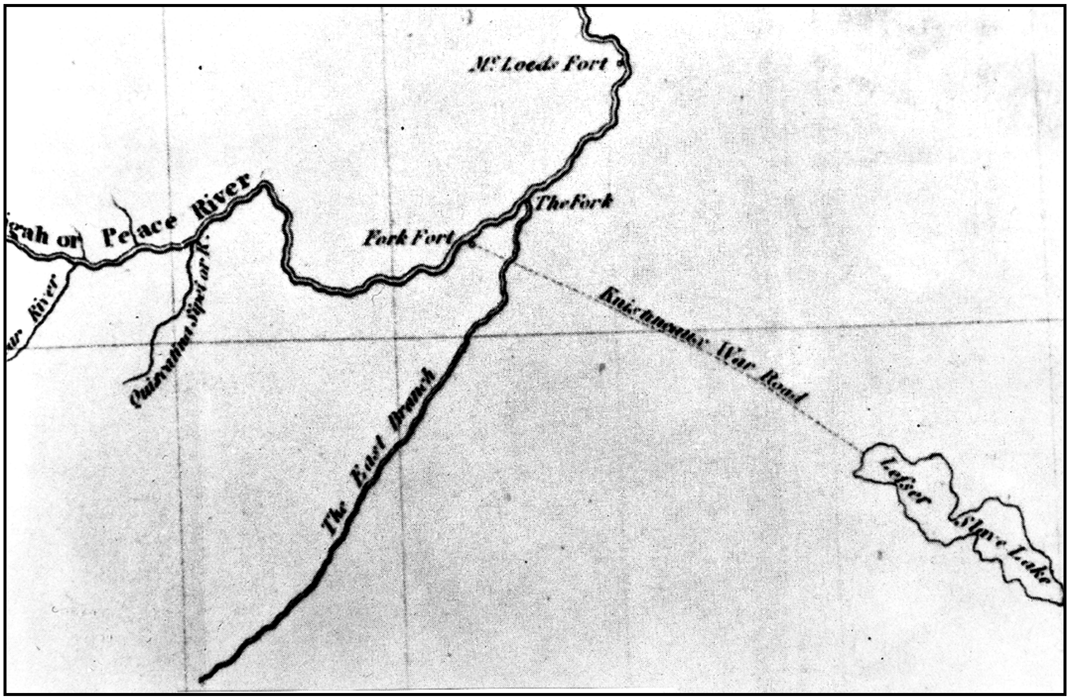

Mc. Leods Fort
gah or Peace River
ur River
Quisnakun Sipi or R.
Fork Fort
The Fork
The East Branch
Knisteneaux War Road
Lesser Slave Lake

Figure 44. The Knistineaux war road, drawn by Alexander Mackenzie, 1801. Data Source:

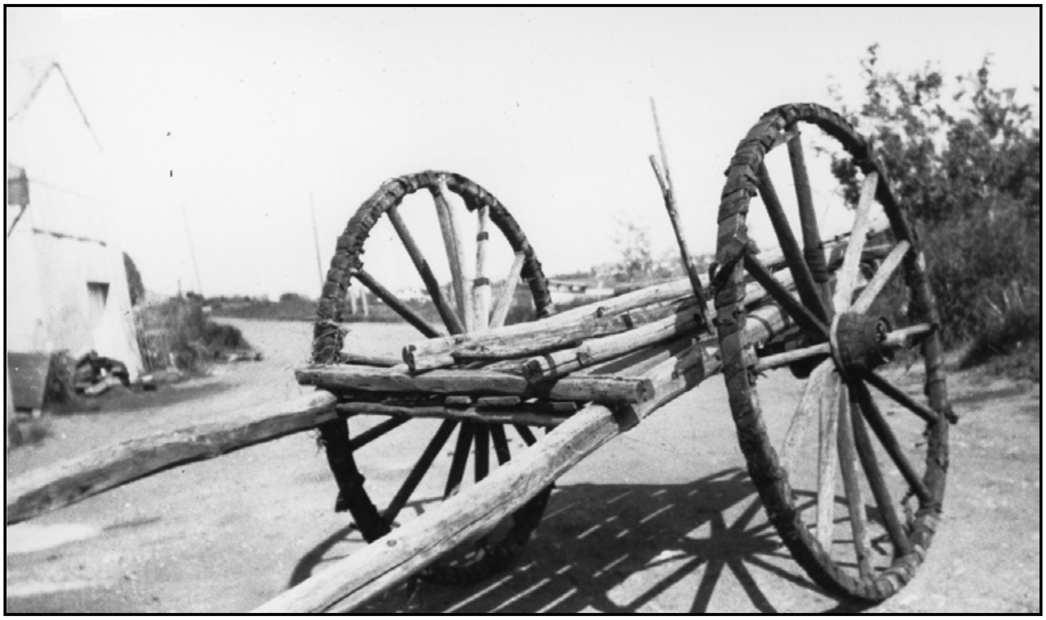


Figure 45. A red river cart. Data Source: PAA A.1321

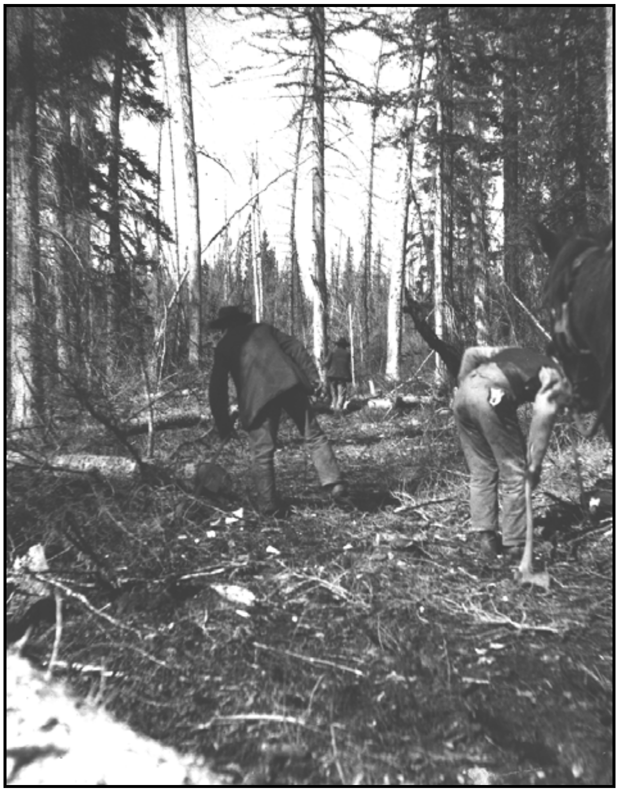


Figure 46. The Chalmers Trail, 1900. Data Source: GAA NA-4035-108

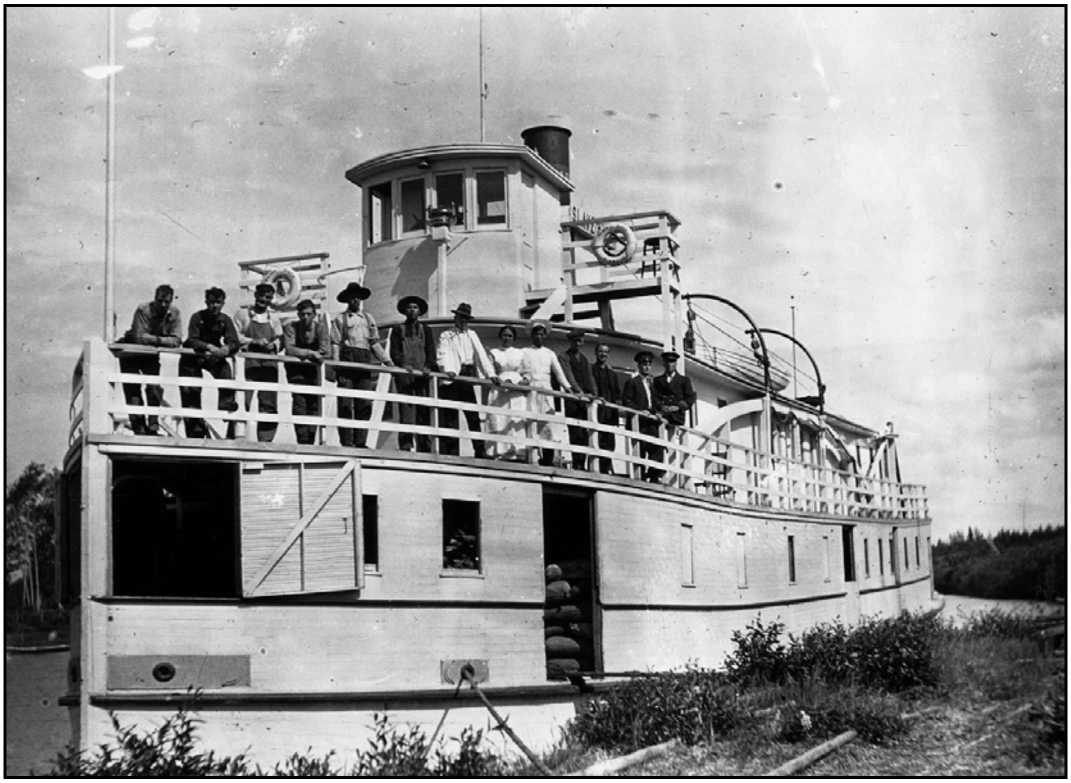


Figure 47. The *SS Slave River* in 1912. Data Source: PAA A10,172

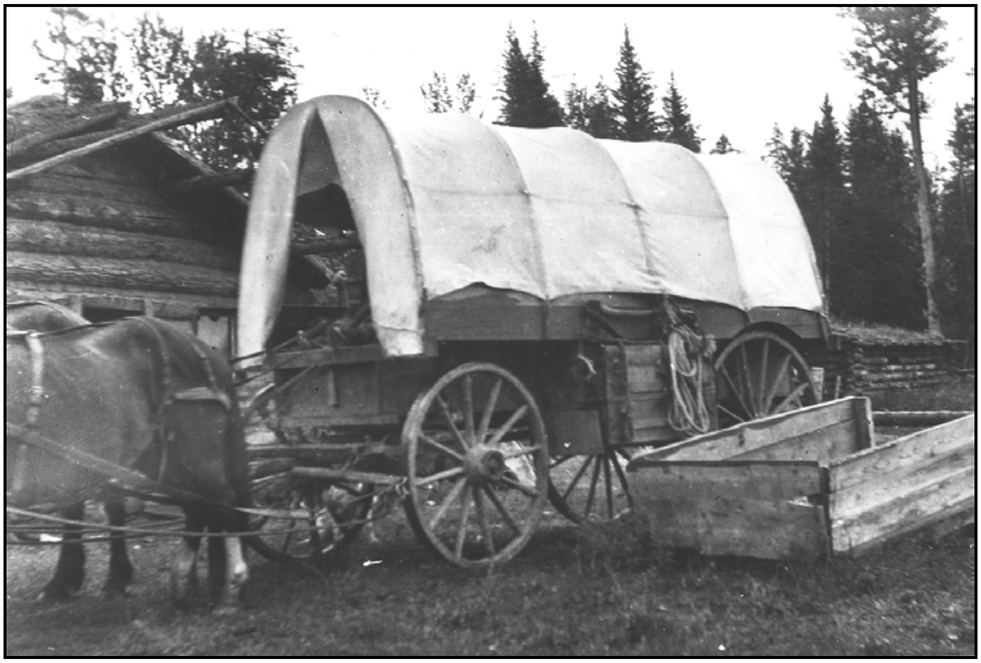
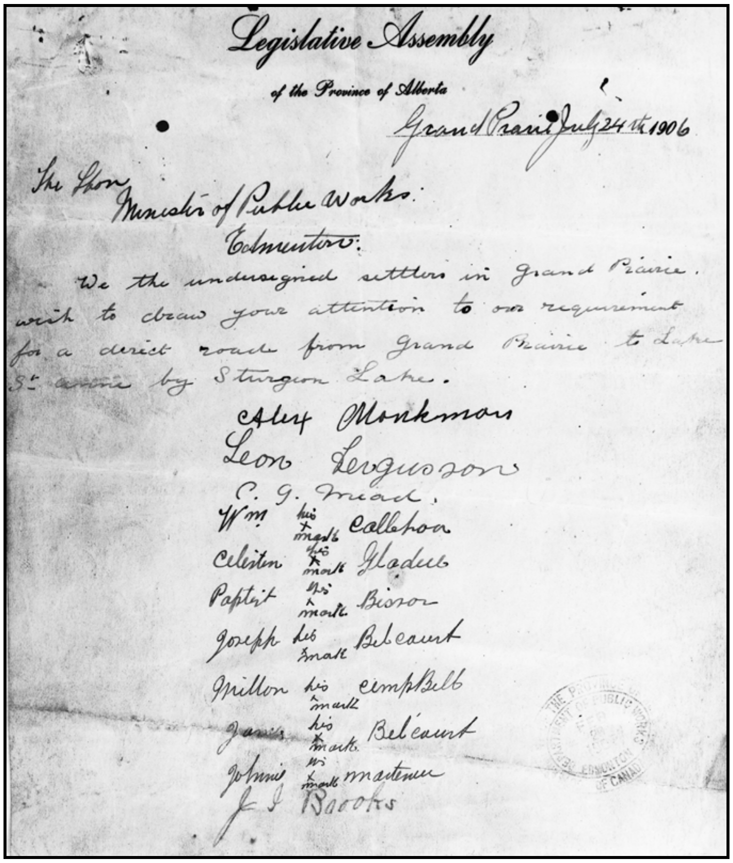


Figure 48. A prairie schooner. Data Source: PAA A.5380



Legislative Assembly
of the Province of Alberta

Grand Prarie July 24th 1906

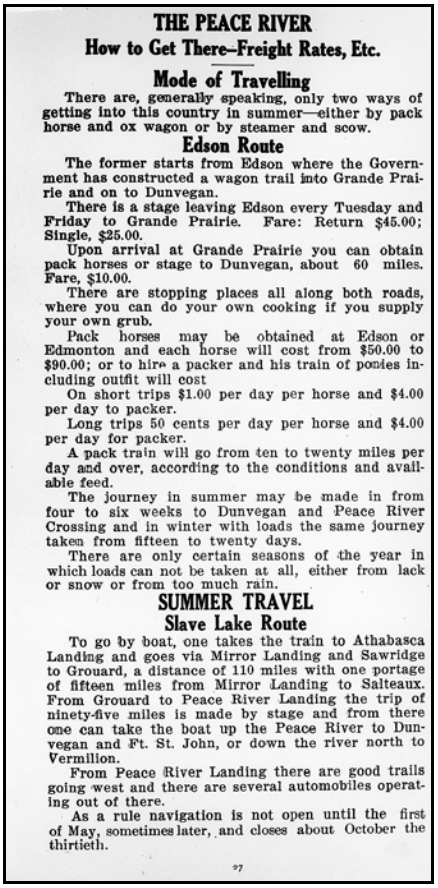
The Hon
Minister of Public Works.
Edmonton:

We the undersigned settlers in Grand Prairie. wish to draw your attention to our requirement for a direct road from Grand Prairie to Lake St. Anne by Sturgeon Lake.

Alex Monkman
Leon Ferguson
C. G. Mead.
Wm. his x mark Calihoo
Celestin his x mark Gladue
Baptist his x mark Bisson
Joseph his x mark Belcourt
Millon his x mark Campbell
James his x mark Belcourt
Johnie his x mark Martineau
J. I. Brooks

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
THE PROVINCE OF
EDMONTON
OF CANADA

Figure 49. Petitioning for a road to Grande Prairie, 1906. Data Source: PAA 67.303/35/8



THE PEACE RIVER

How to Get There–Freight Rates, Etc.

Mode of Travelling

There are, generally speaking, only two ways of getting into this country in summer—either by pack horse and ox wagon or by steamer and scow.

Edson Route

The former starts from Edson where the Government has constructed a wagon trail into Grande Prairie and on to Dunvegan.

There is a stage leaving Edson every Tuesday and Friday to Grande Prairie. Fare: Return $45.00; Single, $25.00.

Upon arrival at Grande Prairie you can obtain pack horses or stage to Dunvegan, about 60 miles. Fare, $10.00.

There are stopping places all along both roads, where you can do your own cooking if you supply your own grub.

Pack horses may be obtained at Edson or Edmonton and each horse will cost from $50.00 to $90.00; or to hire a packer and his train of ponies including outfit will cost

On short trips $1.00 per day per horse and $4.00 per day to packer.

Long trips 50 cents per day per horse and $4.00 per day for packer.

A pack train will go from ten to twenty miles per day and over, according to the conditions and available feed.

The journey in summer may be made in from four to six weeks to Dunvegan and Peace River Crossing and in winter with loads the same journey taken from fifteen to twenty days.

There are only certain seasons of the year in which loads can not be taken at all, either from lack or snow or from too much rain.

SUMMER TRAVEL

Slave Lake Route

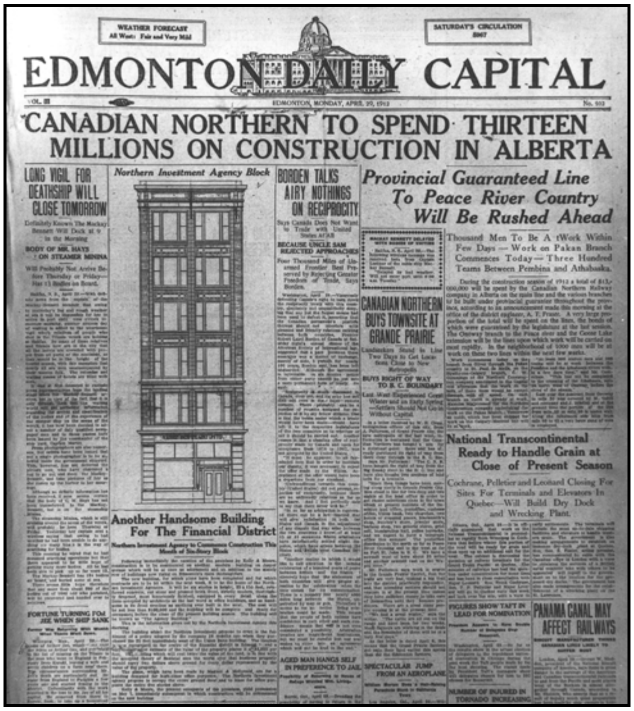
To go by boat, one takes the train to Athabasca Landing and goes via Mirror Landing and Sawridge to Grouard, a distance of 110 miles with one portage of fifteen miles from Mirror Landing to Salteaux. From Grouard to Peace River Landing the trip of ninety-five miles is made by stage and from there one can take the boat up the Peace River to Dunvegan and Ft. St. John, or down the river north to Vermillion.

From Peace River Landing there are good trails going west and there are several automobiles operating out of there.

As a rule navigation is not open until the first of May, sometimes later, and closes about October the thirtieth.

97

Figure 50. From Mundy's "Northern Directory", 1913. Data Source:



WEATHER FORECAST
All West: Fair and Very Mild

SATURDAY'S CIRCULATION

EDMONTON DAILY CAPITAL

EDMONTON, MONDAY, APRIL 29, 1912

CANADIAN NORTHERN TO SPEND THIRTEEN MILLIONS ON CONSTRUCTION IN ALBERTA

LONG VIGIL FOR DEATHSHIP WILL CLOSE TOMORROW

Definitely Known The Mackay Bennett Will Dock at 9 in the Morning

Northern Investment Agency Block

Another Handsome Building For The Financial District

Northern Investment Agency to Commence Construction This Month of Six-Story Block

BORDEN TALKS AIRY NOTHINGS ON RECIPROCITY

BECAUSE UNCLE SAM REJECTED APPROACHES

AGED MAN HANGS SELF IN PREFERENCE TO JAIL

Provincial Guaranteed Line To Peace River Country Will Be Rushed Ahead

Thousand Men To Be At Work Within Few Days — Work on Pakan Branch Commences Today — Three Hundred Teams Between Pembina and Athabaska.

CANADIAN NORTHERN BUYS TOWNSITE AT GRANDE PRAIRIE

BUYS RIGHT OF WAY TO B. C. BOUNDARY

SPECTACULAR JUMP FROM AN AEROPLANE

National Transcontinental Ready to Handle Grain at Close of Present Season

Cochrane, Pelletier and Leonard Closing For Sites For Terminals and Elevators In Quebec—Will Build Dry Dock and Wrecking Plant.

FIGURES SHOW TAFT IN LEAD FOR NOMINATION

NUMBER OF INJURED IN TORNADO INCREASING

PANAMA CANAL MAY AFFECT RAILWAYS

Figure 51. Newspaper article describing planned rail development in Alberta. Data Source:

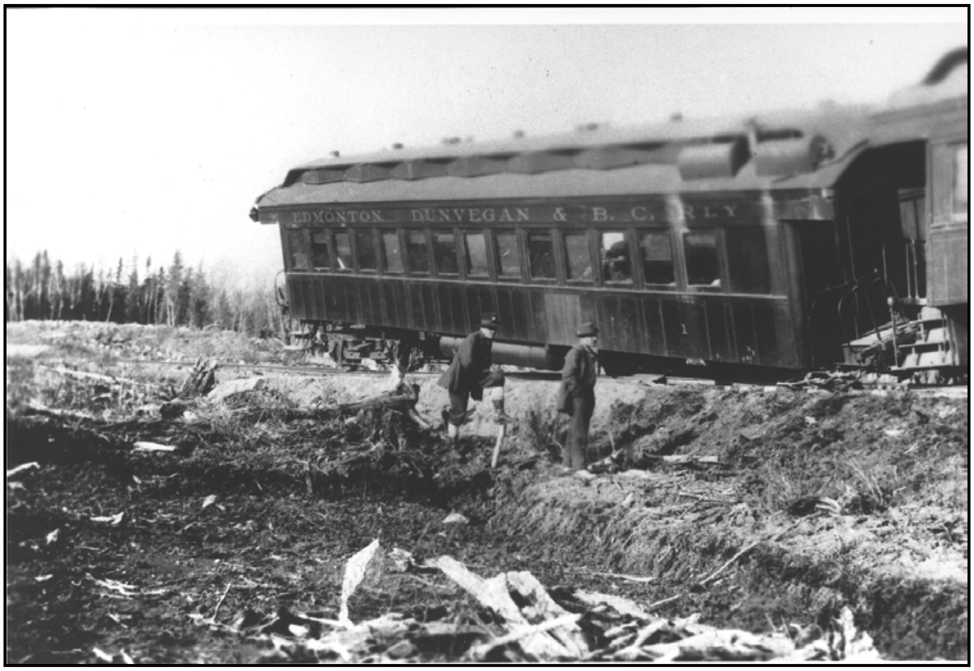


Figure 52. A derailment on the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Line, c.1920. Data Source: PAA A.2232

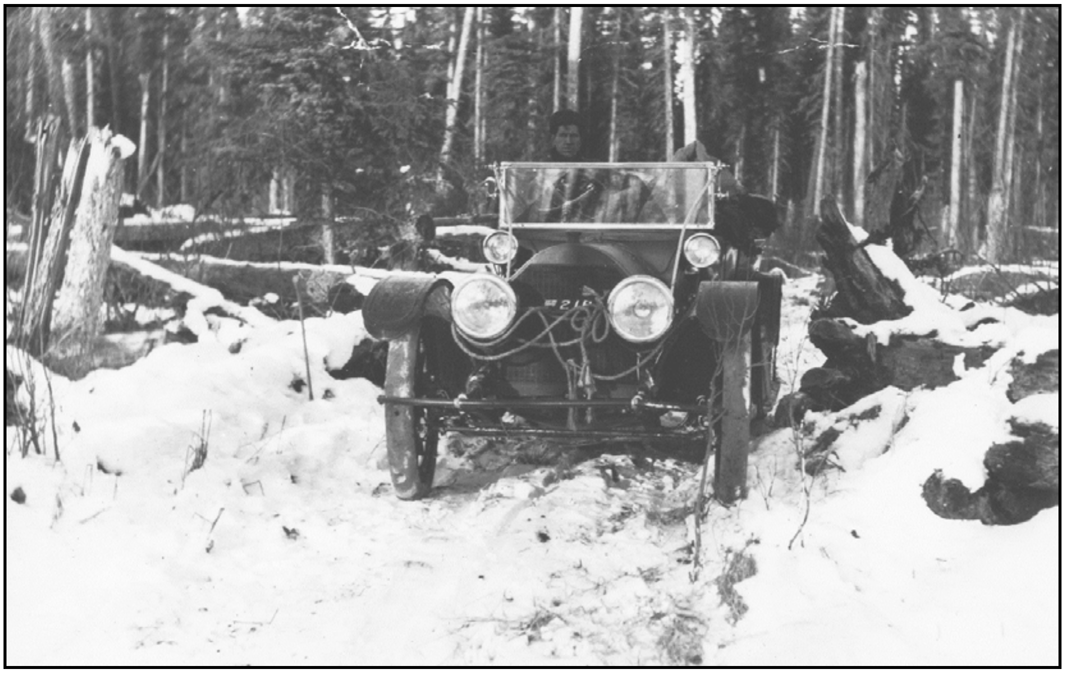


Figure 53. Bringing the first car into Grande Prairie, 1913. Data Source: GAA NA-3869-21

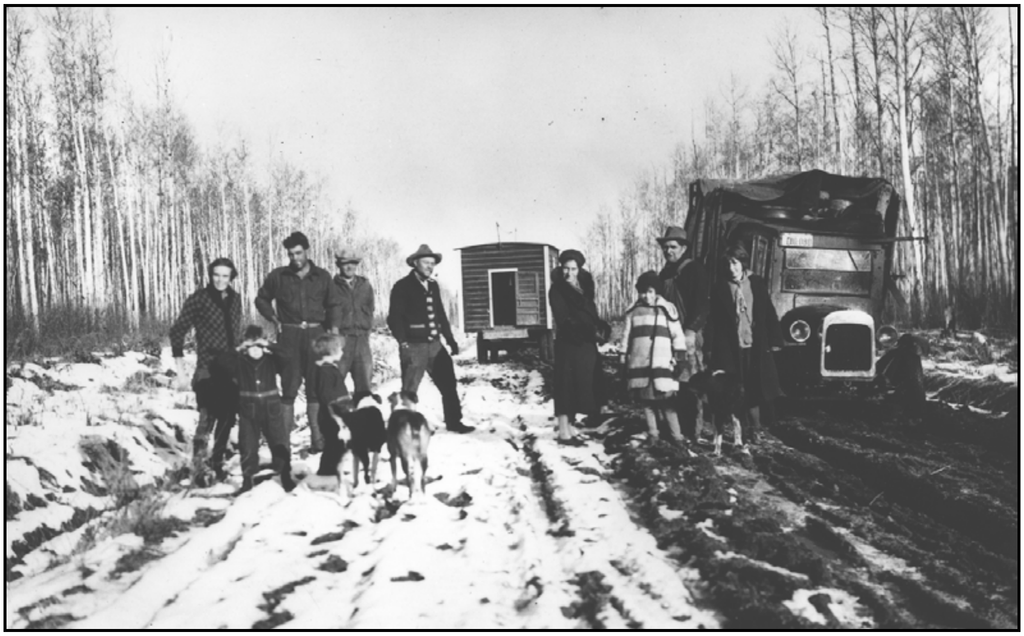


Figure 54. On Alberta Highway #2 en route to Grande Prairie, 1934. Data Source: PAA A.6905

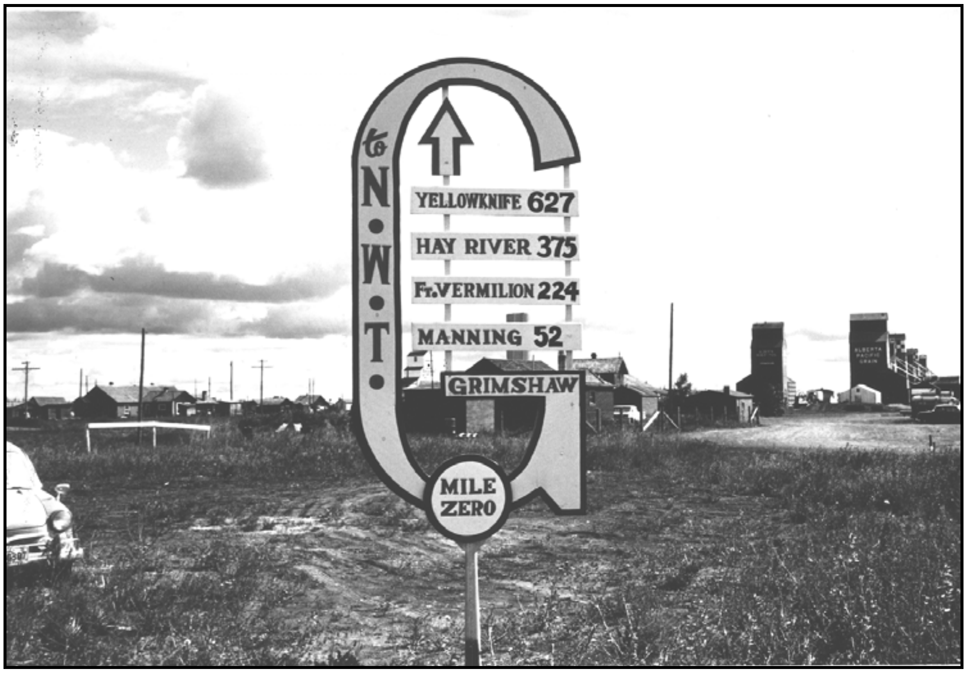

to
N.W.T.
YELLOWKNIFE 627
HAY RIVER 375
Ft.VERMILION 224
MANNING 52
GRIMSHAW
MILE ZERO

Figure 55. Mile Zero of the MacKenzie Highway, c.1906. Data Source: PAA A.11,179

Current Road and Railway Network

The total distance of low and high grade roads within each of the FMUs and in northwest Alberta are shown in Table 13 and Figure 56. In total, ~17,500 km of roads existed in northwest Alberta as of 1991. High grade roads are those roads that occur on a built grade, are all-season, and are either paved or gravel. Low grade roads are not built on a grade, generally do not have a ditch, and can only be driven on in dry conditions or when the road is frozen-in. The network of high grade roads within the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA, and northwest Alberta is illustrated in Figure 57, Figure 58, and Figure 59, respectively. The designations of the major roads, and the rail network, are illustrated for the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA, and northwest Alberta in Figure 60, Figure 61, and Figure 62, respectively. As of the early 1990's, there exists approximately 6 km of low grade road for every 1 km of high grade road. It is important to recognize that these road data do not include the upgraded seismic lines that are the primary means that forest companies use to access their cutblocks. Nor do these data include the road network constructed within cutblocks to move equipment in and wood fiber out of the cutblock. Given the following assumptions that 100,000 ha of logging has occurred historically in northwest Alberta, that "in-block" roads conservatively amount to 2% of the cutblock area, and that average inblock roads are 5 m, a total of ~4000 km of roads have been constructed or used to date. The permanence of these inblock roads is currently unknown but will be affected by many factors including: season of harvest (winter or summer), road construction technique, post-harvest site preparation strategy, and operational need to access post-harvest cutblock for such practices as thinning, herbicide treatment, etc. The amount of seismic line used as access roads by the forestry sector in northwest Alberta is currently not known, but is minimally in the multiples of thousands of km each winter season.

Forestry is only one of many landuses that uses seismic lines as a transportation network. The energy sector, in addition to being the original source of seismic lines, may reuse lines for exploration purposes or as subsequent access to wellsites and other infrastructure. The recreational activities of hunters, trappers, hikers, and the off-road vehicle community all use seismic lines to access the boreal forest of northwest Alberta. Collectively, their reuse of these linear features may significantly reduce the revegetation rates of seismic lines.

As considerable are the distances in roads and seismic lines in northwest Alberta today, they are clearly only a small proportion of the total transportation footprint destined for this forest landscape. For example, current economic assessments demand that maximum distance from a harvested tree stump to an inblock road is ~400 m. Using a hypothetical series of parallel roads 800 m apart, and assuming a uniform landscape that is all merchantable, ~125 km of inblock roads would need to be constructed for every township (10 x 10 km) of merchantable forest landscape. In reality, the inblock road density would need to be higher to take into account the non-linearity of roads due to topography and because much of the landscape is not uniformly merchantable. If one considers that the study area is approximately 15 million hectares, and that 30% of this region is considered to grow merchantable trees, then ~ 450 townships will be accessed for wood fiber during a rotation interval, yielding a total inblock road network of ~56,000 km or 28,000 ha. The degree to which this road network remains as a permanent feature or revegetates will depend on numerous factors as outlined above.

The rail network of northwest Alberta is not extensive (Figure 60, Figure 61, and Figure 62) but has played an important role in the historical development of the region. The study area of northwest Alberta is generally bisected by a north-south rail line running to the west of the Peace River maintstem from 56 to 58° N latitude and subsequently proximal to the west bank of the Hay River from 59 to 60° N latitude.

Table 13. Length of low and high grade roads in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

FMU	Low Grade Roads (km)	High Grade Roads (km)	Total Roads (km)
S10	1,005.6	183.7	1,189.3
S15	688.7	125.2	813.9
P2	670.6	33.0	703.6
P4	398.8	178.8	577.6
P5	377.0	0.0	377.0
P10	271.8	43.1	314.9
P3	295.1	5.3	300.4
P1	179.4	23.6	203.0
S9	59.3	0.0	59.3
F1	8.5	0.0	8.5
All FMU's	3,954.8	592.7	4,547.5
Northwest Alberta	14,988.1	2,509.7	17,497.8

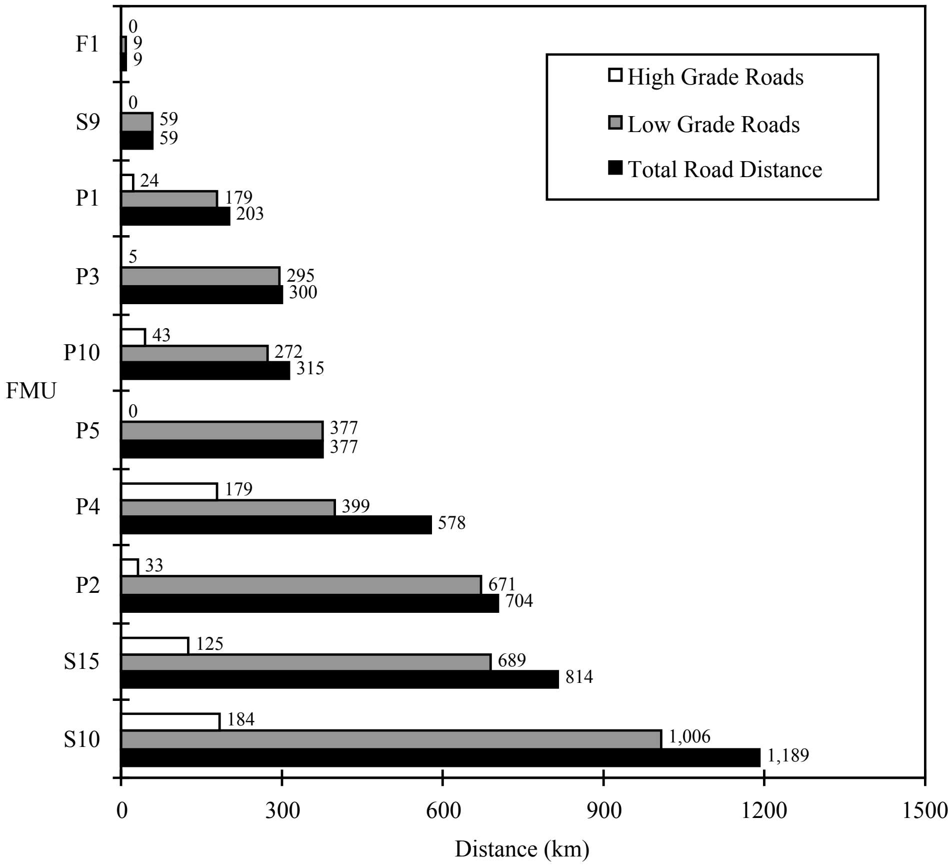
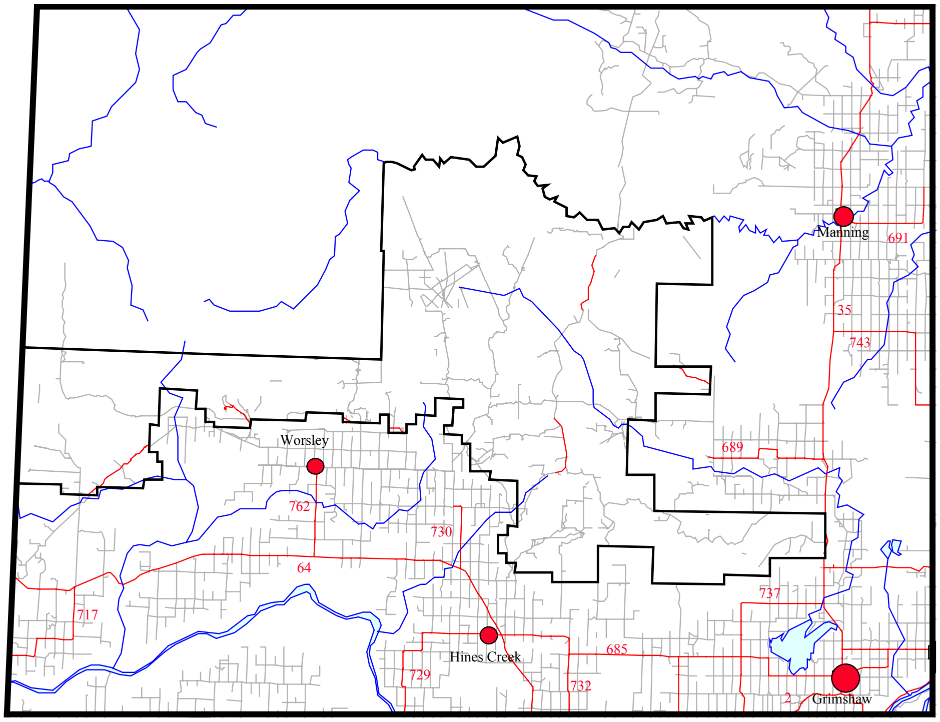
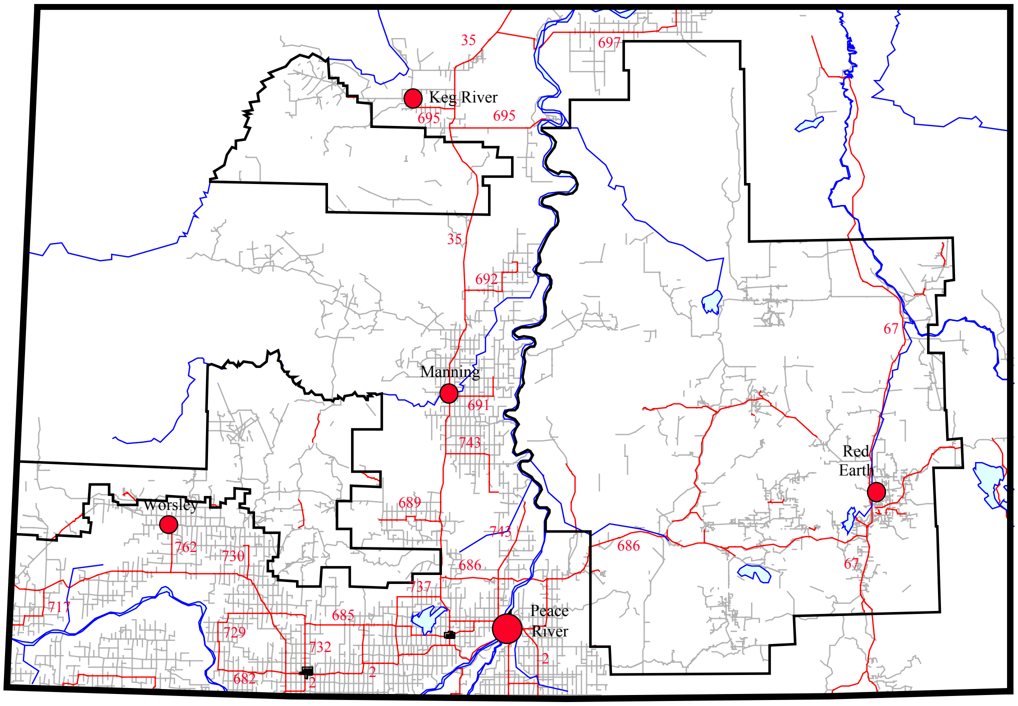


Figure 56. Total distance of roads in PRPD FMA. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.



Manning
691
35
743
689
Worsley
762
730
64
717
737
Hines Creek
685
729
732
2
Grimshaw

Figure 57. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.



35
697
Keg River
695
695
35
692
67
Manning
691
743
Red Earth
689
Worsley
762
730
743
686
686
67
717
737
685
Peace River
729
732
2
682
2
2

Figure 58. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade roads in the PRPD FMA. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

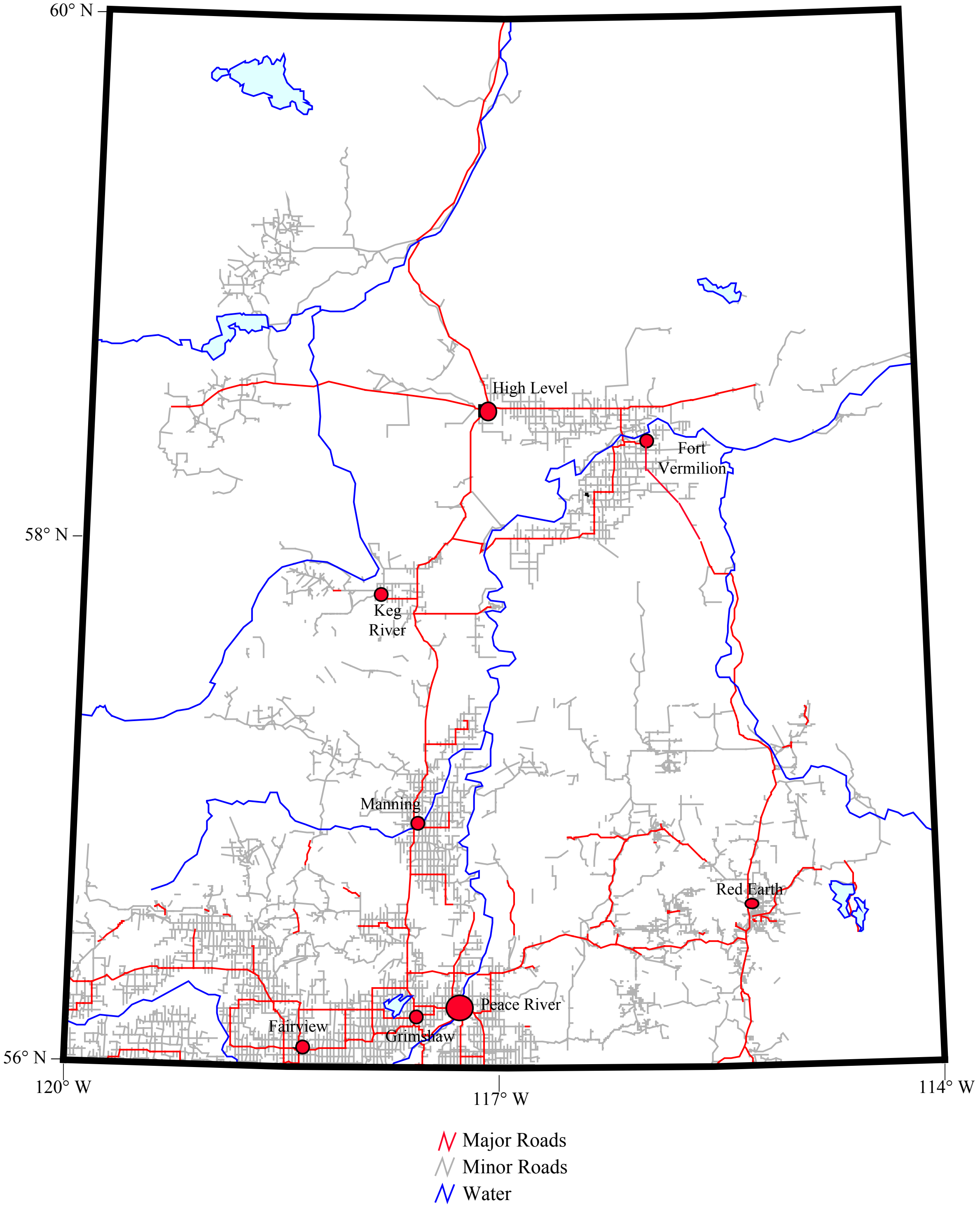

60° N
58° N
56° N
120° W
117° W
114° W
High Level
Fort Vermilion
Keg River
Manning
Red Earth
Peace River
Fairview
Grimshaw
Major Roads
Minor Roads
Water

Figure 59. Road network of low (minor) and high (major) grade roads in northwest Alberta. Paved highways and major gravel roads are in red, all-season (high grade) and seasonal gravel roads (low grade) are in grey. Improved seismic lines used as access roads for the energy and forest sector are not included. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

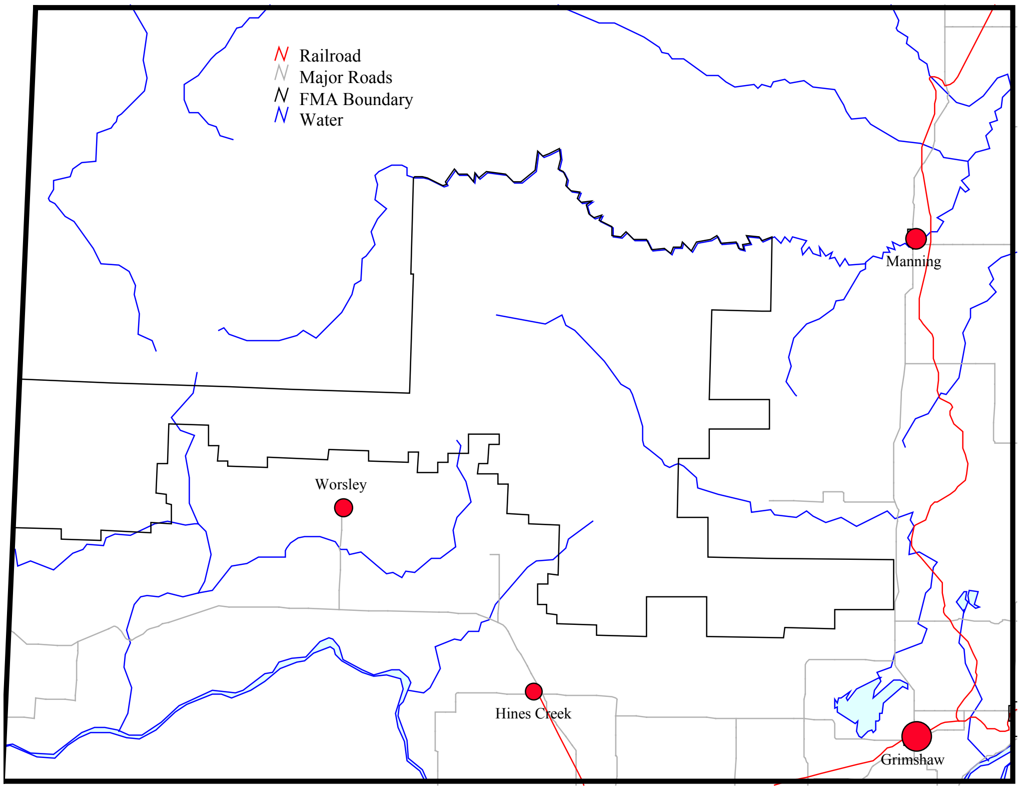

Railroad
Major Roads
FMA Boundary
Water
Manning
Worsley
Hines Creek
Grimshaw

Figure 60. Major road and railway network in P1 and P2. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

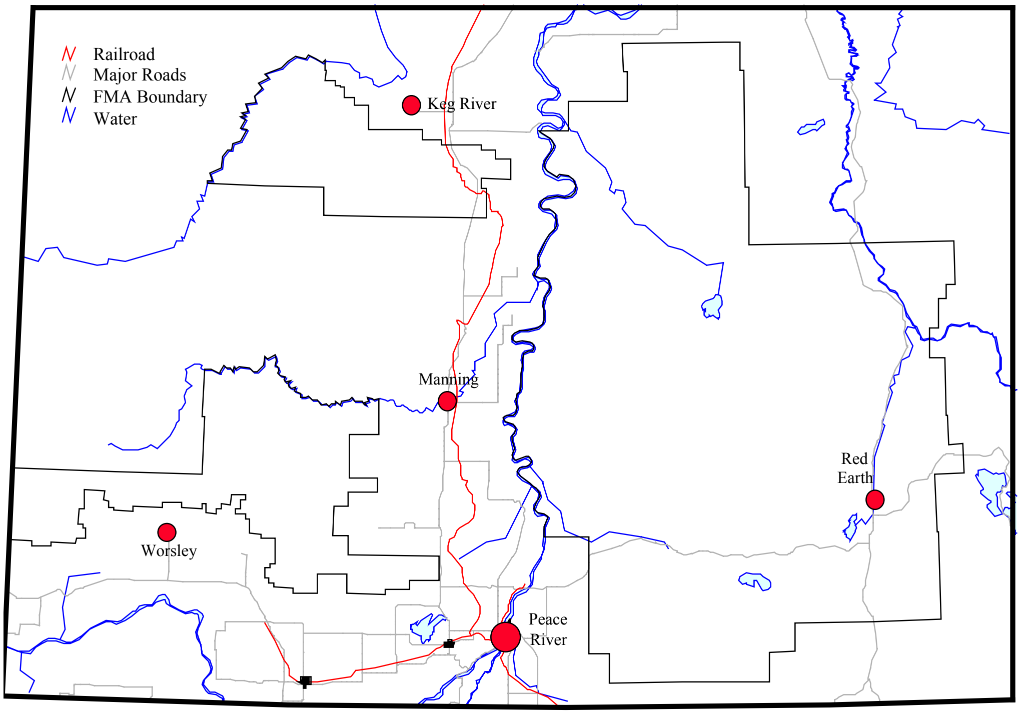

Railroad
Major Roads
FMA Boundary
Water
Keg River
Manning
Red Earth
Worsley
Peace River

Figure 61. Major road and railway network in the PRPD FMA. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

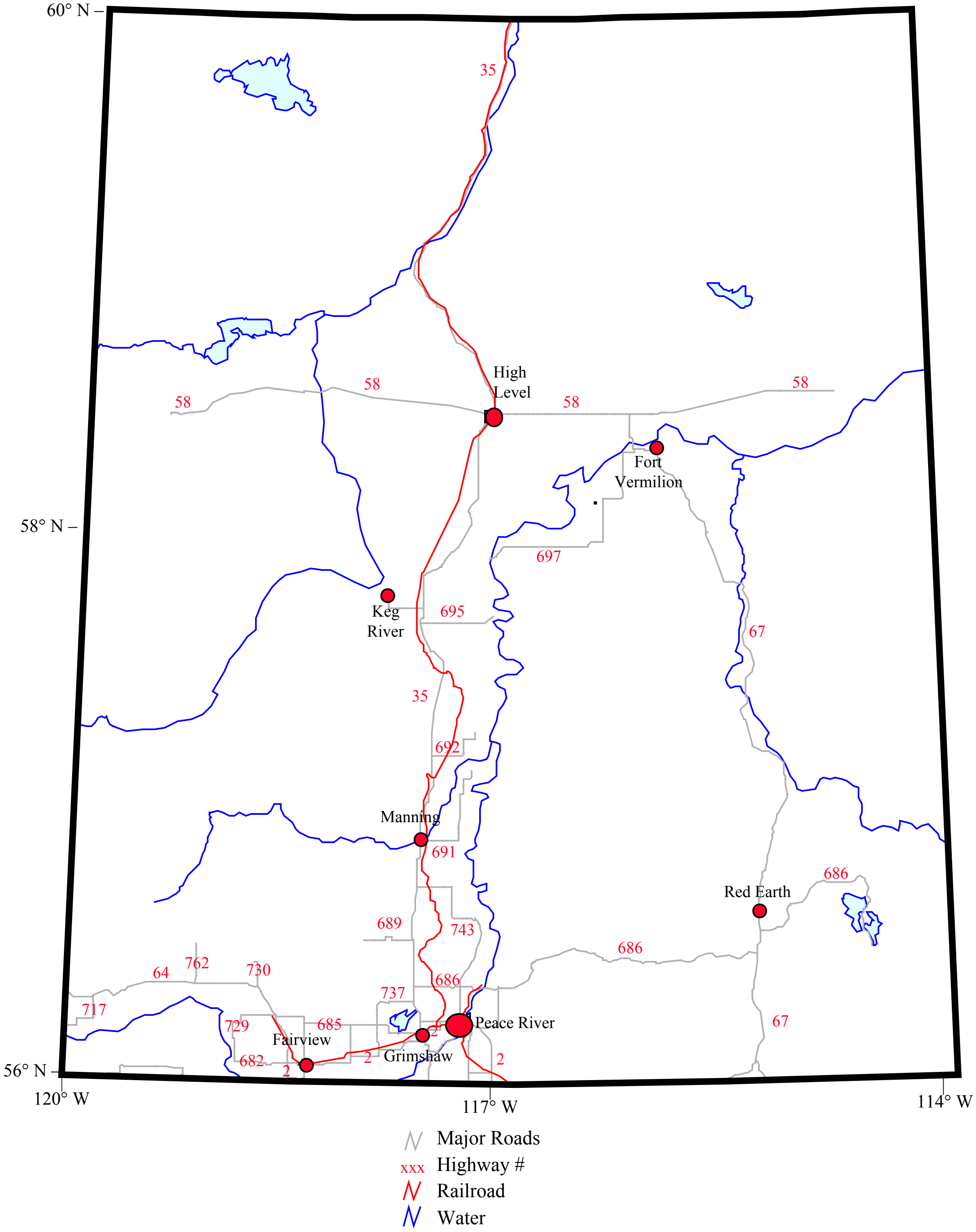

60° N
58° N
56° N
120° W
117° W
114° W
35
58
58
58
58
High Level
Fort Vermilion
697
Keg River
695
67
35
692
Manning
691
689
743
686
Red Earth
686
64
762
730
717
737
686
729
685
Fairview
Peace River
2
682
2
Grimshaw
2
2
67
Major Roads
xxx Highway #
Railroad
Water

Figure 62. Major road and railway network in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

Aviation Network

A network of airstrips and helicopter landing sites is found throughout northwest Alberta and is used variably for personal recreational flights, commercial charters, and government purposes. These strips play an important role in commuting people from remote communities, for fire suppression activities, as re-fueling sites for various industrial landuses, and by commercial carriers servicing the recreational community. Airstrips are generally categorized as "maintained" or as "status undetermined".

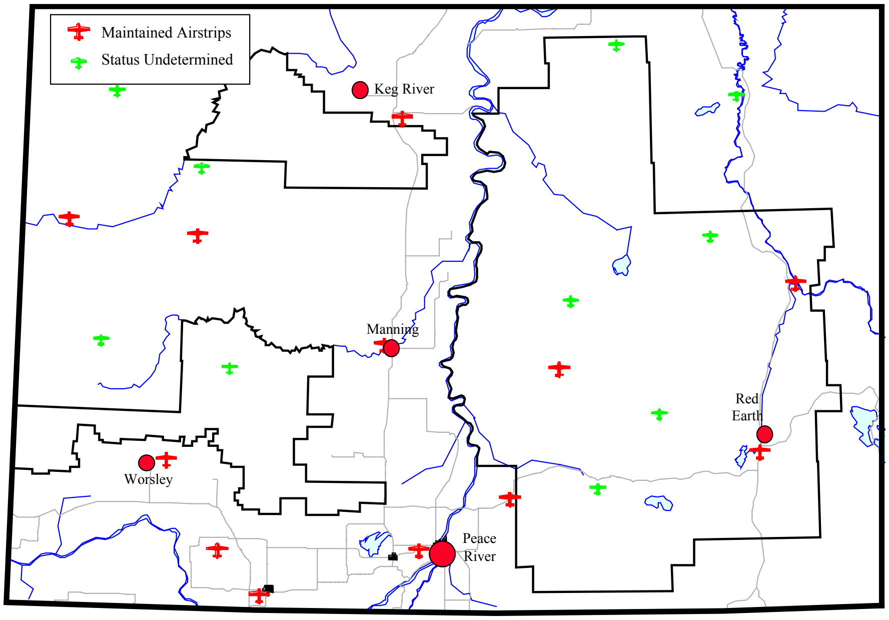

Maintained Airstrips
Status Undetermined
Keg River
Manning
Red Earth
Worsley
Peace River

Figure 63. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

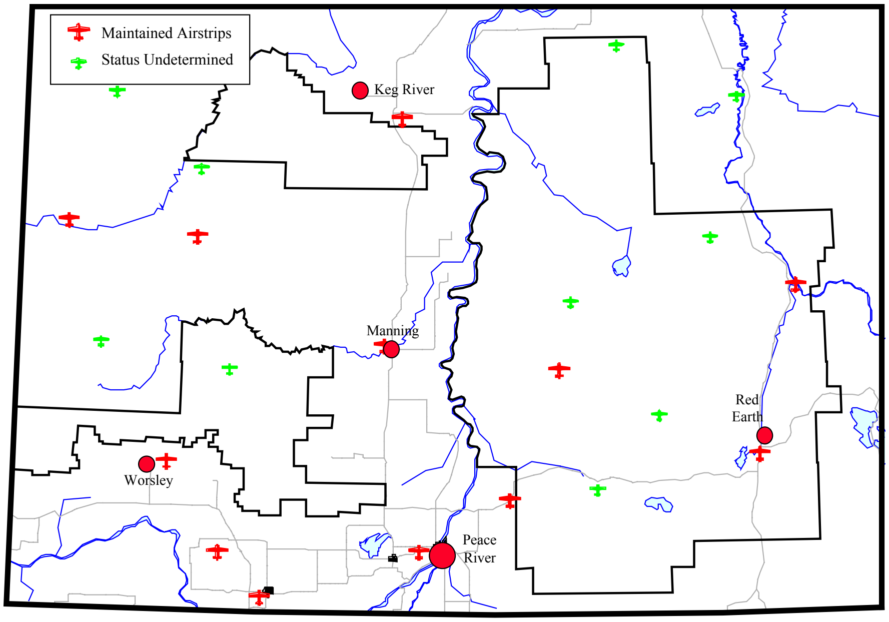

Maintained Airstrips
Status Undetermined
Keg River
Manning
Red Earth
Worsley
Peace River

Figure 64. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

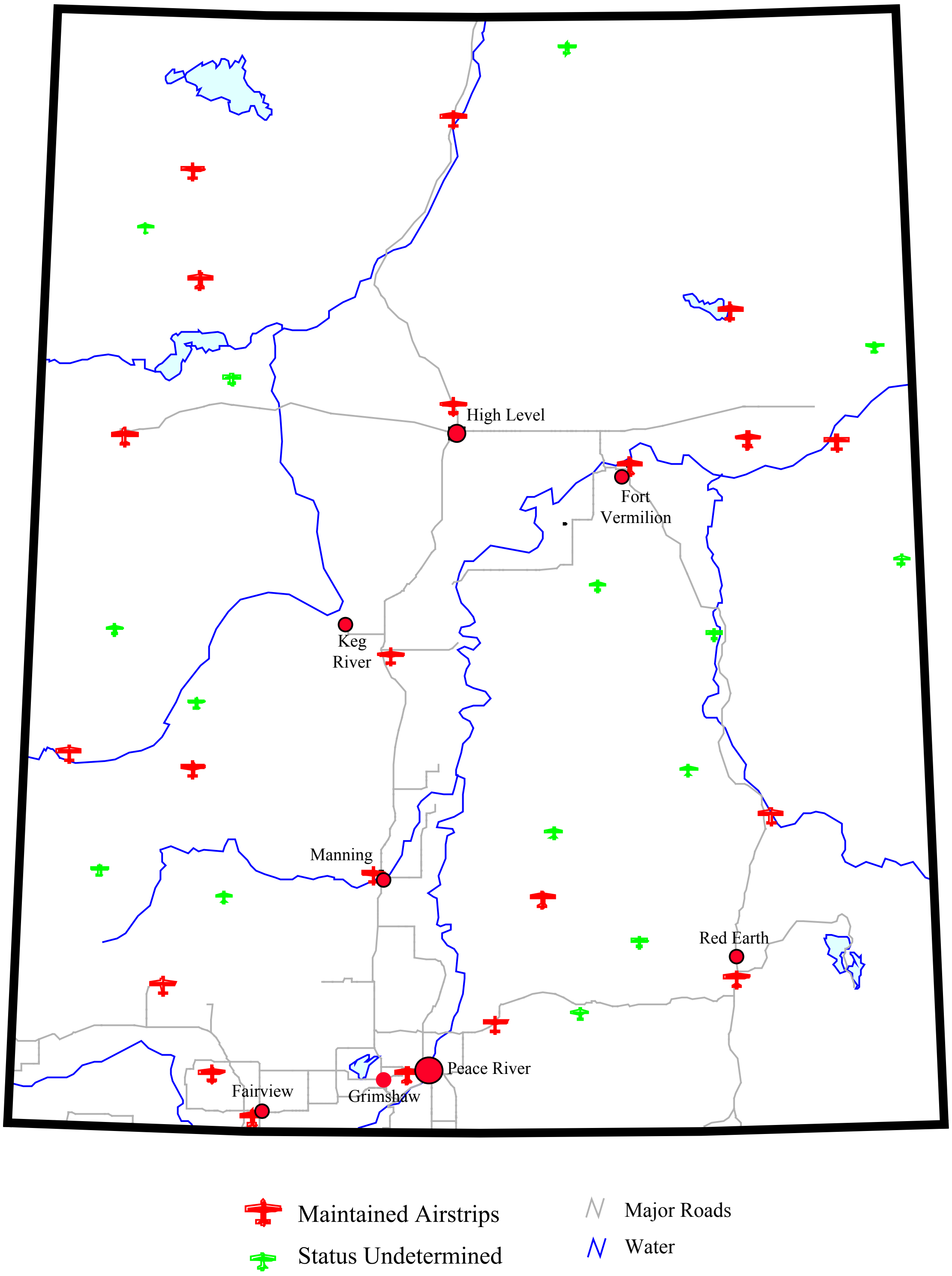

High Level
Fort Vermilion
Keg River
Manning
Red Earth
Peace River
Fairview
Grimshaw
Maintained Airstrips
Status Undetermined
Major Roads
Water

Figure 65. Distribution of airstrips and helicopter landing sites in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

Electrical Grid Network

An extensive powerline grid network, providing power to residential and industrial clients, is found throughout much of the occupied white zone of northwest Alberta. The current distribution of the larger transmission lines is shown for the P1 and P2 FMUs, the PRPD FMA, and northwest Alberta in Figure 66, Figure 67, Figure 68, respectively. These larger transmission lines move electricity between source and sink locations, with major users being human communities and large industrial plants.

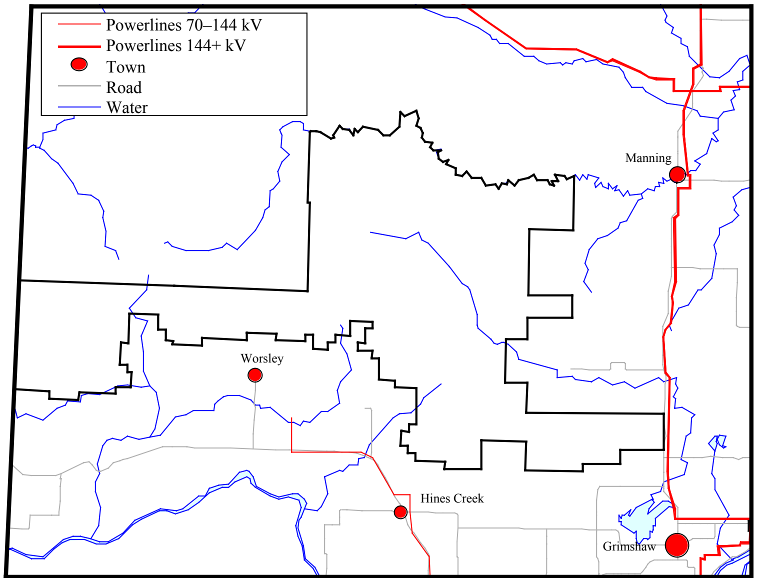

Powerlines 70–144 kV
Powerlines 144+ kV
Town
Road
Water
Manning
Worsley
Hines Creek
Grimshaw

Figure 66. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in the P1 and P2 FMUs of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

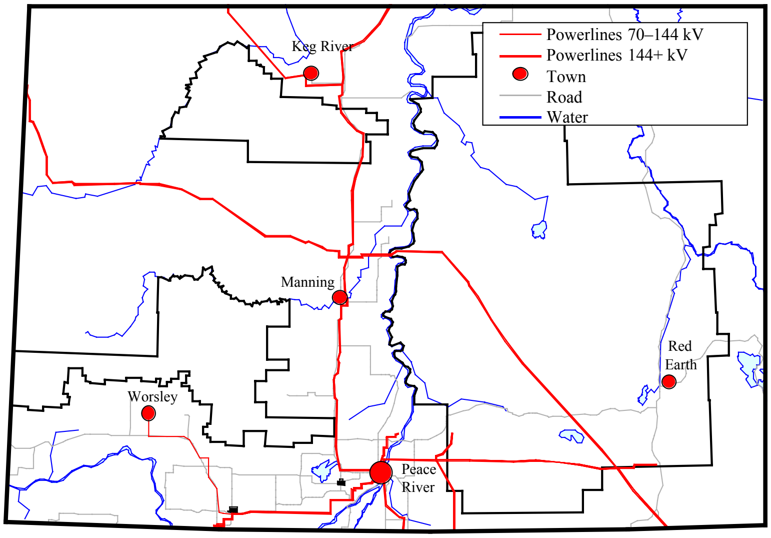

Keg River
Powerlines 70–144 kV
Powerlines 144+ kV
Town
Road
Water
Manning
Red
Earth
Worsley
Peace
River

Figure 67. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in the PRPD FMA of northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

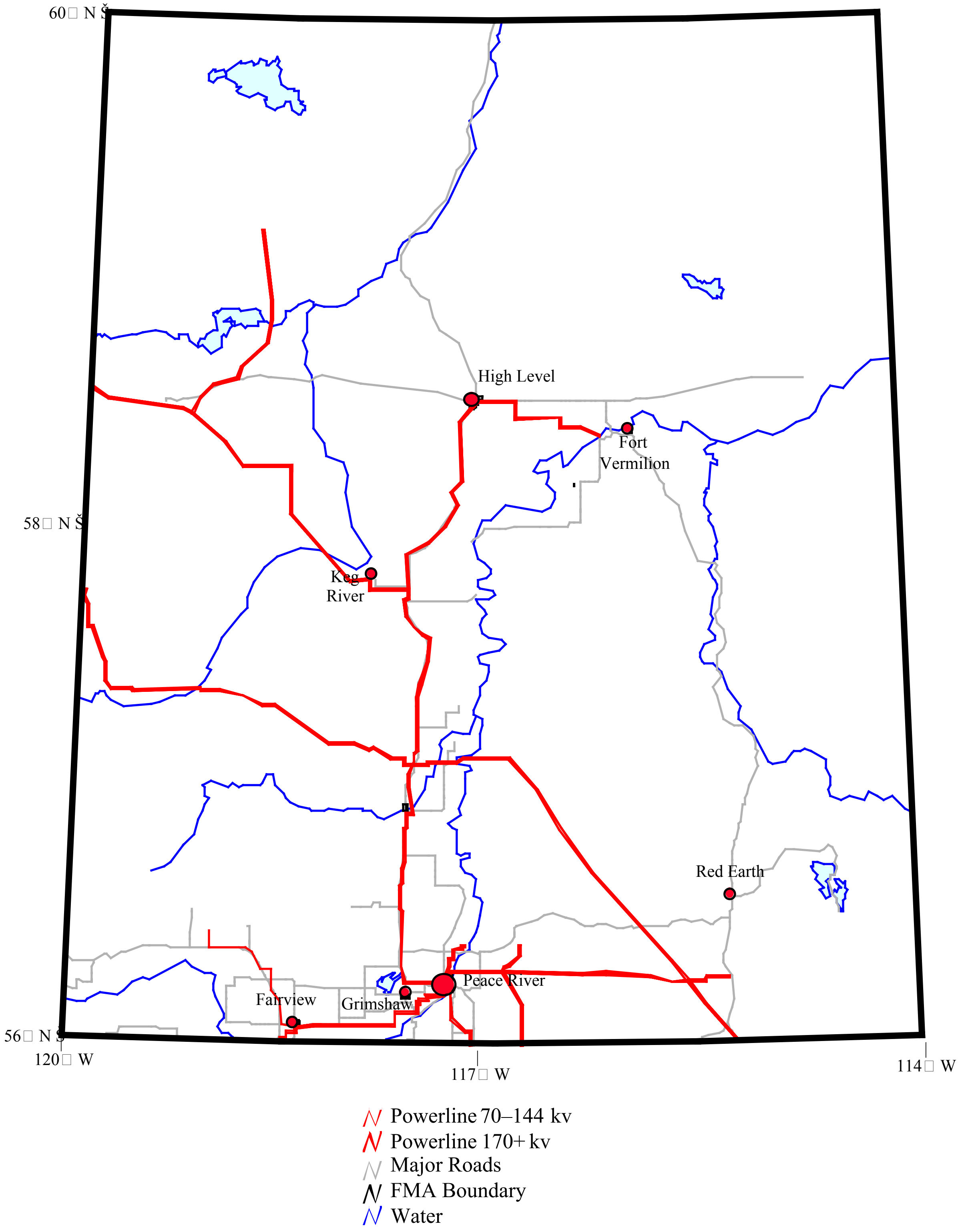

60□ N Š
58□ N Š
56□ N Š
120□ W
117□ W
114□ W
High Level
Fort
Vermilion
Keg
River
Red Earth
Peace River
Fairview
Grimshaw
Powerline 70–144 kv
Powerline 170+ kv
Major Roads
FMA Boundary
Water

Figure 68. Distribution of the electrical grid (>70kv) in northwest Alberta. Data Source: PRPD AVI dataset.

Communications and Utilities; A Historical Review

Since it began to make regular trading excursions into the Peace River Country during the early 19th century, the Hudson's Bay Company carried mail for its employees without charge. When missionaries began to take up residence in the region during the late 1860's, the HBC extended this service to them as well. The independent traders, however, were left to their own devices. When the North West Territory was acquired by Canada in 1870, the HBC extended its mail service to all people, although Dominion postal rates were now applied. For letters, the charge was one penny per ounce.

When the postal service was brought under full control of the Dominion Post Office in 1878, the contract for mail delivery in the North West Territories was naturally given to the HBC which was the only agency equipped to handle it. For lands northwest of Edmonton, the first official postmaster therefore became the Chief Factor at Fort Edmonton, Richard Hardisty. Outgoing mail was delivered to Winnipeg for further re-routing south to Pembina. From there, it was taken either to Toronto and points east, or delivered straight to some address in the United States, the U.S. postal rates having been covered. Canada was now a part of the Universal Postal Union, and whatever extra postage was needed, either inside or outside the country, had to be calculated ahead of time and be paid for before it left the country.

For years, sparse settlement brought few demands for a regular postal system to the Northwest, and the HBC simply shipped what incoming mail was intended for the Peace River Country to Athabasca Landing. From there, it was taken west to Lesser Slave Lake and points beyond. Outgoing mail was brought out over the same route. The various HBC posts in the Northwest served as post offices and always had supplies of stamps on hand. With the Klondike gold rush, the demand for mail service picked up, and various patrols of the North-West Mounted Police also began to deliver mail throughout the North, although they balked at taking mail back.

In the fall of 1900, a contract to deliver the mail between Edmonton and Peace River Crossing was given for the first time to a private contractor, Jim Cornwall. That winter, Cornwall took the mail to and from the Crossing by dogsled; the following summer, he used wagons and scows. In October 1902, he was given the mail contract for an extended period, and, in the summer of 1904, he began to use the service of his Northern Transportation Company. By this time, the mail was delivered to the various posts of Bredin & Cornwall in the region, which now served as post offices. When this firm sold out to the Revillon Freres in 1906, these posts continued to serve as federal post offices, although the contract for mail delivery to the region was now taken over by a trader at Spirit River named William English.

When the settlement period in the region began in 1909, new demands arose for a more efficient postal system, and the government began shipping packets of mail to Peace River Crossing via George Mcleod's stage and, later, motor car service. Beginning in April 1911, delivery to the Grande Prairie was undertaken over the Edson Trail via J.B. Taft's stagecoach. By this time, official post offices were in place at community stores in Calais, Grande Prairie, Lake Saskatoon, Redlow (Beaverlodge), Grouard, High Prairie, Peace River Crossing, Shaftesbury, Dunvegan, Pruden's Crossing, Spirit River and Fort Vermilion. By 1914, other postal outlets were in place at Friedenstal, Glen Leslie, Griffin Creek, Halcourt, Hythe, Kleskun Hill, North Vermilion, Scotswood, Sexsmith, Vanrena and Waterhole. The local storekeepers served as the postmasters, always keeping on hand a weigh scale, a supply of stamps and a list of the latest postal rates.

The arrival of the railway in 1916 brought a more efficient postal service to the region, as the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway and its subsidiary, the Central Canada, were naturally given the contract for mail delivery. Also, more post offices were established along the rail lines. In 1921, 58 postal outlets were operating in northwest Alberta, 23 of them in railway communities. For the communities off the rail line, the postmaster, who was also a local storekeeper, would make regular excursions to the nearest railway towns to pick up the mail for his district and deliver outgoing mail. By this time, post offices independent of commercial stores were operating in Grande Prairie and Peace River. These were managed by full time postmasters. The demands were now made greater by a marked increase in the use of mail-order services then provided by the large retail firms of Eatons, Simpsons and the Hudson's Bay Company. Like elsewhere in the rural West, the weeks leading up to Christmas became an intense time for the postal system.

The dramatic increase in population during the late 1920's brought even more demands on the postal service which now handled magazine subscriptions. For people in northwest Alberta, as well as northeastern British Columbia, this meant regular delivery of the *Edmonton Journal* or *Bulletin*, albeit from one day up to several weeks late. Some people preferred to purchase newspapers, as well as magazines, at one of the growing number of local news stands that were appearing in the larger communities, most in conjunction with barber shops which also served as community pool rooms. Major periodicals were also being brought in via the postal service. Many were American in origin, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, which would do much towards Americanizing the attitudes and tastes of northern Albertans. Also contributing to this was a growing number of motion pictures circulating in the region, most run by itinerant projectionists.

Locally, the first newspaper appeared in the region in March 1913, when the *Grande Prairie Herald* began publication. The following July, the *Peace River Record* commenced operation. These two newspapers provided an invaluable service in the years that followed. They both devoted columns to news from the various 'districts' of the Peace River Country, and they both included news of the world which was received over the Dominion telegraph which had arrived at Peace River in 1910 and Grande Prairie in 1912. Built of very heavy #6 iron wire, 1/4" thick, the telegraph stretched from Edmonton to Peace River Crossing via Athabasca Landing, Mirror Landing and Grouard. From Peace River Crossing, it was extended to Dunvegan, Spirit River, Grande Prairie and reached Lake Saskatoon towards the end of 1912.

Because the telegraph wire was so strong, it could actually accommodate telephone transmission for a few miles. Along the Shaftesbury Trail, telephone sets were installed at the Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions and at the farms of Jean Collins and Allie Brick. They were naturally made available to neighbors. A similar service was provided from Grouard to settlers in the district of High Prairie. While the farmers put up the poles, the Dominion Telegraph Service agreed to contribute the wire and hook up the system. Subscribers paid $15 a year and usually charged their neighbors ten cents a call. In 1929, the federal telegraph found competition when the NAR instituted its own telegraph service. This made sense, as the stations along the rail line had to stay in touch with each other anyway, and the telegraph lines could be maintained by railway workers. Station agents could also double as telegraph operators. Before long, the costly federal telegraph service to the region was put to rest.

Though the Peace River Country would not receive a direct Alberta Government Telephone hook-up to Edmonton until 1946, the first mutual telephone operation in the region had begun as early as 1912, when Howard Probst founded the Fairview Mutual Telephone Company at Waterhole. Using wire supplied by the Northern Electric Company, and regular fence post insulators on locally cut poles, he connected five of his neighbors that year. (Cashman, pp.240-44) The following year, he extended his line to Bluesky and Dunvegan, leasing use of the poles of the Dominion Telegraph Service. This innovation brought major news stories to the district, for, at given times, the telegraph operator at Dunvegan, Alphonse Vaillancourt, would alert the party line with nine short rings. This was the signal that he was about to broadcast the news as he had just received it over the Dominion Telegraph. From Dunvegan to Bluesky, subscribers would pick up the phone and learn what had just transpired around the world. During the first few years, reports on the Great War in Europe were naturally the main stories.

In the south Peace River Country, the establishment of the first telephone system did not go so smoothly. Here, the Rural Municipalities of Bear Lake and Grande Prairie had been set up, and their permission was required to establish mutual telephone services within their boundaries. In the spring of 1913, the Lake Saskatoon Co-operative Telephone Company applied for, and received permission to extend lines from Lake Saskatoon to Beaverlodge, Grande Prairie and Sexsmith. The co-operative, however, soon sold out to the privately incorporated Northwestern Telephone Company headed by Anson Wagar of Lake Saskatoon. At the same time, Grande Prairie gained status as a village, and Village Council refused Wagar the right to erect telephone poles along the village's streets, and passed a bylaw affirming this. Wagar began to do this anyway, for as he argued, he had permission under the Telephones Act. He was nonetheless arrested and brought before the local Justice of the Peace who sentenced him to 30 days of hard labour for defying a municipal bylaw under the Towns and Villages Act. He was found guilty by a jury of Grand Prairie residents and then taken for incarceration to Grouard.

Fortunately for Wagar, Justices of the Peace were then subject to overruling by the provincial Attorney General, and, when Wagar reached Grouard, he learned that his sentence had been overturned. By now, the provincial Board of Public Utilities Commissioners was in place to decide upon such matters, and it ruled in Wagar's favor. The location of telephone poles however continued to be an issue, with the Village contending that they must be erected in the back lanes. Now anxious for the service however, the Village finally reneged, and, in the spring if 1918, the system was installed with a central located in the G.A. James drugstore with Annie Tindall as operator. Public resentment, however, continued to be directed towards Wagar who was blamed for virtually every problem encountered with the system. In the summer of 1920, he sold his company to Alberta Government Telephones for $9,000. (Cashman, pp.259-61) In the years that followed, hook-ups would be made between Grande Prairie and other rural exchanges of AGT which were established throughout the south Peace River Country of Alberta. From these exchanges, party lines were brought to farms in the outlying hinterland.

In Peace River, the village almost became the second incorporated community in the province to have a municipally operated telephone system, after Edmonton. In 1916, Village Councilor George Mcleod was appointed to head a committee to investigate the feasibility of a municipally run system, and, although he rounded up 52 subscribers, and Council purchased 125 tamarac poles, nothing further transpired, even though the government agreed to supply the equipment at cost. It remained for Alberta Government Telephones to install a local service, which was undertaken in 1921. As with the south Peace River Country, a number of rural exchanges of AGT soon followed, along with rural party line extensions. These were in addition to the odd rural mutual telephone company which had begun to operate in the region.

By 1929, exchanges were in place at the following communities with the number of telephones listed in the AGT Directory of that year: Beaverlodge (28 local, 17 rural); Berwyn (31 local, 72 rural); Bluesky (4); Donnelly (1); Fairview (14); Falher (22 local, 7 rural); Grande Prairie (233 local, 154 rural); Huallen (2 local, 11 rural); Hythe (18); McLennan (2); Peace River (129); Sexsmith (39 local, 45 rural); Spirit River (19 local, 6 rural); Wanham (2); Wembly (32 local, 44 rural) and Whitelaw (5). In addition, two rural mutual telephone companies operated around Beaverlodge (17 and 12); and one each around Spirit River (10), Spirit Valley (6), and Valhalla (43). AGT toll stations were also maintained at Belloy, Braeburn, Clearview, Cleland, Dalgleish, De Bolt, Dunvegan, Elmworth, Esher, Griffin Creek, Grimshaw, Hagen, Halcourt, La Glace, McNaught, Moody's Crossing, Rio Grande, Rycroft, Stony Hill and Vanrena. Several of these places were simply farmers' homes.

AGT never did turn a profit from its district telephone exchanges, and during the Depression, the number of subscribers fell drastically, the result being the closure of a number of the local exchanges. For some, telephone service would be lost until after the war, for others, the service was picked up by new rural mutual telephone companies. For the Peace River Country, 24 were incorporated during the 1930's, joining the five others already in existence. Others followed during the war, including a direct line through to the Alaska Highway, which was maintained by the Royal Signal Corps. Following the war, AGT picked up its service to the Peace region, at last providing it with a direct line to Edmonton. This gave the Peace River Country telephone access to the outside world for the first time. Beginning in 1951, this could be undertaken through direct dialing. AGT also began to buy many of the mutual telephone companies in the more populated rural areas. In the more remote districts, other mutual companies were incorporated to fill the gap until, during the 1960's, AGT was able to cover virtually the entire region.

Since the Peace River Country had developed as a farming area, there was not the same demand for public utilities as there was for transportation and communications. Most public services were supplied by the communities, including street grading, livery stables, garbage disposal and fire fighting. Wood, coal, water and sometimes milk delivery were left to private initiative. In 1915, the first electrical lighting plant was set up in Grande Prairie when Joe Voz brought in a generator which he operated with coal. Soon, most businesses and some homes in town were being served, and, by the end of 1918, most streets had electric lights. The service was purchased in 1928 by Canadian Utilities. That same year, in Peace River, Village Council decided to install its own municipally owned and operated system, the first in the north Peace River Country. The plant was built at a cost of $30,000 raised through local debentures. 210 customers were quickly hooked up, and, in the summer of 1930, Peace River's streets were lit with electric lights.

The phenomenon of public electricity did not immediately catch on with other communities, for there was simply not the population base to warrant such service. During the Depression, few people could afford it anyway. In Peace River, the municipal service proved too costly to the ratepayers, and, in 1933, the power plant was sold to Dominion Electric Power Ltd. In the smaller communities and on the farms, domestic lighting was mostly by kerosene lamps, and, what electricity was needed in the homes, was usually supplied by large batteries. Indeed, the most noteworthy communication development during these years was the spread of battery operated radios. With radio reception often better at night, many people found escape from the hardships of the time in the programs then popular which were received from CKUA or CKUA in Edmonton, or directly from stations in the northwest United States. In 1938, the first local radio station was established in the Peace River Country, CFGP in Grande Prairie. News, weather, grain prices and public service announcements constituted a main part of its broadcast schedule which was picked up throughout the entire region.

With the easing of the Depression, the desire for electricity gradually increased, and, by the outbreak of World War II, small community sponsored generating stations were in operation in several of the villages in the region. These were usually diesel operated and powerful enough to maintain several streetlights. In other communities, private businesses began to maintain their own small diesel power plants with either AC or DC currents. These also began to appear on certain of the larger farms. The demands of the war, however, brought increased pressure for centralized electrification systems, and, immediately after the war, the large power companies began to upgrade their generating stations and extend their lines to small villages and hamlets throughout Alberta. By 1950, virtually all communities in the settled parts of the province were ‘electrified’. The major supplier in the north Peace River Country was Northlands Utilities, while Canadian Utilities predominated in the south.

There was also a growing desire for electricity in the rural portions of the province, and this had been reflected in the report of the provincial Post War Reconstruction Committee, tabled in 1944. Contracted to examine how this might by efficiently achieved was Dr. Andrew Stewart of the University of Alberta. Taking note of the success of the mutual telephone companies, Stewart hit upon the idea of rural electrification associations. This was taken up by the government, and in 1947, the Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Act was amended to permit the Provincial Treasurer to guarantee repayment of loans made by chartered banks to such associations. The REA’s would be required to raise in cash one-half the cost of bringing in the system, and borrow money to finance the rest. The systems would be run by private power companies which would construct the lines and operate them at a fixed rate sanctioned by the Public Utilities Board. By 1956, 32 rural electrification associations were bringing electricity to the farms of the Peace River Country.

From 1950 to 1958, the power requirements of the Peace River Country grew from 3,000 to 14,000 kilowatts. (NADC) Other utilities and services were also expanded during this time. As gas wells were now being drilled, it was only natural that this product serve the region. Indeed, the Oil & Gas Conservation Board set a number of fields aside strictly for district consumption. During the early 1950’s, propane became a common domestic fuel, especially on the farms. In the middle and latter part of the decade, most towns and villages of the area were supplied with natural gas which was piped in from recently drilled wells. The main supplier was initially Northlands Utilities. Most incorporated communities also installed water and sewer lines at this time, the wells and sewage plants being constructed and maintained by the municipalities.

Communications were also greatly expanded during this decade. At the time, 14 local newspapers were operating in northwest Alberta, while every town and village maintained a public library, and most a movie theatre. As most theatres were part of a circuit, the movies shown were usually recent productions. In 1948, CFGP was joined over the airwaves by CJDC Dawson Creek and, in 1954, by CKYL in Peace River, all three extending news, entertainment and public features throughout the region. In 1962, television was finally brought directly to the Peace River Country from CBC Edmonton.

In the 1960’s, northwest Alberta began to function much the same as the rest of the province with respect to communications as well as utilities. In a region rich with gas and oil, energy costs were kept low, with Alberta Power and TransAlta Utilities becoming the main regional suppliers. In the meantime, radio, television and newspaper access became almost the same as anywhere else in the province. This served to diminish the insularity of the Peace River Country, but at the same time coalesce the regions towards an Alberta perspective. Far more news coverage in the Peace River Block of British Columbia, for example, was to be received from Edmonton than Vancouver. Also, while electrical power generated from the W.A.C. Bennett Dam began to flow southwest, energy from the gas fields of Fort St. John flowed southeast. Today, many cultural and recreational institutions straddle the border, such as the Peace Country Library Network and the Spirit of the Peace Museums Association. They sustain the popular perception of the region as an historical and cultural entity, albeit with a focus towards Alberta.

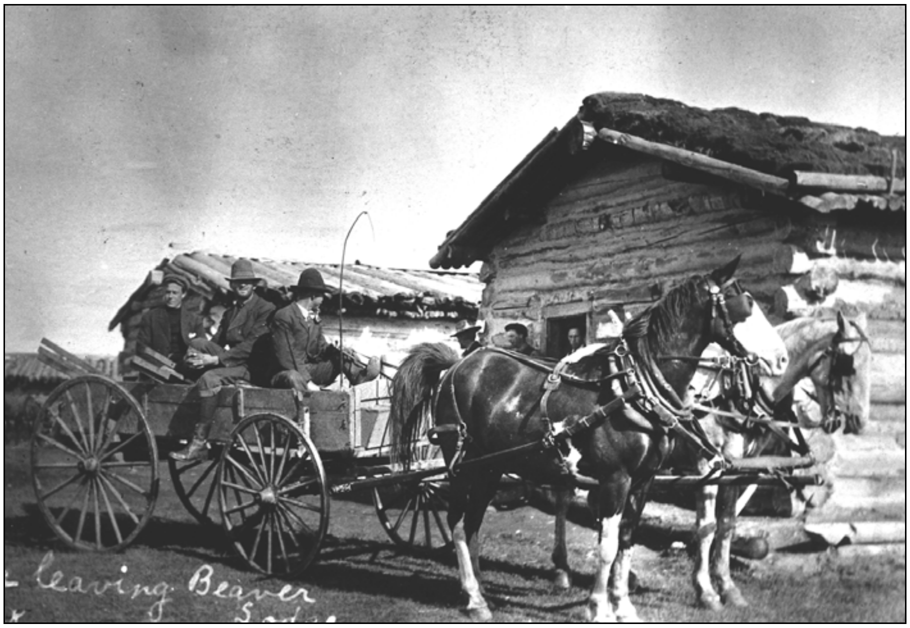


Figure 69. The mail stage of J.B. Taft at Beaverlodge (Lake Saskatoon), 1911. Data Source: PAA A. 7178.

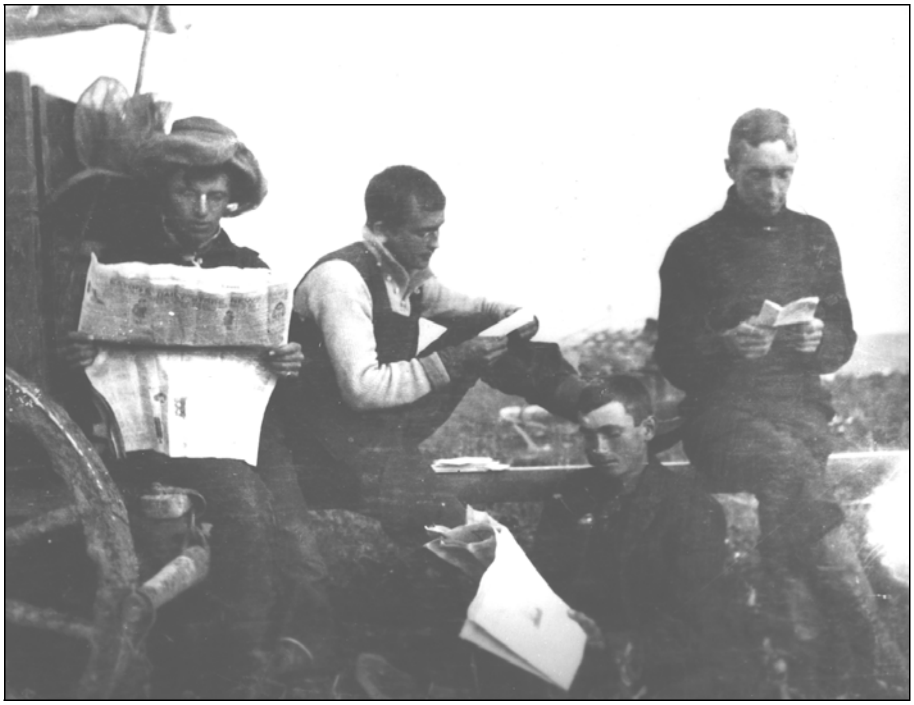


Figure 70. Reading the mail in the Peace River Country, C. 1912. Data Source: PAA A. 2535.

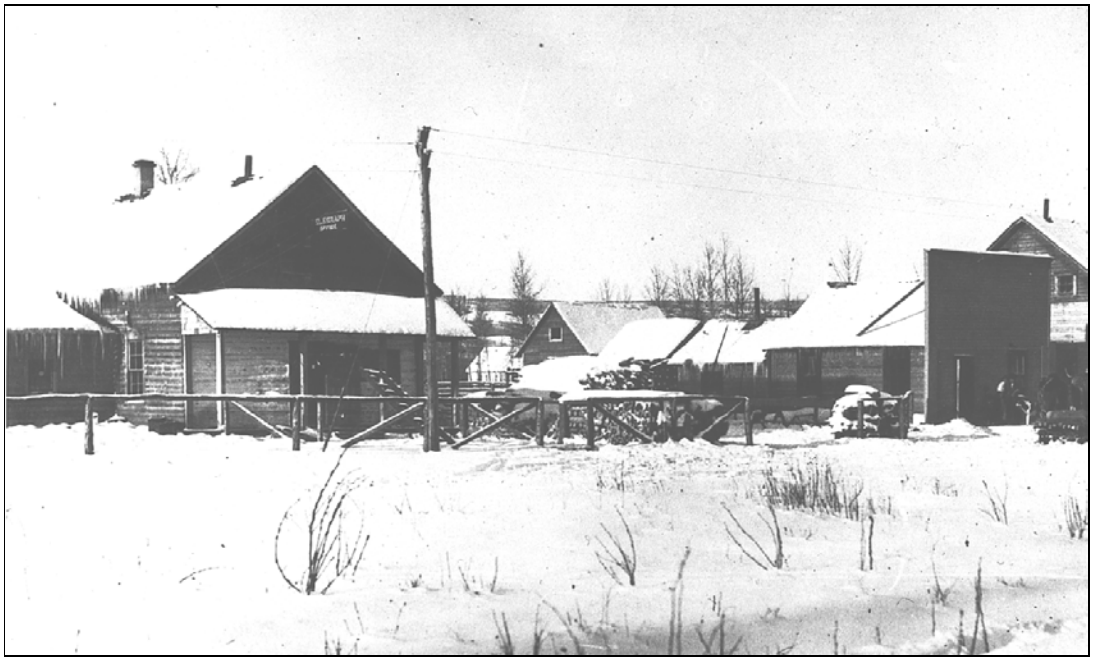


Figure 71. The telegraph station at Peace River, 1914. Data Source: PAA A. 8136.

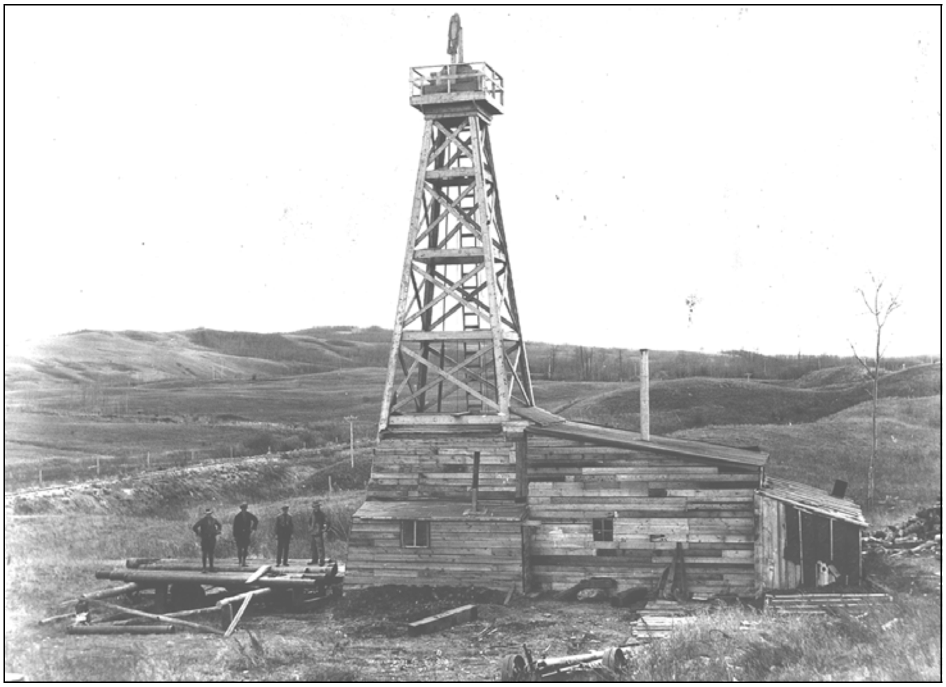
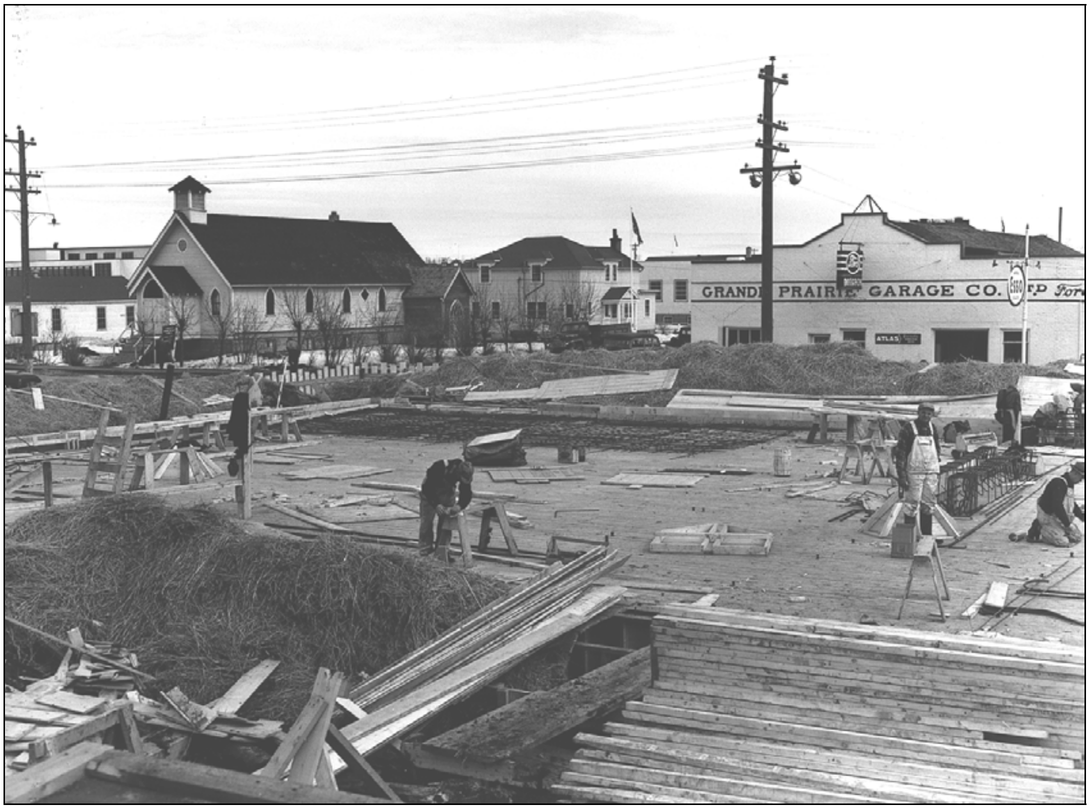


Figure 72. An oil well west of Peace River, late 1920’s. Data Source: PAA P. 5950.


GRANDE PRAIRIE GARAGE CO.
ESSO
ATLAS
Figure 73. Building the new Grande Prairie Post Office, 1952. Data Source: PAA A. 5318.

References

General Cited References

Anonymous. 1995. Demographic characteristics of the Mackenzie region. Prepared by the Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency.

Butler, William Francis, *The Wild North Land* (London: Burns & Oats, 1915)

Campbell, T. 1997. Dene Tha' Traditional Land-Use and Occupancy Study. Published by The Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary.

Cashman, T. 1972. *The singing wires*. Edmonton: Alberta Government Telephones.

Dawson, George, "Report" in Canadian Pacific Railway, *Annual Report*, 1880

Edwards, Oliver Cromwell, *On the North Trail* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1999)

Faraud, Bishop Henri, *Dix-huit Ans Chex Les Savauges* (Paris, Regis, Ruffet & Co., 1866)

Fraser, Simon, "First Journal of Simon Fraser from April 12th to July 18th, 1806" in Canada, Canada Public Archives. *Annual Report*, 1929, Appendix B.

Fumoleau, Rene, *As Long As This Land Shall Last* (Toronto:McClelland & Stewart, 1967)

Gordon, Daniel, *Mountain & Prairie* (London: S.Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1880)

Grouard, Bishop Emile, *Soixante Ans d'Apostat Dans L'Athabaska-MacKenzie* (Winnipeg: La Liberte, 1923).

Krech, Sheperd, *The Subarctic Fur Trade* (Vancouver: Univwersity of British Columbia Press, 1984)

Leonard, D.W. and Lemieux, V.L. 1992. *The lure of the Peace Country* 1872–1914. Detselig Enterprises Ltd..

Leonard, David, *Delayed Frontier* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995) Liberte, 1923)

Mackenzie, Alexander, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (Chicago: the Lakeside Press, 1931)

Maclean, John, *Notes on a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Company,* W.S. Wallace, ed. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932).

Macrae, J.A., "Report on Treaty 8" in Canada, *Sessional Papers*, #27, 1901

Mair, Charles, *Through the MacKenzie Basin* (Toronto, William Briggs, 1908)

Morton, A.S., *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973)

Northern Alberta Development Council 1968. *Report on the Land, Industry and related factors in the Peace River Country, Alberta*.

PFRA Peace River 1997. The cow-calf industry in the Peace Country; An opportunity for expansion. Prepared by PFRA Peace River.

Riddington, Robin, "Beaver" in *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institute, 1981).

Strathern, G. 1988. Alberta Newspapers, 1880-1982. Edmonton; University of Alberta Press, 1988.

Wood, Dallas, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Peace River Fur Trade", MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1968

Horetzky, Charles, *North West Canada* (Ottawa: A.S. Woodburn, 1873)

Mackenzie, Alexander, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1931)

McDonald, Archibald, *Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson Bay to the Pacific* (Ottawa: J.Durie & Son, 1872)

Rich, E.E. ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson In 1820 and 1821* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1938)

Archival Sources Cited

For holdings in the National Archives of Canada (NAC), the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), and the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA).

Bompas, William, "Report on the Diocese of Athabasca", 6 April, 1868, in NAC, M17, C.1/M.7, #97; also Bompas to Secretary, Church Missionary Society, 27 September, 1871, in *ibid.*, C.1/M.8.

Brick, John Gough to Richard Young, 10 February, 1885, PAA, A281/33.

Campbell, Colin, "Journal" for 1835 in 1835-37 in HBCA B.56/a/5, and for 1838, in PAA 74.1/120.

Connally, William, "Journal" for 1821, in HBCA B.115/a/5.

Garrioch, Alfred, HBC account for 1880, PAA, A281/104.

Hardisty, Richard jr., "Report on Peace River", 1891, in HBCA D.25/1.

Harmon, Daniel, "Journal" in NAC MG19, A15, vol.2.

Harvey, George, Journal of 6 June, 1899, in HBCA B.56/a/16.

Hetherington, Sergeant, "Report", June, 1899, in NAC RG 18, vol.128, p.37; also *ibid.*, vol.1395, file 163.

Holmes, Reverend George, to Bishop Young, 25 May, 1899, in PAA A281/149.

King, Cornwallis, report to William Pearce, n.d., UAA, 74.169 9/2/6/3/9.

McDonald, Ewen, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 30 April, 1889, in NAC RG10, vol.3707, File 19,446, pt.3.

McDougall, John to Richard Hardisty, 10 September, 1878, GAA, M477.

Robinson, Henry, to Bishop Young, 10 July 1899 and 19 September, 1899, in PAA A281/247-48.

Ross, Donald, "Report" for 1876 in HBCA D.20/4.

Round, H.B., to C.C. Chipman, 2 October, 1899, in HBCA D.20/69.

Sexsmith, David. Memoir in PAA, D.W. Albright Information File.

Sifton, Clifford, to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 12 May, 1899, in NAC RG10, vol.3848, file 75236-1

Tissier, Father Christophe, to Bishop Faraud, 15 April, 1859, in PAA 91.345 C-28; also Tissier to Bishop Faraud, 15 April, 1869, in PAA 91.345.

Reference Sources

Main sources for Information on General or Specific Aspects of Transportation in Northwestern Alberta:

Bezanson, A.M., *Sodbusters Invade the Peace* (New York: Burgey & Curl, 1954)

Bowes, Gordon, ed., *Peace River Chronicles* (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing, 1963)

Dawson, Carl & Murchie, Robert *Settlement of the Peace River Country* (Toronto: MacMillan Company, 1934)

Eagle, John, "J.D. McArthur and the Peace River Railway", *Alberta History*, Vol.29, #4 (Winter, 1981), pp.33-39.

Edwards, O.C., *On the North Trail* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1999).

Hansen, Evelyn, *Where Go the Boats* (Peace River: Centennial Museum), n.d.)

Hatcher, Colin, *The Northern Alberta Railways*, vols.1&2 (Calgary: British Railway Modelers of North America, 1981 & 1987)

Holtzander, Dale, "The Challenge of the Lesser Slave River", *Alberta History*, Vol.28, #2 (Spring, 1980), pp.33-37.

Irwin, Robert, "The Regional Identity of the Peace River Country", Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Alberta, 1997.

Leonard, David & Lemieux, Victoria, *Lure of the Peace River Country* (Calgary, Detselig Enterprises, 1992)

MacQuarrie, Memoir in PAA, MacQuarrie Information File.

Mair, Charles, *Through the MacKenzie Basin* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908)

Schneider, Ena, *Ribbons of Steel* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1989)

Swanson, Cecil, *The Northern Alberta Railways*, Vol.3 (Calgary: British Railway Modelers of North America, 1998)

Wetherell, Don, "The Economic Development of Northern Alberta", Unpublished Manuscript, Alberta Historic Sites Service, 1999.

Zaslow, Morris, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: MacMillan & Stewart, 1971)

Zaslow, Morris, *The Northward Expansion of Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan & Stewart, 1988)

General References on Human Populations

Alberta Aboriginal Affairs. 1994. Alberta's aboriginal population, 1991: Cities, towns, and villages. Edmonton: Aboriginal Affairs, 1994.

Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism. 1988. Designated historical resources in Alberta. Edmonton: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, 1988. P. 99.

Alberta Municipal Affairs. 1987. Implementation of resolution 18a: Resolution concerning an amendment to the Alberta Act. Edmonton, AB. Alberta Municipal Affairs Dept., 1987.

Alberta Provincial Archives of Alberta Historical Resources Library. 1988. Native peoples of Alberta: A bibliographic guide. Edmonton: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Historical Resources Division, 1988. P. 33.

Anonymous. 1985. A demographic overview of the native populations of Alberta [S.L.]: Alberta Native Affairs; 1985. P. 35.

Anonymous. 1986. A guide to native communities in Alberta. Alberta: [S.N.]; 1986. P. 177.

Anonymous. 1985. A guide to native organizations in Alberta. Alberta: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Native Services Unit, 1985. P. 4, 35.

Brink, J. 1981. Archaeology in Alberta. Edmonton: Alberta Culture, Historical Resources Division, Annual [1981 Copy Described].

Bryan, A.L., G.T. Conaty, D.G. Steele. 1975. A prehistoric Athapaskan campsite in northwestern Alberta. By A.L. Bryan and G. Conaty, with Appendix. Analysis of a human tooth. By D.G. Steele, Edmonton, AB. Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, 1975. Pp. 64-91.

Camponi, L. 1981. Maps of Indian reserves and settlements in the National Map Collection, Volume Ii: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories. Ottawa: National Map Collection, 1981.

Canada: Dept of Regional Industrial Expansion, Alberta: Alberta Tourism and Small Business. 1985. Canada Alberta subsidiary agreement on northern development. Ottawa: Government of Canada, Regional Industrial Expansion; Alberta Tourism and Small Business, Northern Development Branch; 1985. P. 33, 36.

Cole, D., D.G. Reid. 1993. Recreation practices of the Stoney of Alberta and Mohawks of the Six Nation Confederacy. Recreation and First Nation Communities. Journal of Applied Recreation Research. 1993, 18: 2, 103-114.

Dempsey, H.A. 1978. Indian tribes of Alberta. Calgary, AB: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1978. P. 88.

Dion Resource Consulting Services Ltd Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. 1984. Indian lands: Social impact of petroleum activity. Edmonton, Dion Resource Consulting Services; 1984. P. 1 V.

Fedirchuk McCullough & Associates, Canstar Oil Sands Ltd. [Sponsor]. 1982. A prehistoric settlement-subsistence model for northeastern Alberta, Canstar Oil Sands Ltd., Bituminous Sands Leases 33, 92, and 95 : A preliminary statement. Environmental Monograph - Canstar Oil Sands Ltd., 1982- 1; Calgary : Fedirchuk McCullough & Associates Ltd., 1982.; Xi, 181 P. : Ill., Figures, Tables; 28 Cm. Appendix.; References.

Ferreira, D.A. 1992. Oil and Lubicons don't mix: A land claim in northern Alberta in historical perspective. The Canadian Journal of Native Studies -- Vol. 12, No. 1; 1992. P. 1-35.

Fiordo, R. 1985. The soft-spoken way vs. the outspoken way: A bicultural approach to teaching speech communication to native people in Alberta Journal of American Indian Education, 24, No. 3; 1985. P. 35-48

Fort McKay First Nations. 1994. There is still survival out there : A traditional land use and occupancy study of the Fort McKay First Nations. Calgary, AB. Arctic Institute of North America, Canada-Alberta Partnership Agreement in Forestry, 1994. 130 P. : Ill., Folded Maps (1 in Pocket); 28 Cm.; 0-919034-81-0.

Gartrell, J.W., G.K. Jarvis and L. Derksen. 1993. Suicidality among adolescent Alberta Indians. Suicide and life threatening behavior. 23(4): 366-381.

Godel, J.C. 1989. Vitamin E status of northern Canadian newborns: Relation of vitamin E to blood lipids. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 1989, 50: 2, 375-380.

Hîhn, E.O. 1973. Mammal and bird names in the Indian languages of the Lake Athabasca area. Arctic 26:163-171.

Ives, J.W. 1977. A spatial analysis of artifact distribution on a boreal forest archaeological site. Xiii, 162p. (2 Sheets) : Ill. - (Canadian theses on microfiche; 34373) University of Alberta, Dept. of Anthropology, M.A., 1977. By J.W. Ives, Bibliography: P.120-7.

Jenness, D. 1938. The Sarcee Indians of Alberta [Ottawa, Ont.]: [National Museum of Canada]; 1938. P. 98

Justus, R. and J. Simonetta. 1982. Oil Sands, Indians and Sia in northern Alberta. By R. Justus and J. Simonetta, Ann Arbor, MI. Natural Resources Sociology Research Lab, University of Michigan, 1982. Pp. 238-257

Leonard, D. and Whalen, B. 1988. On the North Trail; The Treaty 8 Diary of O.C. Edwards. Published by Alberta Records publication Board, Historical Society of Alberta.

Lewis, H.T. 1978. Traditional uses of fire by Indians in northern Alberta. Current anthropology, 19; 1978. P. 401-402.

Macauley, A.J. and D.A. Boag. 1974. Waterfowl harvest by Slave Indians in northern Alberta. By A.J. Macauley and D.A. Boag. Arctic, 27, No. 1; 1974. P. 15-26.

Magne, M.P. 1988. Archaeology in Alberta. 1987, Edmonton. Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Historical Resources Division, 1988.

McCormack, P.A. and G. Ironside, editors. Canadian Circumpolar Institute, Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion Bicentennial Conference, Edmonton, AB and Canadian Circumpolar Institute. 1993. The uncovered past : Roots of northern Alberta societies. Circumpolar Research Series, No. 3; Edmonton, AB, Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 1993. 186 P. : Ill., Maps; 28 Cm.; 0-919058-85-X. : 0919058868 (Bound); 091905885x (Pbk.)

McCullough, E.J. 1982. Prehistoric cultural dynamics of the Lac La Biche region. Edmonton, AB. Alberta Culture Historical Resources Division, 1982. P. 10, 166.

Metis Association of Alberta, T.A. Ferguson, J.S. Sawchuk and P. Sawchuk. 1981. Metis land rights in Alberta: A political history. By the Metis Association of Alberta and J. Sawchuk, P. Sawchuk, and T. Ferguson. Edmonton, AB. 1981. P. 264.

Moore, P. and A. Wheelock. 1990. Wolverine myths and visions: Dene traditions from northern Alberta. Edited by P. Moor and A. Wheelock, Lincoln, Nebr., University of Nebraska Press, 1990. P. Xxv, 259

O'Reilly, J. 1988. Indian land claims in Quebec and Alberta governments in conflict? Provinces and Indian Nations in Canada, edited by J.A. Long and M. Boldt, in association with L. Little Bear, Toronto. Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Pollock, J.W. 1978. Early cultures of the Clearwater River area. Edmonton, AB. Alberta Culture Historical Resources Division, 1978. P. 8, 163.

Ramrattan, A. and N. Kach. 1985. Native education in Alberta: A bibliography. Compiled by A. Ramrattan and N. Kach. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 12, No. 2; 1985. P. 55-68.

Rycroft. D.J. and Leonard, D.W. 1996. The electoral history of the Peace River Country of Alberta 1905–1993. Published by the Historic Sites Service, Alberta Community Development, Edmonton.

Sata Systems, Inc., Northern Alberta Development Council. 1983. Profiles of regions and small communities in northern Alberta, northeast/central [S.L.]: Northern Alberta Development Council, 1983. P. 246.

Siggner, A.J. and C. Locatelli. 1980. An overview of demographic, social and economic conditions among Alberta's registered Indian population. By A.J. Siggner and C. Locatelli, Ottawa, Ont. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian-Inuit Affairs Program, P.R.E., Research Branch, 1980. [N.P.]

Smith, D.B. 1985. The original peoples of Alberta: Portraits of cultural diversity. H. Palmer and T. Palmer, Editors. Saskatoon, SK. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985. Pp. 50-83.

Stevenson, M.G. 1996. Indigenous knowledge in environmental assessment. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. Arctic, Sep 96, V49, N3, P 278(14) Journal Article.

Stevenson, M.G. 1989. The formation of artifact assemblages at workbench/habitation sites: Models from Peace Point in northern Alberta. American Antiquity, Vol. 50; 1989. P. 63-81.

Stienstra, D. 1984. Provincial power at a premium: Aboriginal rights, Alberta and the Constitution. Edmonton, [S.N.]; 1984. P. 16.

Vaisanen, R.A., O. Jarvinen and P. Rauhala. 1986. How are extensive, human-caused habitat alterations expressed on the scale of local bird populations in boreal forests? Ornis Scandinavica, 17, 282-292.

Wein, E.E., J.H. Sabry and F.T. Evers. 1991. Food consumption patterns and use of country food by native Canadians near Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada. Arctic 44(3): 196-205.

Wein, E.E., M.I. Gee and Z.J. Hawrysh. 1992. Food consumption patterns of native school children and mothers in northern Alberta. Journal of the Canadian Dietetic Association. 1992, 53: 4, 267-273.

Wonders, W.C. 1983. Far corner of the strange empire: Central Alberta on the eve of homestead settlement. Great Plains Quarterly, 3, No. 2; 1983. P. 92-108.

Young, D. and G.C. Nicks. 1991. Birchbark industry and brain tanning in the central Canadian Subarctic. Arctic Anthropology, Vol. 28, No. 1; 1991. P. 110-123.

Zawadiuk, E.R. 1990. Historical look at foods eaten by native people in northeastern Alberta in the early 1900’s. Canadian Home Economics Journal. 1990, 40: 2, 64-65.