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Breton Plots History Project

Breton Plots history materials compiled in 2005 and donated to the University of Alberta Archives

From

Breton Plots Soil Conservation Society
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As part of a project to research and document the history of the Breton Plots, oral history interviews and other materials were compiled in 2005. The project was funded in part by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

Materials donated to the University of Alberta Archives:

1. Interviews

- summary description of interviews done.
- 8 videotapes.
- 16 digital files in original format (DSS) from digital recorder and also converted to wave format. Also included software DPM 2.0 (digital pocket memo) for listening to DSS files.
- indexes (guides) to interviews.
- consent forms from participants, and copy of information sheet for participants.

2. Overviews

- 8 overviews on topics of importance to the history of the Breton Plots, researched and written by J.A. Robertson:
 - Time Line for the Breton Plots
 - Beginnings of the Breton Plots
 - Origins of the Name "Grey Wooded"
 - Early References to Sulphur in Alberta
 - Student and Technical Assistants at Breton Plots: Gleaned from Department Minutes 1958-77.
 - Names Used for the Breton Plots
 - Evolution of the Breton Plots – 1929
 - Evolution of the Breton Plots – 1930s

3. Newspaper articles

- list of some stories already on file and potential newspapers to search for stories about Breton Plots.
- *The Representative* (Leduc and region newspaper):
 - overview of Breton Plots news coverage from 1930 to 1995 and best stories.
 - summary table of articles of interest.
 - copies of stories related to Breton Plots and context stories, sorted and highlighted.
- *The Western Review* (Drayton Valley newspaper) was reviewed around field days (mostly July)
 - overview of Breton Plots news coverage from 1972 to 2000 and best stories.
 - summary table of articles of interest.
 - copies of stories related to Breton Plots and context stories, sorted and highlighted.

4. Review of archives.

Indexes or notes were compiled from review of materials relevant to the Breton Plots in the following archival collections:

- University of Alberta Archives: 76.25 Faculty of Agriculture and Department of Soil Science papers; 79.82 Four videotapes of interviews done in 1979; 79.89 Field books; 80.14 Four videotapes of 50th anniversary celebrations in 1979; 82.3 JD Newton papers.
- Provincial Archives of Alberta: 73.307 Alberta Government, Dept of Agriculture Papers; Agriculture Hall of Fame nominations; various other files related to agriculture.
- Breton and District Historical Museum: two boxes of documents – #95-15 – and a display board with photos re Breton Plots.

5. Review of books.

Notes were compiled from review of the following books:

- Breton and District Historical Society. 1980. The ladder of time: a history of Breton and District.
- Johnston, Alex. 1977. To serve agriculture. The Lethbridge Research Station 1906-1976. Agriculture Canada, Historical series no. 9.
- Swindlehurst, Edward B., 1967. Alberta agriculture: a short history. Dept. of Agriculture, Edmonton, AB.

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Summary of Interviews – Breton Plots History Project - 2005

ID	Video	Audio	Name	Length (Min.)	Primary role - Breton Plots	Background of interviewee & content of interview	Period
1	1.1	x	Bentley, Fred	91	Academic & Advocate	Fred Bentley biographical - 1914 to 2005. Growing up near Edmonton, undergrad student at U of A in 1930s, academic staff - Dept of Soil Science, Dean of Agriculture, Professor Emeritus, roles re Breton Plots as researcher, educator, advocate and major supporter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1910s-present: biographical • 1936-41: U of A student • 1946-67: U of A academic • 1990s-present: advocate & patron
2	1.2	x	Bentley, Fred	64		Childhood and youth, rural life, anecdotes from early life	
3	1.3	x	Bentley, Fred	55		High school, university studies, early university work.	
4	1.4	x	Bentley, Fred	54		Academic career, U of S, U of A, fertilizer research, on-farm experiments, concerns/ research needs re grey-wooded soils and Breton Plots.	
5	1.5	x	Bentley, Fred	40		Agriculture at the U of A, anecdotes from days as a student and later as a member of staff, the character of the Ag community at the U of A and some distinct challenges and achievements.	
6	1.6	x	Bentley, Fred	33		Breton Plots and on-farm experiments, anecdotes re field studies, early operations of the Breton Plots, procedures for field studies.	
7	2.1	x	Robertson, Jim	67	Supervisor & Advocate	Jim Robertson biographical - 1931 to 2005. Growing up in Manitoba, academic staff - Dept of Soil Science, Professor Emeritus, roles re Breton Plots as supervisor, researcher and advocate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1930s-present: biographical • 1955-96: U of A academic • 1976-1990s: Supervisor • 1976-present: advocate, advisor & documenter of history
8	2.2	x	Robertson, Jim	87		Overview of involvement with Breton Plots, views of the Breton Plots and other longterm plots, field work and field operations, research, field days and other extension	
9	2.3	x	Robertson, Jim	77		Breton Plots evolution and changes, financing of the Breton Plots, special events, challenges, memories and anecdotes, reflections on sustainability.	
10	3	x	Flesher, Bill & Sylvia	102	Farmers/ former landowners	Roles of the Flesher family in the work of the Breton Plots, how the work was done, and experiences with the activities and the people associated with the Plots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1930s-present
11	4	x	Taylor, John	64	Tech. staff	Information on Breton Plots field operations and activities from roles as summer staff, technician, to farm manager over 1957 - 1977.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1957-77

ID	Video	Audio	Name	Length (Min.)	Primary role - Breton Plots	Background of interviewee & content of interview	Period
12	x	x	Fielhaber, Bruce	53	Tech. staff	Information on Breton Plots field operations and activities from role as technician from 1970 – 1978.	• 1970-78
13	x	x	Puurveen, Dick	104	Tech. staff	Information on Breton Plots field operations and activities from roles as grad student, summer staff, technician, to manager over 1991 – 2005.	• 1991-present
14		x	Ross, Gordon	73	District Agricuturalist	Agric student at U of A from 1945-49, Alberta Agric. staff from 1949-1986, including DA at Rocky Mountain House 1953-67, experience with grey-wooded soils, extension and the farming context in west-central Alberta.	• 1945-67
15	x	x	Carson, Jim; Lavery, Don; & Goettel, Adolph	101	Students/ Soil Scientists	Soil scientists, who were undergraduate students at the U of A in the early 1950s, MSc students with the Soils Dept in the mid 1950s to early 1960s, and worked as soil scientists in Alberta, mainly with Alberta Agriculture.	• 1950s-late 1980s
16		x	Janzen, Henry	15	Collaborating Research Scientist	20 years of experience with long-term experiments as a Research Scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge Research Centre.	• 1980s-present