

A WALK THROUGH

A self guided historical walking tour of the
TOWN OF SMOKY LAKE



History



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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**YOUR STOPS
TODAY**

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

1

1919: Smoky Lake Railway Station Railway Avenue

The Canadian Northern Railway Station was constructed during 1918 and 1919 when the rail line reached this area. Soon after it was operating, it became Canadian National Railway. If you look up, you'll notice a hipped roof over the main station area with two gabled dormers and a low pitched roof over the baggage area. It has a very wide eave with brackets extending along the platform.

The arrival of the railway in the Smoky Lake district brought dramatic changes to settlers' lives by enabling the transport of goods across the country. Villages along the railway line suddenly became populated as businesses ranging from grain mills and general stores to banks quickly became established. Both passenger and freight was transported in and out of Smoky Lake from 1919 into the 1980's.

Then:

The original CN Station is shown. The Town purchased the land, with the Friends of the CN Station moving and restoring the facility in the early 1990's.



Photo #G1073 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Now:

The CN Station is open July and August every year as a tourist attraction. In 2022, it was designated as a historical resource.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

2

1922: Smoky Lake Inn (formerly known as the Smoky Lake Hotel) 4 Wheatland Avenue

The Smoky Lake Inn, complete with hotel rooms, restaurant, lounge and liquor store, is over one hundred years old. Across from Pumpkin Park, it is conveniently located by the railway station, built with train passengers in mind. It features a two storey rectangle plan shape with concrete basement. The hotel was one of the early commercial buildings in Smoky Lake, constructed in 1922 by Sam Kostyniuk.

Sam expanded the building onto the next lot in 1933. The interior and exterior have undergone a series of renovations over the years. The hotel had renovations twice between 1925 and 1933. First adding a lower level extending to the north then adding again by going further north and upwards adding a complete second story. This is the basic footprint that remains today. The hotel was added to again in the 60's and 70's (keeping the original building intact) taking over the space once occupied by the Empire Pool Hall. This added the current lounge, liquor store and the modern rooms that are available today. The Inn saw another renovation in 2000's to replace the flat style roof and upgrade the exterior appearances as well as the interior. The building is wood construction but when the railway station was being updated to a stucco exterior in 1936 the owners decided to also stucco the hotel. Probably taking advantage of the crew being in the area and also seeing the advantages of lower maintenance costs and durability of the stucco. The original underlay of this stucco is stronger than concrete. (As shown by many worn out drill bits during renovation.) The Hotel had stucco added again to match the exterior to the modern cinder block construction done in the 60's and 70's. The hotel was originally heated with wood then converted to a coal fired boiler, then oil and again has been updated to work from a natural gas fired electric boiler and forced air system. Water was originally hauled from the town well until waterworks were installed. This usually providing employment for the young boys in town.

Sam was elected Mayor of the Village of Smoky Lake in 1929 and served in that role until 1934. In 1933, the hotel expanded onto the next lot. Unfortunately, Sam was killed tragically in a car accident in 1938, forcing his wife Kate and six children to move to Edmonton. Meanwhile, Kate's brother, John Megley, managed the hotel with the help of Kate and Sam's son Spence upon his return from the navy. They managed the Inn until 1949 when it was sold.

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

Some of the owners after Sam Kostyniuk have been Frank Stucko, J&M Komarniski, Albert Hanson, Jim Shupenia, Nick and Shirley Werstiuk and currently Brian and Leesa Jones.

The hotel included space for sleeping quarters upstairs, a café and a bar. We can only imagine the number of train weary people coming to the hotel looking for comfort and a meal or those that were road weary looking for the same. Remember some of these journeys were with horse and buggy until the automobile became mainstream. Paper boys would hawk their Edmonton Journals on the corner to the patrons of the Hotel and the customers on the streets. A travelling optometrist had his office located on the second floor for a time as well. (Dr. Tchir) providing eyecare for the local population. The restaurant would sometimes be leased out and other times run by the owners themselves but there was always a reputation for good food. Today the hotel continues to operate as it did 101 years ago, providing rooms, food and beverage to weary travelers and a place to meet and visit for the locals.

Then:

When Sam Kostyniuk, the first owner, died in a car accident in 1938, it was the first time a hearse was used in Town. The funeral was held in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Because there were so many people, the floor buckled, the results of which are still present today.

NOW:

Brian & Leesa Jones, current owners, just celebrated the 101st Anniversary of the Smoky Lake Inn.



Photo #G176 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



3 A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

1919: Gavinchuk House (residence)

368 West Railway Drive

The Gavinchuk House is an older, single-storey 1919 residence of simple design, with a high-pitched roof and an attached enclosed front porch.

Its heritage value lies in the home's direct connection with acclaimed photographer Nicholas Gavinchuk, who had his studio in the house for over 40 years.

Nicholas Gavinchuk was born in 1889 in Western Ukraine. He arrived in Canada in 1899 with his parents, and they settled on a farm in the Chipman area. In 1908, Gavinchuk attended the Alberta College where he became interested in photography. He then obtained a teaching permit from the Ruthenian Training School for Foreign Teachers. He taught school for two years until the outbreak of World War I, when he was declared an enemy alien and had to return to his parent's farm. He and Anna Horbach were married in 1915.

Nickolas Gavinchuk's original photo studio was located on Main Street. After it was destroyed by fire in the early 1920s, Gavinchuk renovated this house to accommodate a photo studio and office. This was his place of business for the 40-plus years that he photographed significant events in the region and the people living in it. He took thousands of wedding photographs, baby pictures, and family portraits. He also documented the everyday life of Smoky Lake and the surrounding areas taking photographs of business operations, agricultural activities, events and street scenes.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

4

1922: John H. Eckess House

410 West Railway Drive

This single-storey wood framed house was built in 1922. Its location is a large corner lot on the edge of an area of older residential homes near the downtown commercial area on a street running parallel to the abandoned railway line. The house features a square plan and has wood shingled siding, an arched verandah, window and door details, brackets under the soffits and fieldstone skirting.

John H. Eckess was the first resident of this house built in 1922. John Eckess was an Austrian who came to Smoky Lake in 1920. He managed the Beaver Lumber Yard and was later the Imperial Oil Bulk agent while also serving duties as Justice of the Peace. He served as secretary-treasurer to the Municipality of Smoky Lake from 1925 to 1927 then as a councilman in 1928. School Superintendent Harry A. Kostash also lived in this house from 1943-47. He taught in Smoky Lake, in area rural schools and in Saskatchewan. In 1935, he was appointed as School Inspector in Athabasca and established several new school districts for newly arrived pioneers. He returned to Smoky Lake in 1939 as a School Inspector and held that position until he retired in 1964. The high school in Smoky Lake bears his name.

1922:



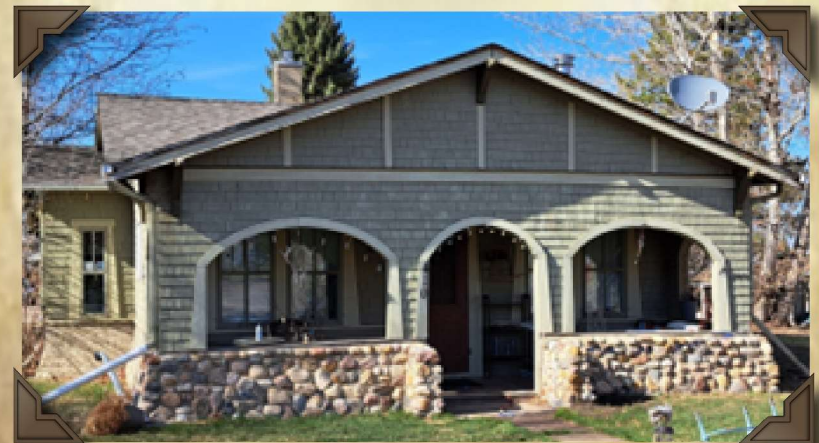
2024:



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

School Superintendent Harry A. Kostash also lived in this house from 1943-47. He taught in Smoky Lake, in area rural schools and in Saskatchewan. In 1935, he was appointed as School Inspector in Athabasca and established several new school districts for newly arrived pioneers. He returned to Smoky Lake in 1939 as a School Inspector and held that position until he retired in 1964. The school in Smoky Lake bears his name.

The house is an excellent example of Craftsman Style residential construction and is representative of early small urban homes. It features many details prevalent in Craftsman homes such as wood shingle siding, wide bracket detailing under the soffits, full width verandah with arched headers, and splayed wood side casing around the doors and windows.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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1931: Goresky House (Mission House)

333 White Earth Street

The Goresky House is a one-and-a-half-storey residence built in 1931. It is an excellent example of craftsman style architecture. It is stucco clad and has a high-pitched gable roof with large central dormers front and back and an enclosed front porch. Interior wooden features such as mouldings and pillars indicate the high level of workmanship and attention to detail that was invested in homes of this period.

The house has heritage value due to its association with Dr. Isidore Goresky, who was employed at several schools in the Smoky Lake area and was principal of the Smoky Lake School, a post he held from 1926 to 1935. He was also a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Isidor Goresky was born in Austria in 1902, to Basil and Victoria Goruk. The family came to Canada in 1904. Basil changed the family name from Goruk to Goresky.

The house also has heritage value because of its association with the Womens' Methodist Mission Society, Kolokreeka branch, which purchased the house from Goresky in 1932. The Kolokreeka church home, once located about a mile north of Smoky Lake, was established in 1908 and boarded children from the countryside during the school year. That school was closed at the start of the Great Depression but the Methodist Mission continued its community work with missionary women residing in this house until 1959.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

6

1919: Kostyniuk House (residence)

262 White Earth Street

This single-storey, residence was built around 1919 and features red brick on all sides. It has a medium-hip roof, and concrete lintels over window and main entry openings.

The House was built by Samuel Kostyniuk in 1919, who also built the original portion of the Smoky Lake Inn in 1922. Samuel was born in Ukraine in 1889, and came to Edmonton in 1907 joining his brother. He and his wife, Kate Megley, moved to the Smoky Lake area in 1918. When it was announced in 1919 that a rail line would be built through the community, the couple moved into Smoky Lake and built the hotel, which continues to operate to this day.

The distinctive red brick for the house came from the local brick factory. The clay to form bricks came from the site of the factory on the east-side of the train tracks north of the Town of Smoky Lake.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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1920: Former RCMP Detachment and Residence 4808 & 4810 McDougall Drive

The former Alberta Provincial Police (APP) detachment office and jail was built around 1920 and is now a private residence. Originally located on Main Street, now Wheatland Avenue, it was relocated to this site in 1922. The APP operated as a one-man post in Smoky Lake and the first constable was William E. Buchanan a.k.a. Bill or Buck. He was stationed in Smoky Lake from 1920-29. Sometime during his tenure, a steel jail cell was transported from Edmonton and installed in the building with the assistance of local blacksmith George Wolansky. Constable Buchanan recalled that several of the local 'boys' spent the odd night in his 'hotel' which offered no chambermaid services, each guest having to make his own bed. This building was later used by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) when the APP was disbanded in 1932 and policing duties were contracted to the RCMP. The detachment is a basic stucco-clad structure with fascia uniquely decorated using a wood layering detail to create open slots at even intervals along its length. Immediately adjacent to the detachment office to the west, is the former RCMP residence. Built around 1935, the house is a basic, one-and-a-half storey residential building typical of the modest residences constructed for constables responsible for municipal policing at that time.

McDougall Drive was a prominent street in the town's early development; both of the police buildings were located here as was the McDougall hospital and the doctor's residence. Although times have changed, and the R.C.M.P. detachment has been moved to a modern building, the old detachment and residence retain value as a symbol of the A.P.P and R.C.M.P. presence in Smoky Lake.



RCMP Detachment



RCMP Residence

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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1936: Rudie's Garage (long known as General Garage & Tommy Ford) 78 Wheatland Avenue

This automotive garage, built in 1936, has a vaulted roof with a curved parapet and stucco covered exterior walls. The interior walls were made with a mixture of mud and straw over the wood then a layer of plaster. The wood was supplied locally from Palichuk's Lumber Mill. The ceiling is composed of pressed-tin. A hoist used to lift engines from Model-T Fords was incorporated into the ceiling.

Anthony (Tony) Nowakawsky's parents and family preceded him in about 1910; Tony joined the family later after completing automotive school in Europe. He was mechanically inclined and aimed for a career in automotives. He worked as a mechanic for the famous bush pilot named Wop May, taught mechanics, and also obtained a pilot's license. In 1920 he married a teacher named Mary Lutczyszczyn whose family had come from Poland. In 1928, they bought a small service station in Smoky Lake from Peter Dubetz in and the couple lived in the White Earth School teacherage where Mary taught. By 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression, the Department of Education let go of all married women teachers in order to provide more positions for male teachers needing income to support their families; this prompted Mary to develop the automotive business with her husband.



Then:

Photo #G2197 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta
From left to right are the General Garage, Smoky Lake Electric owned by Zen Fedorkiw, Jarema's Dry Cleaners and Mens Wear. Behind the Smoky Lake Electric building was the electric power plant that supplied the village with power.

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY



In 1934, Tony and Mary purchased three lots near the center of Smoky Lake and began construction on their new garage called General Garage. It operated as a Fuel Products gas station. In December 1935, Mary was granted a franchise and became the first woman in Canada to operate a Ford Dealership. The whole family was involved in working the garage and when Tony passed away in 1946, Mary ran the business and raised the family. When she retired in her 70's, the youngest son Tommy took over the business; he was the mechanic and his brother Terry handled the sales. When Tom retired, Rudy and Janice Lofflebein purchased the garage in 2014. When he retired, Rudy and Janice Lofflebein purchased the garage in 2014 where he serviced vehicles in the area along with his son Jeremy who now operates the auto repair garage.

Then:

In the 70's, Tommy Nowakawsky took over the business from his mom, Mary - the first woman in Canada to operate a Ford Dealership.



NOW:

The current storefront still bears a striking resemblance to the 1936 original.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY



1922: The Signal House (Residence)

4924 50 Street

This historic building is a two-storey residence with wood clapboard siding, original windows and doors, and a medium-gable roof. It was built in 1922 by the Home Mission Board as a manse for Percy G. Sutton.

Percy G. Sutton was an Englishman who graduated from Manitoba College, homesteaded near Smoky Lake and conducted church services at the Methodist Church in the Victoria Settlement. He studied Ukrainian and often interpreted government and business documents for local Ukrainian settlers. From 1911 to 1921, he was the minister for the Austrian Mission in Smoky Lake (Ukraine being part of Austria at the time). He was also secretary of the Smoky Lake School District and a well-respected Justice of the Peace for the Smoky Lake district.

John and Annie Millar lived in the house until he passed away in 1951 when it was sold to Harry Woytkiw. Mr. Woytkiw subdivided the two acres, that had been mission land, to create an alley between it and county property that held the county administration building and another lot for the house next door. He worked for the Alberta Liquor Control Board in town, served as town councilor for a number of years and then mayor in 1958-59. In the late 1970s, Lorne and Cathy Taylor purchased the building as their home and for the offices of the weekly newspaper, the Smoky Lake Gazette, later, "The Signal".

The Smoky Lake Signal which served the community for over forty years donated about 80,000 photographic negatives and a full archive of newspapers to the Provincial Archives. Currently, private owners have upgraded the interior infrastructure of this family residence and have a great interest in its history.



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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1929: Our Lady of Atonement Roman Catholic Church 4904 50 Street

Construction of Our Lady of Atonement Roman Catholic Church began in 1927, and was completed in 1929. The structure was built according to the cruciform plan, and designed with onion-shaped domes characteristic of Byzantine architecture and eastern rite churches. There is a large central dome over the nave, as well as smaller dome on the front axis which houses the bell. The Byzantine design of the church is unusual for a Roman Catholic congregation and reflects the Slavic background and religious traditions of most of the parishioners. The church houses an icon of "Our Lady of Atonement," painted by noted Ukrainian-Canadian church artist Peter Lipinski. Our Lady of Atonement Roman Catholic Church is part of a complex which includes a convent adjacent to it as seen in the photo. The combination of church and convent are conspicuous in the residential neighbourhood.



Photo #G27 (c. 1933) appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



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YOUR STOPS TODAY



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Inside the church offers seating for 175 people, pews were built by George Gavinchuk and paid for by the members. A majestic brass-finished crystal candle chandelier and Red Eternal Light were suspended from the ceiling. There are eleven large vertical round-arched stained glass windows. Although there are no iconostas, there are numerous framed religious paintings, a tetrapod in the front centre of the nave and a ten foot by six foot wooden cross clad in bronze sheeting on the north wall behind the altar. The gold tabernacle is on top of the altar. There are processional banners (khorovy) made of silk. There is a full basement with kitchen and restrooms, four wooden beams. Parishioners celebrated fifty years in 2014 with Divine Liturgy and banquet at the Complex.



Building the Church



12 A WALK THROUGH HISTORY



1933: Smoky Lake Hardware (Small engines, Alamo Travel Agency, most recently, flower shop and hair salon)

106 White Earth Street

This commercial building is divided into two businesses, each its own entry and large fixed display windows on either side. It is located on a corner lot on a main commercial street in downtown Smoky Lake. Originally, Stanley Paskevich built this as a hardware store in 1933. Joe Moroz purchased the hardware store and constructed the northern addition in the late 1970s. He sold snowmobiles, lawn mowers and other small engine machines. During the Moroz period of ownership, the business operated as Joe Moroz & Co/Alamo Travel Agency. Ambers Flowers and a hair salon later operated from this dual-business building. When first constructed, it was clad with clapboard siding and had a stepped boomtown front façade. However, in 1945 the building was clad with plaster and a projecting horizontal and vertical frame similar to other buildings in the vicinity.



Then:

Photo #G1230 (left)

Left to right: Smoky Lake Hardware built by Mr. Paskewich, P.S. Dubetz general store (present Bakery site), J.M. Woycenko store (the leanto was a barber shop, later a library and a barbershop again). The first barber was Harry Gawerletz. Andrew Shymka general store which was later owned by Mike Mykyfiuk.

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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1932: P.S. Dubetz General Merchant Store
(Old-Fashioned Bread Bakery)

114 White Earth Street

The bakery is a single-storey commercial building with a boomtown front. It is stucco clad with large display windows that flank a flush central entry.

The Old-Fashioned Bakery building was constructed in 1932 and was originally the P.S. Dubetz General Merchant Store. After the family homestead close to town was established, the family helped Peter to build this store. While the town of Smoky Lake grew as an agricultural service centre of the district, the store was an important outlet for farmers in the region from Bellis to Warspite. The business continued to operate through the depression. After Peter passed away in 1954, the building became Velma's Bakery owned by Wilmat and Velma Switzer. Beginning in 1972, the bakery was owned and operated by Ernie and Berangere Brouseau who stayed in the living quarters in the basement during the first year. For many years, Maurice Lalonde was in partnership with them. The couple socialized with their customers and often sat with them in the friendly atmosphere surrounded by freshly baked bread. In 1988, a large expansion was added on.

Now, their daughter Reneé is the full time baker and the business has been a family operation for over 50 years. The building has provided important services to the community and continues to service the surrounding local residents and visitors.



Photo #G1230 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

14

1945: Ortona Hall (Drop-In Centre)

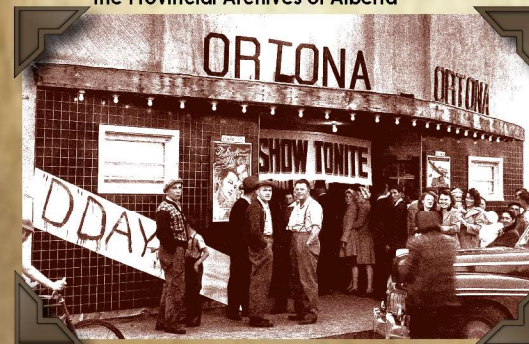
124 White Earth Street

This entertainment hall was named Ortona after the battle fought in Italy during WWII. Carpenter Harry Shopik began construction around 1942, and completed it in 1945. It is a one-and-a-half-storey building with a prominent stepped boomtown façade. The design was influenced by the Moderne architectural style that emphasized rounded corners and a vertical protruding pattern intersected by a horizontal linear band.

The first owner of the Ortona was Bill Esopenko and the hall was mainly used as a dance hall and theatre. A formal dress code was enforced when dances were held. The hall was also used for other forms of entertainment, including wrestling bouts. Most of the wrestlers came from Edmonton, except for one local wrestler with the last name Kinesavich. After Esopenko, Jack DoBush owned the hall and continued to operate it as a dance hall until purchased by the Smoky Lake Seniors Club. In 1973, retired citizens of Smoky Lake organized the club and reopened the hall February 1974. Volunteers repaired and remodeled the it, adding a serviceable kitchen, tables and chairs, and pool tables. Not only was the Ortona Hall a prominent building with unique architectural features, but it was also a central community gathering place for social events such as dances and movies. It continues to be the social centre for the local residents.



Photo #G540 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



NOW:

This historical building is currently still a bustling centre for residents of all ages.

Then:

Ortona Theatre on D-Day June 6, 1945.

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY 15

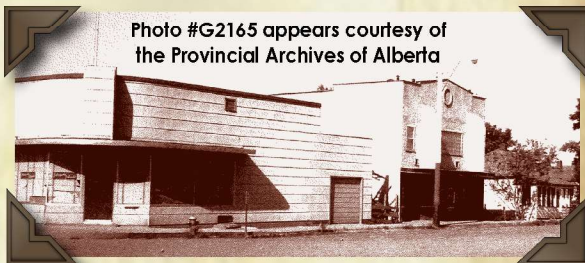
1950: Coop (more recently Rivers Edge Computers)

55 White Earth Street

This is a one-storey, stucco-clad commercial building with an apartment at the rear. It has a curved corner entrance, with a fixed awning over the corner entry that wraps along the sides above the large display windows. It is located on a corner lot at the intersection of the two main commercial streets in downtown of Smoky Lake.

The location was once the site of the Kinesavich Dry Goods store. It was purchased by the Co-op, used for a short time, and then dismantled in 1949. The existing building was constructed for the Co-op in 1950 by Mr. Pawliuk, a local carpenter. After the Co-op ceased business, the building was purchased by Nick Skoropad. The storefront was rented to various businesses over the years, and a section in the back of the residence was used as a hair salon. Nick and Pauline Skoropad moved to Smoky Lake in 1946. Pauline operated the hairdressing business and Nick taught in Smoky Lake County at the Edwand, Toporoutz, and H.A. Kostash schools until retirement. Businesses that rented from Skoropad included Dr. Lobay's Office, Kolotyuk's IDA Pharmacy, Nick Darichuk's Electronic/TV repair, Wally's Floors Alive and a Sears catalogue outlet.

The heritage significance of the building lies in its design features: sleek lines, curved edges, corner marquees, minimal decoration and stucco surfaces that demonstrate a Moderne architectural influence.



Then:

In the early 1960s the Capital Theatre was renovated and became the town office.

NOW:

This historical building is currently for sale and waiting for a new owner.



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1947: Capitol Theatre (Town Office, Store)

65 Wheatland Avenue

The Capitol Theatre is a two-storey, commercial building located on Wheatland Avenue in the centre of Smoky Lake. The 565-seat theatre was constructed in 1947, by three partners: Nick Kurylo, Nick Palemarek and Peter Maskalyk. The sloped floor included in the design caused some digging challenges for the builders. It was typical of small scale movie theaters of the time. The glass block and windows in the upper façade are original. The upper façade also once carried a marquee projection. The lower facade, now replaced with contemporary alterations, once had Moderne architectural detailing of Carrara glass and curved raked entries. The exterior is brick and stucco clad. The Capitol Theatre operated until 1963, when the theatre was converted to the Town Office.

The theatre is important in local history and is valued for its landmark status as a focal point for community entertainment and a centre for municipal administration.

Then:

In the early 1960s the Capital Theatre was renovated and became the town office.



1950: Filewych Meat Locker (Maple Garden Restaurant)

181 White Earth Street (Lot 1, Block 10, Plan 803)

Lazaruk Brothers Garage: In 1912, William Lazaruk married Mary Kretzul. In 1919, they adopted William and Sandra Ratsoy, whose parents passed away and were related to the Lazaruks'. He served as Mayor in the village of Smoky Lake for one term in 1927. In 1930, two brothers, William and Peter Lazaruk built in partnership the Lazaruk Brothers Garage. The one storey rectangle plan shape measured fifty feet in width by one hundred and twenty feet in length, with boomtown front, double entrance doors and extra large front windows. They sold Allis-Chalmers tractors, Red River threshers, Brantford wagons, Cockshutt farm machinery in addition to being the Chevrolet dealership to sell cars. The business was sold in 1944 to Nick W. Boychuk. In 1948, there was a fire destroying the building and property totally.

Save More Locker: In 1950, upon clearing the devastating impact fire has, two more brothers set out to build a grocery store. This time it was the Filewych boys who were originally from the Vilna area Peter and William (Bill.) Bill was a school teacher, who married Mary Furiak in 1938. The business included a butcher shop featuring homemade sausage, grocery store and refridgerated lockers available to rent to customers to keep food frozen. In around 1970 until mid 1980, Larry Fiewych and his family owned and operated the business while living in the quarters upstairs.

There have been several other businesses through the years. Since 2003, Wei Ren and Yan Hong (Jennifer) have been operating Maple Garden, a family owned Chinese restaurant.

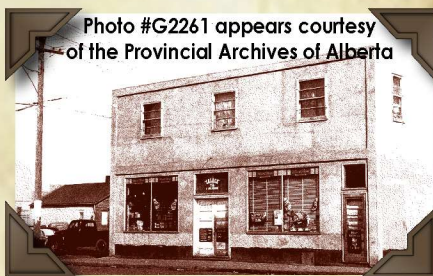
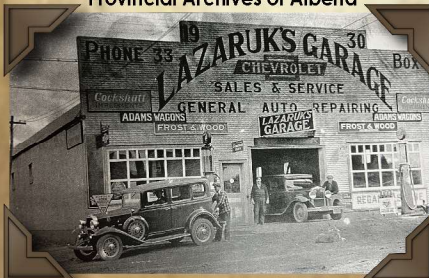


Photo #G282 appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



1921: Bottle Depot

161 White Earth Street

This business and residence combined has a boomtown front, two inset doors each to half the storefront, large windows, and stucco-clad exterior. One of the most striking things is the huge pot bellied stove as near the main entrance still in operation today.

In 1921, William and Mary Lazaruk in partnership with John Kinesawich built a General Store. In 1924, Mr. Kinesawich assumed full ownership, buying the Lazaruks' out. In the mid 1930's the Kinesawich Family moved to Thorsby to operate their newly acquired hotel, which was about the time George and Domka Cherweniuk purchased the building to operate a succession of businesses over thirty years from 1930-1960, which included a pool hall, bowling alley and restaurant. The family of five lived in the back in the living quarters. The pool hall served as a meeting place for "locals" while the bowling alley was a booming business. The restaurant was operational for a period of five years but was not very successful in a time of using ice blocks prior to refrigerators. From time to time spaces were rented out as a barbershop, beauty parlor, drug store, grocery store, furrier and cleaners and egg grading station. Lastly, George and Domka embarked on establishing and operating a second hand store.

In 1960, George and Domka's son Metro along with this wife Shirley moved back to Smoky Lake and ran the second hand store until 1974 and even added a bottle depot as we know it today. The store had a collection of oddities with an assortment of antiques lining the walls. There were used tools, household appliances, pocket books, comics and many other things on display. Metro and Shirley and their three children also lived in the back of the store. Later a bottle depot was added so people could bring their empty containers for a refund of money. Metro and family went on to purchase Smoky Lake Meat Market vacant building beside Number 7 as we know it today. Now owned and operated by Tim Sakellarvou and Beth Braucht, this building continues to service the community as a bottle depot.



1946: Lazaruk & Ratsoy Marshall Wells
(Pappy's Parcel Pitstop)

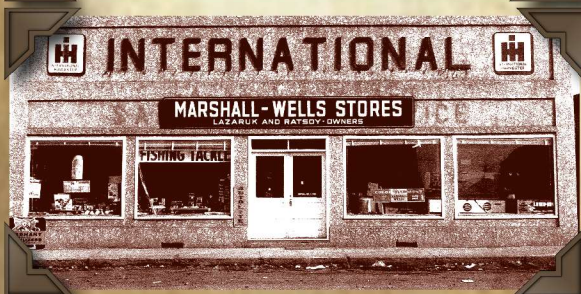
141 White Earth Street

The simple rectangular structure with a boomtown front was built in 1946 by William Powley for a McCormick-Deering Implement Shop.

William Ratsoy purchased the building in November 1947, with partner Alexander Lazaruk forming a combined International Harvester farm machinery agency and hardware business. By 1954, Bill and his wife, Mary with hard work saw their hardware and implement business flourish. They were eventually able to buy out their partner and specialize in hardware alone under the Marshall Wells franchise.



Photos below, #G2075 & #G2259 appear courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta



In 1975, it became Carpenters' Hardware Store owned and operated by Carole and Cliff Carpenter with Sears Catalogue and Registries until 2018 when they retired. In that same year, Michelle Wright and Dennis Jonker started Pappy's Parcel Pitstop. The building underwent major renovations to create a one stop shipping and receiving hub in rural northeastern Alberta in conjunction with other businesses renting space at the Pitstop.

Then:

International store owned by Lazaruk and Ratsoy c. 1948
Marshall Wells Store
Lazaruk and Ratsoy increased their business to include International Sales and Service and Marshall Wells merchandise.

2023: Town Mural 45 White Earth Street

This mural was painted for the town's 100th anniversary and depicts some items emblematic of its history from Métis and missionaries to Ukrainian and agrarian lifestyles and the town flourishing with the coming of the railroad.

In the foreground, you can see a river, the North Saskatchewan. The North Saskatchewan River provided transportation and food sources for first peoples; later for Métis and European settlers, and continues to provide water for domestic use today. Prior to European colonization, groups of First Nations, primarily Cree with Blackfoot south of the river, travelled throughout the area for thousands of years, often gathering and setting up encampments by the river, a favourite meeting place near "Hairy Bag" (a buffalo grazing area) with sheltered sites within the river valley. At the top of the mural, you can see buffalo and an indigenous campsite. The river is in the foreground as it is at the forefront of settlement.



The iconic Métis Red River Cart is also at the top; to the left of it, is the Pakan Methodist Church. The first permanent settlement in this region began in 1862 when Methodist minister George McDougall established a mission at Hairy Bag to bring religion and education to the indigenous people. A Hudson's

Bay Company trading post was established two years later in the area where some Métis helped with guiding and translating. McDougall soon encouraged a contingent of Métis families from Red River Settlement, Manitoba to come to Pakan, where the Métis population grew to 130. Newly arrived families established river lots with farms extending 23 km along the Victoria Trail following the North Saskatchewan River.

To the upper right, you'll see a domed church. The church was a very important community building for Ukrainians who began settling the area during the 1890s. Settlement expanded northward as hundreds of Ukrainian and other European settlers took up homesteads yet they maintained their culture as shown by the Ukrainian dancers toward the middle of the mural. Prairie agriculture and the establishment of eastern European immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century further developed farmland and communities. A woman in a garden adjacent to berry shrubs along with a farmer pitching hay represents the farming lifestyles of both Métis and European settlers in the area living off the land.



The train station seen in the mural is the central element for the establishment of the Town of Smoky Lake. Settlers built churches, schools, halls and businesses at places throughout the lands being settled; then with the advent of the railway coming more residents and places of commerce opened in clusters along its route. As the Canadian Northern Railway line was established in 1919 at Smoky Lake, this location turned into a thriving community.

Pumpkins growing in the agricultural portion of the mural represent a more recent facet of our culture. While pumpkins have been grown in the region by early farmers, over three decades ago, locals began a challenge to see who could grow the largest pumpkin. This contest grew over the years to become the Great Pumpkin weigh-off incorporated into a fair. The town is now well known for the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Fair throughout western Canada and beyond.

1928: Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church Railway Avenue

The architecture of this Ukrainian Orthodox Church follows the building traditions of the prairie Byzantine church style. It is a wood-frame stucco-clad church on a cruciform plan, has small onion-shaped domes on octagonal drums and a prominent central dome each supporting wrought-iron crosses. The roof structure relates to the arrangement of interior spaces, where there is a large central rounded section formed upward into the ceiling leading that leads to the dome. In front of the altar are decorative royal doors and iconostas an ornamental structure with pilaster moldings and painted icons. The windows are arched and have stained glass. There is also a stand containing the church bell in front of the building. The first Ukrainian pioneers arrived around 1900 from Bukovyna in the Smoky Lake Region and it took a lot of courage and perseverance to establish a new life in the wilderness enduring hardships. Once their homes were built, they organized cultural and religious life with churches and community halls. The first church was Russo Greek Orthodox which presented a language barrier and felt they would be better served by a Canadian-based Ukrainian Orthodox Church independent of overseas control and organization began in 1918.



The first Ukrainian priest came in 1924 and over the next few years, services were held in homes. By 1926, the congregation had increased to 32 families at which time they began planning and constructing a church building with the people of the parish giving their time and energy. The church was finally constructed and held its first service November 1928. Following the first church service, a wedding ceremony was held and a harmonious air of peace was felt as the sacrament of marriage was celebrated before a funeral was performed. Enthusiasm brought donated articles of need such as crosses, banners, bells and vestments and everyone worked together. The spirit of the first pioneers lent support and self-sacrifice to make this parish a success.

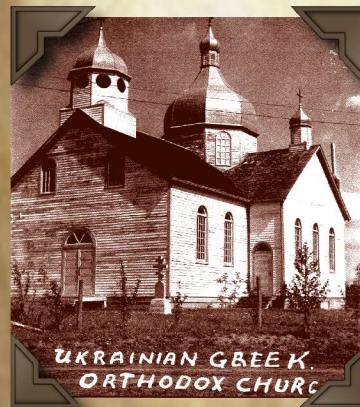


Photo #G453 (c. 1935) appears courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY 22

1948: GM Dealership Railway Avenue

Metro Ratsoy purchased his first truck around 1940 and started a business trucking goods such as furs and farm cream to Edmonton. At this time, horses were still the main mode of transportation in Smoky Lake and Metro partnered with an auctioneer to buy and ship horses to town. However, aware that mechanized forms of transport were rapidly replacing horses, Metro began bringing back trucks and tractors and, with the help of a mechanic, established a garage to service and sell automobiles. Metro was later offered a Dodge franchise, but because World War II was ongoing, he could only receive three cars per year. After the war, he was given the Mercury franchise and one year later he changed to GM's Chevrolet franchise. The dealership was eventually inherited by Metro's son, Jim. Jim ran the Smoky Lake GM dealership and went on to operate dealerships in various cities.



Then:

In 1948, Metro Ratsoy had a GM dealership selling Chevrolet, Pontiac, and Buick vehicles.

NOW:

In 2023, the GM Dealership at this same site continues to operate.

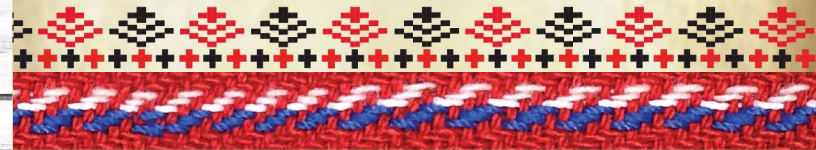


A WALK THROUGH

Thank you for taking the tour.

We welcome feedback on your experience.

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History