

Snippets and snapshots from the past ...



Photo by
Chris Koslo

This blue cup (inset), a treasure to long-time resident Reg Gray (above), reminds him of an old trail through Strathcona County, and what life was like when he was younger.

Before there were roads in the area, people travelled along trails. One well-used trail through the County followed high ground between North Cooking Lake and Edmonton.

People journeyed by wagon, by horse, by old model automobile, and of course by foot. Even cattle were driven through along the trail, which is found on maps dating back to at least 1894.

Just off the trail — at the site of a former fire and survey tower, a spot known as Deer Mound — was a survey marker, and in the centre of the marker, a brass plaque from the Geodetic Survey of Canada. The wooden 30-foot tower was built in the last decade of the 1800s at a high point along the trail.

Reg Gray remembers the tower. From the top on a clear day he could see north to Fort Saskatchewan, east to Cooking Lake and west to Edmonton.

Deer Mound was a stopping place. Travellers would stop to rest there from their journey. At a spring near the trail, they would take a drink of water using a small blue cup that hung on a nearby tree. The cup had been there for years.

As time went by and roads were built, the trail was no longer used and the cup forgotten. Forgotten that is until Reg Gray went looking for it in about 1955. After a long search, he spotted the cup high in a tree, intertwined in branches.

The cup is on display today at the Strathcona County Museum and Archives.

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