

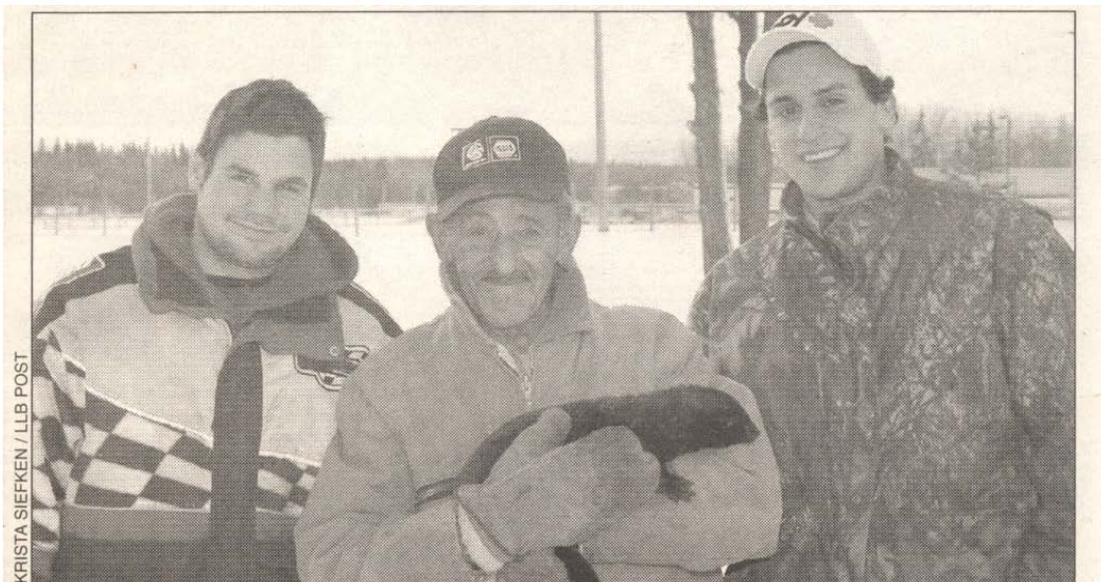
Biography

Mr. Mike (Mohammed) Fyith

Mike Fyith came to Canada in 1928. He was about twenty-five years old when he arrived by ship on the shores of Halifax, Nova Scotia. From Halifax, he took a train to Edmonton where he met up with other Lebanese who had immigrated prior to him: Alex Sine, Darwish Taha and others. After getting to know some people he asked about how he could start earning a living and was told he could work on farms outside of Edmonton, which he did. A few months later, Mike began selling clothes out of a suitcase. He would walk from farm house to farm house, sleeping at night in hay lofts and school porches. He did this for a couple of years until he had saved some money to buy a horse and wagon which enabled him to travel faster and father to different farms to sell his goods. When he had saved enough money he sent for his wife Lutfeyee and son Otto to join him in Canada.

They too travelled by ship to Halifax and then took a train to Edmonton, arriving in Edmonton on January 1938. Mike's family lived there for a year before moving to High Prairie where he opened a clothing store. He ran this business for about two years. High Prairie was also the place where Mike started his mink ranching business, by acquiring two female mink which were used in lieu of payment for a grocery bill. He continued in this manner to acquire more mink and soon had twenty of them.

He then decided to move to Slave Lake to open another store. He also continued raising mink, buying fish from fishermen for mink feed. The family lived in Slave Lake for six years where Mike bought a small farm to raise his mink. At this point he had 150 mink.



KRISTA SIEFEN / LLB POST

Lac La Biche-based mink rancher Otto Fyith, centre, with one of his remaining dozen mink and his two grandsons, Walid Fyith, far left, and Darwin Cadieux, far right, last week.

He eventually quit the store and kept his mink business but the fish stocks began to dwindle. Mike heard that fish was plentiful in the lake at Lac La Biche and so he decided to move there in 1961. He operated his mink ranch and began to help bring the rest of his family to Canada, including other relatives. He did the best he could to help his relatives establish themselves in their new home.

Mike retired from mink ranching in 1970. He passed away almost twenty years later in 1989. (Written by Otto Fyith, Mike's eldest son)