



Charles Taws

Bowmanville

*Museum curator, found traces of
Clarington in his new Alberta museum*

Here in Grande Prairie, I have a museum village, and incorporated in my museum village is a 1911 Presbyterian Church. It's a log building, and it's one of the first buildings from Grande Prairie. When it opened, what do you think they had inside? They had a Dominion organ from Bowmanville.

I worked for the Bowmanville Museum for a long time, and every summer at least one German would show up. We would take them out to the school. Back then the school was a religious school, and that's who we bought the log cabin from. It was from a skills training exercise for the German soldiers to do, and we were able to buy that for \$200. We got a company to move it for free and then we restored it all. So, that was the last piece from the time of the Germans in Bowmanville.

Most of the German soldiers had very positive things to say about their time at Camp 30.

One funny story involved Bruno Petrenko. When they had the reunion in 1991, it occurred to me that everyone was talking about how well they were treated. I finally said "well, you guys were prisoners here... you must have some bad memories about this place." And Mr Petrenko thought about it and says "oh... there was one thing."

I said "aha! I knew it! What was it?" And he says "Well, you know that it used to be a boys school before it was a prison and work camp." He said "they had boys there of all ages. Well, we were stationed where the little boys were, so the toilets were only so far off the floor, and the sinks were only this high off the floor," as he gestured close to the floor. And that was the only bad thing he could think of from his time in Bowmanville as a Prisoner of War.

