

Beaumont

Heritage Series



Feature Stories

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Beaumont Heritage Series

In July 2016, I was contacted by our local reporter with a special request. He explained that he was writing an article for our weekly community newspaper about the heritage mural being sculpted by local artist Marjorie Ann Davies. He asked me if I could write a few stories for the paper, about the people and images depicted in the mural. He felt that this could best be done in a series.

The first of my 12 articles were printed in La Nouvelle de Beaumont News on Friday, July 15, 2016. The series continued with a new story printed each week, the last one on Friday, September 30th. The project was popular among the residents of Beaumont.

In October, we had a special pipe organ concert at St. Vital church, where I was asked to MC the event. Once again, I did some research, this time on the history of our Casavant organ. It was later printed in the newspaper on October 7, 2016. It becomes one of two feature stories in this collection.

Our second feature story is a Remembrance Day article that was printed in the local paper on November 10, 2016. It is the story of Private Prince William Elliott and his family. He was a local boy, and member of the Canadian military serving during the first World War. He is buried in Clearwater Cemetery.

Carole Hudson

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CREDITS

Cover Photo
Town of Beaumont
1948 Aerial View
Beaumont & District
Heritage Society Collection

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**Front Inside Cover**  
**Villeneuve Family Barn**

**Page 2-3 Heritage Mural**

Photographs by Carole A. Hudson

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Historical Photos
Courtesy of the Alberta
Provincial Archives

Image numbers are provided

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## Feature Stories

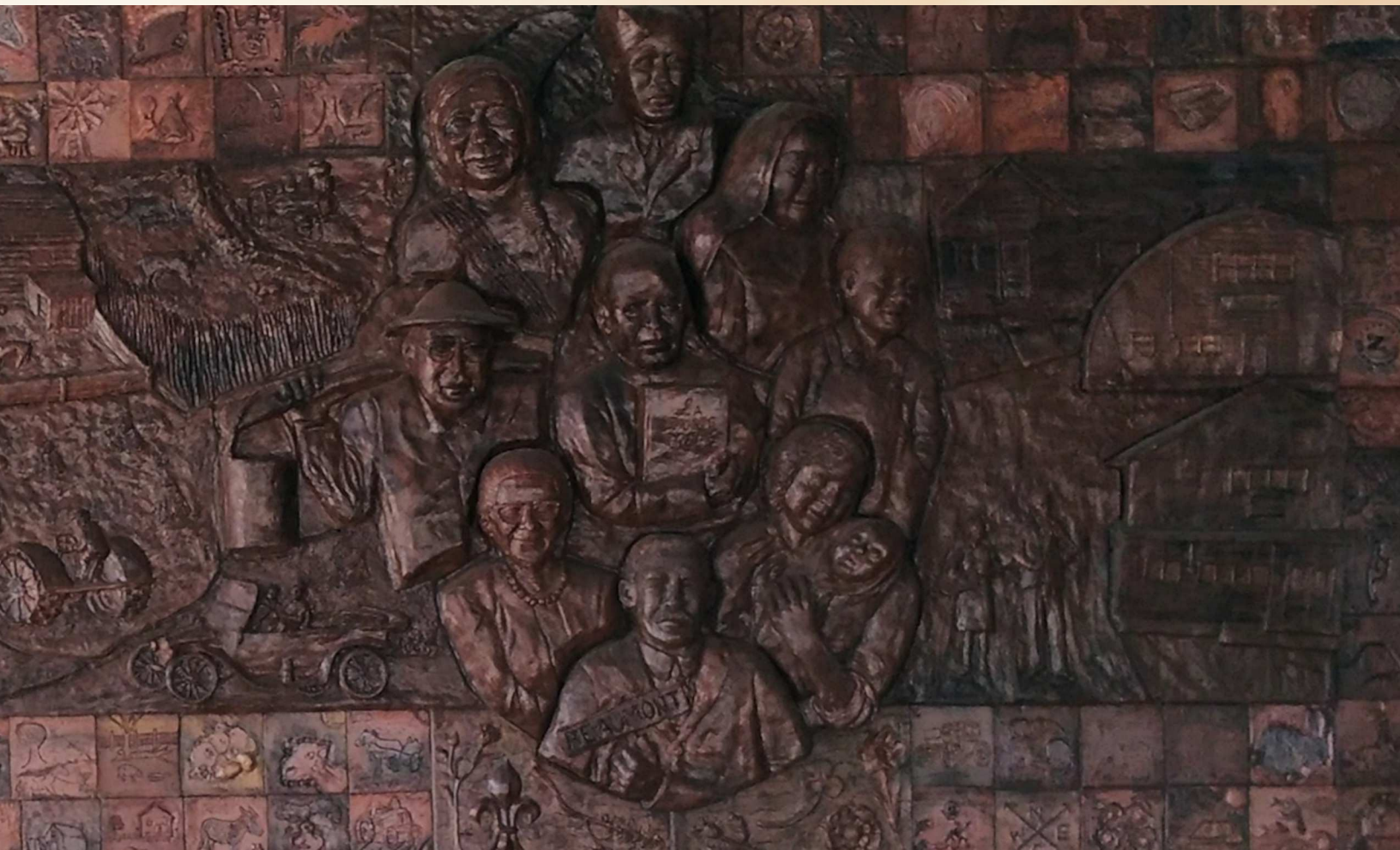
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Beaumont Heritage Mural by Marjorie Ann Davies



On Monday, November 14, 2016 the historical mural at the entrance of the Centre Communautaire Beaumont Community Centre (CCBCC) was unveiled to the public. The key figures include, clockwise from top center:

Soldier Henri Magnan, Fille de Jésus, Young Boy, Mother with Child, Jean Royer, Marie Louise Charbonneau, her husband Hermas Charbonneau, Chief Papaschase and in the center Reverend J.E. Lapointe.

The 20 foot long mural also includes scenes and buildings from the past and took over two years to complete.



Chief Papaschase

## Original Inhabitants of the Beaumont Area

For centuries Western Canada and the Beaumont region was populated by Canada's First Nations. To early European settlers the vast expanse was originally known as "Rupert's Land" and was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. Accounts from the HBC indicate that a great displacement of the indigenous people began as early as the 18th century. Of the various tribes and cultures the Woodlands Cree were generally north of the North Saskatchewan River and the Plains Cree roamed freely on the south.

Chief Papaschase (also known as The Woodpecker Chief, John Gladu-Quinn) was born around 1838 to two Cree who also possessed European names, John Quinn and Lizette Gladu. He was described as an accomplished warrior and he was involved in the struggles between the Nehiyawak (Cree) and the Nitsitapii (Blackfoot Confederacy.) "In 1858, at the age of 20, he married Julia Batoche at Edmonton and may have had at least one other wife and many children." (Fort Edmonton Spotlight, part 1.)

He moved from the Lesser Slave Lake area where he had travelled and hunted, to the

Beaver Hills area in the late 1850's with his 6 brothers and their families. They settled in the Ross Flats below Fort Edmonton. It is now the location of the present Legislative grounds. They traded with the HBC and from time to time were also employed by them.

In 1876 various western tribes entered into Treaty No. 6 and surrendered 121,000 square miles of fertile agricultural land in central Alberta and Saskatchewan to Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada. By that same year there were 195 in the Papaschase Band and on August 21, 1877 Chief Papaschase and his brother Tahkoots, a Headman, signed an adhesion to Treaty No. 6 on behalf of their own band at Fort Edmonton. He selected an area roughly four miles south of the River, just north of what would soon become Beaumont, to serve as a reservation.

It wasn't until September in 1884 that the survey of 39.9 square miles (they actually qualified for 78) was completed for Indian Reserve No. 136. The surveyor had been instructed that his survey was to interfere as little as possible with the settler's claims and timber lands. By this time the buffalo were gone and many of the indigenous people were starving. Rations promised in Treaty 6 were not duly provided and the Papaschase Band made limited progress in farming, which was supposed to improve their rapidly changing life style.

"They held a Sun Dance on Rosedale Flats, where a traditional Aboriginal burial ground was located, and may have ranged as far south as Montana in search of



Rosssdale Burial grounds  
Papaschase.ca

bison.” (Fort Edmonton Spotlight, part 2.) A Sun Dance is a plains culture practice where a community gathers to pray for healing.

On June 3, 1885 when a Half-Breed Scrip Commission arrived in Edmonton offering scrip to people of mixed Indian and white ancestry, a total of 102 members of the band, who were starving and of poor health, accepted. A scrip certificate entitled the holder to either a parcel of land or roughly \$160, they would also forfeit their Indian status and any interest in an Indian reserve. Only 82 members of the band remained and most of them were elders, women and children.

After receiving scrip Chief Papaschase and other members of the band continued to use and occupy IR 136 and were allowed to harvest their crops in the fall of 1886. Pressure was then made to remove the remaining members so that the land could be sold to third parties. On August 12, 1887 the remaining band members were persuaded to move to the Enoch Band’s Stony Plain Reserve and Chief Papaschase and others were evicted.

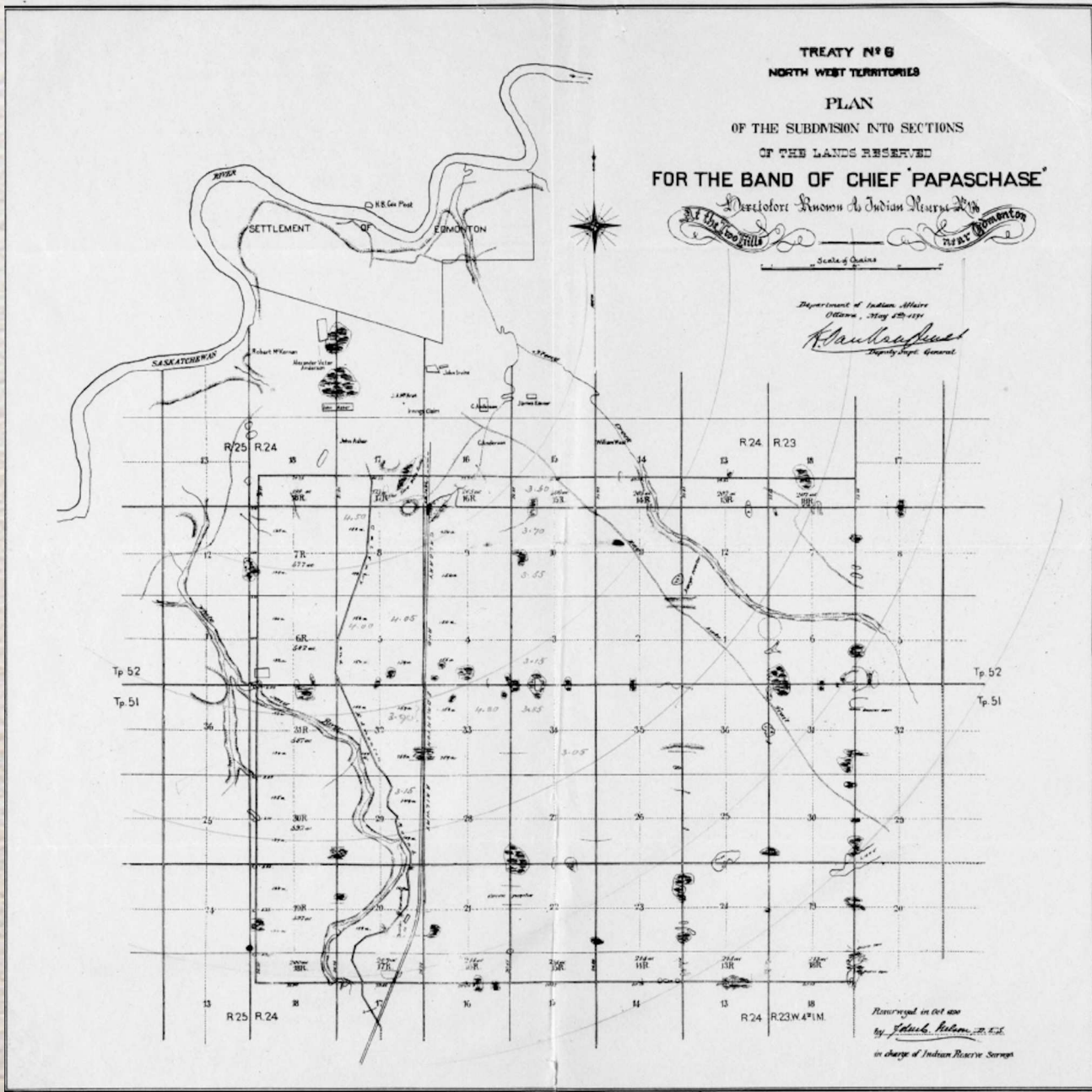
Most of the band who moved to the Enoch reserve remained but some joined other bands: Alexander, Michel, Bear Hills Bands (Hobbema), Saddle Lake, Beaver Lake, Kehwin, Frog Lake and Onion Lake. Of the discharged band members most of them

relocated to places like Elinor Lake, Lac La Biche, Beaver Lake and Kikino.

“Any benefit of the scrip was somewhat fleeting for an older man, and in 1904 the aging Papaschase travelled to St. Paul des Métis where he lived with an old friend Laurent Garneau until his death of influenza in 1918. Today the Papaschase First Nation continues to live and work in the Edmonton area and have faced long struggles to regain band status. They were instrumental in creating the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Aboriginal Burial Ground in Rosssdale.” (Fort Edmonton Spotlight, part 2)

Chief Papaschase, later years





Indian Reserve No. 136 as surveyed for the Band of Chief Papanaschase, Library & Archives Canada

**Sources:**

- The Original Peoples of Alberta, pg. 50-83 ISBN 0-88833-151-7
- <http://studylib.net/doc/7402332/word-document>
- <https://www.fortedmontonpark.ca/uncategorized/chief-papaschase-edmontonian-in-the-spotlight-pt-1/>
- <https://www.fortedmontonpark.ca/1885-street/chief-papaschase-edmontonian-in-the-spotlight-pt-2/>



Jean Royer

## The First Settlers Arrive in Beaumont

The first European language introduced on the Canadian Plains was the French of the *voyageurs*, who often intermarried with local First Nation people, and their offspring became the Métis. At Fort Edmonton many of the Hudson's Bay Company employees were French Canadian and Métis. French-speaking missionaries arrived at Fort Edmonton in 1842 and during the 1870s settlements of French Canadian emigrants came from Quebec and New England. By 1885 roughly 60% of the population of 2,599 at Fort Edmonton were of French origins.

The Northwest Territories Act of 1875 allowed for the use of French in the courts and in the legislative council. Roman Catholic schools had the right to instruct their students in French. But between 1881 and 1891 more Ontarians moved west than the Quebecois and the population jumped from 1,500 to 50,000. By 1892 the English settlers were successful in making English the only accepted language of the assembly. Only children in their first two or three years of school were allowed instruction in French, if they spoke no other tongue.

In hope of increasing the French population in the West a number of priests, including Father Lacombe, were named as colonization agents by the church.  
[Page 473 Beaumont History Book]

In the 1890's half of the 620 French-speaking families brought to the Edmonton area were from the United States and one-fifth from Quebec. Most people in Quebec enjoyed being close to their relatives and so did not have a desire to leave.

**« Dans ce temps, des brochures et renseignements généraux étaient distribués en Europe, dans l'est du Canada, et aux Etats pour attirer des familles pour coloniser l'Ouest. Des agents de colonisations organisaient des groupes et voyageaient avec eux jusqu'à leurs destinations. »**

Jean Royer was born 1858 to Jean Royer and Zoé Brochu in St. Charles de Bellechase, Quebec. He married Elise Royer at Lambton, Quebec in 1882. They moved to Bartlett New Hampshire where their eldest son Achille was born in 1883. They moved back to Quebec and five more children were born, Omer in 1886, Henri in 1889, Amanda in 1890, Adélarde in 1891 and André in 1892.

With their 6 children they were among the first homesteaders to settle in the area that became Beaumont. They arrived from Montréal by train in April 1894 with a group of 42 colonists under the leadership of Father Morin, a colonization agent. On July 13, 1894 Jean and Elise Royer applied

for a homestead on section 28-50-23-W4, one mile south and four miles east of the little settlement on the hill.

As required, in their application for a patent of ownership they recorded the following:

“July to August 1894, cleared 5 acres of land. September 1st 1894, began construction of house to finish in October that same year, measurements of the house 18’x20’ at a value of \$30. Dug well for water and spent first winter on the homestead.

April 20th, 1895 to July 15, away from homestead to find work. 1895, broke 3 acres, cropped 8 acres. 1896, broke 2 acres, cropped 8 acres. 1897, broke 2 acres, cropped 8 acres. 1898 broke 5 acres, cropped 10 acres.

The Royer’s stock consisted of 19 horned cattle, 4 horses, and 3 pigs, also one stable, value of \$25, two granaries, value of \$40, two wells, value of \$20, and one and one half miles of fencing at a value of \$50.

It wasn’t until 1895 that the French Canadian colony was named Beaumont. Father Morin travelled to Ottawa to petition for a Post Office. With this petition he presented a list of suggested names to give to the community. These were: Chartier, Bellevue and Beaumont and the name Beaumont was accepted. It had been suggested by Jean Royer.

For Jean months away from his homestead were often spent working on the Low Level Bridge or in British Columbia in the lumber camps. On the 20th of July 1899, after having fulfilled the “Dominion Lands Act” homestead requirements, the land was issued in Jean’s name. A few days later, a son Wilfrid was born. Philippe was born 4 years later and Aimé their youngest was born in 1906 but died as a baby.

Township No. 50

| Range 24 West of 4 <sup>th</sup> Meridian |    |    |    |    |    | Range 23 West of 4 <sup>th</sup> Meridian |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| 31                                        | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 31                                        | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 |
| 30                                        | 29 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 30                                        | 29 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 25 |
| 19                                        | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 19                                        | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 18                                        | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 18                                        | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 |
| 7                                         | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 7                                         | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 6                                         | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 6                                         | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |

As their family grew, they bought the SE quarter of Section 26-50-24-W4 on June 6, 1904 from “The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into the Hudson’s Bay” and the NE quarter on December 27, 1909. They also bought the NW quarter of Section 25-50-24-W4 (either on March 27, 1900 as recorded on page 14 of the Beaumont History Book, or in 1914 as suggested on page 475.)

In 1919 Jean bought a house and lot in the village of Beaumont, in front of the church, where they planned to retire ... but it never came to be as Elise’s health deteriorated very fast and she passed away in 1933. Jean died 2 years later.

*“Alberta, at the turn of the century, was a young man’s country. Under the crust of pioneer living, opportunity beckoned. For the restless and the strong, jobs were for the asking – stringing fence, grading right-of-way, breaking sod, clearing brush. For the home-loving type, “free” land was for the filing. If you were young enough, tough enough and patient enough, the new land held a thousand promises.”*

**Delmar T. Oviatt**

Jean et Elise rêvaient de voir leurs enfants s’installer dans les environs et de se retirer au village. Ce rêve fut réalisé; mais, ils n’ont pas vécu pour en jouir.

Jean and Elise’s dream was to see their children settled close together and they were to retire in the village. This dream was realized but they did not live to enjoy it.



Régina (Moreau) Bilodeau

## Women of Beaumont - The Early Years

Life in the prairies was a family affair and that was certainly true for the early settlers of present day Beaumont. Though there is a tendency to focus on men and their business accomplishments the women in their lives were also a big part of any success story of inspiring pioneer perseverance.

Wives, mothers and sisters alike contributed not only in the raising of families but also in their community responsibilities. For this reason, it is fitting to include the figure of a mother and child in our heritage mural and to share the stories of just a handful of many early day Beaumont pioneer women, as preserved in the pages of our Beaumont History Book.

In 1891 the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company was tasked with continuing the rail line from Red Deer to Strathcona. Once completed in July, the CPR signed a renewable 6-year lease to take over operations in August. Stage coach travel between the two locations used to take 4 days but now the distance was covered in only 12 hours by train. This resulted in both mail service and passenger transportation taking the quicker route.

Families started arriving at the Leduc station in 1892 and then travelled by wagon, crossing the Black Mud Creek, to reach their new home in the Beaumont area. To avoid the added distance of detouring they were often required to use rafts when the creek flooded in the spring.

Aloysia (Dupras) Letourneau and her family “arrived from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, in 1898 via rail to Leduc. Three families consisting of the Lamberts and the Gregoires, as well as the Letourneaus, had travelled in a boxcar. They had a stove set up in the boxcar and [the women] cooked all their own meals en route.” (pg. 392)

Louise (Bergeron) Brassard came west with her husband and family of nine children in early September 1907, “arriving at Leduc in a blinding snowstorm ... bringing with them a boxcar full of personal belongings, including a weaving loom, spinning wheel, sewing machine and all accessories and a good supply of finished lumber.” (pg 250)

In 1912 widow Marie (Bérubé) Hinse “decided to settle out west, boarding the train at Ste-Julie with her young family” of nine children. “After 4 days and 3 nights on the train and many delightful adventures, she arrived in Beaumont.

She had left Quebec with \$1,500 in her possession and upon arrival bought a team of horses, 2 mares, 3 and 4 years old, for the sum of \$400. Then she bought a wagon for \$100 and a good set of harnesses for \$50. Soon after she married Alexandre Vaugeois, a widower with 3 sons, with whom she had two daughters. The children



Back row: Raymond, Fernande, Armand, Colombe, Desneiges  
Front row: Gabrielle, Rachel, Aurore, Régina, Angéline, Flore, Thomas

walked to Clearwater School two and a half miles away.” (pg. 515)

Husbands often found employment away from home to help support their families. One such day Régina (Moreau) Bilodeau “was interrupted by two Indians who opened her door and stepped in. Fearing the worst, her children flocked around her. But all that the two wanted was her fresh berry pie and some tea. They left as quietly as they had come.”

When her husband died in 1927 she was left with twelve children to raise on her own. “She continued to work the farm, then sold to her son Raymond and she moved to the village.” (pg. 244)

Similar tasks were shared by many households. “After the snow was melted, it was time to make soap ... meat was smoked so that it would keep during the summer. Garden seeds were selected from a catalogue and ordered by mail. They took about three weeks to arrive.

“In the spring, a shopping trip to the city was usually made to buy printed cotton to make dresses, aprons, and even men’s shirts for the summer. During the summer the children helped their mother weed the garden and earth up the potatoes. They collected the eggs and went to get the cows from the pasture to be milked.

“Berry picking was done by most families. They picked wild strawberries, gooseberries, wild cherries and raspberries. Jams and jellies were made ... vegetables were kept in the basement or in a root-cellar. Potatoes, carrots and turnips were the most common winter vegetables. Peas and beans were dried and used to make baked beans and pea soup.

During harvest time “long hours of work were put in by everybody. People had to get up around four in the morning and didn’t go to bed until late at night. In the house the stove had to be kept hot all day long, as there were three big meals to prepare, not only for the family but for the

hired men as well. When winter came along mothers had to replenish the winter wardrobe.” (pgs. 132-4)

“I, Madeleine, daughter of William Demers and Clarice Lambert, was born on October 21, 1933. We lived ... on a farm where my parents always had a lot of chickens and a couple hundred turkeys every spring. We had cows which I thought were so much of a bother when I had to go fetch them from the pasture a mile away. My parents worked very hard and taught me many things when I was very young, about working outdoors.



“Eugène and I were married at St. Vital Church ... we had 200 laying hens and 2 cows to look after and as we did not have any electricity we had to put gas lanterns out in the hen house every morning and evening. These were a real fire hazard and it took a lot of care to fuel up the lanterns. We didn't have running water; to me this was no change but Eugène found it quite different because his parents had running water in their house.

“In January we got 3 cows ... so we purchased a new cream separator. This was the beginning of our dream of one day having a dairy herd and possibly being able to ship milk. There always seemed to be a lot of work to do ... for me, there were the children to care for and with nine children there is certainly never a dull moment ...

“As Eugène and I look back over the years that we have been on the farm together, we have a lot of things to be thankful for, mainly for having been able to see all our children grow up in a district surrounded by good friends and relatives whom they can visit, and a community filled with wonderful people. How fortunate we all are!” (pgs. 224-5)

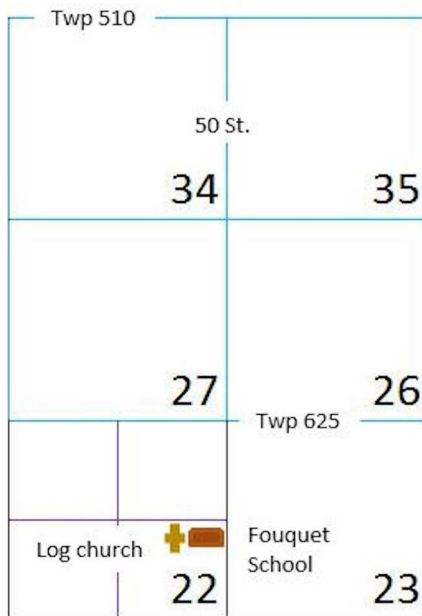
Eugène and Madeleine  
(Demers) Bérubé



Father Gaborit

## Les Filles de Jésus Come to Teach

Every community needs a school and the first one established in the Beaumont area was named Fouquet after one of the early families. It was located on the north corner of quarter section S.E. 22-50-24-4 which was land owned by Sherman Johnson.



The first church was a log cabin next to Fouquet School, about one and a half miles south of St. Vital. The school district covered a total of 25 sections or 25 square

miles. In 1895 the school was moved on the hill and by 1902 there were enough students that the Fouquet School District was dissolved to form two new districts, Beaumont on the north and Clearwater on the south.

Reverend J.T. Quévillon earned \$50 for teaching one month, Charles Morneau taught the next three months and then for the 1904 school year Reverend Quévillon was hired. In 1905 Miss Adeline Lawler became the new teacher in Beaumont. Over the next five years the number of students increased and though there was talk of building a new school the trustees decided to rent the home of the St. Pierre family to provide more room.

In 1907 Bishop Émile-Joseph Legal of Edmonton travelled to his homeland in France to recruit priests to help with his growing diocese. In Soissons, France he met Father Edmond Gaborit who had expressed interest in serving as a missionary, he also suffered from chronic bronchitis. It was suggested that the dry weather in Canada would be good for him. He came in 1910 to help establish new churches, first in the Wainwright and Wetaskiwin areas. ([www.sacredheartusa.org](http://www.sacredheartusa.org))

Meanwhile, in 1911 a new school in Beaumont had finally been built. In 1919 there were 30 students and teacher Anna Cyr was expecting to have 38 by spring time.

Father Gaborit came to serve as the new priest in Beaumont on June 2, 1924, where he would spend the next 16 years of his life.



Our Lady of Peace Convent, page 34



Religieuses de la congrégation des Filles de Jésus, originaires de Beaumont, page 35.

Sisters of the religious order "Les Filles de Jésus", originally from Beaumont.

The parish was very much in debt and so he set about trying to improve the situation. In 1928 he oversaw repairs to the church and rectory with the latter becoming a juniorate and noviciate for Priests of the Sacred-Heart, an order that was founded in Northern France, where he was from.

During the 1929-30 school year there were 44 students registered at Beaumont School. Father Gaborit's goal had been to eventually have nuns teaching catechism in the parish as well as taking charge of the village school. The former home of Mrs. Eléonore (Dubord) Lachapelle, across the street from the school, was purchased for the purpose of serving as "Our Lady of the Peace Convent."

On August 17, 1932, at 7:30 a.m. three Sisters left Morinville, accompanied by the Provincial of "Les Filles de Jésus," Sr. Marie-Ste-Zenaide. They stopped briefly in Edmonton and asked Bishop Joseph Henry O'Leary for a blessing. They arrived in Beaumont at 10:30 a.m., stopped long enough to leave their baggage in their new home, and then walked to visit the church as well as Father Gaborit at the rectory.

Father Gaborit blessed the residence of "Les Filles de Jésus" at around 5 p.m. that same day. Most of the parishioners were farmers so they brought gifts of vegetables, milk, cream and meat for the sisters. When school started in September there were only two classrooms where Sr. Marie-Ste-Osmanne taught the primary grades, Sr. Celina-Marie taught the secondary grades and Sr. Marie-Antoinette was doing housekeeping.

In 1935 the church grotto was built by Arthur St. Pierre, under the direction of Father Gaborit. Arthur also built the stone fence around the church, as seen in the photo on page 486 of the Beaumont History Book. In 1938 the Statue of the Sower was installed at St. Vital and in 1939 the convent was moved and a new one constructed for the sisters by Pierre Bérubé and Amédé Leblanc.

Father Gaborit died on March 27, 1940 and was buried at the foot of the cross in the cemetery at St. Vital. A new modern school was built in 1949 and by that time there were a number of lay teachers as well as the nuns. Most of the sisters had served as educators, others as music teachers, in visiting the sick or as sacristans, taking care of the sacristy at St. Vital. This is a room where the priest prepares for a service, and where vestments and other things used in worship are kept. ([http://terms\\_en.enacademic.com/36092/sacristy](http://terms_en.enacademic.com/36092/sacristy))

Our Lady of the Peace Convent officially closed on December 14, 1971 due to a lack of personnel while Sr. Marie-Bathilda continued teaching until 1974. Seventeen girls from the Beaumont area joined Les Filles de Jésus and another fourteen joined other religious orders.

"When the County of Leduc took over (in 1963) they made a promise (to) continue to always offer Catholic education ... It's very unique and it's worked very well." - Phyllis foster, former Bellevue School Principal. "When Black Gold Regional School (BGRS) division was formed in 1995, the tradition continued and today Beaumont is one of the few communities to offer Catholic programming through the public system." (Kate Hamilton - La Nouvelle, May 19, 2010)



Private Henri Magnan

## Serving Our Country in Times of War

War is a miserable time and Beaumont was not left unscathed by the suffering. During World War I over forty young men served from Beaumont, under Canada's flag of the day, the Union Jack.



Marie-Louis Bérubé was with the 50th Calgary Fusiliers and he sailed 18 days by boat to England. George Wheatley was killed in action, Alex Bilodeau had signed up with the RCAF and was in France when the Armistice was signed. Harold Clutton met a girl in England and brought her home as his bride.

During World War II at least sixty men from the Beaumont area served, this time our country's flag was the Red Ensign.



Lucien Joseph Rodrigue trained in Vancouver and served on a total of ten ships including the "Five Aces," a.k.a. "The

Bad Deck," for one and a half years in the English Channel. Eric Bérubé fought in Italy, France and Germany and was wounded. John Zolkivski was in England, Africa and Italy where he was wounded as well, he lost a leg. Frank Billsborrow spent his time in England and Normandy France.

He never made it home.

Representing all who have valiantly served our country during times of war and peace, this is the story of Private Henri Magnan. Henri was born April 26, 1924 to Honoré Magnan and Albertine Roy who later moved to Beaumont. He enlisted on January 25, 1943, shortly before his 19th birthday. His basic training took place in Camrose, then he moved to Currey Barracks in Calgary. He was a member of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Royal Canadian Infantry Corps, Canada's first and oldest infantry regiment. Also known as The Loyal Eddies their motto is: Fears No Foe. Now they are known as the 4th Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

On August 27, 1943 Henri sailed to Europe. He disembarked on September 1st, and on September 2 he was recorded as "T.O.S." which stands for "taken on strength." This was a term used by the military to keep track of how many soldiers there were, as they would be needing to claim money from the government to feed and clothe active duty soldiers.

All of Henri's letters home required censoring so that confidential military information was not revealed. Only the



**The Loyal  
Edmonton  
Regiment,  
Royal Canadian  
Infantry Corps,  
Canada's first  
and oldest  
infantry  
regiment**

name of the country a soldier was writing from was allowed. Combining Henri's words from three letters home, along with some of the information that is available in books and online databases, the following is a very general account of what Henri experienced.

We know that his regiment the PPCLI were involved in the Battle of Ortona between December 20-28. The goal was for the Allies to break through the Ortona Winter Line fortification constructed by the German military from one seaside of the country to the other. This battle was also named the "Italian Stalingrad" for the desperate street fighting that took place.

"On 28 December, after eight days of fighting, the depleted German troops—who lacked reinforcements—finally withdrew from the town. The Canadians suffered 1,375 dead<sup>[3]</sup> during the Moro River battles of which Ortona was a part. This represented almost a quarter of all Canadians killed during the entire Italian Campaign." ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Ortona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ortona))



**Loyal Eddies, December, 1943 – Ortona**

Courtesy LCMSDS Photo Holdings (Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University)

On March 19, 1944 Henri wrote the following to his brother Richard: "I am feeling not too bad, I have a bad cold, but that is not much in the army. I was waiting for a letter from you for a long time, but I have not got any ... If you only knew what mail means to a fellow way out here."

Another important battle for Henri that started in the early hours of May 23, 1944 was their assault on The Hitler Line. Soldiers "ran into murderous fire ... a Company managed to get through the German wire but in the process was badly hit." Casualties were high. <http://lermuseum.org/return-to-battle/line-after-line/>

On May 31, 1944 Henri wrote: "I got wounded on the morning of the 23 May. I got a piece of shrapnel in the back, but I am coming along pretty good. The doctor operated on me yesterday. There was a piece of iron about an inch long and about half an inch across. It went pretty deep, but it did not touch any bones. I was sure lucky to get out of there alive."

To give you an idea of what it was like. There was tanks burning all around us, shells landing very close, dead men laying all over the place, machine guns' bullets firing around our head, but we still went on as we're moving up.

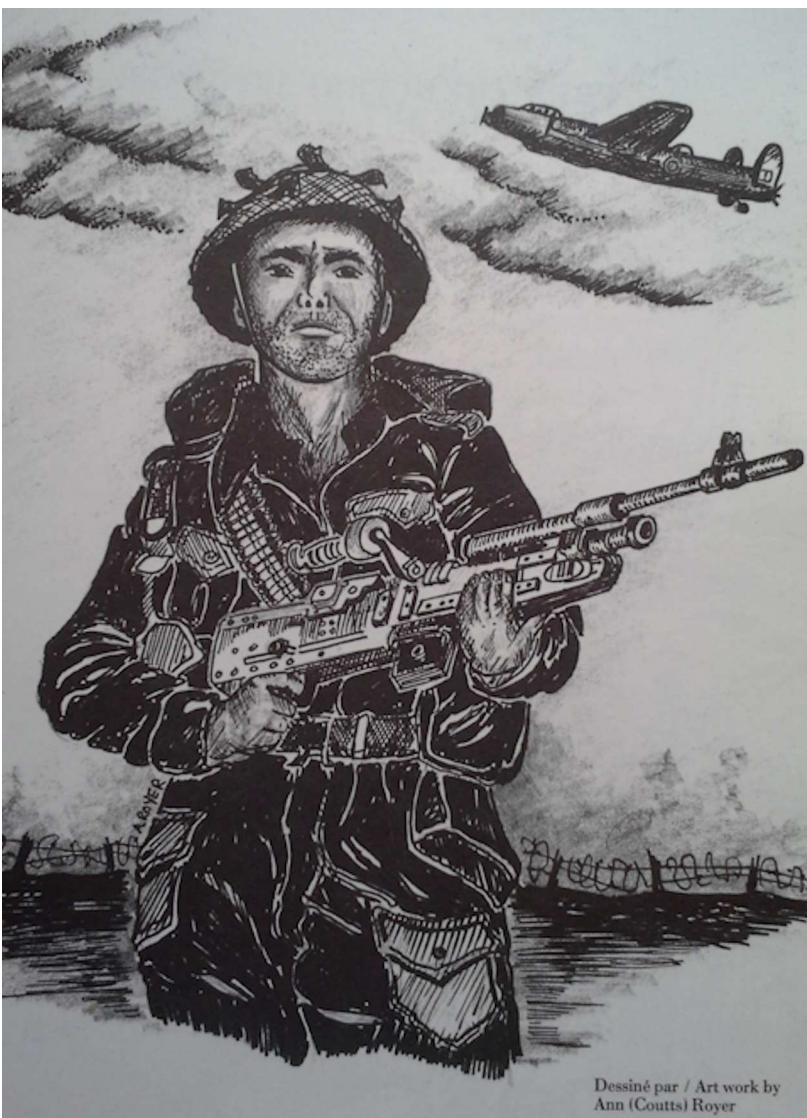
There was dead Germans all over. You must of heard and read in the papers when the Canadians fought through the Hitler lines. That is where it all happened." After recovering from his injury Henri was put back on the front line.

"On January 3, near Bagnacavallo, the Patricias attacked from the south and surprised the Germans... the Loyal Eddies entered the deserted town in a magnificently executed plan by the 2nd Brigade. The fighting in Italy more or less ceased for the winter with the men digging in on their side of the Senio... The Canadians were stretched thin across a forty-three-kilometer front, and they were defending with severe rationing of ammunition. If the Germans had launched a major attack the Canadians would have been in a bind with their lack of supplies... there were minor skirmishes along the Senio that winter." (pg. 239-242, *Hell & High Water: Canada and the Italian Campaign*, Lance Goddard)

On January 21, 1945 Henri wrote his last letter home: "I often think of how nice, it would be to be back with yous again, but I hope it will be soon... If I stay here much longer, I think I will go crazy, for I am sure lonely out here and now I sure wish I was back in civic street."

On January 28, 1945, while clearing up, and with a stretcher helping out the wounded, Henri stepped on a landmine. His parents received a telegram announcing his death and the local paper reported "Parmi nos nombreux soldats de la paroisse, c'est le premier qui tombe là bas." (*La Survivance*, page 4, February 7, 1945)

He is buried in the Ravenna War Cemetery which is roughly a 2-hour drive from Florence, Italy. Henri's mother received the Memorial Cross, a gift from Canada



Dessiné par / Art work by  
Ann (Coutts) Royer

that is issued to a mother and widow for their personal loss and sacrifice, “in memory of one who died in the service of his country.”

War Medals that Henri would have received if he had returned home:

1. The 1939-1945 Star for 6 months’ service on active operations. There were 305, 000 given to Canadians.
2. The Italy star for service between June 11, 1943 to May 8, 1945. There were 91,000 given to Canadians.
3. The Canadian volunteer service medal – given to any rank who had honourably completed 540 days’ service from Sept 3, 1939 to March 1, 1947. There were 1,183,000 Canadians who were eligible.
4. The War Medal 1939–1945 is a campaign medal that was instituted by the United Kingdom on August 16, 1945. It was awarded to subjects of the British Commonwealth who had served full-time in the Armed Forces or the Merchant Navy for at least 28 days between September 3, 1939 and September 2, 1945.



Marie Louise Charbonneau

## The Small Town Post Office

Correspondence was very important to early settlers experiencing isolation, far away from home and loved ones. When you think about it little has changed.

Regardless of the modern advances of our day, it is still important to connect, to communicate with each other whether it be online, by phone or even still, by post.

The earliest reference to a postal service in New France was in 1705, with a regular system created in 1734 “when a road existed between Montreal and Quebec.” (Wikipedia) In April of 1754 a notice appeared in the Halifax Gazette of an unofficial post office, considered the first in Canadian history. A regular postal courier service was established between Québec, Montreal and New York in 1763. It operated twice a month in the summer and monthly in the winter, and then once a week year-round by 1771.

In 1820 there were 23 post offices in Lower Canada, 19 in Upper Canada, 6 in Nova Scotia, 3 in New Brunswick and 1 in Prince Edward Island. The first stamp in the Province of Canada (1841-1867) was issued in 1851, the Three Penny Beaver, designed by Sir Sandford Fleming. It was one of

the earliest examples of a pictorial stamp rather than a reigning monarch.



In 1858 Wells Fargo & Co. began express postal service from San Francisco and the East to Victoria, B.C. By 1 July, 1867 there were a total of 2464 post and 937 way offices in Eastern Canada. Effective 1 April, 1868 new legislation provided for a uniform postal system throughout the Dominion. On July 15, 1870 Manitoba became the fifth province and service was established in Fort Garry, Manitoba.

On “1 August, 1876 a 1400-km (900 mile) stage route was established between Winnipeg and Fort Edmonton, NWT. The trip would take 21 days one way.”

([www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/cpm/chrono/chsmene.shtml](http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/cpm/chrono/chsmene.shtml))

Prior to 1895 mail for the hamlet of Beaumont was either picked up by individuals in Leduc or in Strathcona 12 to 15 miles away. A group of English settlers met to discuss petitioning for a post office, either for Sandy Lake just north or for the Clearwater area south of Beaumont. Their concerns included the difficulty of travelling the roads during the rainy season and dealing with all the snow in the winter months.

Reverend Father Morin, who served both as a colonization agent and St. Vital parish priest, travelled to Ottawa with a petition as well. He brought with him three names that had been suggested for a post office: Chartier, Bellevue and Beaumont. Father Morin’s petition was accepted and the new

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“Beaumont” Post Office was open for business on October 1, 1895.

The first postmaster was Ludger Gagnon, then in 1899 Reverend M. Beauparlant. The post office was on section 35-50-24-4 which would have been Ludger’s property, across the street and north of St. Vital church in the downtown area. Soon after, the first female postmistress was Mrs. Edmond Bonin. In 1900 the office moved west to Section 34, also in the downtown, with Mr. M. Bouin serving as postmaster.

In 1908 another change of location took place, south to Section 27 with postmistress Elise Morneau, west and across from St. Vital Church. At that point mail was coming in tri-weekly by livery from Leduc and two of the local Pony Express style carriers were Albert Rivard and Isidore Maure.



The original Pony Express mail service in the U.S. operated for only 19 months, until October 1861, reducing east to west coast travel time to roughly 10 days.

Between 1908 and 1924 various postmasters served in the hamlet, N. Champagne, Alcide Bérubé, C. J. Dubord, J. H. Goyer and A. Desnoyers. Mrs. Marie-Louise (Paradis) Charbonneau served the longest of all, she operated the post office in her private home from 1925 to 1955.

Daily mail delivery between Edmonton and Beaumont was in place by the early 1950’s.

The Post Office moved to a new residence, once again on the north, Section 34. It was here that Mrs. Eulalie (Magnan) Magnan served as postmistress for the following 15 years. Her home is still standing. It is the white house with green trim across the street from the Credit Union, originally built in 1919 as a retirement home for Alfred Dubord.

In 1970 Gérard Goudreau took over for two years and the post office was at that time located in an early Credit Union building. Mrs. Fernande (Bilodeau) Gobeil also served from her home for the following 11 years. (Post Office history – pgs. 184-5, Beaumont History Book)

Our Beaumont heritage mural pays tribute to the vital early years of postal service with the image of Madame Charbonneau, who served as postmistress for over 30 years. Marie-Louise Paradis was born in Quebec on April 2, 1886 to Auguste Paradis and Mathilda Lagacé. Her family moved to a farm in St-François, Manitoba when she was 2 years old. They lived there for 11 years. When her mother passed away, as the oldest Marie-Louise helped manage the household for the next 3 years. Her father remarried and moved to Saskatchewan with the family.

Marie-Louise remained on her own in Winnipeg and worked for a chocolate manufacturing company, then as a store clerk at Eaton’s for a few years. One day while visiting her sister in Saskatchewan



The Charbonneau home served as a blacksmith shop, and post office for many years, page 185



she met her future husband, Hermas Charbonneau. They were married February 25, 1908 and after 8 years living in Saskatchewan, they moved to B.C. with their three daughters.

Their young family moved one last time, to Beaumont, Alberta in 1919. Hermas and Marie-Louise were the parents of 8 children, though five died in their infancy. Marie-Louise was also actively involved in St. Vital parish. She served for many years as President of Les Dames de l'Autel, with Mrs. Nellie St. Jacques and Mrs. Hérard as vice-president and secretary. She was known for her decorative talents. It wasn't necessary to go into the city, she could decorate wedding and anniversary cakes for you herself.

Marie-Louise was always rendering service to the public. In the fall she didn't charge anything extra to keep the post office open until 11 p.m. to accommodate farmers who could not come by during the day. Upon retiring Hermas and Marie-Louise often

travelled to visit friends and relatives in Saskatchewan.

When Hermas died in 1965 Marie-Louise continued to live in their home for 8 more years. (The land is now owned and occupied by the current Beaumont Credit Union.) Following that she moved in with one of her daughters, then moved to the Château Sturgeon seniors' facility in Legal. She passed away August 13, 1983. Marie-Louise was 97 years old. (pgs. 261-2, Beaumont History Book)



Les Dames de l'Autel, page 114



Reverend J.E. Lapointe

## Bank and Credit Union History

A variety of metal coins were circulated in New France but there wasn't enough currency available to be much help to the early colonists. ([www.mint.ca](http://www.mint.ca)) To supplement the short supply of coins, from 1685 to 1714 the first form of paper money issued were playing cards that were specially cut and signed by the governor.

They were marked on the back and originally given to soldiers as compensation. The French King used card money once again from 1729 to 1760, "this time using white cards without colours, which ... had their corners removed." ([nilaishipm.blogspot.ca](http://nilaishipm.blogspot.ca))



An interesting coin used by colonists were the gold 15 and 30 deniers, known as "mousquetaire" because the cross on the one side resembled what the musketeers, the king's bodyguards wore. ([www.coins.nd.edu/](http://www.coins.nd.edu/))



Another form of currency available were promissory notes called *bons*, based on the French phrase, *bon pour*, meaning *good for the indicated amount*. They became

part of the most common type of currency until 1812, along with the English pound and a variety of Spanish coins.

In 1817, Montreal bankers were granted a charter by the British government to open the first formal bank, the Bank of Montreal. It was given a monopoly to issue promissory notes, ... and acted as a central bank for both Upper and Lower Canada. Other popular coins of the day were the Canadian pound, British Gold Sovereign and the American Gold Eagle.

Dominion of Canada banknotes made available in 1870 were \$1 and \$2, in 1871 the \$500 and \$1000 notes were added and the following year the \$50 and \$100 notes were introduced. There was also a \$4 note released in 1882.



Several Montreal French-Canadian businessmen founded the Banque d'Hochelaga in 1874 and besides operating across the province of Quebec, some branches were established in French Albertan communities like Grouard, Bonnyville, Lac La Biche, Falher, Villeneuve, Legal, Morinville and St. Albert.



In May 1908 a small branch was opened in the Hamlet of Beaumont. Besides having the ability to issue its own paper money (see [canadacurrency.com](http://canadacurrency.com)) little else is known

other than the branch closed in 1926. It was located downtown on lot 7, Block 1 of section 27-50-24-4 which now serves as the parking lot for the Family Dental Centre. (Beaumont History Book – block plan on pg. 169 & list on pg. 174)

The Bank of Canada was founded in 1935 during the Great Depression in an effort to stabilize the economy. At this time all banks stopped issuing their own currency. In the 1940's Reverend Father Joseph Eugène Lapointe persuaded residents to form a new financial institution for the community. It was incorporated on May 30, 1946 and named after St. Vital Parish. In the early days of the Beaumont Credit Union only parishioners could be members. The original fee was 25 cents but every year following, a new member was required to buy \$5 in shares.

The Credit Union moved several times, having burnt down twice (see pg. 179), before an official structure was ever built. The first office was in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hérard, now the site of Beaumont Family Medical Associates. Mrs. Hérard reported that one day Credit Union money was stolen while they were away. This caused concern for members but fortunately the amount was small.

We know that the Credit Union office moved to share space with a newly organized egg grading co-operative. In fact there were two such businesses in downtown Beaumont at the time and both of them burnt down, one in 1954 and the other in 1962. The first one was called Smith Produce, it opened in 1940 and by 1944 had moved from the Vaugeois family

home into the former home/store of Pat Demers on 50th Avenue, where the Credit Union is now located. In 1949 the business was sold to Alberta Poultry Marketers. The Charest family lived in the upstairs suite of the home and Joseph Leblanc in a small suite at the other end of the building.

In Lucille Charest's own words, "February 11, 1954, was a bitter cold morning... Mr. Joe Leblanc, owner of the building in which we lived, came knocking madly at our door, yelling at the top of his voice: "Get out of here; the building is on fire!" ... It was about six o'clock ... The old wooden building, part of which also served as the egg grading station, crumbled in no time." (Page 150) (This is probably the first time and location of the Credit Union office burning down.)

The other similar business was called the Beaumont Egg Marketing Co-op, started in 1945. Soon after, it was moved out of the basement of Wilfrid Magnan's home into its own newly constructed building. It was located at the site of our present day Beaumont Bottle Depot. We know for sure that the Credit Union did have an office in a corner of this building, but it was destroyed January 8, 1962 when the building caught on fire.



Left and Background Image - Egg grading station destroyed by fire, January 8, 1962

That same year the Credit Union purchased the first of several lots on the corner 50th Avenue and 51st Street in anticipation of building its own office. For the time being the Credit Union was in the small home on the east half of lot 20, beside where the Pat Demers store used to be.

On June 1, 1977, a larger office space was rented for the “Caisse Populaire, St. Vital de Beaumont Savings and Credit Union Ltd.” in what is now called Beaumont Town Center. Eventually the Credit Union had purchased lots 14 - 20 of block 1 and moved into its own building in 1989, continuing to help meet the banking needs of our rapidly growing community. (Beaumont History Book, 179 – 181)

Little information is available about Father Joseph Eugène Lapointe. He was born in 1882 to Eugène Urgele Lapointe and Armeline Mathilde Lecompte, into a family of six brothers and one sister. He became Beaumont’s new priest in November of 1945 at the age of sixty-three. He was both

co-founder and a chartered member of the Beaumont Credit Union. In 1952 Father Lapointe was named honorary president at an annual meeting. He also felt it important to visit with the Postal Station superintendent in Edmonton several times to encourage daily postal service to the town.

The central individual represented in our heritage mural is Father Lapointe, highlighting his involvement in our community and honouring his role in helping to establish the Beaumont Credit Union. Both the J.E. Lapointe Council of the Knights of Columbus and J.E. Lapointe School were named after him; he served the community for 11 years until his retirement at age 74 in 1956. Reverend Lapointe died May 18, 1969 and is buried in St. Louis Cemetery, Bonnyville, Alberta.

NOTE \*\*\* The only other fires in downtown Beaumont that I have found mention of so far would be: St. Vital Church in 1918, Alcide Magnan home/store in 1936 and the Noe Champagne home/store in 1938, all before the Credit Union was formed.

Several locations for St. Vital de Beaumont Credit Union





Hermas Charbonneau

## **Beaumont School Janitor, Church Caretaker**

Hermas Charbonneau was born in St. Jérôme, Québec on January 23rd, 1882 to Damase Charbonneau and Suzanne Leroux, the youngest of 19 children. He finished grade school and then went on to learn the trade of blacksmith. When he turned 19 he decided to go west to find his fortune. He joined his brother Ménassippe in Saskatchewan where he worked for 6 years teaching the skills of blacksmithing at an industrial college in Lebret. (Beaumont History Book, pgs. 261-262)

The Qu'Appelle Industrial School was built in 1884 to help provide education for First Nations children to fulfill one of the conditions of Treaty 4 signed in 1874. Grey Nuns, Oblate fathers and lay instructors like Hermas taught at this school. The original building burnt down in 1904 but was rebuilt in 1905. (Wikipedia)

While teaching in Lebret, Hermas met and married Marie-Louise Paradis on February 25, 1908. They lived six more years in Lebret, then 2 years in Marcellin before moving to Maillardville, B.C. with their three daughters. In 1919, having heard that there was not a lot of snow in Alberta and that cars would operate in the winter as

well as the summer, Hermas decided to check this out for himself. The parish was busy constructing the new St. Vital church and Father Normandeau would often report news about Beaumont in the French newspaper l'Union. Hermas arrived in advance, looking for a blacksmith shop combined with a car garage.

Three blacksmiths had served the community of Beaumont between 1899 to 1910 and Raoul Mailhot from 1913-1922, before he moved to Legal. Satisfied with what he saw, Hermas moved his family to Beaumont at the end of July. He purchased lots 17 and 18 of Block 1 in downtown Beaumont, which are now occupied by the Beaumont Credit Union building. He moved a small home onto the property and added to it, including a blacksmith shop, which he operated from 1919-1945. Alexandre Ménard was another blacksmith working in the village of Beaumont, his home was in Millet, while Henri Gobeil worked from his local garage. (Beaumont History Book, pg, 174)

Center: Charbonneau Blacksmith Shop (A9175)





A blacksmith knew how to repair many things. This included making and shoeing horses and sharpening plow blades for farmers, mending carts and wagons, making wheel bonds that are shrunk onto the wheels, and a variety of nails and tools as the need arose. Rhéa, Jeanne and Elizabeth would often take turns helping their father with his work. Hermas and Marie-Louise had 8 children with five of them not surviving childhood. We know they had a little boy named Roland who died when he was four years old, and a little girl named Thérèse who was only 2 months, they were both born in Beaumont.

Hermas gave great service to his parish and the clergy, as caretaker, driver, watchman and in mowing the grass in the cemetery. We know that he was a school trustee in 1934 as well as in 1935. Hermas is featured on our heritage mural, portrayed carrying a bucket of water on his shoulder.

On July 6, 1922 a group of residents including Hermas signed a contract giving them access to Napoléon Dansereau's well which was located on the site of our present day "Beaumont Town Center." The property measured 8 by 20 rods, or 40 by 100 meters. Known as "le puis de la compagnie" or the company well, Hermas hauled water to the school every day while

serving as school janitor. (Beaumont History Book, pages 166-7)

Since 1925 Hermas always had a car to drive around so upon retiring he and Marie-Louise travelled to his birthplace for a visit, and to see family in Saskatchewan. He enjoyed taking walks and visiting in the country and often travelled to Edmonton. Hermas died July 18th in 1965 at the age of 83 years.

**The Earliest School History** – On September 9, 1902 the area covered by the Fouquet Public School district was divided into the Beaumont School District No. 741 on the north and the Clearwater School District on the south. In 1903 we know that Pierre Bérubé purchased the old school barn for \$8.25, that firewood was purchased for the school for 82 cents a cord and in April that year the first purchase of school supplies was a set of reading charts and two chairs (page 45).

The original school land, lots 16-20 of Block 2, Plan 7712, was donated to the Beaumont School District in 1910 by "La Corporation Episcopale Catholique Romaine de St-Albert". In 1911 J. Stiler of Leduc was awarded a contract to build a new school room for the sum of \$1,345, while A. Gauthier purchased the old school structure for \$100 in 1912. In 1923 Louis



Hétu built an addition for \$1,575. Now Beaumont had both a junior and senior classroom, with a furnace, out in the open.

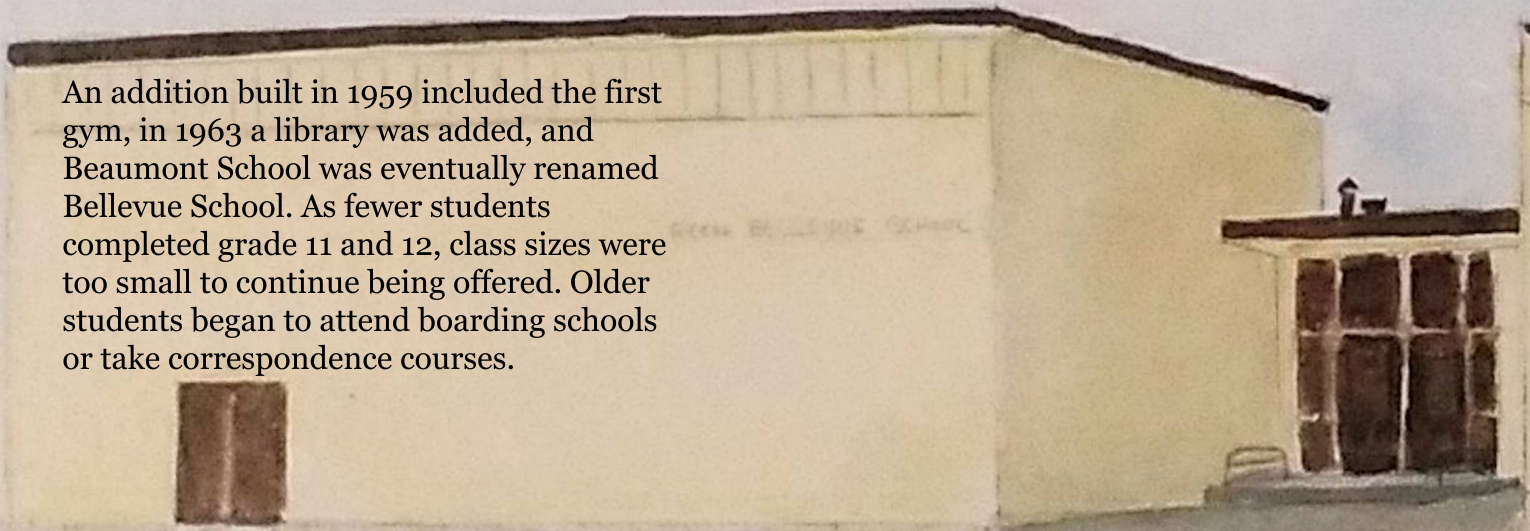
On January 10, 1925 it was decided to extend the school grounds on the south by renting lots from the Beaumont Mission. Sometime between 1923 and 1949 a second addition was added to the southeast side of the school. In 1949 an entirely new school was built, requiring more land on the west. The outhouse was no longer necessary as the new building had washrooms in the basement.

Photo of Bellevue School - Carole A. Hudson



The older building served elementary students in grades 1 to 6 while the new building became the high school, for the grade 7 to 12 students. In 1956 more classrooms were added on the south, the old school was taken down and all grades were taught in the same building.

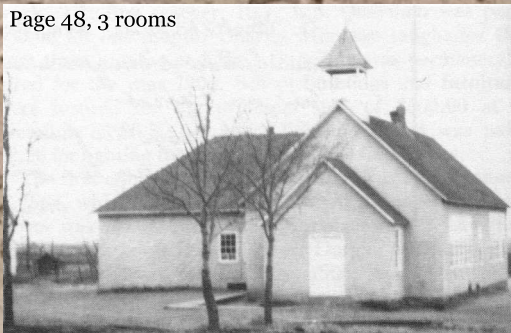
An addition built in 1959 included the first gym, in 1963 a library was added, and Beaumont School was eventually renamed Bellevue School. As fewer students completed grade 11 and 12, class sizes were too small to continue being offered. Older students began to attend boarding schools or take correspondence courses.



A15187, 2 rooms



Page 48, 3 rooms



The formal Beaumont School building began with one room in 1911 and grew to three. In 1949 it became an elementary school and then was taken down, around 1958.

Bellevue School Office - Art by Ilda, 1992





Wilma and Bob Muir

## Pioneer Children in and Around Beaumont

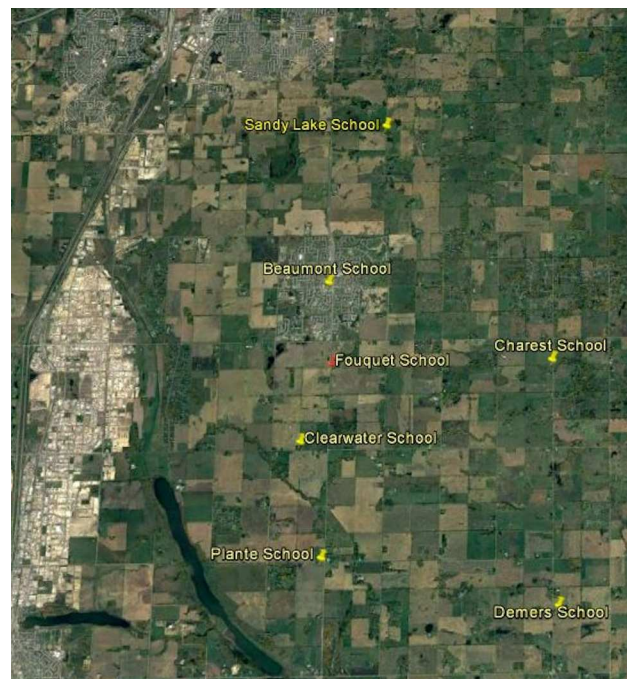
Children in Beaumont, as represented by the young boy in our heritage mural, were early pioneers too. Their lives were two-fold, either going to a one-room country school to get an education or helping with the chores on the family farm, with a little time left for play. The comforts and challenges that our youth today experience were far in the future. Life was harsh but it was also much simpler. The following has been gleaned from the pages of “History of Beaumont and District 1885 to 1960 – Our Roots,” which can be viewed online. ([www.ourroots.ca](http://www.ourroots.ca))

There were seven schools in a nine by five-mile area. Plante school was in the SW (1899-1951) and Demers School (1920 – now, became Rolley View School) on the SE corner. Clearwater (1902-1959) and Fouquet (1894-1902) were central, on the west, while Charest School (1901-1963) central, on the east. Sandy Lake school (1901, rebuilt 1936 after a fire and now gone) on the north. By the 1960’s the schools had either been closed or consolidated.

Beaumont School (1902 – present) was located in the downtown. There are no

photos of the very first building used but we know the new school district was established on September 9, 1902. Miss Wizbach was the first teacher. As recorded by Wallis Wilkerson, students in his class were: Billy, Maudy, Harry and Edie Heatley, Dolly, Tommy, Harry and Del Johnson, Johnny Woods, Billy Townsend and his sister, 3 McDowell girls, Ingram, Tommy, George, Mabel and Prince Elliott, Killiam Demers and his brother. (p. 521)

A one room school might have one of the following: a pail of drinking water at the back of the classroom, a rectangular box stove surrounded by steaming overshoes, mittens and touques, lunch pails around the stove to thaw frozen sandwiches, ink bottles to thaw (or if placed ON the stove to explode, making a mess all over the floor and walls), a barn in the yard for horses and two privies, one for girls and one for boys, (p. 63), erasable slates for practicing lessons (p. 211) and older students lighting the stoves, sweeping, dusting or carrying water from a well (p. 521.)





1934 Weiner Roast - Heritage Society Collection

Mike Telawsky: “At the age of seven I started school, trotting cross-country in a little cow trail through the bush. It was a small school house by the name of Charest School. My first teacher was a handsome young man by the name of McDonald. I still recall the thrill it gave me when he took my hand to help me write my name.” (p. 503)

The Nitschke children “walked 1 ¼ miles to attend the Demers School.” (p. 448)  
Madeleine Demers: “We had a lot of fun walking those 2 miles. Doris, Adolph and I, in snow and mud and at times so much water that we would fill our boots half a dozen times before we got to school.” (p. 224)

Annette Demers: “My sister Fleurette and I went to school in warm weather riding horseback together on the same horse. Fleurette would be in front – I would hold on for dear life. In winter we’d go the 3 ½ miles to Charest School by horse and cutter. The horse was so used to the routine that we didn’t even have to drive. We were wrapped up really well, with heated bricks to keep our feet warm until we got to our one-room school house with teacher Miss Annie Lambert.” (p. 283)

One pleasant warm fall day the Plante School door was left open. There was a “loud clatter, ... the crashing of the wash basin” when Mr. Chalifoux’s goat, from the farm across the road, had entered the room. Marc Dubord said, “Never mind, miss Brugeyroux, I’ll look after this” and he led the goat out and back to its home. When he returned and sat beside his desk partner René Chalifoux protested saying, “Miss Brugeyroux, can Marc go home and change? I can’t stand the smell of him.” (p. 93)

“Raymond Bilodeau taught Mr. and Mrs. Henri Gobeil’s sow some tricks ... he would straddle the pig as if he were riding a horse. He’d hit the sow on the right side to make her go right and on the left to make her go left. He’d go to school this way. He had to go around a slough and when he got to the other side he’d get off, point the pig in the direction of home, hit her on the rump and she would oink all the way home.” (p. 158)

Spring time meant farm duties came first as the children were needed to help in the field. There were rocks that needed picking, potatoes to seed and the older children often would drive the horses and pull the harrow or plow. Children seven years of age were considered old enough to feed the calves and hogs, run the milk through the

Yvette Goudreau feeding pigs, page 108



separator and help making butter with the butter churn. This could take over an hour. (p. 133)

Siblings would take turns bringing wood in the house to fill the wood box, keep the water reservoir on the stove full, peel potatoes and other vegetables, set the table, and wash the dishes. Older children often took care of their younger siblings. In the summer children also helped weed the garden, earth up the potatoes, collect the eggs and get the cows from the pasture when it was time for them to be milked. (p. 133)

Wallis Wilkerson: “One day when I was 4, Dad caught me squirting milk ... he soon made me understand that if I could do that, I could milk cows, and this I did. Shortly after, we shipped the first can of cream to Edmonton City Dairy by rail ... Suddenly cheques were not as large ... Dad decided to ride the train ... the trainmen had decided his was the richest so each man had his own jar and filled it on arrival

... It was then agreed that all cream cans would be locked.” (p. 520)

Agnes Maissonneuve: “In those early pioneer days there were a lot of spruce and poplar trees around. Coyotes from far and near would make these their home. During the night they would come close to the house and howl. This would go on nearly every night. This was very frightening.” (p. 452)

Daniel Bérubé “went to school in Beaumont from grades one to eight. In the winter he drove horse and cutter, in the summertime horse and buggy or sometimes he walked. After grade eight he helped his dad on the farm ... seeding and harvesting.” (p. 222)

Berthe Dagenais: “I went to ... school till I was fifteen ... I stayed home helping mother with housework and milking a bunch of cows during the winter. In summer I mostly worked in the fields helping my father to put the crops in... I did the stooking during harvest time.” (p. 438) Mike Telawsky: “When I finished school ... I helped Dad and my brother Maurice to make hay and stook grain; we also milked a bunch of cows. I worked hard but I was happy.” (p. 504)

Children often had to wear hand me downs from older siblings. Mothers sewed most of the clothes buying materials in Edmonton so that they could sew and knit new coats, mittens, socks, scarves and hats, providing warmth and dryness during the long cold winters.

Bob Muir & Wilkerson girls - Heritage Society Collection





Beaumont School students

When springtime returned, with no hospital nearby home remedies brought relief. “Honey applied on a burn eased the pain and also prevented blisters from forming. Bee stings were quite common. Liquid blueing or mud were applied to the bite.” (p. 142)

“There was always something amusing about an outhouse that had mysteriously moved during the night. Poor ol’ Isodore Maure had a beautiful iron rail gate. Every Hallowe’en the young boys from the village would tie it to the telephone pole, and every year he had to go looking for his gate.” (p. 157)

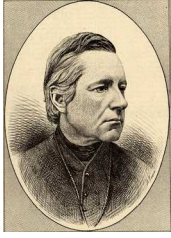
Herbert Schmidt: “The annual picnic and sports day was held on the school grounds and all the school children would take part on this occasion.” (p. 496) Angeline Gobeil: Children “enjoyed playing tag, hide-and-seek and rope skipping. Most families had a big homemade swing in the yard, made from poles and a sturdy rope. A few children had a ball... Children always liked to see the loads of wood in the yard... they

would be able to play in the woodpile during the winter.

“They loved to play in the snow, making big, long tunnels ... when the snow was thick they could make a whole village under the snow. This was a good pastime for them.” (p. 133-4) Louise Goudreau: “Do you remember on Sunday afternoons, how everybody would gather in town to slide down the Beaumont Hill with their very own home-made bob sleds?” (p. 158)

Berthe: “In winter I went to the dances once in a while. One Sunday evening I went to a card party in Beaumont and there I met Emile Morin. He asked me to play cards with him and I did. From then on we went steady.” In February 1928 Emile and Berthe Dagenais were married and moved to their own farm. “The winters were very cold ... it wasn’t much fun” for their seven children. (p. 438)

Life may have been harsh for youth on the farm in early Beaumont and district days, but it was character building too.



Father Albert Lacombe

## The “Spirit” of Pioneering

It is hard to fully grasp what life was like over one hundred years ago. What motivated the men and women who came, often with young children, to settle in the North West Territories? The land was wild and free, uncultivated, without the amenities of eastern Canada and the United States where many of these new settlers had come from.

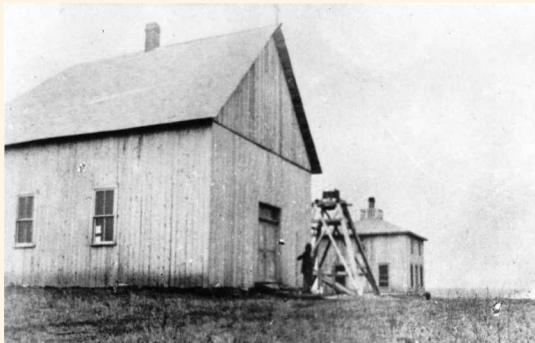
Reverend Father Perrault, serving in the mission at Stony Plain, was assigned to also minister to the small settlement in Beaumont. We know from the first parish register that it was actually called “la paroisse de Saint-Vital de Sandy Lake.” (pg. 20, Beaumont History Book.) A white flag would be hoisted on a long pole overlooking the hill, notifying parishioners when Father Perrault would be holding services the following day. These meetings were held in various individual homes, often at Louis Chartier’s. The first church structure was a small log building (A9085) with a wooden cross on the roof. It was built next to Fouquet School about one and a half miles south of downtown Beaumont.

Father Lacombe chose the site for a new church building and Bishop Grandin paid

the Hudson Bay Company \$50 for 10 acres of land at the top of the hill. Louis Chartier donated 20 acres on the other side of 50th street (which later became part of the business center of downtown Beaumont) for the use of the priest. Construction for the new church, which did not have a basement, began in the fall of 1894. The structure was 46 feet long and 28 feet wide with a sanctuary (rectory) of 16 by 14 feet built on the south. The first church service was held on June 30th, 1895.

In 1896 work began on the exterior of the church and the rectory was completed by November. On March 28th, 1897 a yearly fundraising custom began where a father would buy either a half or a full pew, depending on the size of his family, and that was where they would sit for services. This custom would last until the early 1970’s. By 1900 the inside and outside of the church was still not completed as the parish struggled to raise the funds necessary. On January 24th a raffle, supper and concert were organized, the first large get-together of its kind in the area. With the proceedings from the event ornaments were purchased as well as an organ for the sum of one hundred dollars. There was no organist in the parish so Miss Zenaïde Lavigne practiced for two months at home before the organ was installed in the church.

Almost 100 years earlier in 1818 the church in Verchères, Quebec, near Montreal, had been destroyed by lightning. Father Morin acquired an 800-pound bell from the parish and brought it across Canada (pg. 20.) At first it was placed on a turret



Wood church with bell turret and rectory.

St. Vital Church with new wooden steeple.



between the church and rectory and in 1907, when a steeple was added to the front of the church, there was a more fitting placement for the bell.

On the left is Provincial Archive photo A8983, showing the wood church without a steeple, and below it Archive photo A8984 (possibly taken in 1908) showing the new steeple and front of the church, when it was completed. A third photo, on the back inside cover of this magazine, provides a third view of the church and steeple while it was actually still under construction in 1907.

The wood for the church had been cut from the best spruce. Since it was built with the absence of machinery, the work of squaring had been done by hand (Edmonton Evening Bulletin, February 16, 1918.) Sadly, after the long struggle to build, furnish and truly enjoy their church, the parish experienced a devastating event.

“The origin of the fire is a mystery. It was first noticed about 6 a.m. by Joe Gagnon, who gave the alarm in the village, but the fire had such a start that nothing could be saved... the church was lighted by gas lamps and at 8 p.m. Sunday the lights were turned out. When first seen the fire was at the altar and a short time later the whole church was ablaze. It is thought by some that the fire must have started about three or four in the morning.”  
(The Representative, Friday, February 15, 1918)



Marriage of Achille and Zelia Royer  
23 November 1915 (A8391)

“I remember when we found the bell,” said Leon Lavigne, “Someone had rescued what was left of it from the fire and pulled it to the road.” His father Albert brought the lump of metal home. (Beaumont News, October 10, 1988)

After the fire the parish met in the school but since it was so small in May 1919 it was decided to build a temporary hall measuring 28 by 40 feet on the ruins of the old church. It was ready for use two weeks later. A basement for a new and much larger church was the first step for construction and the frame was completed by July 4, 1920. Soon bricks were being laid and on November 17th a new bell named Marie-Vitaline was installed in the tower.

The construction cost of the new church was \$30,000, aside from all of the donated work and materials. The three church structures are each included on our heritage mural. Marie-Vitaline continues to ring, powered by a motor in the basement, connected to a large wheel and timer. As the disc rotates it pulls a thick rope connected to the church bell, an ingenious local invention.

### **The Uniting of Faiths**

In 1895 James Trimble, of the Methodist faith, donated one acre of land for the construction of a log building. Later, a Presbyterian church was built at the site of present day Clearwater cemetery. Both Anglican and Presbyterian parishioners shared use of this building as they alternated Sundays.

Between winter 1911 and spring 1912 this church was moved to the corner of 50th Street and Airport Road on land that George Curry had donated. It was shared by the local Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist congregations, originally named Clearwater church but in 1925 it became known as the United Church.

In 1966 the church was dismantled and a cairn was erected. In 1982 the Clearwater Cemetery was sold to the Town of Beaumont for \$1 and the town has taken over stewardship of caring for the property. The cairn was recently moved to the cemetery location and continues to serve as a reminder of the early settlers of various faiths who share much local history with their neighbours and friends of St. Vital parish. (2011 History submission by Jake van Lange, St. David's United Church to the Town of Beaumont)



Above: Original Clearwater church, page 40.

Below: Historical Cairn now located at the Beaumont cemetery



Below: Arthur St. Pierre was hired to build the grotto in 1935, he also built a stone fence around St. Vital church, page 486.





Adrian Bérubé

## Economic Growth: From Hamlet to Village to Town

It is hard to imagine what it was really like a century ago in Beaumont without running water, electricity or cell phone service. Life on the farm was very challenging regardless of perceived wealth and prosperity. The one constant was that the community grew together, like a family.

Our heritage mural includes images of some of the early businesses in town. On pages 174 and 175 of our Beaumont History Book several general stores are noted but where exactly some of them were located has proven difficult to determine. The J.E. Lavigne Farmer's Store built in 1898 was directly across from the church, on the west side of 50th street.



History Book, pg. 176



Photo Original

Alcide Magnan acquired the building, for a second time, when he returned to the town after living 12 years in Coal Valley. In 1936 the store and all his family's belongings were destroyed by fire. He had it rebuilt,

and renamed the Red & White Store. Years later it was converted into the Chateau on the Hill restaurant, which is now closed.

Alfred Desnoyers built a creamery somewhere east of the church in 1911 (pg. 289) while Wilfrid Magnan operated a meat market on the northwest corner of 50th Street and 50th Avenue. In the late



1930's he added a mink ranch (A9177) in his back yard. He fed the mink horse meat and fish (pg. 424). Eventually there were too many animals, in 1941 the ranch was relocated half a mile south, down the hill in what is now the Lions RV Campground/ Gerry Patsula Park. I've been told there were quite a number of minks, skunks, racoons and finches kept there.

Beaumont had several blacksmiths who serve in the community. There were two banks at different times, a handful of boarding houses between 1905-1911 and 2 shoemakers who also did harness repair. With 2 garages, 3 grain mills, 2 egg-grading stations, 2 confectionaries, and 3 locations downtown where you could play pool, it was a busy place to be. Beaumont had at least 1 taxidermist, 2 electricians, 9 carpenters, 4 individuals digging wells, 1 barber and 1 wedding cake decorator. This was quite a diversity of services indeed for a small population.



Southwest corner, 50th St. and 50th Ave. (A8986)

In early 1899 local farmers wanted a telephone line established between Edmonton and Beaumont. The first step was to acquire the wire and telephones from the government. Next, permission was given by the C.P.R. to add phone lines to their telegraph poles. By fall the C.P.R. had changed their mind so in October there were 30 men who decided to supply the posts required, covering the distance between Beaumont and Strathcona.

With frost and cold in the winter, spring seeding and a wet summer, construction was delayed. As more issues arose Pierre Bérubé was awarded the contract and he worked on it right away. The line was completed by January 1901 for a cost of \$130. Until 1950, when Mutual Telephones installed other phone lines in the area, it was necessary to call a telephone exchange to complete a connection. The newer service required that 14-16 families would have to share a party line though. When AGT bought the system and installed underground cables in 1971, a few still shared a party line with 2 or 3 others. (Pages 163-4).

Access to water was a challenge. Adrien Bérubé (A9094, top left page) operated a

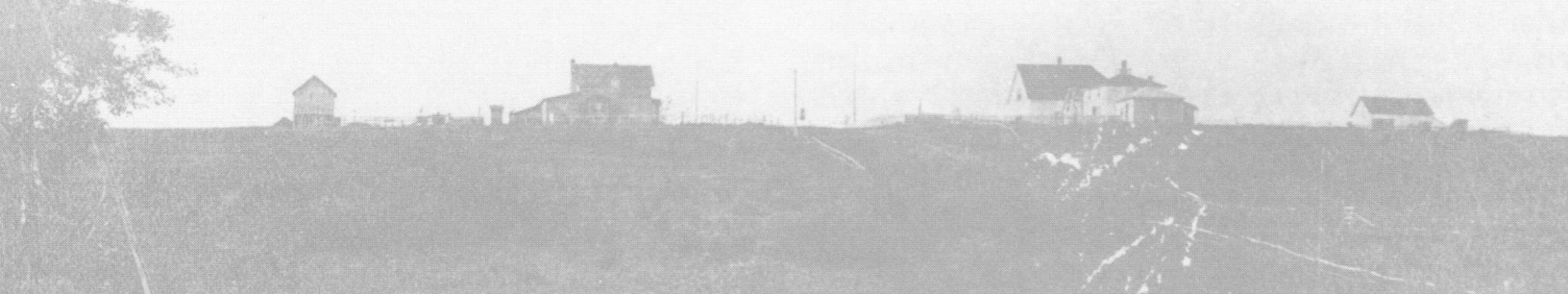
horse-drawn machine and was very busy in the spring travelling all over to dig wells for farmers. In 1922 the Company Well, located in the downtown, was available to a handful of residents who had signed a contract with Napoléon Dansereau. Potable water from the North Saskatchewan River didn't become available until the water line from Nisku to the Hamlet of Beaumont was installed in 1963. On September 1, 1984 the Capital Region Southwest Water Services Commission took over from previous water board facilities, including a newer supply line to Beaumont.

The earliest form of energy for farmers was provided by kerosene lamps and lanterns. In 1945 the hamlet of Beaumont bought an electric plant, it was located at Henri Gobeil's Beaumont Garage. Two years later Calgary Power strung a line to the hamlet while many farmers had private 32-volt plants with batteries and a gas motor generator for charging. They were costly to run.

Albert Rivard began promoting a rural electrification system to area farmers. At a meeting in the church basement on March 22, 1948 they organized the Clearwater Rural Electrification Association. In March



1942 - North of 50th Avenue, on 50th street (pg. 189)



1949 there was a meeting to discuss organizing the cutting of brush along a right of way. By October 3, over 60 farms had electricity. The 35.7 miles of line cost \$38, 142.87 (pg 164-165).

From the May 31, 1978 issue, on page 18 of the Leduc Rep, is the following story of how Beaumont became a village:

In late 1971 Leduc county council received a proposal for a trailer court of 1,000 units for northwest Beaumont and a 500 home subdivision for the northeast sector. In early 1972 a meeting was held in the home of Henri Gobeil to organize a protest. The main concern was the effects of such a large subdivision on a small community. Over 100 people turned out for a hearing that was held by the county council, in Beaumont, a short time later.

Second and third readings of the bylaw approving the development were still passed, totally ignoring their requests and concerns. Only Andy Magnan, county council representative from Beaumont, voted to oppose the bylaw. With 30 days to challenge the legality of the vote the group's lawyer was able to point out an error in the wording of the bylaw and a judge ruled in their favour.

A petition with signatures of over 80 percent of Beaumont voters was handed to the Minister of Municipal affairs, the same day a judge decided that the hamlet of Beaumont should be allowed to incorporate as a village. This decision came before the county could correct the wording of its bylaw.

At a meeting in December, 1972 Denis Hinse, Denis Bérubé and Ken Nichol were verbally told that village status would be granted, which happened on January 1, 1973. The first election took place the following April and all three councilors – Denis Bérubé, Ken Nichol and Cyril Lavigne – won by acclamation. The new council stopped the trailer court proposal (thank goodness!) and re-negotiated a 179 lot housing development agreement for northeast Beaumont. J.E. Lapointe School had not even been built yet.

In 1973 there were 92 families with a population of 412 in the Village of Beaumont. When the next census was taken in 1975 the population had grown by 29.1 percent to 532 residents. In 1976 it grew even more, up to 846 residents which was an increase of 59.04 percent! (Town of Beaumont, Population Figures) Beaumont became a town in 1980.

In 1991 the town population was 4,952 and Beaumont's French Village Guidelines were adopted by council. The guidelines apply to the central downtown area, known as CARP, as well as when a development is considered commercial, multi-family residential or a major municipal building. The original town office, which later became a town library and now serves as our youth center, was one of the first buildings to be influenced by the new design.

And that is the story of how our community grew and thrived in the early days of the Town of Beaumont.



Emilia Taillefer

## Entertainment in the Community

It was important for early settlers in Beaumont to find ways to relax and refresh at the end of the day, or school week. Our heritage mural includes images for the first curling rink in town and the old K.C. Hall (pg. 131), two community facilities that meant a lot to many residents. But they are just part of this story.

In our Beaumont History Book there are photos of other common activities like picking berries (pg. 136), going on a picnic at the lake (pg. 138), having a wiener roast after picking potatoes (pg. 105), going tobogganing with buddies (pg. 138) and giving young friends a ride in a wagon of sorts (pg. 140).

In 1899 a group of 38 parishioners organized the “St. Jean Baptiste Day” or “La fête de l’année”. It was held yearly on a Sunday in June. In later years, during the high mass a group of ladies would prepare dinner in the basement of their new brick church. There were two old wood fueled stoves to cook on while water was heated in a couple of big tubs outside. When dinner was over preparations continued for a supper to follow later in the evening (pg. 119). Various activities took place

throughout the day. For children there were sack races, three-legged races, a fish pond and a ball throw.

The adults got pretty excited about the rope pulling contest with teams coming from as far as Morinville, Legal, St. Albert, Villeneuve, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan to compete for the trophy. This took place between the church and the rectory (pg. 118). Teams came from nearby Sandy Lake, Charest and Clearwater to play baseball, just southeast of the church, before it was moved down the hill later on.

Some team photos are found on pages 144 and 145. Baseball games were often played north of the Beaumont School, as seen in the photo on page 144. Other events included a horseshoe tournament and even horse races. Money raised from all of these activities went towards church expenses.

Music and the arts play an important role in any community. Between 1920-1956 the “Club Dramatique” would present one and two-act plays monthly or three act plays every two months. Starting in 1920 “Box Socials” become quite popular. Once a year, usually in the winter months, there would be card playing that would conclude with lunch boxes being auctioned off to the highest bidder.

The money raised served as a church fundraiser. The women would bring their decorated basket or box, the men would bid on them, and then they would find out who they were sharing lunch with. There is an account of the men trying to outbid Pierre Bérubé. He once had to pay \$30 to have lunch with his wife.

In 1925 Father Gaborit wanted to find something for the young men to do so he formed a brass band. To become a member (photo pg. 121) they had to pay a \$20 membership fee while honorary memberships would cost \$5, and all the funds raised went towards paying for their instruments. Often the boys in the band would travel in Eugène Gobeil's fire wagon, charging \$5 to play at birthday celebrations.

There used to be a bandstand (A9183) between the church and rectory where they could go on Sundays and practice. There is also an archive photo (A6675) of some female musicians gathered outside the Bilodeau home. On page 58 of the History Book there is a very cute photo of Bellevue students performing in a French festival at the Jubilee Auditorium.

Not to be forgotten, there were several pool hall locations in town. In 1928 Alex and Marie (Bérubé, Hinse) Vaugeois retired from farming, sold their farm and bought a house in the village once owned by the Bank of Hochelaga. It was located across the road from the rectory.

Alex died in September 25 that same year but his wife continued managing their pool room and confectionary (pg. 176), even after his death. In 1935 Léopold Magnan opened a pool room in the Pat Demers store, now the site of the Beaumont Credit Union. He later purchased the Dubord home across the street and operated a pool room and confectionary from here between 1950-1959.

In 1948 there was another youth group called the "Beau Club" that over the next five years would organize things like dances and toboggan parties. In 1958 Father Lucien Robert encouraged a youth group to form, they called it "Club Laflamme." They were successful in raising money for a tennis court that was built east of the cemetery, but it is no longer there. The club also had several curling teams, a sport that many in the town knew little about. They would play in Leduc on Sunday nights and eventually a curling league was formed.

Land was purchased from Alberta Rivard at the west end of the village (now Beau Villa Estates, across from the Senior's Centre) and by December 1960 a three-sheet natural ice rink (pgs. 127 & 128) had been built. One year there was a shortage of skips for the ladies' curling team so Clarence Kartz filled in, which was only allowed because he was willing to wear a dress, which he did for that year.

All-night bonspiels became evidence that the new sport had taken hold. In 1978 the old rink became the property of Larry Villetard. Later that year a new six-sheet rink was opened in the new Beaumont Regional Activities Centre, fondly known as the B.R.A.C., which also included our first hockey arena. On page 125 is a photo of the first hockey team, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus around 1962.

In November 1953 discussion began about building a community centre, land was purchased from Mrs. Lucienne Bérubé for



A9183

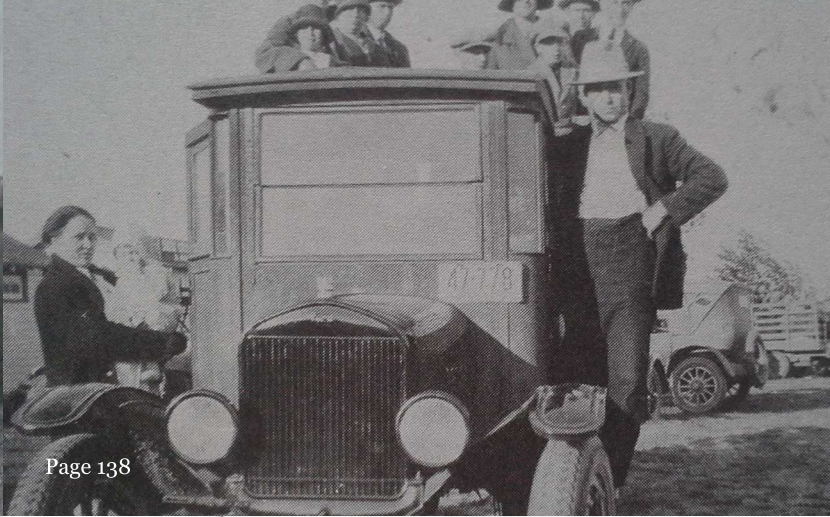
\$2,000 and construction began in June 1954. The estimated final cost was \$24,891.89. On Sunday, November 28, 1954 there was an official opening celebration which included a grand banquet at 6 p.m. where almost 200 were served. In July 1970 an adjoining lot was added to allow for more parking at the Beaumont Social Centre. On April 29, 1971 the Lapointe Council of the Knights of Columbus became the proprietors.

The October photograph used in the 2016 Heritage Society calendar shows that the original structure included a stage for performances. The KC Hall served as a hub of activity for a variety of events from 1954 to 2015, a total of 61 years. The site is now the home of our new Centre Communautaire de Beaumont Community Centre and our Heritage Mural.





Page 41



Page 138



A8389



A12000



A1971



A9184



46

Page 144



Page 145



A9182



Page 145



A6675



A8980



A8982



Page 105



Page 140



A9091



St. Vital Parish - The organ console was originally installed on the balcony in front of the wind chamber and the pipes. It has been moved to the front of the chapel.



## Opus 1673

As part of a concert on October 2, 2016 at St. Vital Church, I was asked to share the history of our pipe organ. It all began in 1834 when a young man by the name of Joseph Casavant enrolled at the Séminaire de Sainte-Thérèse de Blainville in Québec. His father had encouraged him to be a blacksmith but at the age of 27 he decided to shut down his forge and study classical music instead. To help pay for his schooling he worked as a handyman.

The seminary director, l'Abbè Ducharme, introduced him to an organ that had been only partially completed. The timing was perfect, Joseph had also come across the writings of a French Benedictine monk, Dom Bedos de Celles, the work was called "L'art du factuer d'orgues" (1766, The Art of Organ Building). His curiosity piqued, Joseph decided to take it apart and then completely rebuild the unfinished instrument.

His experiment was a success and soon after, in 1840 a nearby parish hired him to build another. Setting up his workshop in Saint-Hyacinthe, by 1866 he had built a total of 16 instruments. He introduced his sons, Joseph-Claver (1855-1933) and Samuel-Marie (1859-1929), to the trade. After travelling Europe and studying from masters and builders in the art, they returned home to continue his work. "Founded in 1879, Casavant Frères is one

of the best known and most respected pipe organ builders in the world.”

<http://www.casavant.ca/>

As of 2014 the total number of organs built has reached over 3900. They are found in leading colleges, universities and conservatories in both Canada and the United States, with a full 90% of production being exported. On February 18, 1941, St. Vital parish placed an order for their very own Casavant Frères pipe organ.

Following the death of Father Edmond Gaborit on March 27, 1940, it wasn't until 5 months later on Sunday, August 25 that a new priest was assigned to St. Vital parish. Father Narcisse Chartrand came from the Village of Chauvin, in east central Alberta. It was Father Chartrand who placed the order for a Casavant Frères pipe organ for St. Vital parish. From contract documents and stories in the early French newspaper “La Survivance” (The Survival), this is the story of Opus 1673.

Ordered on February 18, 1941, the legal document was signed in Edmonton on March 10, 1941 by Father Chartrand and Wilfrid Magnan, trustee. Their witness was Gedeon Pepin from Edmonton, who would be installing the organ. The purchase price was \$3,100 and with inflation, that would now be roughly \$52,000 today. (At a visit of the factory in October 2016 we learned that the price tag would actually now be \$200,000.)

The organ was to have two manuals, 61 keys on the swell and 61 on the great, with

32 pedal keys, and a total of 410 pipes. It has an electro-pneumatique mechanism, “whereby air pressure, controlled by an electric current and operated by the keys of an organ console, opens and closes valves within [the] wind chest, allowing the pipes to speak.” (Wikipedia) This sounds like a lot of pipes but Opus 1673 is considered a “small” instrument.

The organ was to arrive in June of that year and Amédée Leblanc was tasked with preparing the church for its installation. The first payment of \$400 was due in October. The second payment, same amount, was due January 1942, with the remaining \$2,300 to be paid in five equal payments. Federal tax was not included in the price. The interest due would cease the day the entire amount was paid. In November 1945 every family was asked to make a donation of \$10 to help finish paying for the organ.

The console, now at the front of the chapel, was originally detached from the wind chamber and placed 12 feet from the wind chest, in the gallery above. The organist was seated facing the pipes, a mirror was installed so that the organist could see the choir director. During the most recent renovation the console was moved to its place by the choir, making it necessary to build an electric module to communicate with the original blower, located in the basement.

In 1942 there was great anticipation building among Beaumont residents, as reported in the June 17 issue of *La Survivance*:



Opus 1673 console, 2 manuals. Built in 1941.

“Il ne faut pas oublier que c’est dimanche prochain, 21 juin, que nous célébrons le cinquantenaire de notre paroisse.”

Just one year after the arrival and installation of Opus 1673, a grand celebration took place in honour of the 50th anniversary of the founding of St. Vital parish. With Mlle Yvette Méthot at the organ and a choir under the direction of Wilfrid Royer, numerous visitors from Morinville, Legal, Villeneuve, Edmonton and Lamoureux were in attendance. What better reason to bring a Casavant organ to Beaumont!

|                    |             |                                                |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Mid 1941- mid 1945 | First Main  | Mlle. Yvette Méthot                            |
| 1943               |             | Mme. Marcelle (Maltais) Goudreau f/funeral     |
| 1945-1956          | Second Main | Mlle. Angeline (Lavigne), became Mme. Goudreau |
| 1946               |             | Mlle. Meuniers w/school choir                  |
| 1946               |             | Mère Estelle                                   |
| 1947               |             | Mlle. Germaine Bérubé                          |
| 1947               |             | Mlle. Florence Bérubé                          |
| 1949/51/53         |             | Mère Agnes                                     |
| 1950/51            |             | Les filles de Jésus                            |
| 1954/58            |             | Mère Marie-Claire                              |
| 1954               |             | Mme. John Whitby                               |
| 1956               |             | Rolland Deslauriers f/funeral                  |
| 1960/65            |             | Mère Ephram-Marie                              |





# War Heroes

This is the story of Private Prince William Elliott who served his country in WW I and is buried in Clearwater Cemetery.

William and Phoebe Elliott were both born in Ontario, William in 1860 and Phoebe in 1864. From the 1901 Canadian Census, we know that at some time they had moved to live in the United States where their two children were born, Isabel in April 1890 and Prince in Michigan, February 1895. They returned to Canada in 1899 and their home was located somewhere on Section 13, Township 50, Range 24 which is roughly two miles south and a little east of Beaumont.

They were of Irish ancestry and attended the Presbyterian church that was built at the site of present day Clearwater Cemetery, sharing the building on alternate Sundays with Anglican parishioners. Prince attended Clearwater school on Airport Road, one mile west of 50th Street (Highway 814).

One of his classmates was Wallis Wilkerson, one year younger than Prince, as mentioned on pg. 521 of the Beaumont History Book. In the 1906 Alberta Census William, Phoebe and Prince were included but there was no mention of his sister Isabel. She would have been 16 years old at the time. Perhaps she had married young, moved away or died elsewhere.



**Clearwater Home Guards - 1916 or 1917  
Page 201**

**“One lives in the hope of  
becoming a memory.”**

**Antonio Porchia**



**Private Prince William Elliott**

The 1906 Census also included a record of livestock owned by each family. On the Elliott farm, they had 7 horses, 7 milch cows (that's how they spelled it in those days), 42 other cattle and either 1 pig or 1 hog. In 1910, when Prince was 15 years old, his mother died and she was buried in the Clearwater Cemetery. Her headstone includes the inscription:

“And I'll go and prepare a place for you  
I will come again and receive you into myself that where I am there ye may be also.”

From the 1911 Canadian Census, we know that Prince was now 16 years old, working on the family farm, he had completed another 10 months at school and he could read and write. World War I began 3 years later when he was 19 years old. In 1916, sometime around his 21st birthday, Prince served for a short time as a member of the Clearwater Home Guards, as seen in the photo on page 201 of the Beaumont History Book.

On June 5, 1917, we know that 22-year-old Prince was unemployed and possibly staying with his father, in the city of San Luis Obispo, Shandon, California. While there he was required, along with 24 million other young men, to participate in the first of three draft registration events held in the United States. On the form, he reported that he had previously served for 6 months in the Edmonton area reserves, probably referring to his Home Guard experience.

The following year we know that Prince was back in Alberta and on August 20th he passed his Medical Examination, required under the Military Service Act.



Elliott Family plot - Clearwater Cemetery

On September 17, 1918 Prince William Elliott signed his Declaration of Recruit form in Calgary, Alberta, becoming a member of the 1st Depot Battalion Alberta Regiment.

This same document tells us that he was 23 years old, 5'6", his chest measurement when fully expanded was 36 inches and he was of medium complexion with blue eyes and brown hair. A handsome boy indeed.

During WW1 Depot Battalions were established across Canada to help with the training of new recruits. The men would receive minimal training to develop discipline. They would then travel to Canadian battalions in England to receive more training before entering the fight.

The Alberta Regiment was the largest in western Canada and based in Calgary. A war diary, Form c. 2118, is kept during

wartime, by various military units and they become the official record of their activities. Many of these war diary entries are now available online.

During the month of October 1918, the war diary entries for the 1st Depot Battalion here in Alberta include evidence of another battle that our young soldiers were fighting here at home, along with the general public. The results were devastating.

At 3 a.m. on Wednesday, October 2 a train travelling from Quebec City to Vancouver made a stop in Calgary. The city's Medical Health Officer had received a telegram from the last stop in Regina informing him that there were 15 ill soldiers on the train, returning from Europe.

He took charge of them, making sure that no one else had contact with them. They were put into isolation at the Sarcee military camp, with the hopes that no one else would get sick with the Spanish Flu, which they were suffering from.



Unfortunately, this flu would go on to kill more people worldwide than all the casualties of the war. Two nurses and a soldier from Calgary were contaminated



within the next five days. And the flu found other ways to reach the city as well.

(Page 1, Alberta History, Autumn 1976, Vol. 24, No. 4)

In the War Diaries, we learn of the prevalence of the flu in the Victoria Barracks by October 13th. On the 14th the Dental school attendance was hindered; the Supply Depot at Sarcee Camp was cleared for use as an Emergency Influenza Hospital.

On Saturday the 15th, Thanksgiving Day as noted in the diary, 27 soldiers from the Victoria Barracks were admitted to the hospital, another 27 on the 16th, 7 on the 17th and 23 on the 18th. On Saturday, the 19th all the buildings in Sarcee Camp were in use as an influenza hospital, and another 16 men were admitted, 27 to follow the next day.

On October 24th, the Provincial Health Authorities ordered that everybody wear masks, while another 11 men had to be admitted. On the 25th of October 2 men died, all troops were wearing masks by the

26th and on the 27th an urgent order was placed for more stores (supplies) for the Isolation Hospital. On the 28th a further demand was made for hospital cots and mattresses. More men died over the next several days, even members of the medical staff became victims of the epidemic.

Interestingly there are no War Diary entries available online for the month of November, the only month missing. But from military records we know that while on leave at his home in Leduc, Prince William Elliott had become ill with influenza, it had developed into pneumonia, and on November 6th he died, only 5 days before the end of the war.

His father William, his only next of kin, was contacted in California about the death of his son. He was laid to rest at Clearwater Cemetery beside his mother and the following spring his father had arranged for a stone to be erected for him in the family plot, with this inscription:

“Weep not father and mother  
for me,  
For I am waiting in glory  
for thee.”

Private Prince William Elliott, a young farmer in the prime of his life, was willing to serve his country to do his part in restoring peace in the world. Because of his military service he was placed in added danger, exposed to the Spanish Flu along with so many other young soldiers. His father had suffered a great loss, both his wife and son were gone, possibly also his daughter.

It is hard for us to fathom what life was like for the Elliott family, and countless others, even before the war began.

Our respect and care of military grave sites is a small price to pay to honour those who were willing to give their lives to protect us, regardless of whether they even made it to the battlefield abroad.

**“To live in hearts we  
leave behind is not  
to die.”**

**Thomas Campbell**



13 M.D. First Depot Battalion Alta Regiment  
Regl. No. 3214966

ORIGINAL

Co. 5

### PARTICULARS OF RECRUIT DRAFTED UNDER MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917

(Class 1)

1. Surname Elliott
2. Christian name Prince William
3. Present address Leduc R.R. No. 2 Alta
4. Military Service Act letter and number 387616 NC  
(If man is defaulter, i.e., has not registered under Proclamation, this fact should be stated, together with date of apprehension or surrender)
5. Date of birth 22nd February 1895
6. Place of birth Gilmore Mich. U.S.A.  
(town, township or county and country)
7. Married, widower or single Single
8. Religion Presbyterian
9. Trade or calling Farmer
10. Name of next-of-kin William Elliott
11. Relationship of next-of-kin Father
12. Address of next-of-kin Leduc Alta
13. Whether at present a member of the Active Militia No
14. Particulars of previous military or naval service, if any No
15. Medical Examination under Military Service Act :-  
(a) Place Edmonton Alta (b) Date 20th August 1918 Category A2

#### DECLARATION OF RECRUIT

I, Prince William Elliott, do solemnly declare that the above particulars refer to me, and are true.

Prince William Elliott (Signature of Recruit)

#### DESCRIPTION ON CALLING UP

|                   |                    |                |                                                                                       |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Apparent age      | <u>23</u> yrs.     | <u>6</u> mths. | Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease. |
| Height            | <u>5</u> ft.       | <u>6</u> ins.  |                                                                                       |
| Chest measurement | fully expanded     | <u>36</u> ins. | Nil                                                                                   |
|                   | range of expansion | <u>3</u> ins.  |                                                                                       |
| Complexion        | <u>Med.</u>        |                |                                                                                       |
| Eyes              | <u>Blue</u>        |                |                                                                                       |
| Hair              | <u>Brown</u>       |                |                                                                                       |

39  
P.H.  
gh

O. C. Depot Btin.

Regt.

Place Calgary Alta Date 17-9-18

M. F. W. 133.  
8024-5-17.  
1272-39-1128

**To Contact the Beaumont & District Heritage Society**

info@beaumontheritage.com  
Website: [www.beaumontheritage.com](http://www.beaumontheritage.com)



**St. Vital Church, with incomplete steeple addition (around 1907)**  
Heritage Society Photo Collection

