

Transcript

Oral history of W.C. Reesor, Clerk of the Court, 1978.

After my tour in Hussar in the hardware, I was under the doctor's care. He ordered me off work for some time, and later on, while in Medicine Hat, I applied for and was appointed sheriff and clerk of the court for the Judicial District of Medicine Hat, a post which I held for twenty-two years until my retirement in 1962.

During my term of office at the courthouse, the most interesting experience, I think, was that I was clerk at the time of the prisoner of war trials, which the court was open from February until August. As sheriff, of course, it was my duty to supply the jurists and, as clerk of the court, keep a record of the proceedings. I must admit that it got rather monotonous before the end of the trials, because every word had to be translated and, of course, the evidence was repetitious in many respects. These murders took place at the prisoner of war camp, and the Germans, they killed some of their fellow prisoners because, there's no question, these prisoners were transmitting information to our side.

The exhibits in the trial, I think, were most interesting, and the most of them can now be found in the RCMP Headquarters in Regina. For instance, there was a model camp. One of the prisoners of the war constructed this with cardboard and so on, all to scale. Even the toilets were shown, miniature toilets and little mirrors, and everything that was in the camp was shown in the greatest detail. This miniature camp is now, as I've said, in Regina.

There were seven charged altogether. The results were five of them were sentenced to be hanged, one received a life sentence and the other one was discharged. Incidentally, this last chap was very poorly at the time, and my understanding is that he never got out of Canada; he died somewhere in the east on his way back.

These prisoners that were sentenced to be hanged were taken to Lethbridge. I was rather thankful in this, because it is the duty of the sheriff to attend any hanging, and I was just as well satisfied that they did not take place in Medicine Hat, because I don't know that I would have appreciated being present at such an act.