

Steve Andrishak: Museum News



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All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Elk Point Historical Society. The Society also accepts advertising for its web site and donations to pay for its information gathering and publishing of local history.



In 2013 Steve Andrishak requested that I, Marvin Bjornstad, make a bound book out of a collection of articles he had on his museum in Elk Point and I did in 1914. I only printed one copy which Steve treasured. It was lost and I printed Steve a second copy. After Steve's passing on February 25, 2017, the Andrishak family has given the Elk Point Historical Society permission to make it available in PDF format so interested history buffs can make their own copy of the work.

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A Life of Collecting

By Billie Milholland

Submitted to the Western Producer May 1989

In 1927, not long after the railway came to Elk Point, when the new business section of town was bustling with activity, a six-year-old entrepreneur discovered the fascination of collecting. Model T Ford keys were attractive looking items, big, solid brass and never removed from the ignition in those days. It was not too difficult for an enterprising young fellow to collect 20 or so in an afternoon.

"And I've been collecting ever since." laughs Steve Andrishak, owner and proprietor of the Fort George Museum in Elk Point. "I wasn't the most popular boy in town that day," he says "but, I was certainly the most sought after."

He was encouraged to change his strategy somewhat after that, but the collecting bug had bit, and by 1952 when Steve officially opened what he called the Pioneer Museum, he had become well known for his passion. When he discovered that there were many museums in Alberta and Saskatchewan named after the early settlers, he changed the name of his museum to Fort George in honor of a North West Company Fort site on the North

Saskatchewan River nearby. It was at that fort site, long before collecting artifacts by the general public became illegal, that Steve discovered the kind of treasure that every collector dreams of. Fourteen inches beneath the surface of the ground he found a cache of fur trading goods, probably left behind when the fort was abandoned in the early 1800's. Over 200 identifiable artifacts were added to his collection from that breathtaking find.

"The fur traders hid this, intending to come back for it, but I beat them to it." he jokes.

Steve Andrishak's good humor and his fast-paced jokes do not hide the fact that he is still a serious collector today, after over 60 years of combing the countryside for collectibles. Garage sales, antique auctions, old dump sites; no place is too big or small to look. Now that Steve is retired, he divides his time between restoring the things he finds that are in poor repair and traveling around looking for treasures. He says that his biggest thrill is to revive something that other people have discarded as worthless. One of his favorite pieces is a unique, squatty cast iron stove that he found half buried and corroded. He patiently combed the site until he retrieved all the pieces except one small door, then painstakingly cleaned everything and reassembled the odd-looking thing. The stamp on the warming oven reads Record Foundry, 1902, Star Machine Co. Moncton N.B.

From the small display building open to the public in 1952 Steve has expanded over the years to three additional buildings in order to display his continually expanding collection. The building that he calls The Elk Point Trading Post is designed to show what a small general store might have looked like in the early 1900's. It is dedicated to the memory of his father, William Andrishak, who was one of the early merchants in Elk Point. In fact, his store used to be on a site right across the road from where Steve's museums are now. The

Trading Post is well stocked with tins and bottles of everything from ginger beer to plug tobacco. He has dried roots and pulses in glass jars and coyote and fox skins on the wall beside washtubs and patent medicines. Old calendars, brochures from early agricultural fairs, extravagant advertisements aimed to entice settlers to Canada, and World War 1 sheet music fill in any empty wall space.

Next to the General Store is a building that Steve uses to repair and restore items, but it is more than a workshop. The walls are lined with an extensive bottle collection, Reader's Digests back to 1922, seashells of every sort and drawers of antique car parts. There is a crystal radio set from 1915 sitting on a shelf beside souvenir pocketknives, one with Babe Ruth written on the handle and one commemorating the 1939 Royal Visit.

The building next to that, houses a skate blade collection, Edison phonograph cylinders, cast iron heaters and hundreds of old photographs, including a picture taken in 1873 of the North West mounted Police march from Fort Garry to establish Fort Macleod. There is a felt banner on the wall commemorating the World Championship fight between Jack Dempsey and Tommy Gibbons in Shelby, Montana, July 4, 1923 and a little yellowed copy of The Edmonton Bulletin 1680. The phrase...And items too numerous to mention...was invented for the delightful assortment of memorabilia that Steve has gathered over the years.

His original building, still houses some of his oldest artifacts, including a 1903 Model A Ford, handwritten letters by John A. MacDonald and fur trade era items. He has glass cases containing stuffed birds of nearly every local species, bird eggs, a 19th century painting by the Canadian Artist George Baxter of Queen Victoria's Coronation. The items in this building are not limited to Canadian content. There is an Arabian Matchlock Gun made in the late 1600's, African masks and shields, battle axes from India and a pair of tiny slippers that once covered the bound feet of a Chinese woman.

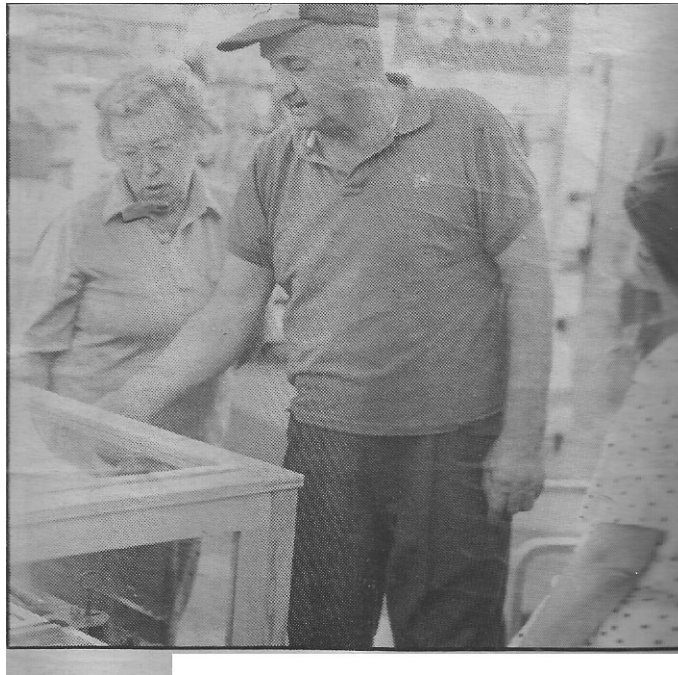
There is always a certain amount of controversy surrounding a private collector in an age when so much of our history is in the public domain. There are people who feel, that despite the years and money spent in assembling such a remarkable' collection, that Steve should now turn everything over to the Government for proper cataloguing and display in a Provincial Museum. Steve feels hurt by that kind of criticism and is quick to point out that many more people have access to his collection right where it is than would be able to enjoy it in a warehouse in Edmonton. There is also the fact that most of his collection has been gathered within a fifty-mile radius to where it is now displayed and he feels that this is important. His museum is his life's work and he is far from finished what he started, that day in 1927 when he was attracted to the shine of brass car keys.

Thanks, Mr. Andrishak

THE ELK POINT REVIEW, TUES., JULY 7, 1992

Elk Point Public Library Board and staff would like to thank collector Steve Andrishak for displaying his original fur trade artifacts in the Library on June 25 and 26. A special showing to commemorate the Bicentennial of Fort George - Buckingham House was held on Thursday evening. Refreshments were served. Visitors who had arrived early for the official opening of the Interpretive Centre were especially impressed with the extensive collection of original items from the two fort sites. Thank you, Steve, we would love to display some of your other collection.

Steve Andrishak has kindly offered to display his collection of Christmas and New Year's cards in the show cabinets in the library. The cards date back to the turn of the century and are very different from what we send now. Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to see this portion of Steve Andrishak's museum collection.



Discussing relics

Mary Kettenbach of Rockyford listens attentively as Steve Andrishak discusses some of the artifacts at Elk Point Public Library last week. The cases which has a large collection of arrowheads and other utensils

The Interactive Library

One project leads to another. The displaying of Steve Andrishak's artifacts prompted the construction of two new display cabinets. Matching funds from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the local Legion were raised and now the locally crafted cabinets are a permanent feature at the library. Who can guess how many children will be inspired by the changing displays?

Showing Andrishak's collection was one of the little touches that makes the Elk Point Library so important to the community, like the Ukrainian Dance Dolls now on display. "They're dedicated to two young dancers who died in a tragic highway accident," explains Mayner. "Members of the Elk Point & District Ukrainian Dance Club used donations in the children's memory to dress the five large dolls in traditional costumes.

The Best of the Past at Pioneer Museum



RARE AS THEY COME - Steve Andrishak proudly displays his 1903 Ford car, one of about 50 still in existence world-wide. The ancient auto is among the countless rare and interesting displays to be seen at Andrishak's Pioneer Museum, Highway 41 and 50 Avenue, Elk Point.

A new sign has appeared on the lawn of one of Elk Point's landmarks. "Pioneer Museum" is the new, yet old, name for Steve Andrishak's incredible collection of antiques, memorabilia and curiosities from around the world, which has for many years been known as Fort George Museum. "Pioneer Museum" was, however, Andrishak's original name for his massive display, and he decided to revert to this when his museum began to get numerous calls belonging to the Fort George - Buckingham House Interpretive Centre.

Three buildings on the site, across Highway 41 from the Tourist Information Centre in Elk Point, house everything from a mammoth's tooth and a bottle of sand from the Sahara Desert to a 1928 slot machine, a 1898 calendar and a grain cradle used in the 1907 harvest on newly broken land in the Elk Point area.

Andrishak's General Store, where the genial proprietor jokes that he "hasn't made a sale in years," contains shelf after shelf of cans and jars one could have seen half a century back in Grandma's pantry. All the other necessities and nice ties of pioneer life - china dishes, a carpet sweeper, toys, cameras, a most unusual gear-driven churn and a wooden washing machine, not to mention a wide variety of implement seats, are right there on the shelves. Need to order your garden seeds? There are seed catalogues from the 1920s, right alongside the advertising literature for steam tractors.

A long building is divided two sections. The first is the workshop where Andrishak does restoration work on pieces for his collection. This area also houses shelf after shelf of bottles, from tiny perfume bottles to large and sometimes ornately patterned containers. A fine collection of shells from many faraway shores fills another corner. A massive roll-top desk and a rocking chair rumored to have had a famous owner sit cheek by-jowl to shelves containing 72 years of Reader's Digests, from the first issue ever printed right up to the current date.

The second section of that building is dominated by stoves, many of them with gleaming nickel trim. One cook stove was found by digging up, piece by painstaking piece, portions found by a metal detector. Gramophones, an organ, magazines dating back to the 1920s, and catalogues of the same vintage give a glimpse of leisure time suits in days gone by. Andrishak plans to display his collection of hub caps, gas ration books and other motoring memorabilia at the Elk Point Auto Club 41.

The final building houses Andrishak's largest item, and one which has been admired by many at previous Auto Club shows: his 1903 Ford car, one of 1708 made of Henry Ford's first production model. Only about 50 of these machines are left in the world. Beside it is the unusual 'Penny-Farthing' bicycle, with a huge wheel and a small wheel, while over and surrounding both are a collection of mounted wildlife heads. This building also is home for the artifacts found many years ago at the fur trading fort sites and Frog Lake massacre site, as well as arrowheads, Hudson's Bay axes and a flint fishhook from days long past.

Andrishak's Pioneer Museum is open for morning, afternoon and evening tours by appointment only. Please phone 724-3654.

Meteorite



ELK POINT — A recent visitor to the Fort George Museum from the National Museum, Ottawa, was most interested in this item, which he feels could well be a meteorite. It has these

distinctive qualities: is dark grey and black in color, has pit marks resembling a thumb imprint, and has slight magnetic properties. Steve has had it in his museum for about ten years.



Museum operator Steve Andrishak
... he started collecting as a boy

Our Collector of The Month - Steve Andrishak

Edmonton Journal, July 16, 1984

ELK POINT - One man's lifelong love has given this town a private museum housing about 12,000 antiques and artifacts.

The tourist attraction known as Fort George Museum represents a life's collection by Steve Andrishak, 66, operator of the local theatre for more than 42 years. A garage and three other buildings house the collection in this thriving oil exploration town about 225 km northeast of Edmonton.

"I've been collecting ever since I was a young guy," says Andrishak. "I was very interested in Indian stuff. I went looking for arrowheads. I'm always on the lookout for stuff. If I can get hold of something, I'll buy it."

"I don't know why a guy does it really. Collecting is like a disease. You get started and you never know when to quit. A lot of people think you're a nut for doing it. It's my way of getting a kick out of life, I guess."

About 35,000 people have signed his museum guest books since 1952. Today, about 1,000 sign annually - many of them busloads of touring schoolchildren.'

Andrishak's display of fur trade artifacts numbers about 10,000 items. He dug and sifted over 12 years from the ruins of nearby old Fort George and Buckingham House trading posts. He also excavated Fort De L'Isle, Fort Vermilion, and the 1885 Massacre site.

Indian artifacts are the second biggest part of his collection, and then pioneer antiques.

Andrishak says it's tough to run a private museum, which he nearly lost to fire three years ago. He's bitter about having to pay the full cost, when it's open to the public.

"I've given up trying to get any kind of help from the town or the (Alberta) government. They know you're here and expect you to put people through, but there's no thanks for it. All I get is taxes."

He built a country general-store museum a few years ago in memory of his father who opened a store here about 1925. Recreating the old country store atmosphere, it contains about 2,500 exhibits and antiques. The shelves are lined with old jam, tobacco, and peanut butter tins up to 60 years old.

There are 30 old 1900 to 1920 Edison cylinder phonographs, 30 old restored cast-iron stoves, and many hand-wound 1920's wooden toys.

"Most of this stuff was either thrown out, or people had no use for it. It seems different now - everybody's collecting something."

A big prize is a 1903 Model A Ford - the first model produced by Ford Motor Co. and one of just 1,708 made in its founding year. The eight-horsepower, chain-driven auto is one of about five left in Canada and 70 in the world and has prompted a letter of praise from Henry Ford.

Andrishak also owns a nearly two-metre high 1871 penny farthing English bicycle. He has about 90 antique pistols and rifles such as flintlocks, blunderbusses, and muzzle-loaders. The earliest is a 250-year-old matchlock rifle.

He has collections of old lamps, books, daggers, and British coins from every English monarch back to Queen Elizabeth I. He has early powder horns, a 1750 grandfather clock, an 1865 buffalo and steer horn chair, old chain-driven pocket watches wound by a key.

There are Indian stone hammers, axes, battle-axes, and Alberta flint spear points 8,000 to 10,000 years old. He's got a music box more than 100 years old which still plays church music.

Andrishak has collected about 800 stone and flint arrowheads since boyhood, but still prowls the fields looking for more.

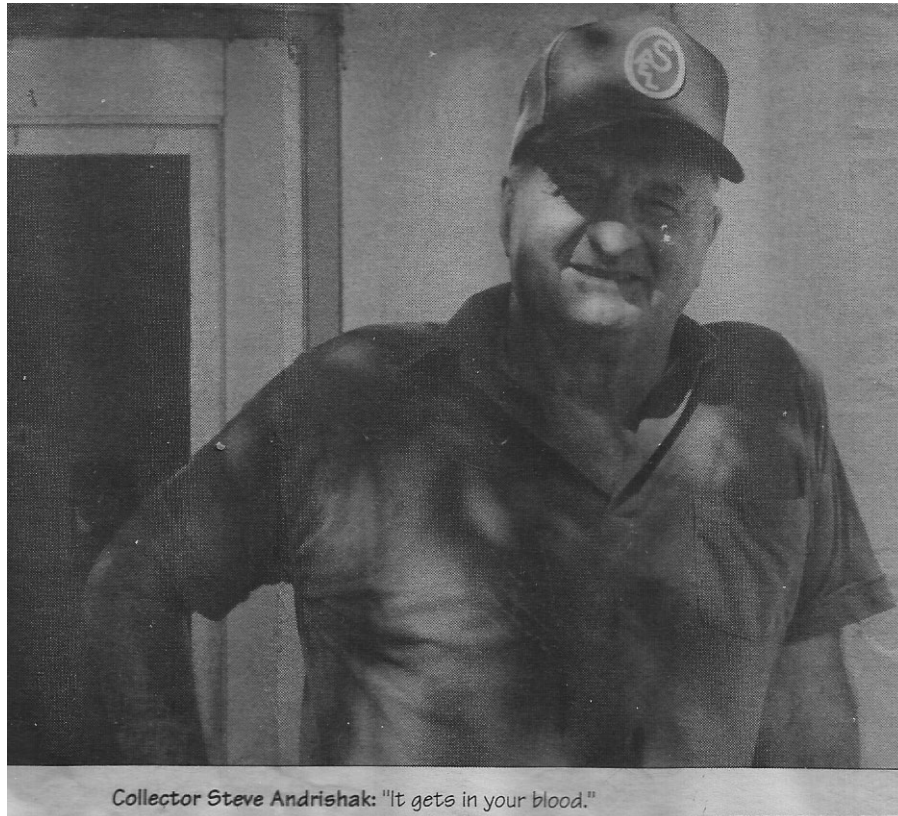
"I think I'll be doing this until the day I die. I've willed it to the family. My boys are fairly interested in it. I hope they carry on after I'm gone."

This article, by Bob Gitmouk, appeared in the Edmonton Journal, July 16/84.

(Ed.)

Preserving Cultural Links

Elk Point



Collector Steve Andrishak: "It gets in your blood."

Elk Point lays 11 km northeast from the site of the trading posts, two kilometers north from the Saskatchewan River, the watery highway that determined much of Western Canadian history. The district was first surveyed in 1885 and a town site registered in 1927. It was a village until 1938. Although the fur trading posts have always been a part of local legend and known by historians and archeologists.

Unfortunately, in these modern times, the vitality of the stories usually diminishes with each generation. And with the memories the relics: the furniture, the signs, the toys, the tools and the implements. Some fortunate communities have in their midst a dedicated soul who seems inexorably bound to keeping the past from slipping away. Elk Point is one such fortunate community.

Sheltered on a treed corner down the hill from the old part of town, lies what locals call the Fort George Museum: four small buildings housing a collection of artifacts, local and exotic;-gathered through the years by Steve Andrishak. Once the owner of the town cinema Andrishak closed the movie house when "someone called to what time the show started, and I replied: when you get here." But he's never retired from collecting. "It gets in your blood," he admits.

As sole proprietor and curator of the private museum, he's shared his collection with thousands of people. Guest books spanning more than four decades testify to visitors from around the world. The museum has been kept open through small change left in the donation plate, and through the tenacity of one man, who, though often viewed as eccentric, opened his doors to anyone who shared his love of old things.

The walls of one building are lined with shelves and handmade display cases; tables line the centre of the room. Here is displayed hide scrapers fashioned from bone and stone, beaded belts, stone pipes with primitive designs, trade goods like buttons- and axe heads, and other quirky items such as a chair fashioned from buffalo horns.

Inside another building, arranged to resemble a general store, there's old tins and jars, games, and toys: like a little monkey on a swing, called Gombo, who might have inspired Dr. Seus.

Sadly, the museum is now closed. Its future, uncertain. One cold day in November last year, someone broke into a building and stole some rifles and several coins. The doors now each have several locks and are secured with metal bars from the inside. Andrishak is cautious of strangers. His friends say he is like a "bird much shot over". He recently loaned a small portion of his Fort George collection for display at Elk Point Library, but it wasn't easy for him.

"Sometimes I'd miss little things," he explains. "A couple of collector types would come in and one would keep me busy while the other pocketed something. But this robbery. I was sleeping a wall away. I don't hear so well anymore. What would have happened if I'd woke and confronted the thief? Still frightens me."

Some locals are worried that the museum will never reopen, that the collection might someday be auctioned, or worse, end up south of the Alberta border. As a child, Billie Milholland lived next door to the museum. She remembers: "Us older kids used to go out on digs with Steve. Sometimes we'd hunt for old bottles or jars. Other times arrowheads. It was such a privilege when he'd let one of us hold the • filter screen. He gets full credit for my interest in history. Some method must be found to keep his collection together," continues Milholland, now executive director of Elk Point's Bicentennial Society. "it's a project I intend to pursue."

Province Must Buy Artifacts

You can't put a price on a nation's heritage. But that's what an Elk Point man is trying to do and the province should be doing everything it can to facilitate the process.

Eighty-three-year-old Steve Andrishak has spent a lifetime collecting rare and significant artifacts from Alberta's past, including items from two trading posts built in 1792 and spent casings, uniform buttons and other artifacts from the Frog Lake massacre that was part of the Riel Rebellion of 1885. He estimates the value of his collection at \$1 million.

While the provincial museum has catalogued his collection, the government has twice refused to buy it from him. And both the province and the town of Elk Point have refused Andrishak's repeated requests for financial help to operate his private museum.

Andrishak is adamant that he will not donate his collection to either the province or the town, which is considering building a public museum to house it. Instead, he says he'll leave the artifacts to his five children to do as they see fit. Governments cannot allow such an important piece of provincial and national history to be divided up and scattered to the winds.

When Wetaskiwin car dealer Stan Reynolds approached the province with an offer to donate his collection of vintage cars and farm equipment if the government would build a museum to house it, the province agreed. When Alberta's Metis community decided to build a \$15-million museum at Victoria Settlement to celebrate their rich history, the province provided a \$1-million grant.

The Alberta government should negotiate with Andrishak to reach a fair price for his collection. The artifacts need to be displayed in a public place where all Albertans can view and learn about their heritage.

Let's rescue Alberta artifacts before it's too late

JOHN LUCAS, THE JOURNAL



Steve Andrishak in his private museum in Elk Point.

As a former chairman of the Alberta Historical Foundation and the Alberta Historical Sites Board, I was delighted to learn that Steve Andrishak of Elk Point is still actively engaged in seeking a permanent home for this important collection ("Archeological gold mine left untapped," July 2). Several years ago, I took two senior provincial government ministers to view the collection. Unfortunately, no negotiations resulted. The collection covers the history of interaction between the aboriginal people and early fur traders many years before Alberta became a province. As many artifacts are "one of a kind," it is essential they be kept together in a museum setting, with proper security. There is no doubt it would be a great loss to the people of Alberta if this collection were to disappear into private hands. An ideal location would be at Buckingham House, close to Elk Point. The time to act is now.

Brian Edwards, Edmonton

Archeological Gold Mine Left Untapped

JAC MacDONALD

Journal Staff Writer

ELK POINT

Elk Point resident Steve Andrishak has been collecting rare and historically significant artifacts for decades. He's set up his own museum, in fact. But he's getting on in years and needs financial assistance to preserve his collection. He's asked for help from the province and Elk Point, but both have refused his requests

Steve Andrishak loves to collect things: old medicine bottles, Indian arrowheads, trade beads, fur-trade muskets, and letters from dead presidents and prime ministers such as Grover Cleveland and Sir John A. Macdonald.

It's admittedly an eclectic collection, a lifetime's work encompassing early gasoline pumps and signs, pioneer wood stoves, calendars and phonographs. It spills through four homemade buildings in the town of Elk Point in northeastern Alberta.

Andrishak's private Pioneer Museum houses some rare and historically significant artifacts from the earliest years of recorded history in this province. Artifacts from nearby Fort George, built by the North West Co., and Buckingham House, built by the Hudson's Bay Co., are prizes of his gathering instinct. The two forts, both built in 1792, were the second fur-trading posts established in Alberta. There are also mementoes from the Frog Lake Massacre, further east, where seven white settlers and two Oblate priests died in 1885 at the hands of the Cree.

The shelves in one building don't hold up quite like they used to do, but there's no doubt this is an extraordinarily unexpected treasure in a town of just 1,400. Alberta parkland archeologist Heinz Pyszczyk says Andrishak's entire collection is one of a kind. "As a fur trade archeologist, I feel a lot of Mr. Andrishak's fur trade collection is very valuable. There are a lot of pieces he has you just do not find anywhere else," Pyszczyk says.

Forty years running the movie theatre in Elk Point have left Andrishak, an 83-year-old widower, deaf in one ear, with 40-per-cent hearing in the other. He had a stroke last year; his knees are bad and he needs his cane to get around. But he went out after arrowheads a few weeks ago and still displays an undiminished compulsion to collect. Still, as Andrishak ages, the future of his collection keeps coming up.

"The fear is it's going to leave the community," says Ray Danyluk, MLA for Lac La Biche-St. Paul. "It's an excellent collection. It combines the historic fur trading era and a private collection of agricultural automotive and antique items." Danyluk wants the province to help put Andrishak's artifacts in a museum in Elk Point where they could draw visitors to the picturesque town.

Done right, Andrishak's collection could do for Elk Point what Stan Reynolds' automotive collection has done for Wetaskiwin — put it on the map and bring in tourists and business, Elk Point residents say. Despite the historic legacy of the forts, and the tourism potential, the province has twice turned down Danyluk's requests to purchase Andrishak's historic mementoes. Yet the artifacts were important enough to be catalogued by the provincial museum years ago, Pyszczyk says.

"Records of the North West Co. are very scarce, so what we know mostly is from the archeological record. The artifacts themselves are very valuable in giving a glimpse of the fur trade," says Pyszczyk.

They come from significant forts which built the first York boats in Western Canada and hosted famous explorer and cartographer David Thompson in 1793-94 and again in 1799, he says. Few people in Alberta found any value in Andrishak's interests for years. The Alberta government didn't protect historic sites from private collectors until proclaiming the Historical Resources Act in 1972.

Andrishak estimates the value of his life's passion at about \$1 million but says there's no way of really knowing unless a certified appraiser evaluates everything. But that would cost about \$10,000 to \$15,000 - --- not an expense he'll be able to afford on his pension. Andrishak vows he'll never hand his life's work over to either the province or to the town of Elk Point. Despite his requests for funding during 50 years of operating his private museum, neither level of government provided support. The place stayed afloat through visitor donations, earnings from the movie theatre and, since then, whatever he could spare from his pension.

The Elk Point and District Cultural Society wants to build a \$10 million centennial building that would include a conference centre, offices, an auditorium and a museum that would exhibit the collection. But Andrishak won't give away his life's work to anybody but his family.

"It's left to my family. If they can sell it, fine, sell it. It won't hurt me because I'll be gone and I won't know the difference," Andrishak says.

His three daughters, two sons and their families are scattered from Elk Point to Vancouver Island. None have the financial resources to purchase the others' interest in his collection, says daughter Carole Rae.

“They think you're going to die and leave it to them.

I say the hell with that.”

Steve Andrishak on the provincial government getting his collection

Andrishak's failing health means the artifacts are seen by fewer and fewer people. At one time about 1,000 people a year would visit his museum, totalling about 45,000 since 1952, he says, including former lieutenant-governor Grant MacEwan.

Today some in Elk Point draw a blank about Andrishak's museum, including a waitress and her customers at a pizza parlour across the street. Others haven't visited for years.

Collector's Museum of Marvels

By BILLIE MILHOLLAND

Keys to a Model T Ford were the lure that hooked a six-year-old entrepreneur into a lifetime fascination with collecting. In 1927, not long after the railway came to Elk Point, Alberta, when the new business section of town was bustling with activity, the attractive looking, big, solid brass keys were never removed from the ignition. It was not too difficult for an enterprising young fellow to collect 20 or so in an afternoon.

"And I've been collecting ever since," laughs Steve Andrishak, owner and proprietor of the Fort George Museum in Elk Point. "I wasn't the most popular boy in town that day but I was certainly the most sought after."

Andrishak was encouraged to change his strategy after that, but the collecting bug had bit. By 1952, when Andrishak officially opened what he called the Pioneer Museum, he had become well-known for his passion. When he discovered that there were many museums in Alberta and Saskatchewan named after the early settlers, he changed the name of his museum to Fort George in honor of a North West Company fort site on the nearby North Saskatchewan River. It was at that fort site, long before collecting artifacts by the general public became illegal, that Andrishak discovered the kind of treasure every collector dreams of. Fourteen inches beneath the surface of the ground he found a cache of fur trading goods, probably left behind when the fort was abandoned in the early 1800s. More than 200 identifiable artifacts were added to his collection from that breathtaking find.

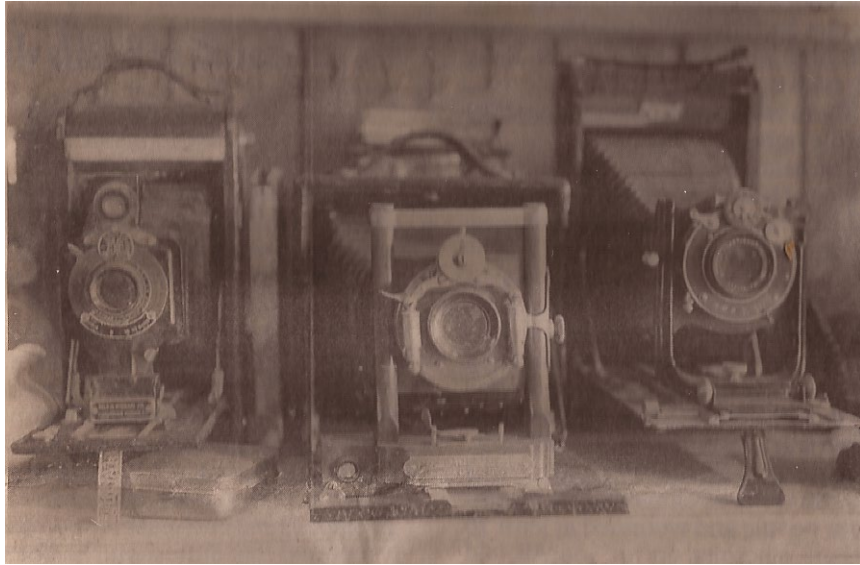
Andrishak's good humor and his fast-paced jokes do not hide the fact that he is still a serious collector today after more than 60 years of combing the countryside for collectibles. Garage sales, antique auctions, old dump sites — no place is too big or small to look. Now that he is retired, Andrishak divides his time between restoring the things he finds that are in poor repair and traveling around looking for treasures. His biggest thrill is to revive something other people have discarded as worthless. One of his favorite pieces is a unique, squat cast-iron stove he found half buried and corroded. He patiently combed the site until he retrieved all the pieces except one small door, then painstakingly cleaned everything and reassembled the odd-looking thing. The stamp on the warming oven reads Record Foundry, 1902, Star Machine Co., Moncton, New Brunswick.

From the small building open to the public in 1952, Andrishak has expanded over the years to three additional buildings to display his continually expanding collection.

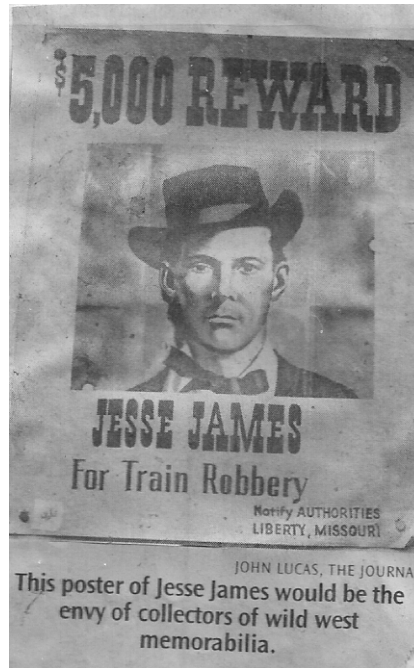
The building he calls The Elk Point Trading Post is designed to show what a small general store might have looked like in the early 1900s. It is dedicated to the memory of his father, William Andrishak, one of the early merchants in Elk Point. In fact, his store used to be on a site right across the road from where his son's museums are now. The Trading Post is well stocked with tins and bottles of everything from ginger beer to plug tobacco. He has dried roots and pulses in glass jars and coyote and fox skins on the wall beside washtubs and patent medicines. Old calendars, brochures from early agricultural fairs, extravagant advertisements aimed to entice settlers to Canada and First World War sheet music fill any empty wall space.

Next to the general store is a building Andrishak uses to repair and restore items, but it is more than a workshop. The walls are lined with an extensive bottle collection, Reader's Digests dating back to 1922, seashells of every sort and drawers of antique car parts. A crystal radio set from 1915 sits on a shelf beside souvenir pocketknives, one with Babe Ruth written on the handle and one commemorating the 1939 royal visit.

Jesse James



These antique cameras make up part of Steve Andrishak's extensive collection of artifacts at his private museum in Elk Point.



This Poster of Jesse James would be the envy of collectors of wild west memorabilia.

CHECK OUT THIS

Websites:

www.elkpointhistory.ab.ca

www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying_alberta/museums_historic_sites/site_listings/george_buckingham/index.asp

I) Without "www.":

collections.ic.gc.ca/abpolitics/alberta/fur_trade/site_profiles_ftgeorge.html

But Andrishak's eyes still get excited when he recalls his field trips and finding a big stash of artifacts.

"There were over 200 things in it. Hudson's Bay axes, trinkets, and baubles and beads. They put it in a big pot and intended to come back for it," he says.

One of his most cherished items is a rare medal he pulled out of a tree stump with the aid of a metal detector'. The medal was struck in 1746 to commemorate the victory of the Duke of Cumberland over Bonnie Prince Charlie the year before. He keeps it elsewhere for security reasons. Andrishak says the item maybe worth thousands of dollars, although Christopher Eimer, a British medal evaluator and author, puts its worth at only \$100.

Andrishak also look his spade and screen (to the site of the Frog Lake Massacre, where hungry, angry, dislocated Cree came under the influence of Big Bear's war chief Wandering Spirit almost 150 years ago. Today, it's a lonely corner of a farm field. A sign declaring it a historic site stands for target practice. There are graves, markers and a stone cairn.

Signs warn against digging, but there was no such prohibition in Andrishak's time. He came back with spent cartridges, old locks, the plowshare of farm instructor John Delaney and uniform buttons.

"Some of these bullets I found right at the site where they killed all the people. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if some of these probably killed people," he says. About a year ago, he says, he told the provincial museum he wanted out of the museum business because of his age. "After a full year, they never advanced a damn inch. They were still waiting for the government to come up with a grant to buy it."

Andrishak says he doesn't bother talking to the town or the province anymore about buying or supporting his collection. "They think you're going to die and leave it to them. I say the hell with that."

jittacdona1d@thejournal.canwest.com

The Past is Treasured Here

By BOB GILMOUR

Journal Staff Writer



Museum operator Steve Andrishak . . . he started collecting as a boy

ELK POINT — One man's lifelong love has given this town a private museum housing about 12,000 antiques and artifacts. The tourist attraction known as Fort George Museum represents a life's collection by Steve Andrishak, 63, operator of the local theatre for more than 39 years. A garage and three other buildings house the collection in this thriving oil exploration town about 225 km northeast of Edmonton.

"I've been collecting ever since I was a young guy," says Andrishak. "I was very interested in Indian stuff. I went looking for arrowheads. I have always been on the lookout for stuff. If I can get hold of something, I'll buy it."

"I don't know why a guy does it really. Collecting is like a disease. You get started and you never know when to quit. A lot of people think you're a nut for doing it. It's my way of getting a kick out of life, I guess."

About 35,000 people have signed his museum guest books since 1952. Today, about 1,000 sign annually — many of them busloads of touring schoolchildren.

Andrishak's display of fur trade artifacts numbers about 10,000. He dug and sifted over 12 years from the ruins of nearby old Fort George and Buckingham House trading posts. He also excavated Fort De L'Isle, Fort Vermilion, and the 1885 Frog Lake Massacre site. Indian artifacts are the second biggest part of his collection, and then pioneer antiques.

Andrishak says it's tough to run a private museum, which he nearly lost to fire three years ago. He's bitter about having to pay the full cost, when it's open to the public.

"I've given up trying to get any kind of help from the town or the (Alberta) government. They know you're here and expect you to put people through, but there's no thanks for it. All I get is taxes." He built a country-general store museum a few years ago in memory of his father who opened a store here about 1925. Recreating the old country-store atmosphere, it contains about 2,500 exhibits and antiques. The shelves are lined with old jam, tobacco, and peanut butter tins up to 60 years old.

There are 30 old 1900-to-1920 Edison cylinder phonographs, 30 old restored cast-iron stoves, and many hand-wound 1920s wooden toys.

"Most of this stuff was either thrown out, or people had no use for it. It seems different now - everybody's collecting something."

A big prize is a 1903 Model A Ford — the first model produced by Ford Motor Co. and one of just 1,708 made in its founding year. The eight-horsepower, chain-driven auto is one of about five left in Canada and 70 in the world and has prompted a letter of praise from Henry Ford. Andrishak also owns a nearly two-metre-high 1871 penny-farthing English bicycle. He has about 90 antique pistols and rifles such as flintlocks, blunderbusses, and muzzle-loaders. The earliest is a 250-year-old matchlock rifle. He has collections of old lamps, books, daggers, and British coins from every English monarch back to Queen Elizabeth I. He has early powder horns, a 1750 grandfather clock, an 1865 Buffalo and steerhorn chair, old chain-driven pocket watches wound by a key.

There are Indian stone hammers, axes, battle-axes, and Alberta flint spearpoints 8,000 to 10,000 years old. He's got a music box more - than 100 years old which still plays church music. Andrishak has collected about 800 stone and flint arrowheads since boyhood, but still prowls the fields looking for more.

"I think I'll be doing this until the day I die. I've willed it to the family. My boys are fairly interested in it. I hope they carry on after I'm gone."

The Elk Point Pioneer Museum Will Amaze You



Museum Mouser of Taxidermic Mice!

Take a most pleasurable trip into the past at the Pioneer Museum in Elk Point.

You will be as astounded at the museum as you are at its owner, Steve Andrishak, whose knowledge and enthusiasm are an integral part of the entire museum experience.

The museum is physically organized in several buildings each with its own genre. One of these is a General Store, which would make any antique lover drool over the amazing collection of tins and containers behind the counter, the Sears catalogues, the countless knickknacks, utensils, china, and "appliances" that once served the folks in houses of old. Cigar, anyone? Only five cents says the sign.

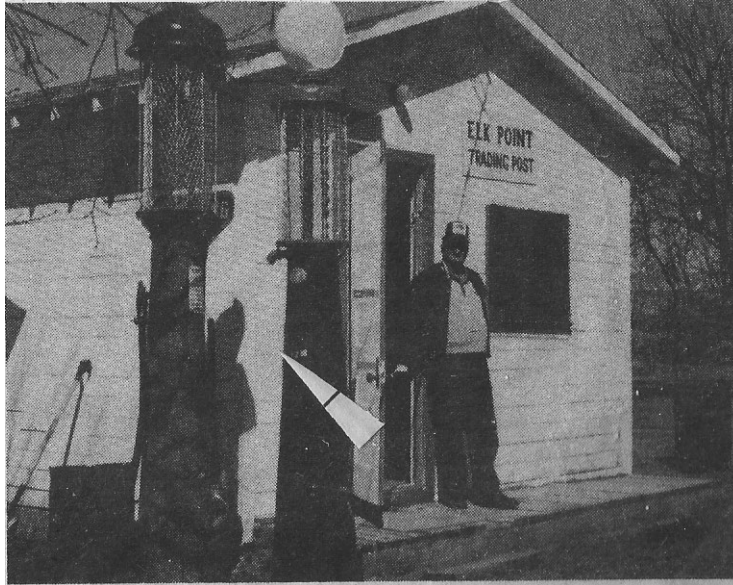
Another stop is the "den"/"schoolroom" featuring a huge solid wood antique roll-top desk, a lion's claw chair, pedestal table, oh-so comfortable rocker, and an antique "doubles" school desk. Bottles, tons of bottles; a copy of the very first edition (1880) of "The Bulletin", Edmonton's first newspaper; the menu from the Elk Point Cafe during the Depression. "T-Bone steak - 55 cents"! A magazine featuring "the up and coming star", Marilyn Monroe, on the front cover.

The "history room" is filled with the finds of seventeen years of digging in the area, especially around the Fort George/Buckingham House sites (In 1976 the Heritage Law came into effect which prevented more.) which tell a tale about the ways of the people who have inhabited this area from the time when they hunted for a living to the days when agriculture became the norm.

Andrishak's extensive world travels and keen nose for collecting, have resulted in an eclectic array of memorabilia. This is a privately-owned museum for which you will usually require a viewing reservation. Call 724-3654 Its well worth it.

Fort George Museum Preserves Local History

By Billie Milholland



Since 1952, when the Fort George Museum in Elk Point officially opened to the public, over 1,000 people a year have passed through its doors on a quest for learning local history. Steve Andrishak, owner and proprietor, says that the collecting bug bit many years before that. He remembers his first collecting expedition in 1927. When Elk Point filled up with vehicles on mail day, young Steve noticed that all the Model T Fords lining the streets, had big, shiny brass keys in the ignition. It didn't take too long before he had a big collection of the attractive items. There was a little excitement that day while the Car owners chased the six-year-old and persuaded him to dart with his treasures. He changed strategy after that, but in the ensuing sixty odd years he has never stopped collecting.

His collection is housed in four large buildings in his back yard. One, he calls the Elk Point Trading Post and if tourists are going to visit only one building, this is the obvious choice. Dedicated to the memory of his father, William Andrishak, who was one of the early merchants in Elk Point, it is a well-stocked replica of a general store in the early 1900's. There are dozens of choices of tobacco from Tiger Chewing tobacco to Repeater fine cut, mild smoking tobacco. A sturdy wooden box promises Fortuna Choice Raisins from California, pottery bottles from Buffalo New York tell the thirsty that ginger shandy, made from pure Jamaican Ginger will wet their whistle and pails of lard from the Stettler Meat Co. Ltd. tell settlers who haven't added a hog to their homestead that they can still make pastry. Coyote and fox skins on the wall and seneca root in jars, show that trading was a respectable way to do business in many places right up until the second war.

He has an intriguing little booklet called HOW FORTUNES ARE MADE IN SUNNY ALBERTA by Costello and Ryan, land men from Calgary, Canada, 1925 and a Fair bulletin from 1912 with an add on the back from the Vermilion Hotel, where a person could procure a room for \$1.00 - \$2.00. Comfortable, sunny rooms, it insists, excellent cooking, the best wines and liquors and a special cold lager.

In another building where Steve does much of his repair and restoration work, he has an impressive bottle collection, Reader's Digests that go back to 1922 and an interesting seashell collection. An adjacent building houses one of the first Television sets from the fifties, a skate blade collection and many different cast iron wood stoves and heaters.

His original building where his collections first went public has a wonderful mixture of fur trading artifacts, early settlers' items and curios from other lands. He has many souvenirs from both world wars, a 2,000-year-old Roman Vase from the Romany marsh in Kent, England, a collection of Chinese opium bottles and a Chinese money sword that was once part of a young Chinese girl's dowry.

It is hard to number the local children who received an indelible feeling for local history through their association with Steve Andrishak. In the 50's and 60's it wasn't unusual to see his old truck, its box full of children and shovels and screens, on its way to some abandoned dump site or other. There are many who claim that their present interest in history was triggered in their childhood and adolescence when they traveled with Steve to collect bird's eggs, dig for bottles or go to auction sales.

Because this museum is owned and operated without any government grants or assistance, Steve does not keep it open for any regular hours. Instead, his collections can be viewed by appointment by phoning him at his home in Elk Point.

Amateur Archeologists Open Museums

ELK POINT -- Steve Andrishak was prowling the site of Buckingham House fur trading post near here one day when suddenly his metal detector "just went crazy."

Thinking something was wrong, he checked the electronic gadget, reset it, and went back over the spot. Same thing again. The detector "just screamed" and he immediately began digging. Sixteen inches down was the kind of treasure trove collectors dream about. Included were six axe heads, three or four padlocks, some with keys still in them, various tools, hinges from the 1792 fort, kettles, frying pans and other objects.

Mr. Andrishak guesses that when they abandoned the post in 1800, the traders found the stuff too heavy to carry out on the first trip and buried it. For some reason they didn't return, and the stuff lay buried, fortunately deep enough that later ploughing of the site didn't disturb it.

Items from that find are today among the most prized objects in the private museum Mr. Andrishak, a theatre manager, has operated here for the past 25 years.

In nearby Dewberry, 25 miles southeast of here, a trio of local farmers, inspired, by Mr. Andrishak's success with detectors, have put their finds on public display. The Dewberry and Elk Point museums contain the two most impressive collections of fur trade era artifacts open for public viewing anywhere in Alberta.

But the manner of collection, the use of metal detectors with quick grab digs by amateurs, angers professional collectors and archeologists., and with the passage of the Alberta Heritage Act in 1974, unauthorized removal of such objects is illegal. Metal detectors, widely advertised for sale in outdoors magazines, enable collectors to locate buried metal objects in minutes.

Archeologists, on the other hand, may spend weeks working with trowel, whisk broom, sextant and camera to map out and record their finds, sometimes down to the nearest millimetre. Bob Kidd, curator of archeology for the provincial museum, says the uncovering of artifacts is meaningless unless they can be related to themselves and to each other. The real value of a find may not be realized until months of laboratory work and historical research has passed. Research papers by Mr. Kidd on Fort George and by Trudy Nicks on Buckingham House, 400 yards from Fort George, give elaborate detail on such finds. " From their work, important clues have emerged to distinguish the ownership of the forts. Until Mr. Kidd's research paper came out in 1970 it wasn't known which fort was the Hudson's Bay Co.'s and which was built by the rival North West Company.

Excavations at Buckingham House turned up more "beaver" and other Hudson's Bay-type buttons than at Fort George. But Fort George had more silver objects like those produced by silversmiths in Montreal where the North West Company originated. Archeologists also uncovered shards of porcelain pottery at Fort George. The North West Company was known to have been obtaining porcelain in trade with China at the time. Such clues could be obscured by careless amateurs. And in digging up metal objects, they could lose or destroy other valuable non-metallic objects, says Mr. Kidd.

Mr. Andrishak and the three Dewberry collectors say they haven't collected from fur trade sites since the act was passed. Besides, they say most of their finds have been from Indian encampments away from the immediate fort sites that interest archeologists most. And they point out their material is on public display, not squirreled away in some private hoard or back room storage vault. Both collections have been studied and catalogued by staff of the provincial museum.

Mr. Andrishak's display, part of a museum which he estimates has had 25,000 visitors in the past 25 years, offers a good cross-section of most trade items. There are Hudson's Bay buttons, silver objects brass spigots from the barrels of rum traders plied the Indians with, musket balls, flintlock parts and metal arrowheads. There are whole rows of trade rings and trinkets, bottles, buckles, and religious objects.

This summer Mr. Andrishak has taken down the museum sign outside his home although he still conducts visitors through. He says it's his way of protesting the provincial government's refusal to give him a museum grant since he operates as a 'private individual and not through a society.

In Dewberry Phillip Porter, Bobby Braithwaite and Wilford Mathison have been collecting for the past seven years and have put their finds on display in the new Dewberry Valley Museum. Their collection includes hide scrapers forged out of musket barrels by fort blacksmiths, an axe head forged in Detroit in 1778. and various Hudson's Bay Co. seals and buttons. There are musket balls, musket parts. dog bells, baby bells, pottery shards, "strike-a-lights", and various items from the Frog Lake massacre site, including an ornate crucifix.

From nearby Fort Vermilion there is a set of cuff links with the words "Tally Ho" stamped on them, and a well-preserved clasp knife with stamped brass side plates. A recent donation to the museum is a steel hide

scraper which had been in the possession of a local Indian many years and was apparently acquired from the fur traders. From the Fort George area came some trinkets known as "tinkling cones," each still with a bead and a piece of twine stuffed inside. The collection includes a wide array of stone tools, arrowheads, scrapers and hammers collected within 10 miles of Dewberry. Archeologists have identified a nearby plateau as a site of almost continual use by Indians for up to 5,000 years.

Summertime Travels In The Lake Country:

The Elk Point Pioneer Museum goes off the top end of the rating scale

By Olli Megley

Feature Writer

Page 14 - THE ST. PAUL JOURNAL, TUES., JULY 18, 1995

I hereby admit that when Vicki Brooker from the Elk Point Review recommended I tour the Pioneer Museum in Elk Point I didn't get too fired up. I thought that it was going to be, oh, you know, just another small town museum. Interesting, no doubt, but... Ho boy, call me amazed with a capital AM. The Pioneer Museum at Elk Point is nothing short of awesome.

Book now. You will be as astounded at the museum as you are at its owner, Steve Andrishak, whose knowledge and enthusiasm are an integral part of the entire museum experience. He started our tour (Vicki, alias assistant tour guide, and I) in the General Store. I gasped (okay, drooled) at the amazing collection of tins and containers behind the I counter, the Sears catalogues (no, I do not have any memories of having ordered from the 1921 edition!), the countless knickknacks, utensils, china, and "appliances" that once served the folks in houses of Old. I marvelled at the high chair which folds down to the floor to a kind of baby "walker". And the leather hat case, and the clip-on candle holder Christmas tree ornaments...Cigar, anyone? Only five cents says the sign. I could have stayed in the store all afternoon.

But soon I learned what Steve meant when he said we'd "start" in the store. Next stop was the "den", my terminology for a separate one room building which reminded me of just that. The absolutely gorgeous huge, solid wood, antique roll top desk initiated the response, but then there was the lions claw chair (my feet reached the floor - people must have been shorter back then), the pedestal table, the oh-so-comfortable rocker, and the antique "doubles" school desk which occupied the more conspicuous spaces in a room overflowing with collectibles. Bottles, tons of bottles. Original Copy of the very first edition of "The Bulletin", 1880, Edmonton's first newspaper. And a copy of the menu from the Elk Point Cafe during the Depression. "T- Bone steak - 55 cents"! A magazine featuring "the up and coming star", Marilyn Monroe on the front cover. So much to see, it was mind-boggling. And there was more...

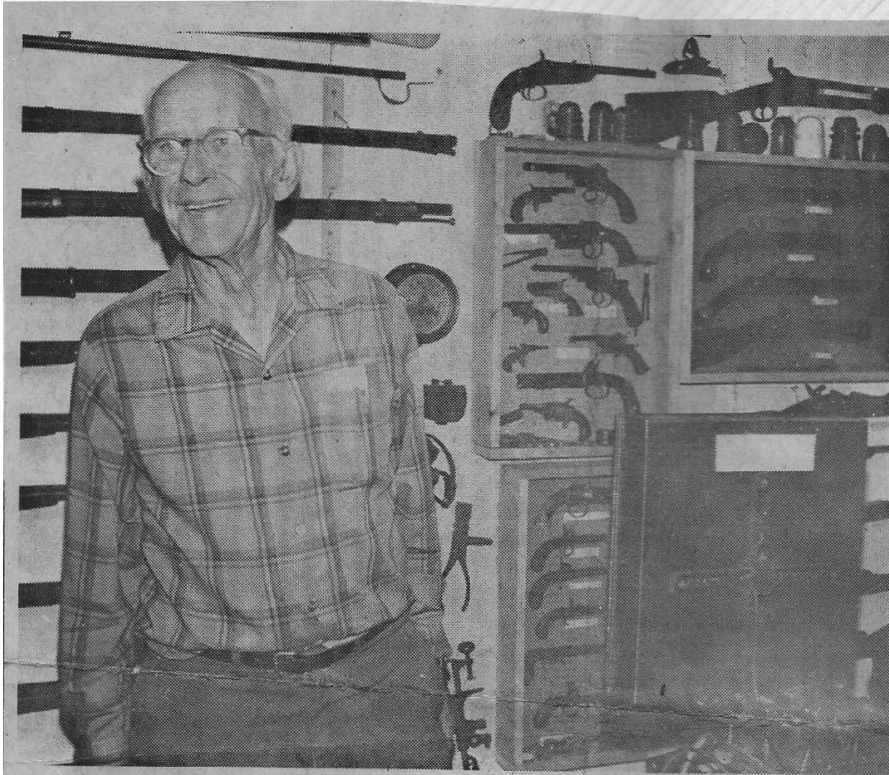
The biggest and most eclectic collection came last. I just cannot say enough about the final building on our tour. Seventeen years of digging in the area, especially around the Fort George/Buckingham House sites, up until 1976 (the Heritage Law came into effect after that) has scored Andrishak a truly amazing collection of artifacts which tell a tale about the ways of the people who opened this area. Add to that his extensive travels, and keen nose for collecting, and what you have is an amazing array of memorabilia. Each and every item set the silent movie camera in my mind reeling with imaginary stories about the people who would have owned them. Andrishak, of course, did a great job of transforming these

"movies" into the talking variety. It's going to seem strange that the largest collection gets the least amount of lineage, but I just cannot think of where to start. All I can say was that this was indeed the top-billed collection.

How does The Pioneer Museum in Elk Point rate on the Lake County star scale? 5 to the nth degree!

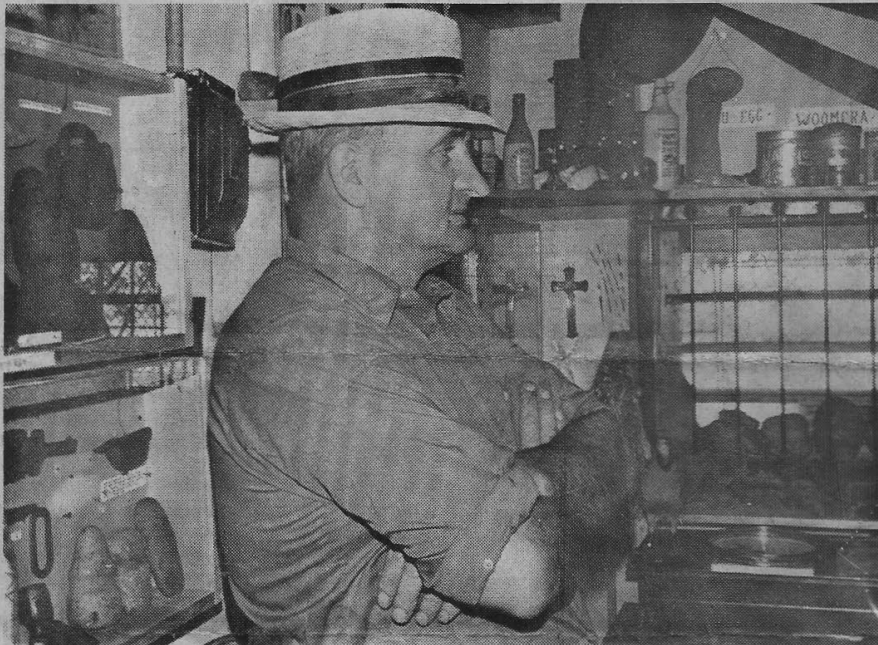


IN HIS ELEMENT - Steve Andrishak relaxes in one of his favorite chairs, this one in the Grocery store portion of the Pioneer Museum. Judging from the extent and condition of the museum, this is not his usual pose.



ELK POINT — Mr. O. A. Keene, from Victoria, dropped into the Fort George Museum early this month to view

the extensive collection of guns displayed there.



ELK POINT — Mr. Steve Andrishak, owner of Fort George Museum, Elk Point, reminds one of a walking encyclopedia, as he describes each of the items in his possession, be it a bill of sale from a slave auction, a

document with the signature of John A. Macdonald, or a 1903 Ford car. He explains that he has many more acquisitions for which he has no display room, and says that he should have four times the space he has at present.

Visit Fort

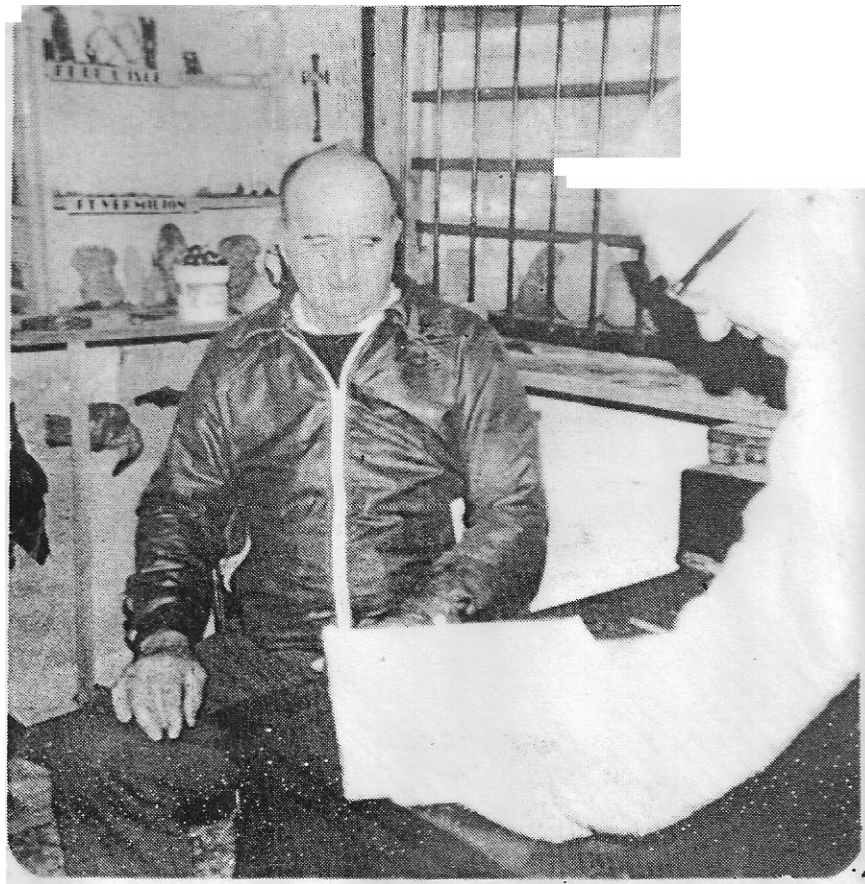
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Fort George: Mammoth Little Museum

July 1978

By Irene Magnusson



Steve Andrishak at the Fort George Museum.

Where, in the heart of Alberta's Lakeland, situated at the crossroads of a small town, would you expect to find a compact building housing thousands of antiques and artifacts, many gathered in the immediate vicinity and dating back to the 1700s? Well, the town is Elk Point, 210 km. northeast of Edmonton and

the place is the Fort George Museum, owned and collected by the town's theatre operator, Mr. Steve Andrishak.

Tucked behind a row of neat maples flush on Highway 41, the centre of the progressive town of Elk Point, stands a long white building, packed with innumerable objects of the past. The name "Fort George" was chosen in commemoration of the old North West Trading Co. fort, which together with the Hudson Bay Co.'s Buckingham House was established in 1791 on the banks of the North Saskatchewan about six miles east of Elk Point.

Deeply interested in the history of the area and an avid collector of authentic artifacts since a youth, Steve Andrishak pursued, as a hobby, the accumulation of Indian tools and weaponry, and the white man's contributions, in imported articles as well as those contrived here in Canada.

A great many articles were recovered from the sites of the two forts when the land was under private ownership. Steve obtained permission to search from the owner, Mr. Arnott, and did so with vigor and considerable success. After some years the Provincial Government acquired the site of the historic fort and Steve worked a few summers with the archaeologists who came to excavate. Of course, all remaining artifacts discovered were transported to the museum at the U. of A. in Edmonton. Steve has, in effect, preserved many artifacts to the town of Elk Point which could have been lost to the local citizens, to be seen again only by a few. Here they are available to all in Steve's display.

Steve has many articles of antiquity and beauty, as well as oddities and historically priceless artifacts in his collection, mounted and arranged for public display. Perhaps his most rare - and his largest - object is his 1903 Model A Ford. One of only 55 known remaining models from Henry Ford's first production cars, this vehicle is in good condition, all the parts are there, and could ostensibly be brought to running order by a mechanic with patience. The Ford Company celebrates its 75th anniversary this year at its plant in Dearborne, Michigan. Steve has had possession of this Model A for around 30 years, obtaining it from his brother-in-law, and has entered it in a few historic celebration parades - notably Elk Point's 50th Anniversary observation in 1957, and at the Heinsburg Bridge Opening, as well as in a St. Paul parade. Another vehicle in his collection is an antique covered buggy, Complete with leather upholstery.

Touching on only a few of the rarities, Steve points out a meteorite, found in the Stoney Plain area; a black gopher (which occurs only about one in ten million) found in the Elk Point area; a single tooth of an extinct mammoth. He has a split jack pine log which reveals several pinecones imbedded intact in its wood; an egg within-an-egg, and a hen's egg shaped like a peanut.

A collection of butterflies from the Amazon in South America make a glitteringly lovely exhibit, mounted on teakwood trays with intricate inlaid trim. A small table, curvaceous of leg, and heavy with tooled brass, swings open into a games table and dates from the 1700's,

Mr. Andrishak has 19 different Edison phonographs with over 600-cylinder recordings, and often plays them as he works in the building. his antique gun collection contains around 75 pieces, flintlocks, cane (or poacher's) gun, muzzle-loaders, pistols, etc. Other arms include a cane-sword. There are numerous ornately carved walking canes. The entire collection has over 15,000 articles, not yet catalogued in detail, a task Steve contemplates with a measure of tepidity - but he knows it must be done soon. "It would be a

helluva job for someone else to sort out - if anything if happened to me!" he says. "I know the history of everything on loan from other citizens; but I ceased accepting anymore some years ago."

"I'd get the antique all restored, fixed up, polished up ready for display - then they'd want it back. Just too much trouble and bother!" he says.

Steve has sufficient material on hand to furnish an old country general store, of around the 1910 period, including cash register, coffee grinder, dandy jars, calendars, containers, etc. Lacking is the space.

Steve Andrishak, now in his 50's, has lived in Elk Point since 1925, when he came as a child with his family. He has operated (and owns) the only theatre for many years and as a hobby brings pleasure and a hint of history's flight to those who visit his museum. He has had over a thousand visitors annually for the 26 years the museum has been open, and welcomes many school classes of children as well as tourists and local citizenry. Steve is always busy - but seldom too busy to give his time in conducting guests through the building, answering innumerable questions, cheerfully sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with all corners.

Two fat visitors-books have been filled with names over the years, addresses ranging from end to end of Canada and many other countries.

In the space available to him Steve can display only half of his fascinating collection, the remainder - must continue in storage in his garage and sheds. He regrets his cramped quarters. Cost of a new and larger building is too heavy for him to carry. He is hopeful of community and government consideration and support in the future, with perhaps some arrangement of mutual benefit. It is to be hoped these valuable artifacts from the past, representing a most important link in the chain of progress, will not be allowed to leave the area - or be sold away.

Navigate River Plywood Boat

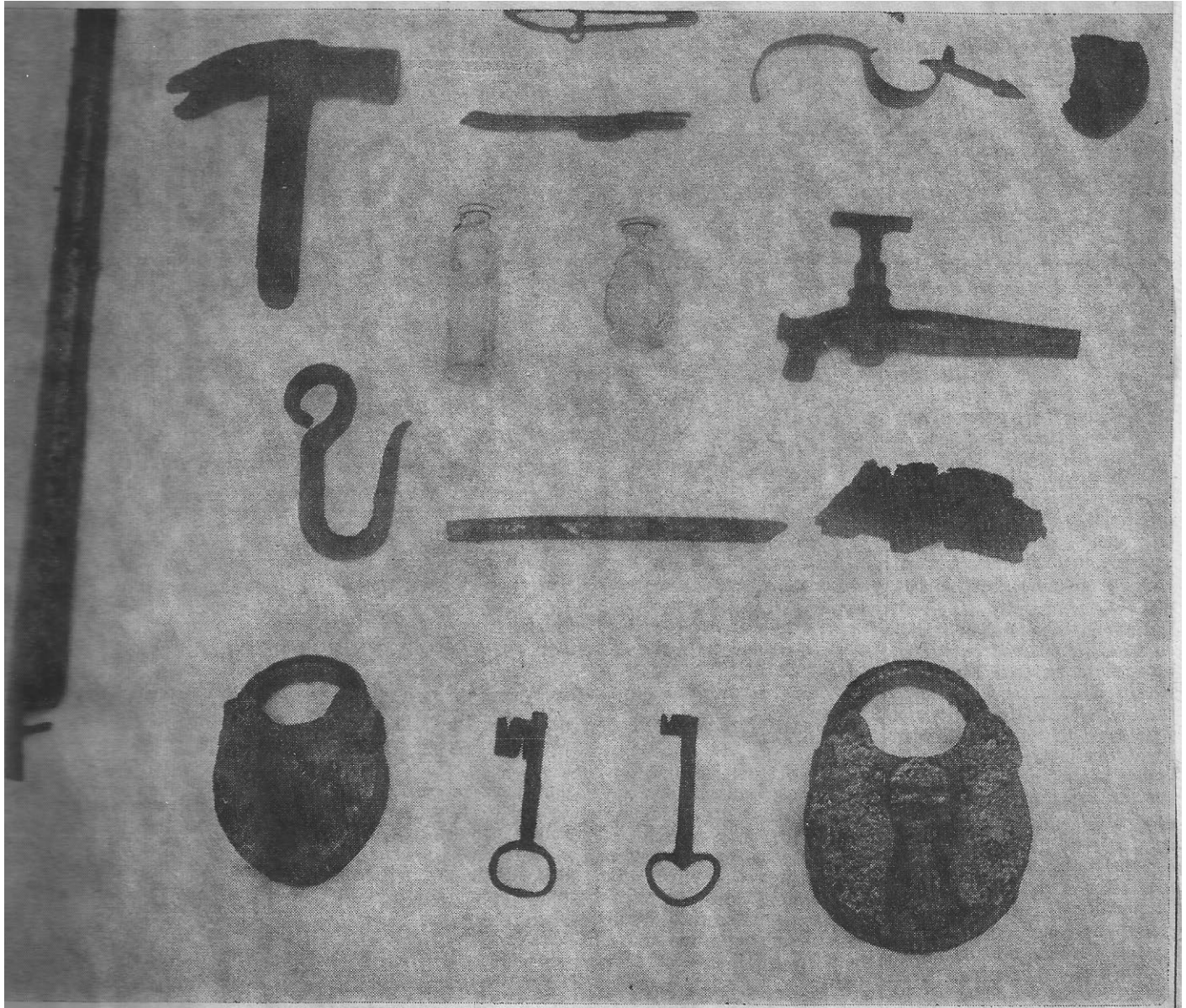
Two modern day voyageurs, Jim Ramsbottom and Steve Andrishak recently made a trip down the Saskatchewan River following the route of the early fur traders. Their 13-foot plywood boat was launched at the Elk Point bridge and taken out at the Lea Park bridge, an estimated distance of about 55 miles. The pair used no motor but relied river current and by rowing. The distance was covered in 8 hours.

Going through the rapids was the most exciting part of the trip, especially the rapids past Heinsburg. These were so violent that their boat almost was swamped.

The scenery along the Historic Saskatchewan River was very pretty, especially the many islands passed. Bird life was abundant along the shores and the pair reported spotting six Turkey Vultures. Four were seen in one group apparently feeding on some dead animal along the shoreline. They paid very little attention to the boat and Jim and Steve were able to get within 50 yards of them and upon using strong binoculars, their species was definitely established. The bird, slightly smaller than the eagle, had a dark body and a reddish-purple head resembling that of a turkey in many ways. This species has been reported in this area before, but are rarely seen this far north, their native habitat being much farther south.

Historical Objects Found Near Elk Point

These pioneer items were dug out around Fort George near Elk Point, a rich historical ground where much of the history of this area evolved. Many of these items can be found on display at Fort George Museum. The curator, Steve Andrishak, dug some of them up himself and received valuable contributions. Drop in any time for a visit.



Preservation Of Historic Values

Feature Of Elk Point District



BY JACK DEAKIN

HISTORICAL ELK POINT — There is much history attached to the district of Elk Point, about 160 miles northeast of Edmonton. The town and district, especially one or two individuals, have done something about its preservation. Shown seated in a 1903 model car is Steve Andrishak who has set up an outstanding museum at Elk Point. Mr. Andrishak owns the theatre. There are thousands of articles of historical interest in the museum. Also pictured are two modern schools in the town.

This wonderful job of preservation here, has been made possible through the efforts of a handful of persons. Their work is outstanding. As a result Elk Point has an historical record seldom gathered together by individuals possessing so much community interest. Possibly two of the most ardent recorders of this history are Steve Andrishak, a theatre owner, and Dr. F. G. Miller, a pioneer doctor of the Elk Point district. Mr. Andrishak has an exceptionally fine collection of articles on the early history of Elk Point. These are stored in a museum building near his home. The museum houses what is believed to be one of the most complete collections held by any individual in the province.

Dr. Miller, among the fairly early settlers, has his historic treasure in manuscript. The pioneer doctor has spent an appreciable amount of time searching for data. He now possesses one of the most complete documentary accounts of the settlement of this district about 160 miles northeast of Edmonton

EARLY HISTORY

Recorded history of Elk Point and district dates back to around 1885 when the Frog Lake massacre occurred. A number of white persons were killed in the Indian attack, and a monument has been set up in remembrance of those who lost their lives.

Located on the Canadian National Railways line from Edmonton to Heinsburg and also on a main run of the Sunburst Coach Lines on Highway 41, Elk Point is a crossroads for this northeastern district. It is remembered that north of Elk Point was the old Red River cart trail over which the pioneers travelled as they journeyed westward. The trail went across the Andrishak farm. The trail went all the way from Winnipeg to Lac La Biche.

On the other side of Frog Lake and located along the bank of the North Saskatchewan River was the North West Mounted Police barracks. Indians raided Fort Pitt and killed some of the police.

When the settlers first came to this part of the country there was ample wild game. The wildlife included elk and, while there are arguments about the source of the name of the town, it is generally believed that the name came from the presence of the animal in the area. Early pioneers reported there was uncovered a large quantity of elk antlers in the area prior to the name being given to the town. It also is claimed that the name derived from Elk Point, North Dakota, a large number of early settlers coming from the Dakotas.

EARLY PIONEERS

Just to list a few of the names of the early settlers and the year they are reported to have arrived: C. Hood, C. Smith, J. B. Caskey, O.J. Fish, T. Aarbo and J. Babcock, 1907; F. Pinder, Mr. Maxwell, F. Lambright, W. Mayblee and O. Selland, 1908; J. Valentine, W. Higsbe, A. Landers, H. Jacobson and P. Kietges, 1909; H. Day, 1911 and G. Arnold, E. Bullis and H. O. O'Kane along with others too numerous to mention.

Early life for the pioneer of this district was not much different than that of other western settlers. They worked hard, had difficulty getting supplies and delivering their products: but they worked and conquered a new country.

Within a few months the Elk Point post office will observe its 50th anniversary although the settlement observed its golden year several years ago. Tracing the history of the Elk Point post office is to trace ones family tree back a number of years. This is the Quin family. Charles Hood, among the real old-timers, was the first postmaster from 1909 to 1928. He was followed by Joseph Cadman Quin, 1928-1937. The post office was taken over by Mrs. Quin from 1937 to 1945 with their son, Robert Percy Quin in charge since 1946. It is also worthy of mention here that the present postmaster can make claim to musical talents. He has made a number of very fine violins. He makes the instruments as a hobby and has done remarkable work.

OTHER POST OFFICES

The Elk Point post office was not the only one in the area in the early days. There also was the Caskeyville office, named after J. B. Caskey in 1908. This was six miles southwest of the present townsite. Another was the Hopkins Post Office in 1908. Other names among old-time postmasters were John Ross, J. S. Valentine, who still lives in the district, and G. N. Wallace.

Steve Andrishak, now 37 years old, came to Elk Point in 1925 from Warspite. From early childhood he took a keen interest in the history of the district. In 1952 he constructed a building in pieces. From then on, he developed an interesting museum which is open to the public during the summer. In the past six years, his logbook shows, he has had about 7,000 visitors. He has had as many as 209 visitors on one Sunday afternoon and conducts the tour himself. His wife, the former Doris Walton, of Stony Plain, also assists him.

He estimates he has about 5,000 museum pieces displayed and each with information attached. The articles of interest are too many to list but include a 1903 model "horseless" vehicle. He has fully restored the Ford model to what it looked like in the "good old days." There also are many articles from Indian days and real old-time music boxes, some of them with metal perforated discs. There are other old gramophones with circular discs. All are in working order, the tunes from some of the discs being exceptionally good.

Andrishak's latest find, and still alive, is a black gopher. He has the animal well cared for in a cage in his theatre and hopes some time to have it stuffed for preservation.

Old Guns, Relics of Indian Days On Display In Elk Point Museum

BY JACK DEAKIN

(Journal Staff Writer)

ELK POINT — A 33-year-old theatre operator's hobby of collecting historic relics is a remarkable attraction in this town about 140 miles northeast of Edmonton. The collector is Steve Andrishak whose interest in Alberta's yester-year, or anything old, started when a child. For a number of years, he has prowled and dug along the valley of the North Saskatchewan River. The river flows within a short dist-

ance of Elk Point, and is nestled in a valley, where Indians and invading white pioneers camped, fought, died and finally lived in peace.

Steve started from a small collection of Indian relics. He soon became intensely interested, and today has constructed a 12 by 26-foot display building he calls "The Pioneer Museum." There is nothing commercial about the museum. Steve, besides supplying the where-with-all to build the small construction, has spent several hundred dollars. He has bought some old pieces, found many and has also received others from donors, the latter on loan to the museum.

JUST A HOBBY

The museum is just a hobby with Steve, and he hopes to keep it that way at least until it gets too large to handle on his own finances. Interest in Steve's collection has increased greatly the past two years. More than 1,500 persons have signed the museum's guest book. They have been genuinely thrilled with what they have seen. The well - displayed collection has also grown and Steve, either this summer or fall, hopes to complete an addition to the present museum building. He will carry out this work at his own expense.

There are many interesting things to see in the collection, but, possibly, the items that caught my attention the most were the antiquated rifles and revolvers. Steve has a grand assortment of them. One in particular is a 1689 model R. Wilson flintlock rifle that looks much like a too-long snouted revolver. Of greatest interest in regard to this old gun is that it was found just six miles east of Elk Point. The finder was a man named T. Wolfe. He dug up the old war piece along the Saskatchewan River.

MUZZLE LOADERS

Old muzzle loaders, powder horns, and progressively more modern firearms are all well displayed and ticketed on one wall of Steve's museum. The early day revolvers also capture much attention and are in working order, too, if anyone dare fire them,

The collection is extensively filled with Indian relics and pieces from the unforgettable Frog Lake massacre in 1885 and the old Fort George, built in 1792 and abandoned in 1801.

Elk Point Sees The Last Picture Show

December 1986

The smell of popcorn, the familiar sounds of Bugs Bunny's inimitable "What's up, Doc?" and the Road Runner's "Beep-Beep!", gales of children's laughter echoing from the dark recesses of the theatre behind the striped gold portieres. Saturday afternoon matinee time: a traditional scene often repeated over the past 42 years. But this time it was different.

As the end of the show drew near, the lobby, with its "no visiting" sign, grew crowded as local businesspersons and representatives of local groups entered, along with numerous parents.

Nostalgia was in the air. One observer was heard to comment, "I'll never forget seeing Easy Rider here" as he munched a bag of popcorn dispensed by Jim Andrishak. Many crowded in for a last look at the familiar cartoons, as "That's All Folks!" flashed on the screen.

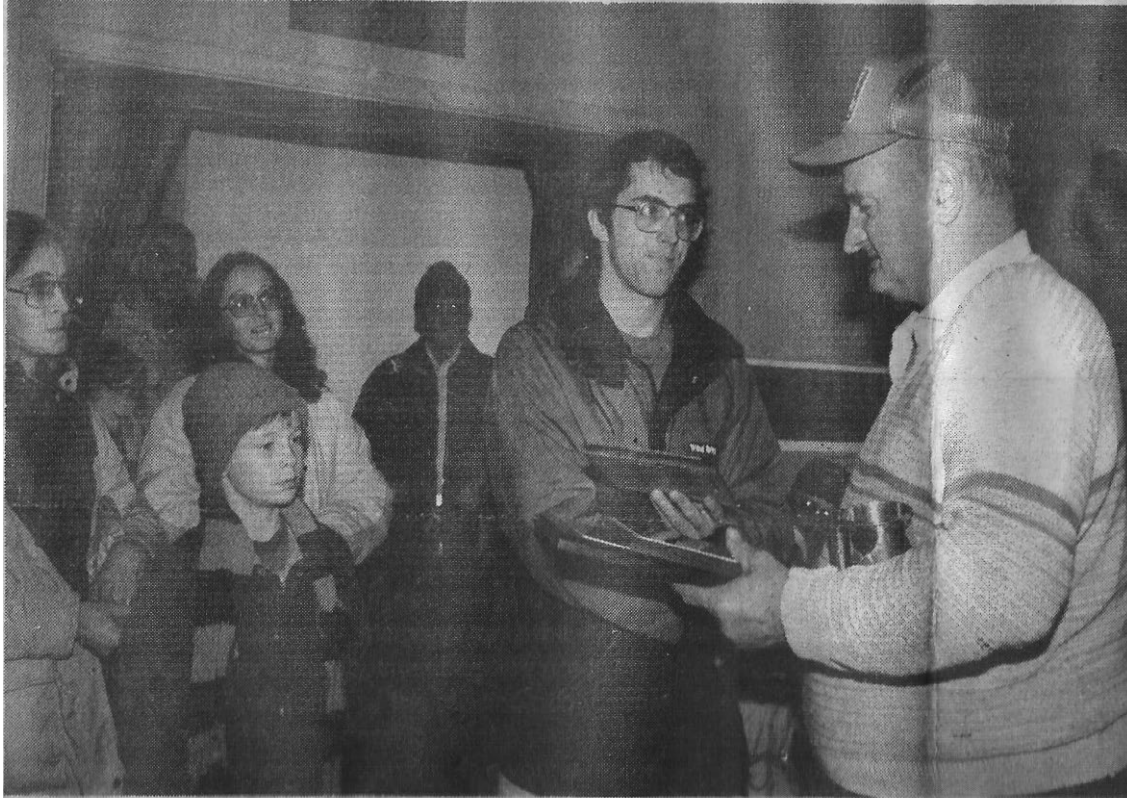
The youngsters headed for the doors, seeming unaware that this "Free Christmas Movie" was any different than those of other years. A snow-suited toddler, who had moments before stood in mid-aisle, gazing in rapt attention at the film, trotted in their wake.

Proprietor, owner and projectionist, Steve Andrishak, slowly descended the stairs from his lofty perch beside the 35mm projector. Instead of a deserted theatre, he found a group of family and friends, many bearing gifts in appreciation of his four-decade", plus of dedicated service in the community.

Mayor Byron Mann, representing the Town of Elk Point, and Elk Point Lions Club President Tad Reed, presented commemorative plaques, while Bill Schuhmacher of the Elk Point Elks Lodge presented an engraved silver tankard. Jim Andrishak, representing the Andrishak family, all who have at some time been involved in the operation of the theatre, presented his father with a plaque. In response to the many tributes, Andrishak said simply, "I've enjoyed doing it," of his years of entertaining the public of Elk Point and district.

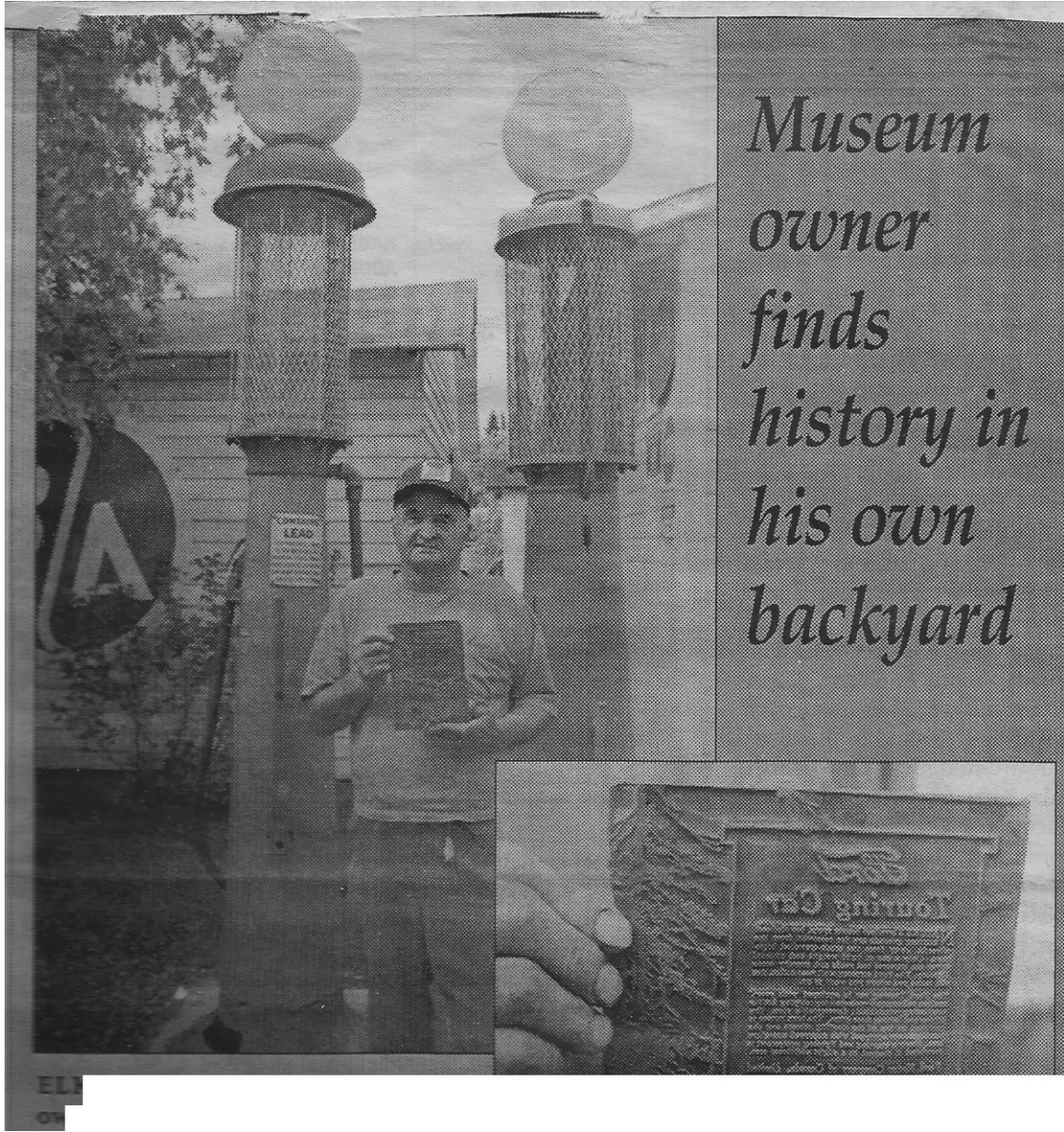
More time to spend in his museum and time to travel are in Andrishak's future plans. However, he said he will come out of retirement to run next year's pre-Christmas shows, sponsored by the Elks and Lions, and slated to be shown in the Elks Hall — "If I'm around."

Today, the theatre stands empty, signs reading "Theatre Property For Sale" and "Theatre Closed" on its boarded-up facade. An era has passed.

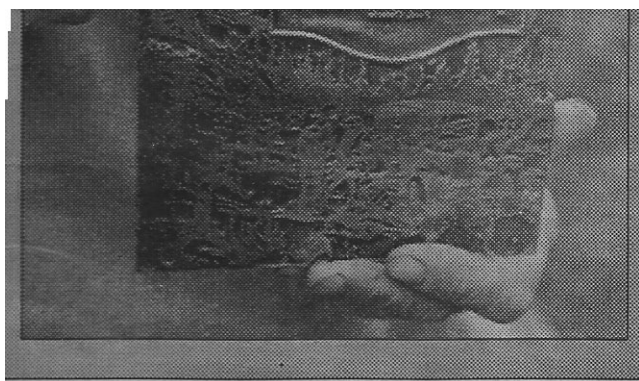


FOR A GREAT DAD — Steve Andrishak is presented with a plaque commemorating his retirement from the theatre business by son Jim, on behalf of the Andrishak family, who have all been involved in the business over the years.

FOR A GREAT DAD — Steve Andrishak Is presented with a plaque commemorating his retirement from the theatre business by son Jim, on behalf of the Andrishak family, who have all been involved in the business over the years.



*Museum
owner
finds
history in
his own
backyard*



Elk Point Pioneer Museum

Steve Andrishak has been seeking out historical items for decades but recently he found one right in his own backyard. The copper and lead printing plate for an advertising brochure a 1917 Ford Model T was found in Steve's garden, originally the site of a Ford Dealership destroyed by fire in late 1922.

Museum Expanding To Second Building

by DAN HEALING

Elk Point Sentinel, Wednesday, April 29, 1981



The Fort George Museum in Elk Point is so full that owner Steve Andrishak is constructing a second museum building. He is making it by himself (with a little help from his son) and expects it to be ready for visitors by July. The building will be used primarily to hold his collection of 24 antique stoves when they are restored. He explained that restoring them means removing all the rust, painting them flat black and sending some parts to be re-chromed in Edmonton. One of the restored stoves is dated 1861 and stamped with 'Hamilton, C.W.' The 'C.W.' means Canada West. The stove was made before there was an Ontario.

Andrishak receives no grants or help from any branch of government. The only funds that don't come out of his own pocket are the admission charges; one dollar for adults and 25 cents for children and private donations. He estimated that he has spent several thousand dollars on the museum since he opened it in 1952.

'I do it because I like it,' he said, adding that he certainly wasn't in it for the money.

The museum is opened only by appointment now. Andrishak claimed he took down the sign on the highway two years ago because visitors were interrupting his work (and his meals) by arriving at all hours of the day.

Andrishak also owns the Arrow Theatre in Elk Point. He bought it from Eric Arnott in 1945 and has operated it since. The theatre was originally built in 1931. An addition was made to the front in 1948 and it was equipped with standard 35 mm film equipment in 1952.

Andrishak has lived in Elk Point since he was three years old, 58 years ago. When he opened his museum thirty years ago most of the things he collected were considered junk by everyone else. An example is a 1903 horse-drawn buggy picked up for \$17 at an auction sale. Fully restored, the same buggy could be worth more than a \$1000 now. He complained that it's tough to run a museum in small town.

'People from across the road have never come. Others have come 200 miles just to see it.'

He has two books containing more than 30,000 signatures of people that have visited since 1952. He said he gets a lot of school groups. The Fort George Museum is an addition to Andrishak's house, located north of the Esso station on Highway 41. The museum got its name from the original Fort George, a Northwest Company trading post on the North Saskatchewan River.

About 20 years ago, before the government bought the site and made it a campground, Andrishak combed it for relics. The items he found, both from Fort George and the neighboring Hudson Bay trading post, Buckingham House, are on display at the front of the present one room museum. There are cases full of buttons, coins, keys, tools, parts of guns, beads, and more, all about 200 years old. A small blue-tinted bottle, which used to hold medicine from England, is stamped with Jan. 30, 1754 and is one of only two such bottles in Canada. According to Andrishak, some bottle collectors would pay about \$300 for it.

A 1903 FORD Model 'A' rests surrounded by animal heads and antiques in the back of the Fort C Museum in Elk Point.

MUSEUM OWNER Steve Andrishak tells the story behind each of the exhibits.

Another case is full of iron arrows and spear heads, sold to the Indians by the trading posts.

Farther into the museum there are 19 different models of the Edison cylinder gramophone.

In the back, surrounded by stuffed animal heads and ancient newspapers, is a 1903 Ford Model A, one of the first cars ever produced. An entire wall is decorated with old guns. A five-foot-tall bicycle rests in one corner. A number of wooden wall phones reside in another. A sewing machine made in 1871 sits on an antique desk. Shelves lining the walls are filled with blue-tinted jars and delicate china. Another wall features the written word, paper yellowed with age, carefully protected behind glass. There's a copy of the New York Herald the day after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865.

Letters written by Sir John MacDonal, Canada's first prime minister, were donated by a local woman. There's a land title from 1822 when King George IV was in power.

Andrishak Displays Fur Trade Artifacts

Elk Point Public Library had very special visitor this past week as Steve Andrishak spent two days at the library with a number of items from his collection of fur trade artifacts.

Items found at the sites of Fort George and Buckingham House fur trading forts back in the days before those sites came under the jurisdiction of the Province of Alberta, included everything from arrowheads to a tea kettle.

Trade beads, including some very unusual beads with delicate designs painted on them, buffalo skinning knives, buttons and buckles from frontier clothing, a rusted lock with key, and a bone hide flesher were among the items on display.

Two of Andrishak's most prized artifacts are a 1746 war medal found at the Buckingham House site, which commemorated the Battle of Culloden, possibly the bloodiest battle in English history, and a hand blown medicine bottle, dated January 30, 1754. Andrishak says there is only one other bottle like this known to be in Canada.

A large cooking pot, along with a tea kettle and smaller pots, were on display, and Andrishak had an interesting story to tell about these items, which he had found buried in what had appeared to have once been a cache. He said that apparently, during the days when the fur trade moved westward and the post was abandoned, these items had been buried for future retrieval by the fur traders. "Only I got there first," he chuckled.

A good number of visitors came to view the collection during library hours on Thursday and Friday, and during a special evening session on Thursday. Each artifact has a story, and Andrishak was happy to relate the details and to answer questions about this unique group of historic items.

Centennial 1967

Antique Prices Going Sky-High

Thanks To Increased Interest

By GORDON AALBORG

Of the Edmonton Journal.

ELK POINT — Centennialism has given the museum and antique collecting business throughout Canada a terrific boost. And for Steve Andrishak, who owns one of Alberta's finest collections it means only one thing. "I'm sure glad I started my collecting when I did," he says. "Its almost impossible to find anything worthwhile anymore. He says. There are too many people looking."

Steve started his collection early in the 1950s, when he spent a lot of time prowling around old Hudson's Bay Company forts near Elk Point.

FINE COLLECTION

The result is one of the finest collections of early Canadian and Indian artifacts to be found anywhere in Canada. He's stuck pretty well to unique articles and genuine ancient artifacts, rather than those of the early 1900s, which many collectors are seeking. The collection includes a hoard of ancient and unique rifles, pistols and other weapons, including many from other countries. Steve had avoided collecting various of the early Winchester rifles because they were fairly common in northeastern Alberta.

"I could have got them by the hundred for next to nothing a few years ago," he says. "I'm sorry now I didn't. People have been coming in during the past few years and there's hardly a relic to be found anymore."

He thinks it somewhat pitiful that archeology has only gained a foothold here in the past few years. Collectors have most of the good articles. They have been coming north and they've been coming north and paying fantastic prices for the last many years."

SMALL MUSEUM

But they missed the 1903 Ford Steve's got on prominent display in the small museum building adjacent to his home. It's worth a fair bit of anybody's money.

Steve's also picked up an extensive collection of mounted, wildlife exhibits and pioneer and Indian artifacts — and what's even better, he knows what everything is and a bit of the history surrounding it. He's getting a bit cramped for space and is also a wee bit behind in his labelling system but hopes to get started on a new building sometime in the relatively near future. He had hoped to build a new museum as a centennial project in conjunction with the town, but this plan hasn't worked out so if he builds anything it'll have to be on his own.

One centennial resolution he does plan to maintain is that the museum will be open each weekend during the warmer months to serve the multitude of guests he expects.

For Andrishak, Tomorrow Is Yesterday

It doesn't look like much from the outside. A small garage-shaped cabin in desperate need of a paint job. But soon Steve Andrishak takes out his plethora of keys and opens the four locks holding the doors secure. Finally, the main door slowly creaks open, revealing a virtual treasure chest of man's distant and not too distant past. This is Andrishak's Elk Point museum, and for him, it is a labor of love.

personality of the week
by DAVID MENZIES

All of which is evident upon entering the structure. Walking down the aisles is like a trip through some sort of time tunnel. In one corner, a Confederate flag from the American Civil War. In another corner, an original Thomas Edison record player. Off to the side, a couple of 100-year-old Eaton catalogues. And then, right near the back, the piece de resistance, a 1903 Model-A Ford, complete with a running two cylinder engine and looking as if it had just rolled off its Dearborn, Michigan assembly line. "There's only four left in Canada," Andrishak proudly says. "And only 68 left in the entire world." But such is the

character of Andrishak's museum: full of items no more recent than 1920 with virtually all of them in mint condition.

Across the yard, another time capsule sits: a garage housing a mock-up general store, circa 1890. It comes complete with steel cigarette tins, giant glass cookie jars, even a catcher's mask Abner Doubleday may have worn. The next structure houses Andrishak's study, containing hundreds of periodicals dating back to the turn of the century, and in his next building, there sits a 1953 Buick Century that has yet to see a single Canadian snowflake. In truth, a visit to Andrishak's is more like a walk down memory lane. The first radio, the first washing machine, the first gramophone — Andrishak's property is a historian's version of Club Med.

Andrishak, who moved to Elk Point with his family from Warspite when he was just a youngster, says he got the idea to open a museum when he was 13 years old. That was when he participated in a class project dedicated to amassing a miniature museum, comprised mostly of old Indian arrowheads found in nearby farmer's fields.

"I just carried it on from there," he says.

Over the years, with the help of a metal detector and a keen eye, Andrishak went about the task of accumulating a collection large enough it warranted a couple of small structures to house it in. Since the museum has been open, Andrishak has shown his collection to more than 35,000 people, all at a nominal admission' price. But don't go rushing to Elk Point to see Andrishak's museum he now shows his collection to people strictly by appointment only.

Not that he enjoys such a set up but the governments at the local and provincial levels have spurned his requests for funding assistance.

"I wanted to hire a student and keep it open all the time," Andrishak says. "I could have made this into a rein tourist attraction for Elk Point. But they (politicians) didn't contribute a nickel. It would be additional business for everybody here — the hotels, the gas stations — they just can't see past their noses. They (the government) are a bunch of freeloaders if you ask me."

Andrishak says that they refused him funds became they claim it's only a private collection, despite the fact that it has always been open to the public. Andrishak says the government has accused him of attempting make profits from potential contributions. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"I've put so much money and so much time into this I could never make a profit. It costs me money every year," he says.

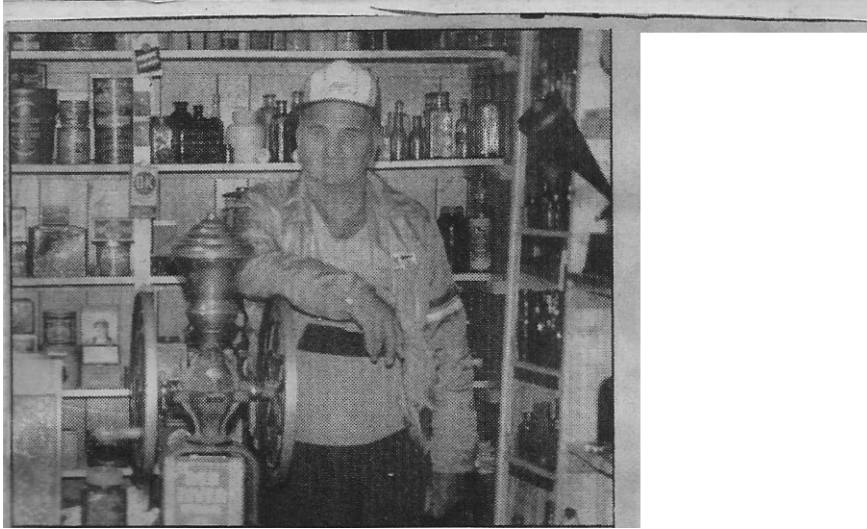
Sadly, Andrishak can't even afford full insurance coverage on what is virtually a storehouse of priceless artifacts.

"The appraisal alone would cost me \$4,000 - \$5,000," he says.

Andrishak's second labor of love is his cinema, the Arrow theatre, also located in Elk Point. Stepping into that structure is also like a trip back in time. The old steel seats, the old concession stand equipment, and in the projector booth, an original 35mm projector in perfect condition.

"Look at the quality of it," Andrishak says while threading some film into the pick-up reel. "They knew how to make things last back then."

The theatre will be 40 years old next month. It was first opened in June 1945, when Andrishak returned from serving overseas in the Canadian Army. Since then, the Arrow has played thousands of films, ranging from 1947's *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* to this year's *Beverly Hills Cop*. Andrishak has seen them all. And how does he like today's films compared with those from Hollywood's Golden Age?



"There was a time when I used to be proud to play a certain picture," Andrishak says, listing *North to Alaska* as his personal favorite. "But some of the movies they make today — I'm ashamed to play them. They're full of sex, drugs, violence — there's no more family pictures anymore"

Andrishak says that *Shane* was his all-time box-office

champion. He brought that film back nine years in a row, and it always played to full houses.

"Westerns were the favorite back then," he says, "but of course, they don't make westerns anymore." Surprisingly, movies that were Academy Award winners never drew well at his theatre. "Those pictures (award winners) are based on a city crowd — they never did well in the country."

Has the advent of cable television, pay TV, and VCR's hurt the movie business? "It's not just that," Andrishak says, "but everything else — bingos, hockey games, there's so much competition everywhere." Ironically, it is now the high school age crowd that keeps him in business by packing the theatre to see the various *Porkys* and *Friday the thirteenth's* that Andrishak so despises.

Not that it matters anymore mind you. The Arrow theatre will close its doors for the last time early next year. That's when Andrishak turns 65 and will start receiving pension benefits and after 40 long years, he's had enough of the celluloid trade.

Although he feels good these days, he wants to enjoy the remainder of his life adding to his museum collection, his first love. And with his wife recently having to deal with poor health, Andrishak has little time on his hands to run a theatre business as well as maintaining the museum. Andrishak says he'll probably get a good price for the cinema, although he is certain the new owners will tear it down to use its prime Elk Point location for more profitable businesses.

But what happens to the museum after Andrishak is gone?

"My sons said they will keep it going," he says, although his children have long since grown up and left the roost. But until his time is up, Andrishak will continue to search flea markets and garage sales, painstakingly adding to his already incredible collection of memorabilia.

And looking at the various displays, it would be a gross injustice for his museum buildings to suffer the same fate his cinema is about to encounter. For in Andrishak's buildings, history not only exists, but it lives and breathes as well.

I glance at a glass-encased display featuring weapons used in the Frog Lake Massacre. I look into it, and instantly hear the screams of women and children being slaughtered. A shiver runs down my spine, goose bumps spring up all over my body.

I look over to the jar collection, and I can see a fur trader in a general store paying the clerk two bits for a sack of preservatives.

The '53 Buick catches my eye: an oversized tribute to U.S. panache and success, it still whispers promise of the American Dream. I can see highway signs flickering by reading 70 miles per hour, and on the Buick's radio I hear Elvis Presley music, interrupted by the results of a ball game featuring the New York Giants and Brooklyn Dodgers.

I shiver again and slowly re-enter 1985, melting back into a world that measures distances in kilometres and where two bits doesn't buy a candy bar. It is like awakening from a dream.

It is only then do I realize how valuable Andrishak's museum is. To see, to touch, to hear, to smell, what history is — or was — cannot be replaced by passed down stories or textbook photographs.

I shake hands and drive off in my small Japanese imported car, so representative of our age of restraint. Andrishak's museum, a tribute to lifestyles that have gone the way of the dinosaur, quickly disappears in my rear-view mirror. The goose bumps subside; my shiver is absorbed. But somehow, I feel privileged that for a couple of hours I was able to take a trip into that region of time and space known to man as yesterday.

Have You Seen Our Museum?

Steve Andrishak, curator of the Pioneer Museum in Elk Point informs us that since 1952, when he first opened the museum, thousands of visitors have left their names in three of large guest books.

Names of visitors include those from 33 different countries of the world. People from 29 American states, as well as visitors from every province in Canada, including Newfoundland, the Yukon and the North West Territories. Visitors from as far away Japan, India, Jamaica, Russia, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Ghana and South Africa have visited the museum.

Some of the more distinguished visitors were Grant McEwan, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Senator Gladstone of Cardston, Alberta, Don Mazankowski, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, Hugh Dempsey, noted historian from the Glenbow Foundation in Calgary, James G. McGregor, well known author of many Canadian fur trading books, and Jim Bond, well known American wildlife author.

Over the years, there have been many busloads of visiting senior citizens from all parts of our province as well as numerous busloads of school children from areas surrounding Elk Point. During the past 33 years, many local teachers have taken their classes to view the many varied exhibits which are housed in four different buildings located on Andrishak's property at 50th Avenue and Highway 41.

Apparently, everyone does not have an interest in historical displays, however. Andrishak says that although many people in the province have travelled as much as 200 miles to visit this museum, others living as close as a block away are not aware that it exists.

Anyone wishing to view the museum can contact Steve by phoning 724-3654 or by taking a chance and calling at the museum. Tours are available anytime to suit you.

1903 Ford Attraction at Pioneer Museum



A 1903 Ford, one of 5000 relics at the Elk Point Pioneer Museum, draws interested attention from a group of young boys, part of the large crowd visiting the premises. According to Steve Andrishak, curator and owner of the Museum, this car is one of the original first production Fords manufactured by Henry Ford in 1903. It is a Model A runabout powered by two opposing cylinders giving an output of 8 H.P. with speed of 30 mph. At the time of manufacture, it was worth \$850.00. 1708 were produced and it is estimated only about 30 are in existence in museums today. It is considered a rarity. Mr. Andrishak, on the right, is explaining the origin of the vehicle to Rene Williams, Eric Terre and Ray Olenik of St. Paul. Background shows other interesting displays.

Area Abounds in Historical Artifacts

1967

Very few residents of Elk Point and district realize that they are living in one of the richest historical areas in the Province of Alberta. Many people think back to the Pioneer days of 1906 when the early settlers from the United States, England, and the Ukraine began to settle our district. However, very few realize that much activity took place in this area well over 100 years before the first settlers arrived.

In 1792 the Hudson's Bay Co. and the North West Trading Co. established 2 fur trading posts simultaneously and side by side along the North Saskatchewan River, located 7 miles south east of the present town of Elk Point. These two forts were known as Fort George and Buckingham House. They were in continual operation until 1801 when moved 18 miles upriver to an island post known as Fort de l'Isle. During this period the North Saskatchewan River was the main highway of transportation. Early explorers, fur traders, Indians and mapmakers passed by our doorstep.

It is interesting to note that these two forts (Fort George and Buckingham House) were the first established forts along the Saskatchewan river in our present boundary of Alberta. During the spring these two posts attracted fur traders as well as Indians from as far west as the Rocky Mountains, as far north as the Peace River country and as far south as the present Montana border. It is hard to believe but nevertheless true that during the busy fur trading season the population of the two forts was greater than the present population of the town of Elk Point. This of course included the permanent staff at the forts, their wives, children, buffalo hunters, fur traders and visiting Indians.

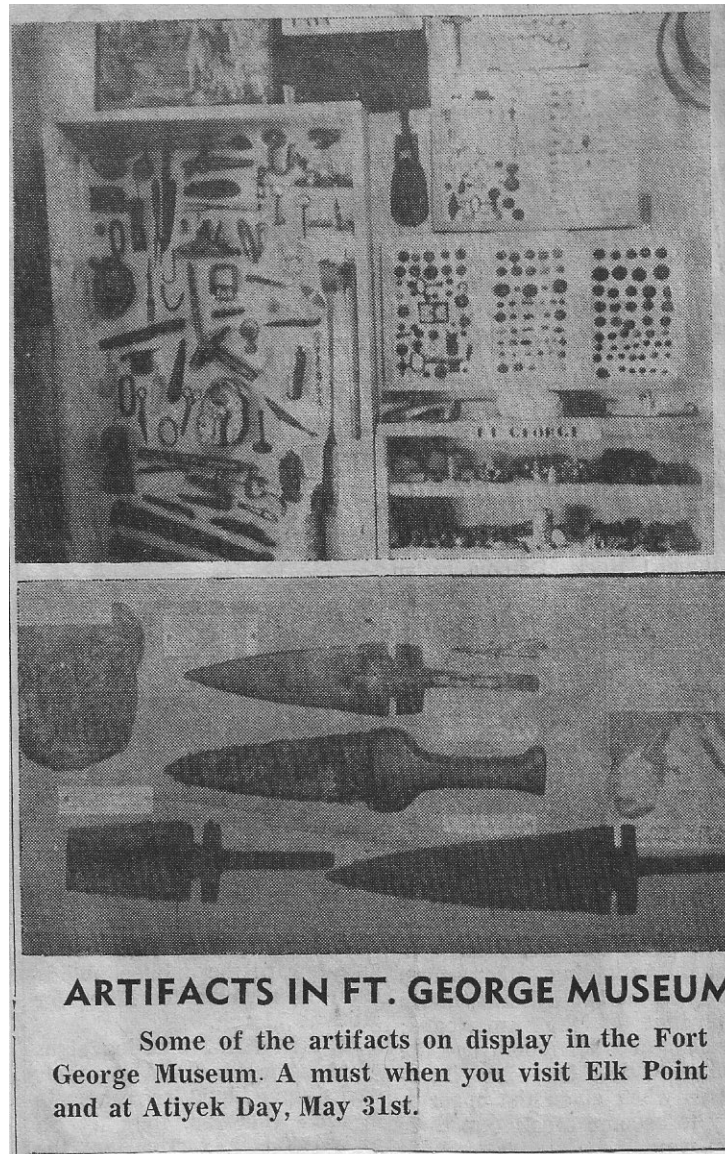
During the winter of 1794-95 David Thompson, the famous mapmaker spent his honeymoon at Fort George with his Indian bride. During this time, he worked on some of his maps which are presently displayed in the Royal Ontario Museum.

Another famous explorer, Sir Alexander MacKenzie passed by on many occasions and spent considerable time in this area. Besides his explorations to the far north in search of the Northwest Passage he established the X.Y. Co. in 1799 on Fort de l'Isle. (18 miles west of the present Elk Point bridge).

The main items of trade, many which are on display at the Fort George Museum in Elk Point, were guns, rum, axes, beads, kettles lead shot, gun flints, trinkets of all sorts as well as numerous other items. In return for these items the fur trader received beaver pelts, as well as mink, ermine, lynx, wolf, muskrat pelts and buffalo hides.

Nearly 100 years later a rebellion took place at nearby Frog Lake in 1885. This was part of the North West Rebellion which at one time threatened the entire west.

This history all took place many years before our ancestors settled the area in which we live in. This year Elk Point is staging A-Ti-Yek day which commemorates the early fur trade era. Many activities pertaining to that period will take place which should add up to a very interesting and unusual entertainment. See you there on May 31.



Artifacts in Ft. George Museum

1967

Some of the artifacts on display in the Fort George Museum. A must when you visit Elk Point and at Atiyek Day, May 31st.

Elk Point Museum

Steve Andrishak Turns Hobby Collection into Museum

THURSDAY APRIL 15th, 1954

As we step inside this museum, one leaves the present and is transported back in imagination to the wide open spaces of yester-year when warlike Indian tribes roamed the prairies, customs of its wild and primitive inhabitants and tradition before the white man invaded the territory. From there, the time pieces, elaborately displayed all around its walls give a vivid impression of the development of the white man, step by step as he proceeded to develop, civilize & tame the wilderness.

This maze of curious and educative material was amassed a 33-year-old Theatre Operator, native of Elk Point. Since boyhood, Mr. Steve Andrishak has dug the river banks of the North Saskatchewan river and haunted the site of the Frog Lake Massacre, a few miles east of Elk Point, and surroundings to dig out the treasures we now see on display in his little 12x26 Museum, located at the cross roads of Highway 41 and the Heinsburg-Lindbergh road. It is just kitty-corner from the Elk Point Clinic and is easily accessible to the tourist who wishes to view folklore.

1500 Tourists Visit

The museum was officially opened about a year ago and since that time over 1500 tourists have signed its register and gaze with awe at the amazing collection, something rarely seen even in the largest national museums.

Besides the numerous Indian relics unburied out of the ground, Steve has collected many old guns, time pieces, dating back to the days of Queen Elizabeth and used along the centuries by intrepid discoverers who blazed our western trails. Many of these items have been bought outright by Steve who has invested a considerable amount of private funds in the collection:

It is really something for an amateur historian to step into this room. It does something to him. We started on one side and went slowly around the room while Steve held forth on the details of the pieces on hand.

Old Firearms

There are specimens of every major type of hand and shoulder arms, dating far back in the years. This includes in historical order: The hand cannon, flintlock, flint lock in pistol and shoulder weapons, percussion lock in pistol and shoulder arms, & wonderful variety of breech-loading weapons in revolver, pistol, rifle shotgun and combination two and three-barrel guns — the forerunners of repeating pistols leading the development of the six-shooter and automatic guns of this period.

History and the makers of history are there. The predominant part the Indian played is all around us. We see neatly ticketed in glass enclosed show cases most of the primitive weapons he us to wage war with the neighboring tribes and later turned on the white man to prevent the hopeless invasion of his lands.

Not only are the weapons of destruction featured, but we can find all kinds of crude tools the Indian manufactured out of hard stone and flint for use in his daily life and mundane activities. There are

primitive knives, crushers, cooking utensils, etc. Well preserved reproductions of the traditional peace pipes used in peace councils are displayed.

We never would have been interested in hunting with a bow and arrow but would certainly have much respect for it in the hands of a skilled warrior. They look like a formidable war weapon and practical for hunting game. In this section can be seen the various types of arrowheads: those used for warring purposes, others for hunting big game, smaller ones for birds, partridges and rabbits as well.

White Antics

The white man's mode of living can also be traced by the chronicle improvements of items seen in Steve's museum. For use in his daily life, we find what we would call today "contraptions", but very much prized then. Candle molds, quite ingenious in its day for pouring the tallow necessary to provide light in tents and log shacks: an old time gramophone for squeaky entertainment — it still works even by using a spherical record: an old spinning wheel, over 110 years old, so essential for the weaving of cloth and making garments at that time: a butter knife reminiscent of the days of old King James and many other items.

Mounted Wildlife

Natural wildlife is depicted with interesting mounted specimens of birds and animals, denizens of this part of the country. Started only recently, this collection is increasing day by day. Mr. Andrishak is an amateur hand at taxidermy, but most of his prize possessions are donated and many have been-mounted by R. Quinn, who is no mean taxidermist himself.

It is impossible to come to the end of the trail on this narrative of the Elk Point Museum. All we intend to give you is a general view of what it contains. May we remind you that Mr. Steve Andrishak has an open invitation to anyone in the district including tourist to drop in and sign the register and get a view of the historical collection.

It was hard for us to tear ourselves away. The desire to explore persisted and we found ourselves wondering about detailed information and digging the past for it. Steve could possibly do that from his large selection of reference books he has acquired for the purpose of identifying relics and securing complete information. And although he is a walking encyclopedia, mysteries still prevail and offer a challenge to a versatile mind delving into our historical past. The field of research has unlimited possibilities.

Mr. Steve Andrishak in his hobby, is rendering a valuable service by the preservation of historical facts. The work of research in this interesting field is on almost every piece of his collection.

Steve has a wealth of information tucked away in his memory, and this was acquired only through spending many hours reading through his collection of books. Because the river valley played such an important part in Alberta's history, Steve has numerous Indian relics. These include a wide assortment of arrow heads, tomahawks, stones used by the Indians for pounding grain and stone knives for the cutting up of game and preparation of hides.

Another old - time piece of domestic machinery is an old hand-operated sewing machine. According to information from one of Steve's reference books the hand-cranked sewing machine was still in use in 1851. It was about that time that the first treadle - operated machine was turned out.

Steve isn't forgetting the children in his collection. He plans to concentrate on an extensive drive to obtain stuffed birdlife of every variety, believing it will be of much interest and education to youngsters.

Another relic of much interest to the immediate district of Elk Point is the first motion picture machine in Elk Point. It is an old French-made projector with history that dates back to the turn of the century. Still in good working order is an old Edison phonograph which dates back to 1895. The recordings are round spheres. Another exceptionally good keepsake is an edition of the New York Herald, dated April 15, 1885, featuring the story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Another old-timer is an edition of the North Dakota Eagle, dated 1893.

The young collector, whose wife and children also take a keen interest in the collection, believes, that many persons have old-time" relics hidden away in their attics or basements. As the years by much of this valuable documentation in the hands of few scattered old pioneers vanishes with them as they pass away and are scattered or destroyed. By providing, in his museum sanctuary to store these valuable records, Mr. Andrishak is serving authentic document of our history for future years when its real value will increase, be recognized and appreciated.

MUCH RESEARCH

Much of Steve's work is in research. He had a large number of reference books, many of them old, and it is by reading these books that he is able to coy up with the necessary information In a small private museum, located in the Village of Elk Point, 22 miles east of St. Paul, can be found some interesting relics of our historic past and turbulent pioneer days. They will bring many kindred memories to the old-timers, still living, and stir the imagination and curiosity of the younger members of this generation.



There is much history attached to the district of Elk Point, about 160 miles northeast of Edmonton. The town and district, especially one or two individuals, have done something about its

preservation. Shown seated in a 1903 model Ford is Steve Andrishak who has set up an outstanding museum at Elk Point. Mr. Andrishak owns the theatre at the 'Point'. There are

thousands of articles of historical interest in his museum and an hour or two spent therein is certainly worthwhile.

—Picture by courtesy of the Edmonton Journal.

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Museum Preserves Past

Last Sunday we accepted an invitation to open house at the Elk Point Museum, owned and operated by Mr. Steve Andrishak. We took the whole family and the trip was an educational one for everyone concerned. Although we had visited the museum on several occasions, there were many "new" and interesting relics added to the collection which now numbers over 5000 individual pieces, including Indian arrows, old time muskets, pistols, tomahawks and other interesting material, all neatly labelled with explanations, origin and the donor or exhibitor of the item. Mr. Andrishak devotes many hours of his time searching for this material, looking up data and classifying it properly.

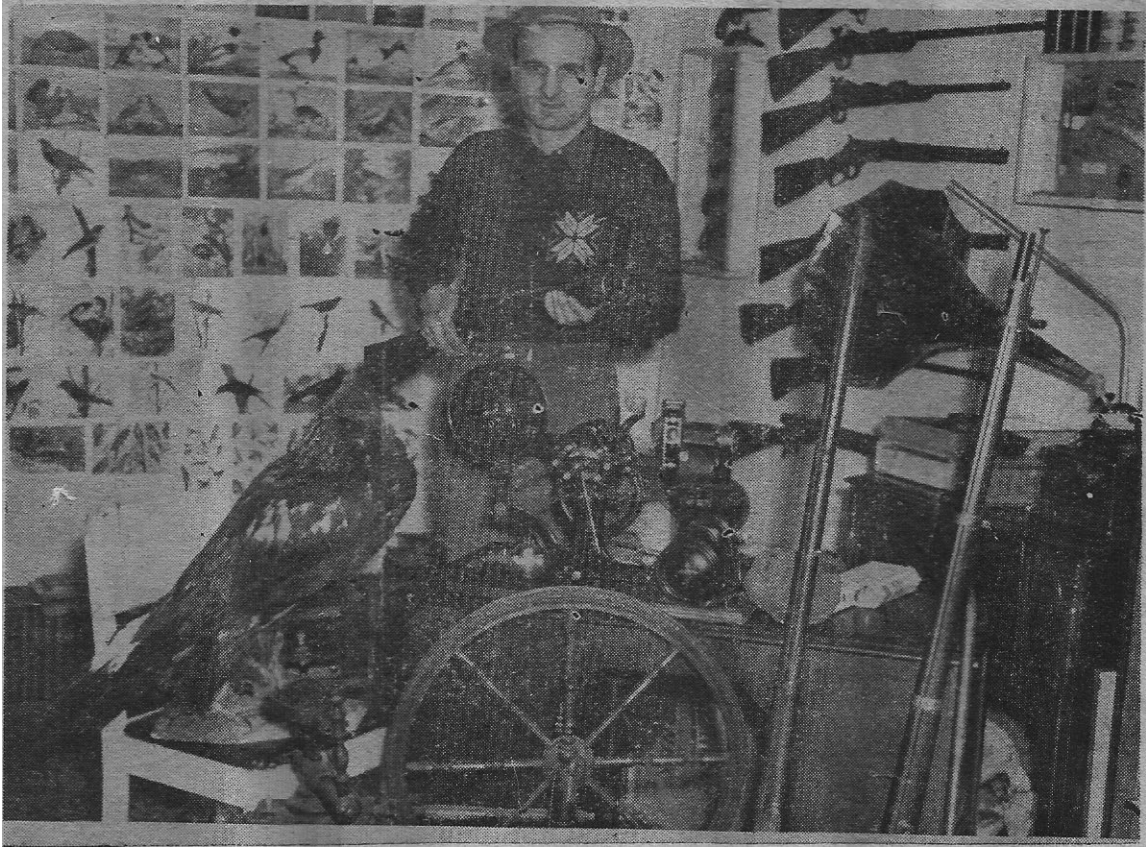
Steve started this hobby years ago and opened up a small museum to which extensions have been made. The popularity of his project is increasing and the number of museum pieces now trusted in his care is congesting the small area and the need arises for more expansion.

The Elk Point Pioneer Museum has outgrown its premises. B u t Steve, who has spent along with his time, a substantial sum of money to operate the museum on his own, cannot and certainly should not be expected to accept the responsibility for more expansion.

It is our opinion that this well established museum should receive some sort of a special grant, possibly from the provincial government, or perhaps the Chambers of Commerce in the district should organize to finance the construction of an adequate building to preserve the relics.

The big danger as Steve explains is fire. Although insurance is carried it is impossible to cover the full value these items which are irreplaceable. A good fire-proof building is suggested.

We are sure the large numbers who visited the museum along with us on Sunday will agree that Mr. Andrishak again deserves congratulations for his interest in history and for preserving the nostalgic and interesting remnants of our great pioneer days.



Mr. Steve Andrishak, collector of old relics stands in his unique museum, surrounded by a variety of historical objects he has gathered in from near and far. In his hands he holds an old type gun called a blunder bust. It was probably first used in England in the hands of a guard riding an old stagecoach. And do not underestimate it. At close range it is quite effective and capable of blowing a wide hole in somebody or something. It is 130 years old. The two percussion muskets leaning against the desk are 120 years old. Directly in front of Steve is the first motion picture, a 28 mm job, used in Elk Point, on the floor an old spinning wheel and on the right an old Victor gramophone, one of the first in existence. Mounted on the left, a beautiful specimen of a Golden Eagle.

EDITORIAL

Village of Elk Point To Tax Pioneer Museum

It has been brought to our attention that the Council of the Village of Elk Point, at a recent meeting decided to tax the Pioneer Museum.

The move is a surprising one to the curator of the museum who has spent much of his personal time and effort to the project as well as financial resources and many citizens of Elk Point who have taken pride in the Pioneer Museum, a local attraction which has drawn many visitors and tourists to the village.

The extensive amount of good publicity this museum has brought to the village is one good reason why some concessions should be made in lieu of taxes.

We understand, that according to the Act the Village cannot exempt the museum unless the title of it was turned completely over to them. However, in view of the importance and desirability of having the museum in Elk Point, perhaps some kind of concessions could be arranged—in the form of a grant to at least reimburse Mr. Andrishak’s cash outlay.

The museum is providing hours of educational entertainment to many adults and youngsters and it would be a fine gesture of recognition if the Village would reconsider its decision . . . or at least make some attempt to help instead of placing obstacles in the way.

Jack Deakin's Rural Route



Leaving Cold Lake with members of the Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce in charge, the tour swung away from the program to visit the towns of Bonnyville, St. Paul and Elk Point. A Pioneer Museum started by Steve Andrishak is one of the best displays seen anywhere on the trip.

Museum for Peace River

Melvin J. Rodacker, a Grande Prairie businessmen honored recently for his work in promotion of a railway to the Northwest Territories through the Peace River country, is on a new project. Mel is a driving force behind a museum for the Peace River country at Grande Prairie.

On a recent trip to the Peace, Mel outlined plans for the museum, which he and his associates hope will be a true representation of the large inland grain shipping empire. Considerable money has been contributed to the venture along with many items of interest. Mel says more money and exhibit pieces are needed. But it is a fairly sure shot that whatever the popular Grande Prairie garage man starts he will finish.

Thinking of museums, and they are increasing in number in northern Alberta, recalls a trip to Elk Point where I met Steve Andrishak, a local theatre operator. Steve has an outstanding historical effort on the Elk Point district. I haven't seen one better. Each year Steve adds to his collection until recently he had to build an addition to the building housing his historical data.

If you are out Elk Point way, 150 miles northeast of Edmonton, drop in on Steve. He'll welcome you. To tour his museum is educational and interesting, because Steve started his collection prowling the banks of the North Saskatchewan River at Elk Point when he was a young tad. Steve isn't dating himself. Like the daisies—he won't tell how old he is.

Forced to Charge At Pioneer Museum

Elk Point, Alta., April 10, 1960.

Editor,
Elk Point News Section, Elk Point, Alberta.

Dear Sir:

Due to the fact that I must now pay Village Taxes on my museum in Elk Point, as well as insurance on the exhibits, light, heating and general operating costs, I have no alternative, but to charge a small admission fee to those who enjoy visiting the museum from time to time.

I have been operating this museum in Elk Point entirely at my own expenses for the past years and received no Village or Government grant for doing so. As much as I hate to charge admission, the Council's decision leaves me no alternative, if I am to break even or get a minimum of compensation on this public project. All those having exhibits on display are entitled to a free admission.

Yours very truly,
Steven Andrishak,
Curator of the
Pioneer Museum,
Elk Point, Alberta.

Claresholm Editor on Tour of Northern Alberta

About a month ago a group of newspapermen toured the North Country from Grand Prairie to Cold Lake and on to Edmonton. One of the reporters, Mr. Gordon Neale, editor of the Claresholm Local Press represented the Weekly Newspaper Association and turned out the following account. The tour was sponsored by the Alberta Tourist Association.

Museum Visitors

Two hundred and nine visitors registered their names at the Pioneer Museum, Elk Point, on Sunday July 6th between the hours of 1 to 10 p.m. Of the total forty-two were from St. Paul, twenty-four from Vermilion. Other visitors came from Wainwright, Gr. Centre, Clandonald, Derwent, Dewberry, Vegreville, Mann- vine, Myrnam, Vilna, Lafond, St. Edouard and Beaver Crossing. The museum, operated by Steve Andrishak, local theatre owner, will hold periodic Sunday openings from time to time and will notify the public through the Vermilion Standard and the St. Paul Journal.

Elk Point Post Office to Celebrate Golden Anniversary

It may be of interest to the readers of this section that in June of this year, the Elk Point Post Office will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of its establishment. The first Post Office was officially opened on the 15th of June 1909 on the farmstead of Mr. Charles Hood (Sec. 6, Township 57, Range. 6-W4). There was no separate building for this purpose because the volume of business did not warrant it and Mr. Hood conducted his postal business right the parlor of his home. It is interesting to note at this time that the board with a slot cut out of it containing the drop or mail receiver of our first Post Office is now on display in Steve Andrishak's museum.

The following is a brief rundown of the various postmasters and postmistresses Elk Point has known in the 50 years spanning its existence.

Established 15th of June 1909.

Location, Sec 6, Twshp. 57, Rge. 6-W4.

The postmaster is listed first and the period of service immediately after.

Chas Hood, 15-6-1909 to 22- 2-1928; Jos. C. Quin, 11-8-1928 to 16-11-1937; Mrs. R. A. Quin, 16-11-1937 to 8-12-1945; R. P. Quin, 27-6-1946 to ?

Here also for your information is a history of our neighboring Post Offices to the west.

Hopkins, Alta. established 1-19-1908, location, Sec. 1.5, Township 56 Range 7-W4.

John Ross, 1-19-1908 to 25-11-1910; J. S. Valentine, 1-3-1911 to 4-6-1914; G. N. Wallace, 20-1-1015 to 15-5-1915. Closed 31-8-1915.

Caskeyville, Alta., established 1st Sept. 1908, location, Sec. 28, Township 56, Range 7 W4th. Name changed to Caskey 1st October 1912. Name changed to Hopkins 1st December 1915.

J. B. Caskey, 1-9-1908 to 24-8-1916; A.D. McGinnis, 1-12-1916 to 4-8-1920. Closed 15-11-1920.

Note: The discrepancy in dates between Postmasters is due to time involved for permanent appointments to be made

The anniversary of our own Post Office in June is the excuse we are using for the whiskers.

This wonderful job of preservation here has been made possible through the efforts of a handful of persons. Their work is outstanding. As a result Elk Point has an historical record seldom gathered together by individuals possessing so much community interest.

Possibly two of the most ardent recorders of this history are Steve Andrishak, a theatre owner, and Dr. F. G. Miller, a pioneer doctor of the Elk Point district.

Mr. Andrishak has an exceptionally fine collection of articles on the early history of Elk Point. These are stored in a museum building near his home. The museum houses what is believed to be one of the most complete collections held by any individual in the province.

Rare Gopher Trapped at E.P.

A jet-black gopher was caught in a trap laid by Peter Andrishak of Elk Point last week.

The gopher, brought to the "Journal" for display by Mr. Steve Andrishak, was first seen by Pete while it was romping around in a field. Pete kept a sharp lookout for it and when he saw it scamper down a hole, laid a trap. A few minutes later it came popping out and was caught around the neck but extricated before it could be hurt.

The rare animal is blacker than a chunk of coal with a shining and glossy fur, which bristles in the light. Its eyes are of a deep matching hue as well as every part of its identity as that of its body. There is no mistake gopher by the hearty "squeak" it bleats out continuously.

Mr. Steve Andrishak who is quite an authority on nature and makes a study of this in conjunction with the operation of a museum in Elk Point said that a black gopher is a much rarer animal than an albino. He said the white gopher is bred out of a color pigment deficiency, reverting to a neutral color white. An animal born black on the other hand has too much of one color ingredient to be offset by its natural physiognomy and turns that color, in this case, black. The gopher estimated to be of this year's spring crop was in healthy condition, fat and well-rounded before his days of hibernation due to commence soon.

The gopher has been referred to the University of Alberta for observation and will be returned to Mr. Andrishak who will mount it for the museum.

Preserving Alberta's heritage calls for training and permits

Deb Gilmour's article "The past is treasured here" (Journal, July 16) appears to imply that Mr Steve Andrishak is doing all Albertans a favor by digging and collecting artifacts for his museum.

In actual fact, however, his well-motivated efforts work against the preservation and interpretation of that very heritage which is dear to many Albertans. When an unqualified and untrained individual digs into our past, so much damage is done to the identification and interpretive processes, that about the only interest served is the collectors.

Every time a fort is dug, every time a prehistoric artifact is collected, the people of this province lose a bit more of their past to a private individual who, while ostensibly well meaning is not acting in the public interest and has no mandate to do so.

These activities have been illegal in Alberta since 1973 when historical resources were protected under the Historical Resources Act. It is not hard to dig up artifacts; it does, however, take a professional person qualified in archaeology or anthropology with relevant field experience, and with a signed permit, to do so legally in this province. Specified levels of reporting, description, and analysis must be adhered to and the artifacts delivered, with the appropriate documentation, to the Department of Culture. To do any less deprives Albertans of their heritage.

Dr. Paul F. Donahue, director
Archaeological Survey of Alberta

Private Museum saved many clues to the past

In reply to Dr. Paul's remarks (Your Opinion, Aug. 19) regarding an article written by Bob Gilmour of The Journal and which concerns the fur trade collection housed in my museum.

First of all I would like to inform Dr. Donahue that the bulk of my fur trade collection was amassed as long as 25 years and at a time when there little or no interest in the preservation of the fur trading posts near Elk Point. Since 1973 w the province passed the law, which prohibits the of historical sites, I can assure Dr. Donahue that I have added one single fur trade artifact to my collection.

Mach of the fur trade in my museum was found well over a half a mile away from the site; other items were obtained from dumps which were away from the actual site. A lot of these artifact: would never have been found and would have deteriorated to the point of being useless. As it stands all the artifacts found at these sites are on display in the immediate area in which they were found, for local residents to see, rather than being carted away to some distant museum. I have made arrangements for this collection to always remain in the Elk Point area.

I have co-operated with the Provincial Museum by allowing them to photograph, catalogue and study these artifacts on many occasions at their convenience and on my time. Thousands of other people have viewed this display over the years. I feel it has served its purpose regardless of what Dr. Donahue thinks.

Steve Andrishak
Fort George Museum
Elk Point



JOURNAL STAFF PHOTO

Black and White Gopher Contrast

About two months ago Bernard Berlinguette brought in a rare albino gopher snared on his farm. This week a contrasting black specimen was brought by Steve Andrishak of Elk Point. Caught by his brother Pete, this black gopher is declared to be even rarer than the white one. An albino lacks color pigment and assumes a neutral color which is white while a black one must produce a special rare pigment coloration to take on dark hues. Pictures of the two rare gophers appear above to show contrast.

Elk Point Museum Rates Highly with Other Museums Of Alberta

Another private museum of interest is operated at Elk Point 140 miles north-east of Edmonton, by Steve Andrishak, an Elk Point theatre operator, whose absorbing interest in history has led to a large and diverse accumulation of historical relics.

Mr. Andrishak's museum, known as The Pioneer Museum, is a hobby which has grown at the theatre operator's own expense to a collection which attracts many people. Beginning from a small collection of Indian relics, the museum, now housed in a 12 by 26 foot building, contains a number of ancient rifles and revolvers, many souvenirs of the 1885 massacre at nearby Frog Lake, and a bewildering assortment of other articles including a 100-year old sewing machine, three Hudson Bay axes, an opium pipe brought from the Philippine Islands after the Spanish-American war, a Turkish dueling knife, a petrified log, and swords used in the American civil war the South African War and the Napoleonic Wars

An Elk Point theatre operator's hobby has led to the erection of one of Alberta's more popular museums. Steve Andrishak houses a historical collection in the museum, which is 140 miles north-east of Edmonton.

Beginning from a small collection of Indian relics, the museum, now housed in a 12 by 26-foot building, contains ancient revolvers and rifles — souvenirs of the 1885 massacre at nearby Frog Lake. Other curios include a 100-year-old sewing machine, three Hudson Bay axes, an opium pipe brought from the Philippine Islands after the Spanish-American war, a Turkish dueling knife, a petrified log, and swords used in the American Civil War, the South African War and the Napoleonic Wars.

Today one can re-live the exciting past of the Elk Point area by visiting the Fort George Museum in Elk Point. Within the museum there are artifacts from the Fur Trading days; such items as Trade rings, trinkets used by the Indians, arrowheads, old books, moustache cups, rifles, pistols, swords, skeletons, and much more.

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Mr. Andrishak has an exceptionally fine collection of articles on the early history of Elk Point and these are stored in a museum building near his home. The museum houses what is believed to be one of the most complete collections held by any individual in the province.

Black Gopher

Mr. Andrishak really sees that the rare black rodent gets the best of care. However, another strange episode has been written into this little black gopher's life. He now has a partner in his cage, another coal black gopher. This one was caught in the same general area as the first, possibly about a mile apart, being snared by Robert Pichka on April 8, 1959. Bigger than the first he is also as black as coal. He too, is very much at home in the cage, and is possibly of a more tranquil nature than Blackie No. 1, as proximity of people failed to worry him even from the first day.

The two rarities may be seen at the Elk Point Museum. The university explains that a pure black animal occurring in a species of another natural color, is caused by an over-supply of color pigment, and happens much less frequently than white or albino animals, where there is a lack of color pigment.

EVERY once in a while, we hear of someone seeing a black gopher. Dave MacDonald of Manor, Sask., has seen them on several occasions. However, they are rare. Here are some interesting facts: he never hibernated during the winter, and has many interesting habits such as completely rolling himself up in his bedding until no gopher can be seen. When up and about he spreads the bedding evenly on the floor of the cage. Food supplied him consists of lettuce, celery tops, oats and other grains, and he really loves an apple, as well as young green quack grass and dandelions.

Pioneer Museum Receives Old 1903 Model Ford Automobile

The Pioneer Museum of Elk Point has obtained a very old and interesting relic of the past — a 1903 Model A Ford. This antique car is considered as Henry Ford's first year automobile since it was in 1903 that Ford organized the Ford Car Co.

In the early stages of the motor car industry, motor vehicles were known as horseless carriages, because the body resembled a buggy but lacked the horses. The parts are all in good shape and sometime this summer it will become mobile. If you happen to be in Elk Point when it makes its initial run don't be alarmed but give it lots of room in case something happens, and it blows up.

One thing it does lack is a set of the old brass coal oil lamps that some of the early models used. Anyone who may have a pair of lamps which could be made usable are pleased advised to contact the museum at Elk Point.

All in all it adds up to a very interesting and rare exhibit, only one other similar model is known in Western Canada and probably no more than 40 of these Models exist in the entire world and those are exhibited only in the larger museums throughout the United States.

The above-mentioned car, which is owned by Steve Andrishak, was then advertised as a 1903 Model A Rear Entrance Tonneau model. (The passengers enter the back seat through a rear door). It is a 2-cylinder vehicle with its 8 h.p. motor, gas tank, water tank and fly wheel all situated under the front seat. A chain drives the rear wheels.

When the above vehicle was obtained only the chassis and parts remained. Mr. Andrishak wrote to the Ford Motor Car Co. as well as other collectors in the USA and obtained all needed information as well as authentic blueprints and plans needed to reconstruct it.

The body was rebuilt by Mr. Mike Kovach who made a marvelous and authentic job in every way. In fact, it was so accurate that when it was placed on the 'frame or chassis it fit to the finest degree.

Model A Ford stirred up

Motoring Craze Hits Edmonton

GORDON KENT
Journal Staff Writer
Edmonton

The teams of draft horses and oxen that lined Edmonton's streets at the turn of the century met their match the day Joseph Morris drove into town. The wholesale grocery store owner and former alderman astonished his neighbors in May 1904 when he returned from a business trip with Edmonton's first car. He hadn't gone shopping for an automobile, but a friend in Winnipeg had just started a Ford dealership and Morris was so impressed with a test drive that he took a car home with him on the train.

Steve Andrishak, owner of a private museum in Elk Point, said these were the first mass-market vehicles the company produced. Ford made about 1,700 of the eight-horsepower, two-cylinder Model As in 1903-04, then went on to other models before reviving the name a quarter-century later, he said from his home 200 km east of Edmonton. The chain-driven, wooden-bodied vehicle stirred up more than dust on Edmonton's unpaved roads.

"The new carriage created quite an excitement on Jasper Avenue last evening, especially among the horses and small boys," the Edmonton Bulletin reported. Wagons, carriages and Red River carts were the town's main form of transportation at the time, although the grandly named Edmonton, Pacific and Yukon railway crossed the river on the Low Level Bridge.

"The new carriage created quite an excitement on Jasper Avenue last evening, especially among the horses and small boys."

— Report in the Edmonton Bulletin

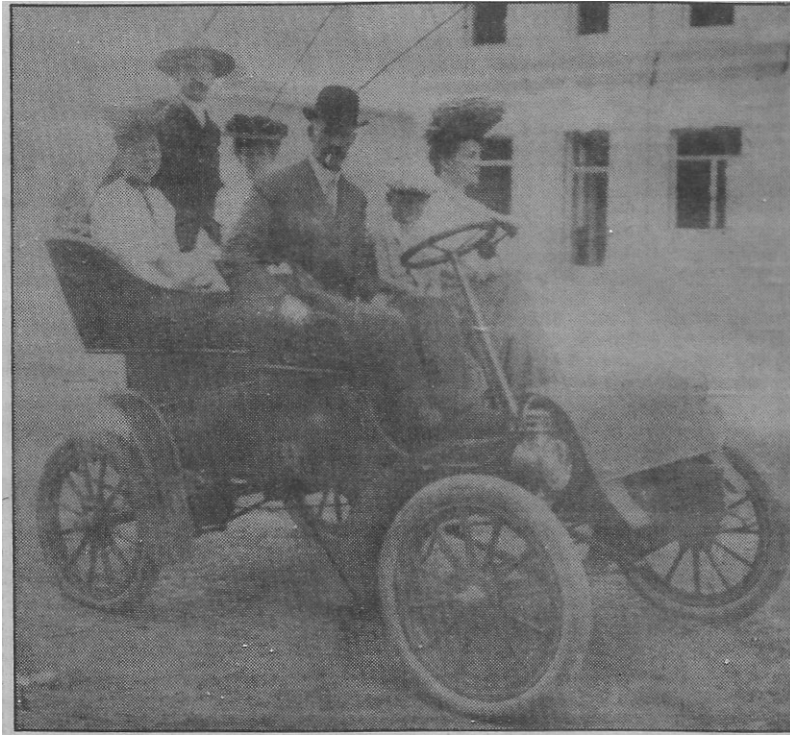
Joseph Morris and his wife, Margaret, had a high profile in local society. Margaret was captain of the city's first women's hockey team in 1898, when the uniform included long skirts and the only opposition was men's teams. She organized Edmonton's first fashion show in 1902, a charity event she put on with the Hudson's Bay Co. after seeing one at Chicago's Marshall-Field's department store.

Joseph, who died in 1939, had a store on the south side of Jasper Avenue just east of 99th Street and was an early leader in the Edmonton Exhibition Association.

But for all his accomplishments, he wasn't Alberta's first car owner — that honor goes to Calgary's Billy Cochrane who in 1901 bought a steam-powered Locomobile. But the Ontario-born Morris, who moved West at age 17 in 1885, was gripped by the motoring craze. Within a year he had three black Buicks in Chicago making up half the town's six cars. Driving was still an Edmonton sport, not a necessity. People went touring or drove to picnics in the woods west of 124th Street in cars that could reach 65 kmh.

By 1906 there were 41 automobiles in Alberta, mostly in Calgary, and the government decided it should register them. Morris wrangled number one. His \$3 registration fee didn't include government-issued plates, so he decided he could have fun.

According to Tony Cashman's *History of Motoring in Alberta*, most people put their numbers on a tin plate with a leather holder. But Morris simply put a broom handle in the back of his open car. When he was charged with failing



City Archives

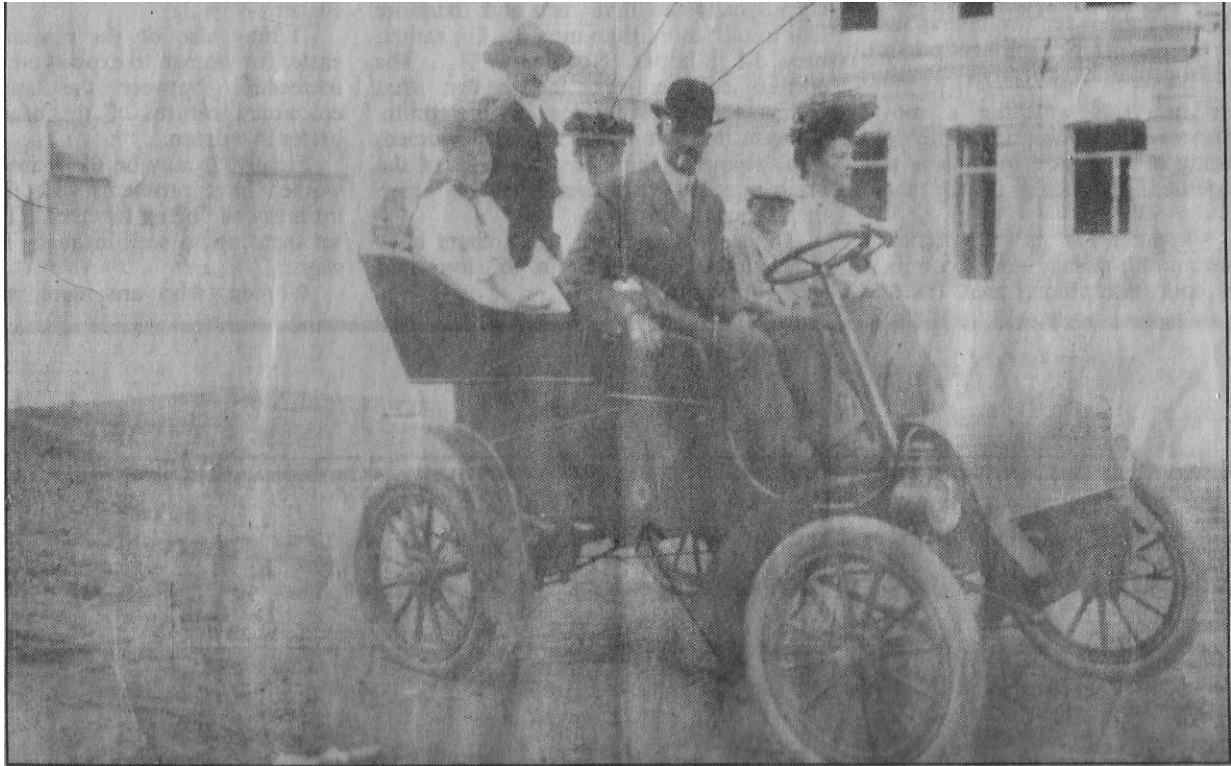
Joseph Morris owned the city's first car, a Model A

Edmonton's First Car: New Carriage Created Quite An Excitement

By NICK LEES

Journal Staff Writer

IT WAS 85 YEARS AGO this week, on May 25, 1904, that many Edmontonians first saw an automobile. And it wasn't long before the owner appeared in court, charged with defying new legislation.



Edmonton's first car was seen 85 years ago this week . . . and owner Joe Morris was soon in court

PICTURE: City Archives

The Edmonton Bulletin began Edmonton's saga of the automobile on May 26 when it reported:

"The credit of bringing the first horseless carriage to Edmonton belongs to Mr. J.H. Morris, who, on his return from Winnipeg last evening, brought a two cylinder autocar.

"The new carriage created quite an excitement on Jasper Avenue last evening, especially among the horses and small boys."

In his book, *A History of Motoring In Alberta*, 'commissioned by the AMA to mark its 50th Anniversary in 1975, author Tony Cashman noted that Morris had been in Winnipeg on a buying trip for his department store and hadn't planned on buying a car. "But his friend Billy Powers had just got an agency for Henry Ford's products and Joe took a ride in the scar, or more precisely, on it," said Cashman.

"He was so impressed with the possibilities of the automobile that he had it shipped home on the same train with him. It travelled express."

MORRIS'S DEPARTMENT store was on east Jasper, where the Hotel Macdonald parking lot is today. And the businessman was faced with a problem when the fire-engine-red car was unloaded at the South-Side station. The High Level Bridge was nine years into the future and Morris rattled down 99th Street and Scona hill and over the Low Level Bridge — and wondered how to get back up the hill.

"The 10-per-cent grade of McDougall Hill looked pretty forbidding," said Cashman. "So, Joe elected for the easier glade of Grierson's Hill. "He made it with ease,"

The engine of the new Ford was under the driver's at and it was cranked from the side. There was no windshield and the back was detachable.

"The car could reach speeds of forty miles an hour," said Cashman. "But there weren't many roads on which such speed was safe. "The horse was still king and no matter what Joe did, he was wrong with the horse operators, if he went rattling by past a team of horses the teamster would cuss him out for scaring the animals, and if he slowed down to a crawl the teamster would yell, 'What's the matter with you? Think I can't handle my horses?'"

THE CAR WAS GREAT advertising for Morris's store, but the following year, he went to Chicago on business and returned with three black Buicks.

"The year after that, in 1906, when the first government of the brand-new province of Alberta found it had 41 cars within its jurisdiction, it passed The Automobile Act to cope with the issues.

"Joe Morris claimed and got license number one through seniority."

The legislation set the speed limit at 16 kmh in town and 32 kmh in the country.

Invitation to Ford Motor's 75th anniversary

Mr. Steve Andrishak has been invited by the Ford Motor Co. to attend a 75th Anniversary luncheon at Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan, on June 16th, 1978. This special recognition is being extended to Mr. Andrishak as one of the few owners of 1903 Model A Ford car, one of the first production vehicles built by Ford. The day will include numerous other activities: a mock completion of assembly of a 1903 Model A which will then be driven from the plant by William C. Ford, Vice President of Product Design and a grandson of Henry Ford.

The Model A will then lead an unprecedented parade of 75 cars representing each year the Company has been in business. During the formal luncheon marking the company's Diamond Jubilee, several owners of original 1903 Model A's — including Steve Andrishak — will receive special certificates signed by Henry Ford II and plaques for their cars. Those unable to attend this reception and civic luncheon will receive their awards by mail. Following the luncheon, the cars will leave Greenfield Village, circle past Ford World Headquarters, and proceed to Fairlane Town Centre where a 25 foot Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Cake will be waiting for a further celebration.

Brilliant illustrations form historical background

By Lyle Hamm

Many towns across North America lack an insight into their own public history. In Elk Point, Billie Milholland has captured history on a wall. A free-standing mural to be exact, but a proud and accurate sketch of the history that casts Elk Point and much of the Lakeland district as some of Canada's greatest historical regions.

Born and raised in Elk Point, Milholland has always been into the artistic forms of drawing, painting, sketching, and of course doodling.

"I've taken several workshops over the years, which has taught me a lot. It is still my dream to take an Arts degree," she said.

History has always been a passion of Milhollands', but until the mural, she was more busy writing about history than painting. Readers of the Harrowsmith magazine may recall coming across articles submitted by Milholland as she once published for them. Working on a historical novel at present, Milholland said she took much of the material out of the content and painted it into the mural sketchings. But that wasn't where the idea of a mural first originated.

"I was watching a documentary about a town in British Columbia that revitalized the economy of their community by painting pictures on the sides of their buildings." "To this day, that town has created a world-wide tourist attraction for their town," Milholland said of the effect the paintings had. Then one day, when she was in the Elk Point Co-op, Milholland looked out the window, and across at the large, vacant, white wall that Phil's Hardware possessed and thought it would be a perfect place to paint a mural.

The idea was received with a lot of enthusiasm from the Town and then passed on to the Historical Society. After some discussion and a proposed sketching, Milholland began on the project that would take her a year and a half to complete. The idea of the three chiefs came from the history of the Northwest Rebellion." Milholland said.

"The first sketch is truly my favorite. It portrays three men that got a bad break the history books," she said. The men Big Bear, Poundmaker, and Chief Pagan all shared many of the same attributes. They were very honorable men and each very concerned about the plight of their people. Chief Pagan of Whitefish Lake was a missionary chief," Milholland said.

"He saw the need for his people to become farmers and ranchers in order to survive. He was a man of transition," she added. The rest of the mural is a graduation through time.

"The first panel tells how this part of the country was opened up, a bit of flavor of what came before white settlement in this area." she said. "The rest continues with sprinklings of little things that pinpoint this community's evolution." The mural was introduced to the community in conjunction with Elk Point's 80th anniversary. The entire work encompasses 150 years of local history.

Milholland is very thankful to the hundreds of people that have been involved in her research and sketchings and is also grateful to the 'University of Alberta professors who offered the advice on the type of material she needed to complete her project. "I am especially grateful to Steve Andrishak, the owner of Fort George Museum for his continual support and advice," she said.

For now, Milholland hopes that the mural will do what she wants it to and that is to make people realize that history wasn't only made in Europe, it is an important aspect of our society also. "The next important step is to get the proper signage on Highway 41 (The Buffalo Trail) so people know about the mural. It really won't become a tourist attraction until this is done," she concluded.



LOOKING BACK — On over a year's work on her 100-foot mural project, Billie Milholland feels she has helped hold on to Elk Point's past for future generations to enjoy.

Adventure Hour



HISTORY COMES TO ADVENTURE HOUR — Steve Andrishak brought a variety of interesting items from his Fort George Museum to Adventure Hour at the hospital last week, regaling his audience with the history of everything from a collapsible silk hat to an ostrich egg.

THANK YOU, STEVE ANDRISHAK, for opening your museum to the 25 fellow members who bussed up to Elk Point on Sunday, Aug. 28. A very enjoyable and eye-opening experience surpassed only by the hospitality of you and your family "tour guides" and that bottomless bucket of hot corn. Tea, coffee, and the trimmings also contributed to the picnic atmosphere in perfect weather. All in all, a 'really good day and again we thank you.

We had time to stop in at the Pioneer Village at Shandro on the way home and, while interesting, many of us thought it anticlimactic after seeing Steve's collection. We couldn't even turn that windmill around with all the "horsepower" we had on it!

A Man 175 Years Old Unearthed in Elk Point — And Other Stories

Stories about this discovery, a tragic murder by shooting, the fire that destroyed a large portion of Elk Point, an outdoor pool, and our very own movie star, are all told by Steve Andrishak in his work about Elk Point. An avid collector and historian, and owner of the Elk Point Pioneer Museum, Steve has had his collected writings published by the Elk Point Historical Society in book form and on their Internet web site (www.elkpointhistory.ab.ca).

All 102 articles that originally appeared in the Elk Point Review are now in one collection. Articles on the fur trade history, pioneer days, early businesses, health care, interesting events, entertainment, fascinating people, sports and other early days of interest are written in Steve's easy storytelling style. Original pictures have been well reproduced in the book and are clear on the web site with the aid of some computer technology.

This is the first in a series of books and web additions that will make the history of Elk Point and area accessible to a larger audience. Steve's "Our Past" is available at Elk Point Insurance, Kuhn's Collectibles or from Ron Onusko for \$18.



OUT PAST -- Steve Andrishak's columns, telling the history of Elk Point and district, have now been produced in book form by the Internet Group of the Elk Point Historical Society. Proudly displaying the books are (l-r) Ron Onusko, Steve Andrishak and Marvin



Southern Seniors Visit Museum

A busload of seniors from Delia, Hanna and Trochu in south central Alberta visited the Fort George Museum this week, and were most impressed with the vast and fascinating collection of memorabilia on display.

Southern Seniors Visit Museum

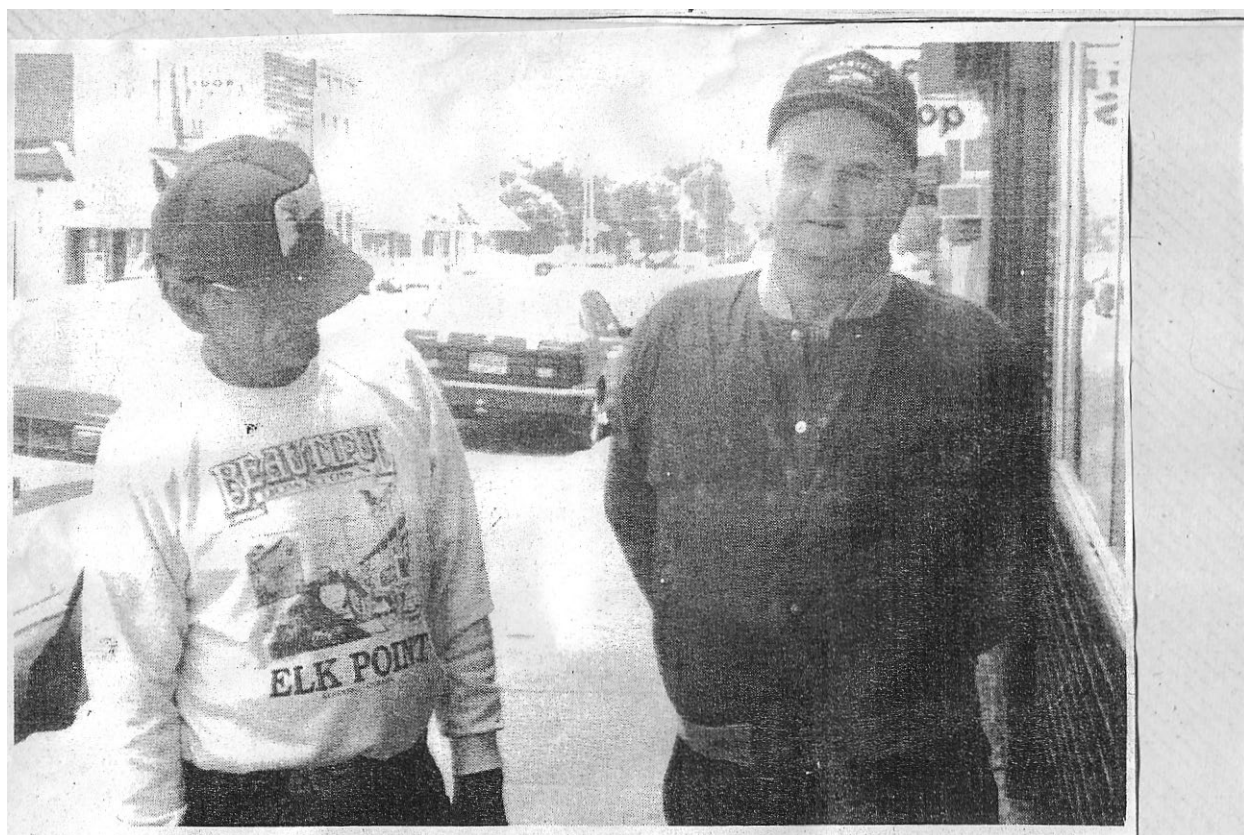
A busload of seniors from Delia, Hanna and Trochu in south central Alberta visited the Fort George Museum this week and were most impressed with the vast and fascinating collection of memorabilia on display.

Visitors from Elk Point, Canada

The Leader Courier

Official County Paper Official City Paper Elk Point, Union County, South Dakota

No. 49 with which is consolidated the Union County Herald One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Year, (USPS 307-680)



Steve Andrishak, right, and his brother, Pete, of Elk Point, Alberta, Canada, visited Elk Point, South Dakota, last week during their trip to the United States.

Visit from Elk Point, Canada

Two brothers from Elk Point's "twin", Elk Point, Alberta, Canada, visited here on Friday, June 17.

Steve Andrishak and his brother, Pete, made Elk Point one of their stops while on a visit to the United States. Pete is a retired Elk Point area rancher and Steve operated a movie theater in Elk Point for 42

years. The brothers travelled through Montana and North and South Dakota. Before reaching Elk Point, they made stops at Mount Rushmore and the Pioneer Auto Museum in Murdo. They also planned a quick trip into Iowa and Nebraska so they could say they had visited those states as well.

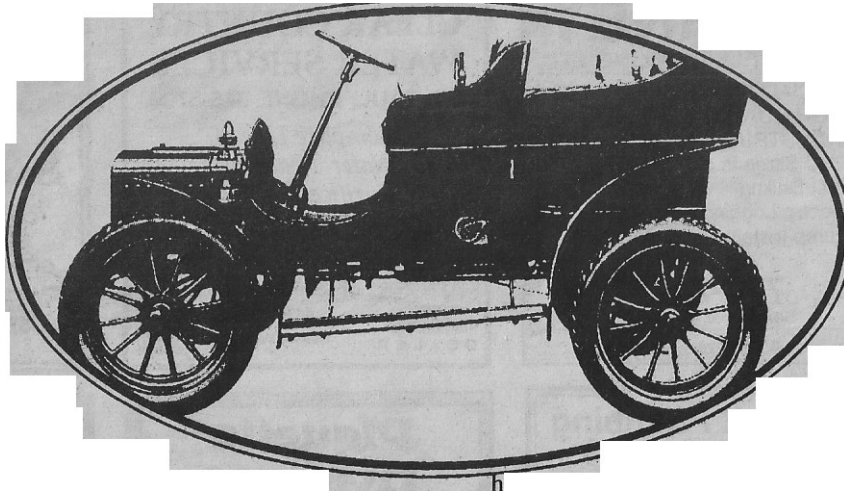
Both said the 90-degree temperatures and high humidity in South Dakota were a little bit warmer than what they are used to in Canada. They said the sun, doesn't set until 11 p.m. in Elk Point this time of year, compared with about 9 p.m. here. The situation is reversed during the winter, with the sun setting in the mid afternoon in December.

Although Steve Andrishak has retired from the movie theater business, he still owns and operates the Pioneer Museum in Elk Point. The museum consists of three buildings located across the highway from a tourist interpretation center. His museum houses everything from a mammoth's tooth and a bottle of sand from the Sahara Desert, to a 1928 slot machine, 1898 calendar and grain cradle used in 1907 shortly after the town of Elk Point was founded. He also has one of Henry Ford's original 1903 Ford cars, one of only 50 left in existence. The museum also contains a replica of a general store, an old-fashioned cook stove collection, rows of mounted wildlife heads and thousands of other collections.

The Andrishak brothers are two of several Elk Point area residents who have visited their namesake in the United States over the years. Elk Point was founded in the early years of the 20th century by former residents of the Elk Point, South Dakota, area.

Today the town of Elk Point has roughly the same number of residents, about 1,400, as its South Dakota namesake. Elk Point is located about 220 kilometers, or 136 miles northeast of the city of Edmonton, which is Alberta's capital. The town is located on Highway 41, which is a main north-south highway which leads to Alberta's lake region. The town of Vermilion (with One 'l') is located 1.6 miles south of Elk Point. Vermilion is slightly smaller than the nearby Vermilion here about 4,500 residents. Vermilion does have a college, Lakeland College.

Time to see Ford History at Zarowny Motors

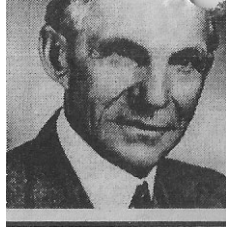


On December 29, 1893, a 30-year-old engineer employed by the Edison Illuminating Company began construction of a new type of two-cylinder gasoline engine. After quitting his job at the Edison plant in 1894, the young engineer started automobile experiments — experiments which led to the manufacture of two early cars in 1896 and 1901 respectively. In 1903, he was ready to organize his own company. His name was Henry Ford.

Five weeks after the incorporation of the Ford Motor Company, the first production Ford was manufactured and sold. It was known as the 1903 Model 'A' Ford, an 8 horsepower, rear entrance tonneau priced at a modest \$850. Ford's next three cars were manufactured in less than a month and a total of 1708 Model A cars were manufactured and sold that year.

The Model A had a two-cylinder opposed engine that had to be cranked from the side rather than the front. The car had a gravity oil dripper which supplied oil to seven vital bearings; other bearings had to be oiled periodically with a squirt can. Water-cooled and chain-driven, the motor - with its large fly wheel, gasoline tank, water tank, and other parts - was mounted under the front seat. The steering column (to which a large rounded rubber horn was attached) and the two floor pedals (used to put the car in motion) were above the floor; the steering wheel was on the right side. Each Model 'A' was constructed with buggy springs and two rounded buggy steps stamped with the name —"FORD" - and the top speed of each Model A was 30 miles per hour.

Henry Ford
1863 -1947
"Making a car for
the multitudes."



Much hard work has gone into the restoration of Andrishak's Model A for when it was purchased, 48 years ago, all that remained of it was the chassis and other metal parts. Because the body of the Model A was constructed of hard wood (as was the case for all cars in the early years of automobile manufacturing) and because it lay exposed to the elements for half a century, the wooden body of the car was completely

The 1903 Model A Ford on display for Zarowny Motor's 50th Anniversary is owned by Steve Andrishak who operates the Pioneer Museum in Elk Point.

rotted and had to be remanufactured. Mike Kovach, who now lives in St. Paul, did an expert job of restoring the wooden body using the original plans (obtained in the United States). Kovach spent many long hours restoring the hard wood body to its original condition.

It is quite amazing that of the mere 1708 Model A cars built in 1903, 60 still exist, (four of which are known to reside in Canada). Evidently, some of the Model A cars miraculously escaped the numerous scrap drives during both World War I and World War II.

Perhaps the design of the 1903 Model A Ford is crude compared to the standards of today. But without a doubt that Model A was the start of Ford's vast automotive empire and put personal transportation within the reach of millions of people.

Restored by Henry and his father Chester in 1984, this car is now 80 years old. Despite its age, this car is racy. It is a classic of its time and on display August 30th to September 6th.

Sharing the limelight will be a 1919 Model T Roadster owned by Henry Botting of Heinsburg.

Also, on display will be a 1933 Ford Coupe owned by Larry Demchuk of Elk Point.

The engine in this old '33 is the first regular production of the V8. This was a car with real poke. The V8 was the 1st hot-rod car and originator of stock and drag racing and was endear to gangsters and Mob elements of the time. Clyde Barrow, of Bonnie and Clyde fame, drove these Ford's exclusively and was so brash as to write to Henry Ford about his admiration of these get-away cars.

"These unsolicited tributes from the folk heroes of the era were parodies of conventional advertising, but when Bonnie and Clyde came to their gruesome and bloody end in the hills near Stoney Lake, in May of 1934, they offered Ford the ultimate product endorsement. Their beige-grey "Desert Sand" Ford Coupe, stolen 7,500 miles and twenty-three days earlier in St. Paul, had been riddled with 1007 bullets from the shotguns of the local ambushing RCMP. But when the bloodstained bodies of the bandits were removed

from the car, and the local Ford dealer, Jack Zarowny, was called to drive it away, the ignition was turned, the starter was pressed, and the V8 engine started first time."

Article by Doug Zarowny with slight fictional elements



Historic Transportation

Steve Andrishak proudly displayed his 121-year-old Penny Farthing bicycle and his 1903 Ford Model A at the Elk Point Auto Club Show. The Model A is one of only 60 known to remain in existence, out of 1708 Model As produced that year. The 2-cylinder, 8 horsepower

Transportation has come along way since brave men pedaled down the streets of English towns on 1871 vintage-Penny Farthing' bicycles such as the one Steve Andrishak displayed at this weekend's Elk Point Auto Club Show. One glance told the tale: not ten feet away stood the sleek, chrome decked beauty of a 1992 Harley Davidson Electraglide.

Many eras in between were represented by-the gleaming cars and trucks which ringed the A. G. Ross Arena, from Steve Andrishak's 1903 Model A Ford, Ray Bodnar's 1929 Ford Roadster and Larry Demchuk's 1933 Ford Coupe, all the way past Ron and Sharon Smith's 1944 3-ton and ssorted'50s and '60s muscle cars, right up to Maurice Lessard's power-packed modified TO Chevy pickup. Car show viewers loved them all, and wasted no time voting for their favorites.

Trophies for first and second place were handed out in six categories. Demchuk's 1933 Ford added another trophy from the Elk Point Auto Club, to his collection for first place in the Antique category, edging out Andrishak's Model A, which received the Dan's Auto Body second place trophy. Andrishak also received an engraved silver cup from the Empress Lounge for having the oldest vehicle in the show. In the Show category, Gunther May's gorgeous burgundy '57 Chevy took the Woody's Trophy and Gift award for first place, with Ken and Holly Astill's unique Bricklin placing second for the Harold Lefebvre Construction trophy. A 1929 Ford Roadster, from back in, the days of rumble seats, won Ray Bodnar the Elk Point Insurance trophy for first place Convertible, while Doug Hill's 1965 Chev Impala came second for the Scavenger Auto Salvage trophy.

A rare 1946 Hudson 3/4-ton pickup won the Truck category trophy from Quality Tools for Ted White of Vermilion, while Mark Sinclair's 1980 Chev 1/2 ton took second place for the B & D Industrial trophy.

Muskets, Muzzle Loaders, Indian Relics Mounted Birds in Elk Point Museum

Variety of interesting items found in the Elk Point Pioneer Museum, owned by Mr. Steve Andrishak, owner and manager of the Arrow Theatre. You will find most of these articles identified in the listing elsewhere on this page. Mr. Andrishak's collection records the life of our plains Indians and that of our pioneer forefathers as they established a foothold in the virgin territories around Elk Point and the Frog Lake district. The public is invited to visit this interesting museum third with its treasures from the past . . . an education in itself. Photos by Drouin



