

ELIZABETH MOON

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

The quintessential pioneer

Elizabeth Moon typified the spirit of the settlers

DEBI RUHL

Herald-Tribune staff

Elizabeth Moon was a classic pioneer woman.

She and her family are being honored at the Grande Prairie Museum as the pioneer family of the month on Sunday afternoon.

She was born in 1864 as Elizabeth Ann McPhee and came to Canada from Scotland.

She married Charles Rolling Moon in 1880 in Orillia, Ontario. Rolling was 22; Elizabeth just 16.

They were blessed with nine children.

Rolling's untimely death in 1904 brought about great changes for Elizabeth.

She decided to pack up and make the move to Edmonton with eight of her children.

Their stay in Edmonton ended in 1913 when her children decided once again to move — this time further north.

Elizabeth made the decision to go with them.

Her route took her through Lesser Slave Lake, Grouard and Peace River to Spirit River and then to Grande Prairie.

She settled in the Bezanson area.

She was loved and respected by everyone who knew her and was affectionately called Grandma Moon by both family and friends.

She is often remembered as a woman with a buoyant spirit of adventure.

She passed away in January 1946.

"She was a very kind person," recalls grandson Alfred Wales.

"What I remember the most



Charlie Wales (left), Jean Rockarts, Neil Moon, Alf Wales, Alice Valgardson, and Gordon Moon.

about her was that she tried to help anyone who needed help."

Gordon Moon, the son of Elizabeth's eldest son, remembers her love of family.

"Grandma Moon always liked to have family near her.

"If you went to a picnic or a social function she always had the little kids around her.

"It's amazing, considering she had nine children, but she was always calm. She never got too upset about anything.

"She was a wonderful woman."

According to another grandson,

Charles Wales, Grandma Moon was a midwife in the area for years and cooked meals in the hospital.

Moon's grandsons enjoyed the simple life.

"We lived in the bush and there were horses to get from one place to another," said Alfred.

"I enjoyed it, but I was just a kid and I didn't know any different."

"You couldn't go anywhere unless you walked or rode," said Wales.

"There were no roads, just trails. There were trails through her yard and ours."

The memories of Elizabeth Moon still live on in the hearts of those who knew her and are being passed on to those who didn't.

"It took a lot of courage for her to come up here with no husband and nine children," said Gordon.

"But it is that type of pioneer spirit that helped build this country.

"We hear so many stories about the pioneer men that got the Peace Country started, but very little about the pioneer women.

"Grandma Moon was the epitome of that pioneer spirit."

Land Ladies

Women Who Homesteaded in the South Peace

Perhaps the most common image we have in mind when we hear the word “homesteader” is that of a young man eager for adventure, or perhaps a family in search of a new life. In the absence of an adult male, however, women could also file on a homestead. Some of them were unmarried women, perhaps veteran nurses of the First World War, while others were widows with families to support. Read on to learn about some of the women who se led on the Grande Prairie. Elizabeth (McPhee) Moon and her family immigrated to Ontario from Scotland when she was a child. She married Charles Moon at 16 and was widowed at the age of 40, leaving her with nine children to support. Elizabeth’s parents and siblings had moved to Alberta several years earlier and sent her glowing reports of their home in the west. In 1905, Elizabeth and eight of her children (the eldest daughter stayed in Ontario to complete her training as a nurse) moved to Edmonton to join her family. Elizabeth ran boarding houses in Edmonton for a number of years. But when her now-grown sons decided to homestead in the South Peace in 1912, Elizabeth decided she was ready for a new adventure as well. In February of 1913, at the age of 49, she Above: Elizabeth Moon, ca. 1910. (SPRA 1996.38.1b) traveled to the Bezanson area by caboose, accompanied by her family. She filed on the northwest quarter of 27-71-3-W6, near several of her sons. Along with working with her family to develop their land, Elizabeth contributed to medical services in the area. She delivered several of her grandchildren and acted as midwife for other women in the community as well, since there was only one doctor serving the region at the time. Later, Elizabeth worked as a cook in the Grande Prairie hospital. She died in 1946 and was buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.



Above: Elizabeth Moon, ca. 1910. (SPRA 1996.38.1b)

From: