

GEORGE & VIOLET KNIGHT

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Seniors Scene

Fond memories of dancing to the wee hours

By MICHAEL LAU
Herald-Tribune staff

There was a time when the Friday night dance was about all a young person living in the country could look forward to in the way of recreation.

"We went all over to dance," George Knight said of the 20s and 30s. "We'd hitch up a team and buggy or a team and sleigh and head to schools in places like Crystal Creek, Twilight, East Kleskun and Bezanson.

"It was mostly local music. Some farmers would play the violin, and occasionally someone would bring drums or a banjo or mandolin."

George, now 75, said there was usually about a hundred people at each dance.

"We'd do the Fox Trot, the French minuet and three or four squares through the night.

"It would last until the wee hours of the morning."

His wife Violet, 72, said sometimes it was so packed you couldn't get in.

The Knights, who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in December, still live on the family farm just northeast of Grande Prairie. The like to talk about the dances — and for good reason.

THEY MET

"I first met George when my family moved to this area in 1929," Violet said. "We were heading for our new farm when we dropped by to visit his family.

"I didn't see him again until later that fall when he and another fellow came to ask my sister and I whether we wanted to go to a dance."

George said it was a dark night and they had driven 40 miles in a 1928 Essex to get there.

"We asked them and they wanted to go," he said, adding in exasperation — "So they went in to ask their dad and he said, 'go to bed!'

"It was a hard old road to hoe." George persisted however, and it soon paid off.

"Her father felt better about it after I went to see him a time or two. But we still always was a foursome."

Before she married George in 1936, Violet did domestic work wherever there was a need for help. The jobs lasted anywhere from one month to six months and involved cooking, baking, cleaning, washing, ironing and sweeping — all done, of course, without the aid of electrical appliances.

"I was paid \$10 a month, which was a good wage," she said. "You considered yourself very fortunate if you had a job."

Violet said people were able to get by in the Dirty Thirties because most farms were mixed.

HAD OWN RESOURCES

"Besides their crop, farmers had their own gardens, dairy cows and chickens. They had their resources right there.

"Even if it was hard times, we didn't have to buy much except flour, sugar, tea and coffee."

George said if anything went wrong, neighbors were always willing to help out. — If there was a fire, everyone would be gone, seeing if they could help."

When people took the two-day journey by horse and buggy from Debolt, Crooked Creek or Goodwin to Grande Prairie, George said, they'd often use his farm as a stop-over.

"They'd come in and want to stay overnight. We didn't charge them anything. We made many friends through it."

Violet said back in those days, things were often done for free. "Today, things are more on a



Violet and George Knight today.



The Knights in 1939



18-year-old George in his Sunday best



George with the team hitched and ready



On the farm, with family and neighbors (George and Violet are on extreme right)

money basis. People are more independent now and you lose some neighborliness that way."

MOVED WEST

George was born in 1910 in Meaford, Ont., the youngest of five children. He moved to the Grande Prairie area at the age of 16 after his father bought an 800-acre farm here.

Violet was born in Sawridge, now known as Slave Lake, in 1914, to a family of 10 children. Her father ran the first hotel there. In 1920, the town was flooded and they moved to Edmonton. They also lived in Mountain Park before coming to the Grande Prairie area in 1929.

BOUGHT IN

In 1948, George bought a half-section from his father.

From 1956 to 1965, besides looking after his farm, he drove a truck delivering fuel to places like Crooked Creek, Ridgevalley, Grovedale and Clairmont.

From 1967 to 1970, he did assembly and delivery work for a farm machinery company.

Violet joined her husband in the labor force in 1970 when they took on the rural route 1 mail delivery.

"We'd sort the mail and deliver it all," she said. "We had to drive on tough roads. They were just getting better when we quit."

"In the winter, George had to worry about snow drifts. He'd bring an extra set of snow tires with chains on them just in case we got stuck."

The Knights retired in 1977, and since then have travelled exten-

sively in Canada and to Alaska and California.

They also enjoy visits from their two children, Allan and Bonnie, and their families.

Comparing the present to the past, George said, "We were all happier back then, than most of them are today — especially the farmers."

"We didn't have the expenses."

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Patrick (Paddy) Brown 75, of Grande Prairie

Patrick (Paddy) Brown passed away on Thursday, May 14, 1998 at the age of 75 years, after a lengthy illness.

Patrick was predeceased by his father George Brown, mother Lucy Brown, brothers Lloyd Brown, John Brown and Donald Brown and sister Julia Sieben.

He leaves to mourn his sisters Violet (George) Knight, Rachel Tink, Gertie (Gordon) Edginton, twin sister Patricia McIntosh, Doreen (Terry) Livelton, his cousins and numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, May 20, 1998.

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