



Willis & Vivian Johnston

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



Gathering around to cut the cake from left to right (front): Mrs. Walter Waldner, Mrs. Willis Johnston, Mrs. Gordon Thompson, Mrs. Julian Jobson, Mrs. Harvey Bulford, Mrs. Bohdan Hawryluk, Mrs. Elmer

Bulford, Mrs. Glen Ames. In outer row, Mr. Waldner, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Johnston, Harvey Bulford, Mr. Hawryluk, Elmer Bulford, Mr. Ames.

Eight couples celebrate 25th

BEZANSON

It's a rare thing when anyone celebrates 200 years of married life.

When it happens, it calls for a gigantic celebration.

And that's exactly what occurred here last weekend as eight couples — including two brothers — combined to celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversaries together.

To help them celebrate the occasion, more than 200

local residents, relatives and friends turned out to the Bezanson community hall for the event.

The eight couples who between them have 31 children and five grandchildren: Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bulford, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Bulford, Mr. and Mrs. Bohdan Hawryluk, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Ames, Mr. and Mrs. Julian Jobson, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Waldner and Mr. and Mrs. Willis Johnston.

[The Daily Herald-Tribune](#)

Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada · Thursday, November 23, 1972

Trophy award

David Ames, Cheryl McNally, Eleanor Ford and Patricia McNally had the honor of being the first curlers to have their names etched on the **Vivian Johnston** memorial trophy which goes to the winners of the grand challenge in the Bezanson students' bonspiel.

The Bezanson students were presented with the big, beautiful trophy by **Willis Johnston** in memory of his wife who gave up a gallant fight for life against cancer Sept. 2, 1974.

At the same time **Mr. Johnston** presented the trophy earlier this week, he gave a cheque to David Ames made out to the cancer society on behalf of the grand challenge winners. The cheque presentation will be done annually at the students' spiel.

The ladies in charge of student curling would like to thank Mr. Johnston for his thoughtfulness in promoting student curling and also bringing to light the great need for more cancer research.

THE JOHNSTON TRAIL

The History behind the Trail

Many residents in the area have not only heard about the “**Johnston Trail**” but have used it extensively as an excellent hiking trail or for other recreational activities. As the trail possesses a spectacular view of the Smoky River, It is one of the most beautiful scenic trails in the area. However, not everyone knows where the name came from and it has on occasion even been referred to incorrectly as the Johnson Trail. It was actually named after the person who had originally constructed the trail – **Willis Johnston**.

The Johnston family has been in the Bezanson area since 1912. When Willis returned from WWII, he purchased a ½ section of land from his father. Willis and his wife, Vivian, decided to enter into a cattle ranching business and began to look for land to lease in order to have sufficient pasture on which to run their cattle during the summer months. Suitable acres were located on the east side of the Smoky River – portions of NE 18, W ½ of 19, NE 20 and W ½ of 20-72-2-W6. The lease was in place by 1959.

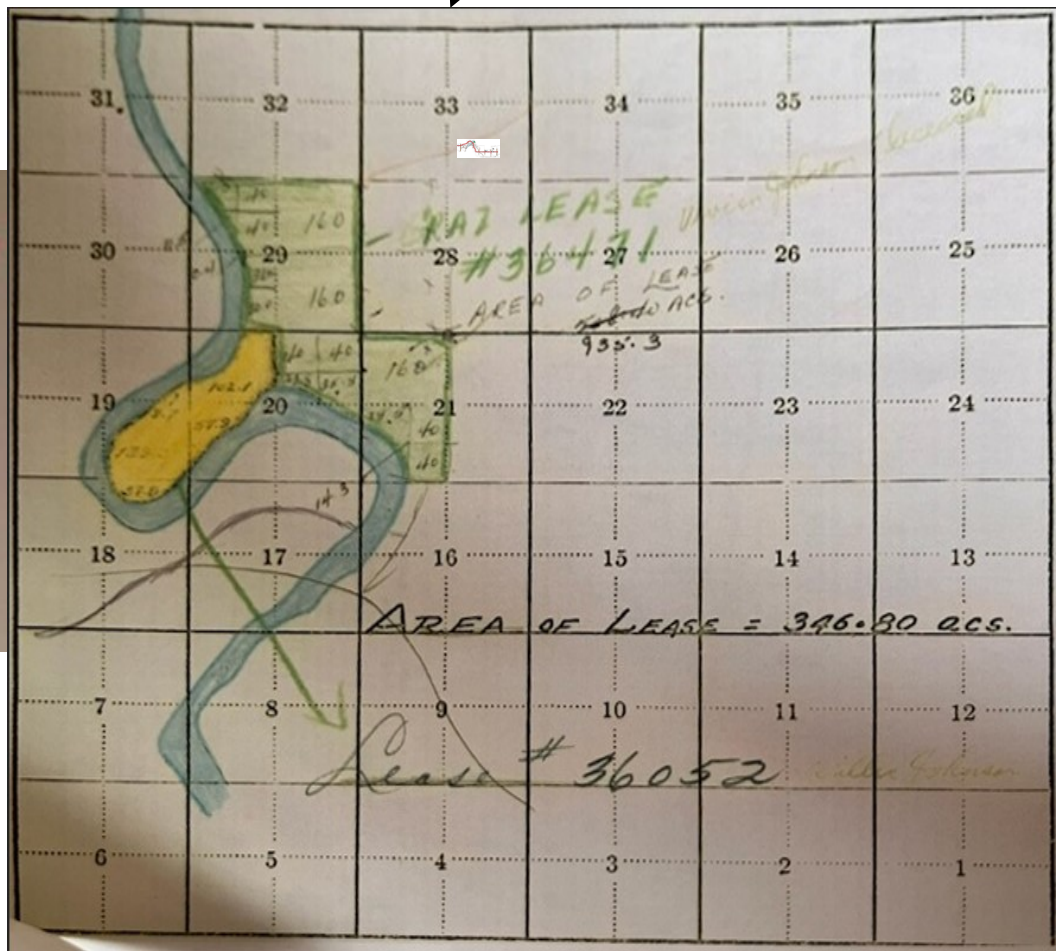
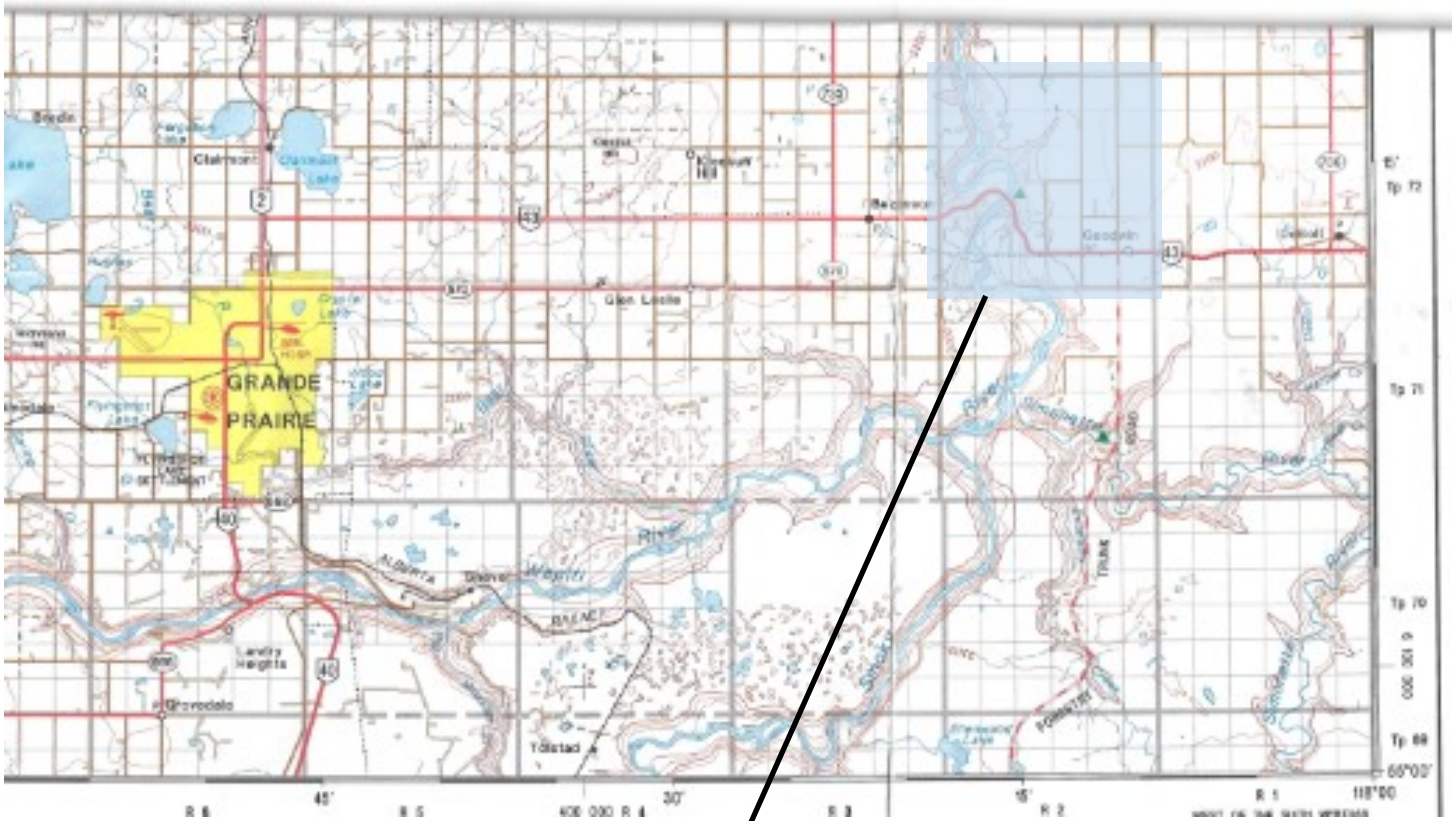


Then a road had to be built to reach the lease land. Willis purchased a John Deer 440 Caterpillar, welded a canopy on the machine and began to clear a roadway of trees and build-up a base of suitable soil for the road itself. It was quite the daunting task for such a small piece of equipment. At that time, there was a small convenience store and restaurant located on the north side of the Smoky River Bridge on the east side of the river. The “**Johnston Trail**” began slightly east of that point and meandered northward towards the lease land. Willis and Vivian enjoyed many years in the cattle industry before Vivian became ill and passed away in 1974. Willis subsequently sold his herd of cattle and did not renew the lease in 1977.

Willis was very proud that the road became known as the “**Johnston Trail**” and his descendants are very pleased that it is still known as that yet today.

Written and photos by Wanda (Johnston) Zenner March 2020

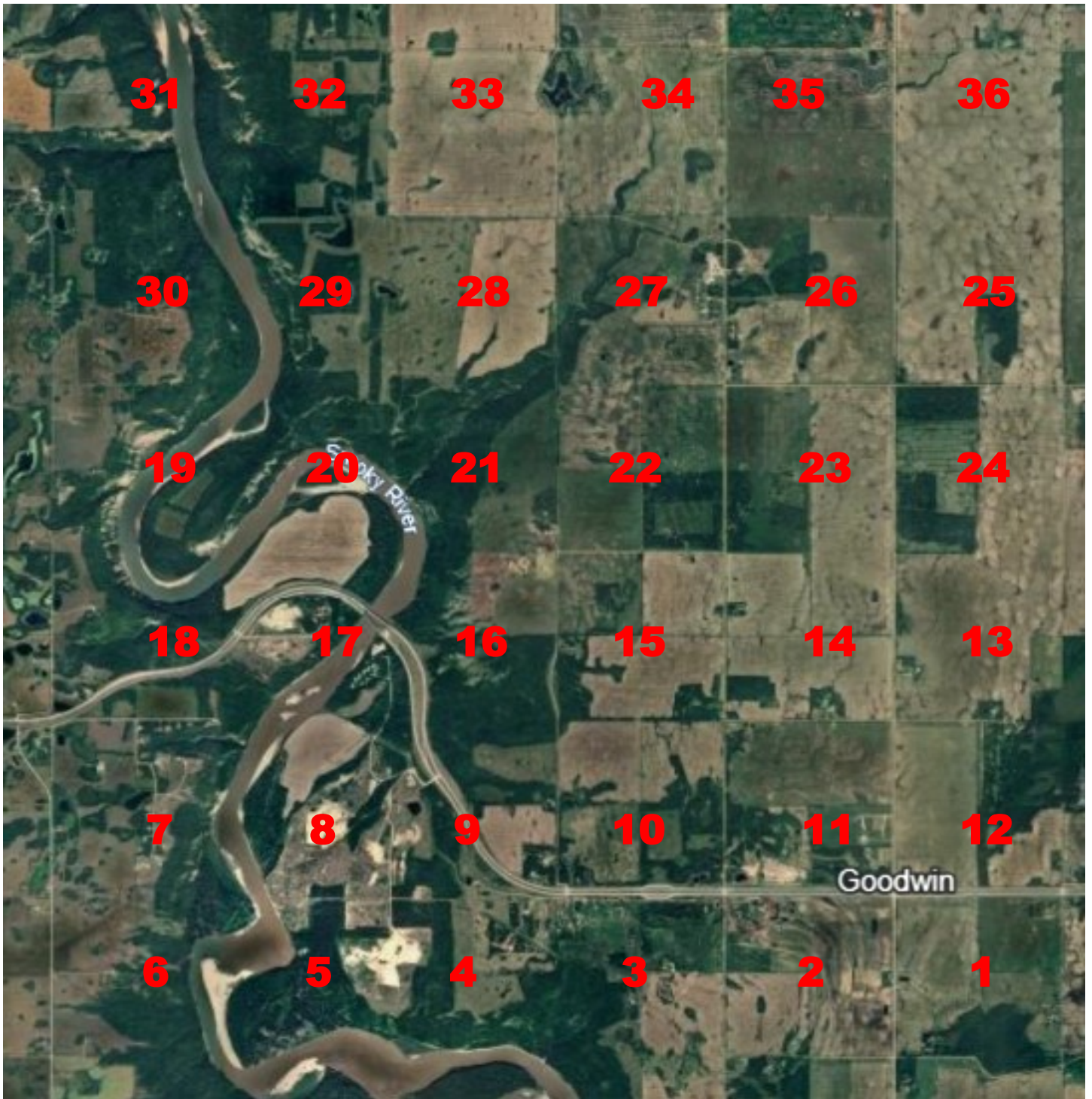
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37.8
 139.3
 9.7
 102.1
 57.9
 346.8

Yellow Lease #36052 NE 18 (37.8), E 1/2 OF 19 (9.7) = (139.3), and W 1/2 OF 20-72-2-W6 (102.1 + 57.9) Total lease (=346.8 acres)

Green Lease #36471 E 1/2 20, W 1/2 21, 29-72-2-W6 Total lease (935.3)



72,2,W6