

Historic homes open at North Peace Museum

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FORT ST. JOHN – A historic homestead and government building have been brought back to its former glory and its doors are now open for the public at the North Peace Museum.

The museum hosted a ribbon-cutting cer-

emony on Sept. 7 with special guests Harold Billings and Alene Peck.

Billings worked for the BC provincial police and the RCMP as well as a safety inspector before retiring in 1985. He was the honoured guest for the opening of a B.C. government building that was used twice as a jail. The building was fully renovated with police barracks, a kitchen and exhibits of past officers who served the area.

It took over a decade to finish the police barracks. It was renovated and moved several times before it was fully completed for viewing at the museum.

The other site was the Paddy Carroll and Peck cabin. It once belonged to Peck, the second special guest.

It was originally built in the 1940s by Paddy Carroll, who sold it to the Pecks 10 years later.

The cabin had then been rented to different couples, but always remained on the Peck's land. In 2004 the Peck's sold the property to Gene McGregor who donated the cabin to the North Peace Historical Society.

Heather Longworth, the North Peace Museum curator said the two buildings were renovated through grants from the Regional District.

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HISTORY FOR THE FIRST TIME

DUP



MATT PREPOST PHOTO

Amanda Dittus and son Ethan, 4, and daughter Alina, 2, peer through the displays at the North Peace Museum in Fort St. John Thursday afternoon. The North Peace Historical Society celebrated its 50th anniversary Thursday with cake and free admission

SEPT 30, 2013

Dup

Celebrating 50 years of preserving history

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FORT ST. JOHN – On Sept. 26, 1963 a society was formed, its purpose was to preserve the history of the North Peace.

Exactly 50 years later and the society's dedication hasn't wavered, on Sept. 26 the North Peace Historical Society celebrated another year in the community.

Over the last five decades the NPHS constructed a museum, which can be found in a red building along 100 Street; expanded the museum, so it can hold gatherings and travelling exhibits; and added on to its outdoor structures, like two recently modified home-steads that were revealed last month.

NPHS' current president Evelyn Sim is proud of how far the Society has come. She considers the biggest milestone for the Society is when they moved into the museum 30 years ago. Story continued on Page 14.

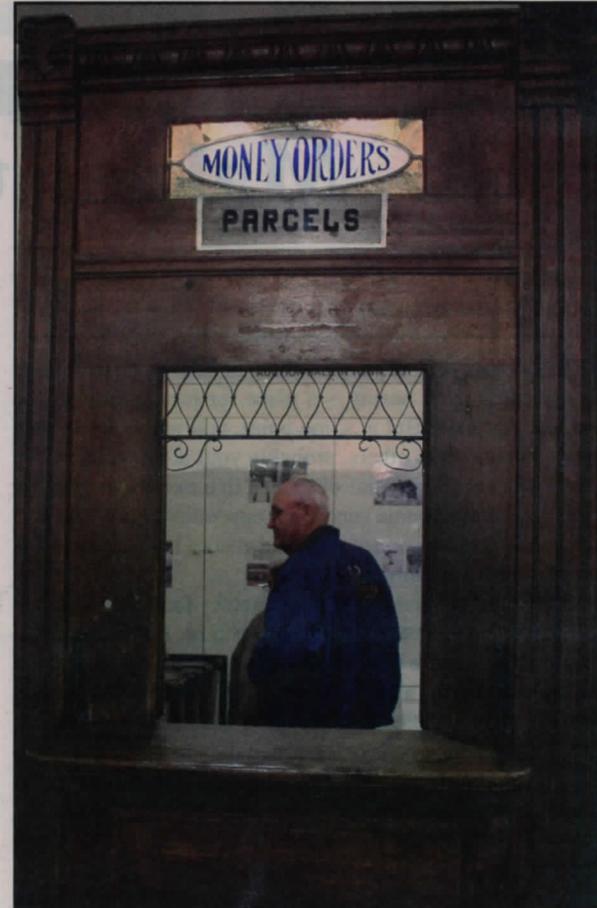


Photo Credit *Kyla Corpuz*
HANS MYHRE BROWSES THE MONEY ORDER EXHIBIT AT THE NORTH PEACE MUSEUM ON SEPT. 26. MYHRE IS A LONG TIME RESIDENT OF FORT ST. JOHN AND A FORMER MEMBER OF THE NORTH PEACE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WHICH CELEBRATED ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY.

50 years history

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“They managed to have this museum erected and have all these artifacts in a good, solid building ... [They’ve] kept things alive and kept a few newspaper articles and other ways of publicizing what went on in the pioneer days,” explained Hans Myhre, who was a former NPHS director. “I’ve been able to be a part of

trying to preserve the history of the area, trying to help them get artifacts.”

Myhre came to Fort St. John in 1929 from Saskatchewan. He attended the Society’s 50-year celebration with Elsie Myhre and Chrisse Bell, all of them have been living in the Peace for quite some time.

Elsie was born in Stoddart Creek in 1931 and Bell was a war bride from Scotland.

If it wasn’t for the NPSH, the North Peace’s history might have been lost, said Hans.

“If it isn’t preserved, it’ll just disappear and end up in the garbage and thrown away, and younger people wouldn’t see how people did things in the earlier days.”



Photo Credit *Kyla Corpuz*

LOIS STROME AND NPHS PRESIDENT EVELYN SIM CELEBRATE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY ON SEPT. 26.

Building a piece of the past

KATIE MAXIMICK
STAFF WRITER

It was quite the historical day for both Fort St. John and Peace Region when two restored buildings were officially open to the public on Saturday at the Fort St. John North Peace Museum.

The B.C. Provincial Police Barracks and the Paddy Carroll/Peck Cabin were re-introduced to members of the public, while city councillors, MLA Bob Zimmer, members of the RCMP, former residents of the Carroll/Peck cabin and restoration workers were all present at the opening Saturday afternoon.

"It's a wonderful part of our history," says Heather Longworth, curator and manager of the Fort St. John North Peace Museum.

"[The B.C. provincial Police Barracks] is actually, as far as we know, the oldest building in the region, so it's neat to have two buildings that show how people lived in our past."

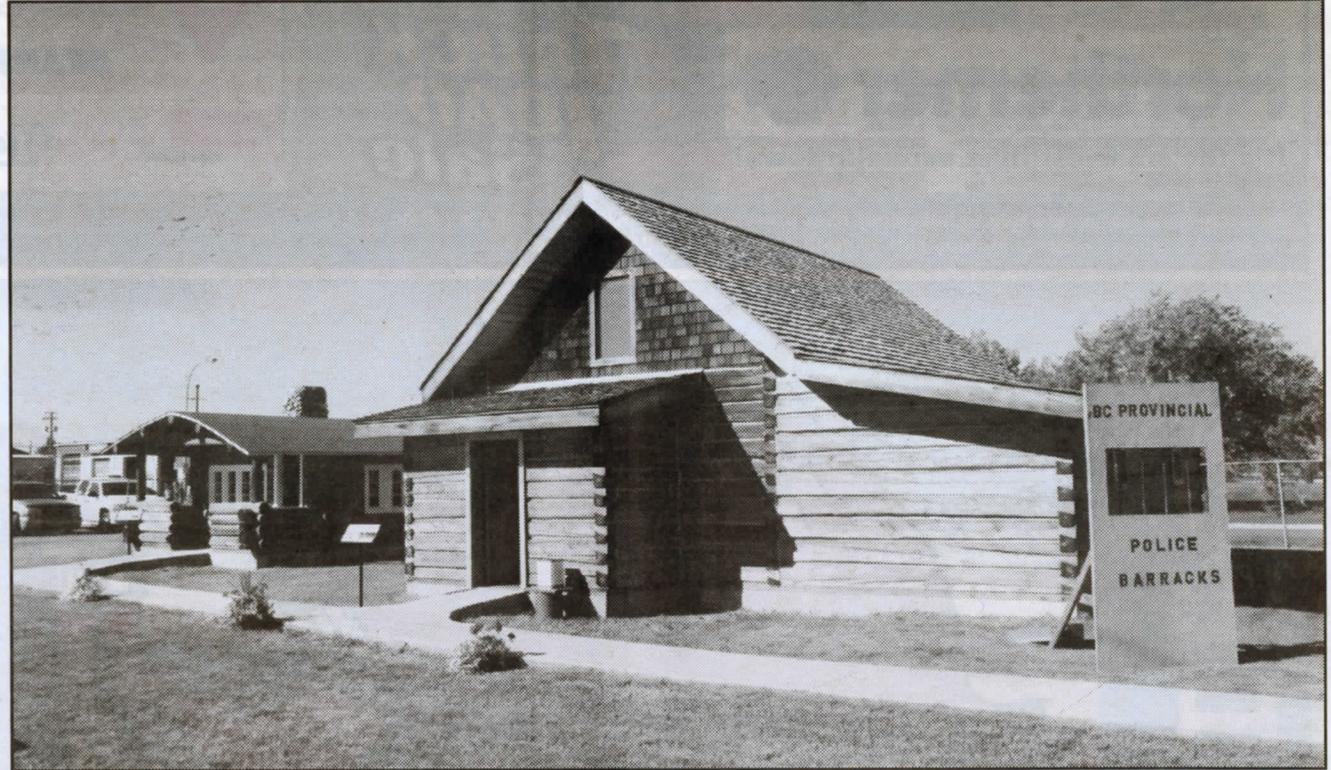
The police barracks was built in 1909 and originally located on the south side of the Peace River across from the 100th

Street lookout. There it was first lived in by Tom Jamieson of Scotland for three years before it was taken over by another police officer.

"It's been 11 years in the restoration process," Longworth explained. "This housed police officers from 1909 to 1921. It was the barracks but also the government building. This is where you came to register your land claims, court cases were held here, if you wanted a mining claim this is where you came, and it was also the early telegraph office with a telephone line as well."

The restored two-storey building shows how police officers lived in the early twentieth century. Inside you can find official documents, photographs, artifacts and antiques, and even a two-person jail cell. Although the upstairs where the police officers slept is roped off, it's easy to step back in time while stepping into the old building.

Set beside the police barracks is the Paddy Carroll/Peck Cabin, a small, one-room cabin that was built in the 1940s and used up until the 1990s. Don and Arlene Peck



KATIE MAXIMICK PHOTO

The Fort St. John North Peace Museum celebrated the opening of two newly restored buildings on Saturday afternoon, the B.C. Provincial Police Barracks and the Paddy Carroll/Peck Cabin. The police barracks, above, is believed to be the oldest building in the Peace Region at 104 years old.

bought the cabin in the 1950s and opened it as a trading store which is how it stayed for decades.

"The Peck family turned it into a fur-trade store," Longworth said. "They sold furs, First Nations'

handicrafts, that sort of thing, and it was operated until the 1990s. The property was then sold to Bring It Welding and they donated it here."

The Peck family also played a big role in pro-

viding funds to restore the cabin, and the Peace River Regional District helped finalized the restoration of both buildings by providing funds for the final stages in 2012.

After a long restoration

process, both buildings are now accessible to the public, ready to reveal what it was like to live in the Peace Region over 100 years ago and let imaginations soar.