



PAST FINDER

DRAYTON VALLEY BRANCH
ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



**DRAYTON VALLEY BRANCH
OF ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
RECEIVES PRESIDENT'S AWARD
FOR 20 YEARS OF DEDICATION
TO THE PROMOTION OF
Genealogical research
AND FAMILY HISTORY
APRIL 18, 2015**

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Drayton Valley Branch
 Alberta Genealogical Society
 PO Box 115
 Rocky Rapids, AB T0E 1Z0

Meetings held 7:00 pm
 Third Wednesday of each month
 Except July, August and December
 In the library at Wishing Well Apartments
 5208 – 47 Ave Valley, AB

The Branch library and resources are located at Wishing Well Apartments and are available to members seven days a week from 9:00am to 9:00 pm. The library is on the second floor. Members are given an access code to open the key lock box which will give them access to the building and another key lock box by the library door will give them access to the library.

EXECUTIVE

President-	Connie Stuhl	780-542-9288
Past president	Colleen Andersen	780-542-2787
Vice President –vacant		
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TWIGS, BARK & KINDLING

Please send me some articles for the Past Finder, I need some input.
 I request anyone who will be celebrating 25 years as a member of AGS in the coming year, please notify the executive.

We are hoping to get some new members this year.

NB Past Finder will be published in Spring and Fall x 2 a year.

Upcoming Programme

September 16, 7.00pm Roundtable

October 21 7.00pm Miriam Roberts showing slides of her tour of Portugal and its Islands.

President's Report

As I sat down to write this report, I reflected on the warm Alberta weather we have been having. We are in the midst of a drought, which I know is concerning for many people out there, and I thought about some of our ancestors and the hardships they endured. Many traveled to this great province on the dreams that were generated by ads from the Federal Government of the time, inviting them to the "Land of Opportunity" They left some very tough times in their home country and when they arrived it was nothing like they expected, yet they persevered and made this the great province that we live in today.

The Drayton Valley Branch recently traveled to the Anglican Cemetery in Drayton Valley for a little tour of local history. Viewing the headstones from years gone by, studying the images on some of the headstones that told us a little about the people who are interred there. Some of us have ancestors buried there and shared some of their history with those that attended. We noted that the cemetery needs some work; some of the headstones are crooked or sinking on one side and the ground is quite uneven.

Since the last newsletter, a workshop was conducted with guest speaker Deanna Bullock, who spoke about the ancestry.com and familysearch.org websites and what was new with each one. We were fortunate to obtain access to the computer lab at the Norquest College in Drayton Valley, so those that attended were able to apply what they learned and conducted a bit of their own research.

Our small group has grown by three members. Welcome to Jim Johnson, Peter and Peggy Warona. We hope we are able to provide some guidance and insight in your genealogical research.

In May I joined the Medicine Hat Branch in their trip to Salt Lake City. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and discovered some interesting finds while there. Thank you to the organizers of this trip for providing some guidelines in how to prepare for this trip. I had a list of microfilms and books that I wanted to view and it was easy to organize my search to make the most of my time there.

On June 24 I attended a Town Council meeting as part of the Community Spotlight agenda item. I gave them an overview of our Branch's activities and mentioned the disrepair that the Anglican Cemetery was in. I was assured that there is a project in the works for the cemeteries in Town and that I would notice a difference in the near future. They also shared that the Town is undertaking a Legacy project that they would be approaching us about. Their goal is to record the Town's history and preserve it in a digital format. They have summer students working with the Western Review to digitize past issues to start.

I look forward to hearing about everyone's activities over the summer!

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Stuhl, President

A query made to Drayton Valley Branch of AGS Facebook Page, by Miriam Roberts #4339

The query was for the Brownbill family. It was Brendan O' Brien who had made the enquiry about the Brownbills, his grandfather was William Brownbill, - Mary Abigail Brownbill, William (Chub) Brownbill's, and Stan Pickavance's cousin. With the query in the form of a link came copies of letters Chub's niece had sent to her mother's cousin, Brendan O'Brien's grandfather, a family history of Mary Abigail Collier née Brownbill, photographs of Mary and Chub, a letter he had sent to Mary's daughter, Mrs Thomas, and a cover letter to our branch, with questions about the family. All of this information needed a lot of time to absorb, and to sort out family relationships. One name did stand out, it was the Blowers, and they lived in Edmonton.

Branch members Colleen Andersen and Miriam Roberts worked together on research of this family. Our branch library has at least four sources of information to choose from, three books and an obituary. The "Index of Births, Marriages and Deaths of Drayton Valley and Surrounding Area in Alberta", the book our branch compiled from local newspapers has both William Brownbill and Stan Pickavance, obituaries noted in it. The information below was all found in our local branch of AGS, library, it formed an outline for the query.



St. Helen's at the beginning of the 20th Century

The first members of the family arrived between 1909 and 1911, James Brownbill of St. Helens, Lancashire, England sailed on the White Stag Passenger Line, possibly on the

ship “Megantic”, he sailed with Mr. William Pilkington also of St. Helen’s, Lancashire, according to the story in “Trappers, Loggers, Homesteaders and Oilmen” (TLHO) the history of Drayton Valley and District. In the Spring of 1911 Jim Brownbill and William Pilkington traveled to Power House Alberta to start work with the Edmonton Heat and Power Company who were building a dam on the North Saskatchewan River. The first permanent settler had only arrived in the area 1907-1908. The nearest railway access was about 35 miles away on a trail through the forest and muskeg, access by the North Saskatchewan river was available.

James Brownbill had a son William, whom he had left in England with his sister, William’s mother had died when he was baby (no age was specified), he was being looked after by his aunt, Abigail Pickavance. In William’s story in TLHO it says the doctor had given up on him, but his father fed him honey and blackcurrants.

William Brownbill, aged 6 and William Stanley Pickavance and sister Mary traveled to Power House with Mrs Pickavance who was James Brownbill’s sister but “wife of William Pickavance’s brother who being somewhat intemperate, was left behind in England” according to Dr. W S B Loosmore’s book “To Trail’s End”.

In TLHO there is also a story about Mary Abigail Brownbill, sister of William Brownbill, saying she became “mother” to William. There is also a story about William Brownbill written by Jim Blower.

These stories can act as a guide to further research, because they are from the contributors’ memories, which fade and are not always accurate. In the story about Mary Abigail Brownbill in the TLHO book it states she was called home in 1946 to be “mother”, it must have meant 1916, because it had - “to look after younger brother and cousin” who would have been around 10years old. In the same story it says she married Burton Harmon Collier in 1923, but it also states sometime later they sold out and moved to Spokane, Washington, Burton was an American citizen. In the story on how the family came from Gainford in TLHO, it states they came by team and wagon, it differs from the story in “To Trail’s End”, where it says “the walk with their belongings”, and “ the tribulations of Mrs Pickavance in her long muddy skirts, tormented by mosquitoes and three young children, can now hardly be imagined”.

William (also named Chub’s) obituary from the Western Review showed he died on December 24th 1996. The obituary gives the Blower family of Edmonton and the Collier family of the USA as surviving family. In the copy of the obituary that I received from the Western Review the heading is Pickavance, William (Stan) on Saturday, February 17, 1996 long time resident passed away at the age of 90 years, for some reason we did not have this obituary pasted on a card, in our library.

William Brownbill known as Chub and William Pickavance known as Stan lived most of their lives in the Drayton Valley District except for short periods of employment elsewhere. They had a trap line together in the Brazeau and Elk River area, which they gave up in 1928. They each homesteaded a quarter section of land south of what was the

town of Drayton Valley. These quarter sections were sold and they bought land on what was known as “The Flats”, south of Drayton Valley along the North Saskatchewan River. Now fast forward to 2015 “The Flats” is farmed by Colleen Andersen and her husband Cecil, Colleen is a long time member of Drayton Valley Branch of Alberta Genealogical Society, she is also replying to this query.



Aerial Photograph of Colleen and Cecil Andersen ranch on North Saskatchewan River

In Colleen’s reply to Brendan she remarked that they “were on the short side and I always marveled at the height that the hanger bar and shelf in the closets were.” Meaning the shelf and bar were on the high side! Colleen’s family lived in the house Chub and Stan had built after the first house was burned down.

It is rather ironic that in Chub’s story in TLHO, it states when he was traveling to Power House in 1911 (changed to Drayton Valley in 1920) at the age of 6 years he wondered “why the family would ever come to such a lonely place” they were traveling through a “wild area, with no other travelers”. To help Chub become more accustomed to the area while traveling to Power House, his Uncle William Pilkington gave him a little rabbit that he caught on the trail. Stan’s Mother was the second woman to settle in the area, there were 14 bachelors in the area when she arrived.

In the article in TLHO about Chub it mentions the dam project that was to be built at Power House was abandoned because WW1 broke out, and steel was needed for the war.

The district must have shaped them as the family developed the land and the community. Chub and Stan did not get married, it wasn’t because they were unsociable, Chub played a violin and Stan corded on the mandolin for local dances, unfortunately it was not an

area to attract single women. They also enjoyed picnics, playing baseball and horseshoes. They raised cattle and hogs as well as some grain. While on “The Flats” forty cattle became stranded on a sandbar in the river, when there was an ice-jam on the river, luckily they rescued the cattle after the water receded. It says in Chub’s story that he enjoyed gardening as well as picking berries and fishing. It also says Chub was “a very caring individual who treated others with respect and courtesy they wished to receive themselves”, I am sure it included Stan in “they”.

Chub and Stan retired to Creston, British Columbia in 1967, they stayed there three years, they missed friends and familiar surroundings of the Drayton Valley district, which they had grown up in, and grown to love.

In TLHO it mentions that Chub and Stan were featured in an article in the local newspaper the “Western Review” on November 28, 1984 page B3. This article mentions the reasons for the nicknames of Stan and Chub, their Uncle was also called William, so William who was born in 1905 was nicknamed Chubby, shortened to Chub, and Stan’s first name was also William, and his second name was Stanley, so he was called “Stan” for short. The article was written by Donna Haukedal, who interviewed Chub and Stan, and could be considered to be more reliable than the stories written about them by other people at a later date, as in TLHO, it was published in 2004.

Chub could be called a trapper, logger, homesteader and oilman, as the title of the local history book suggests. Chub and Stan had a trap-line, both Stan and Chub homesteaded land south of Drayton Valley, which would include logging the trees from the wooded area they cleared, Stan went to work at making rail road ties when he was 14. Chub drove a cat to clear land for battery sites for Mobil Oil, after oil was discovered in the district.

I have the book “Memoirs of a Mission” which was written by Mary Burrows in 1980, it was the story of the Anglican Church. At the beginning of the book Mary Burrows gives a short history of the area before the church was built in 1937. Mary mentions that Jim Brownbill and Bert Collier helped build the road between Entwistle and Drayton Valley in 1922. The “road” was difficult to maintain because of it being carved out of the forest, it remained wet and with the type of gumbo clay soil in the area it was often impassable except when it was frozen. In the early days of settlement the residents would have their supplies brought in by boat on the North Saskatchewan River. It was not until well after oil was discovered in 1953 that roads improved, allowing more freedom to leave the isolated area.

In an email Brendan sent to Colleen Andersen he said “What is fascinating to me is that if you knew St. Helen’s you would see that for these people going to Alberta was surely like going to the planet Mars. They had absolutely no agricultural knowledge or experience whatsoever, having been for generations industrial labourers I am so full of admiration for them carving out this new life in what must have been a very challenging environment at that time.”

One thing I learned from the letters was the fact that Jim Blower who had written the story in TLHO about Chub was related to the family. I decided to look up on www.canada411.ca for Jim Blower's phone number, after I found it I phoned the one Jim Blower on the website, and asked him if he was related to Chub Brownbill. He said he was, so I asked him if he kept in contact with The Collier family, he said he would have to look up the addresses because he did correspond with them at Christmas time.

I contacted Colleen Andersen to tell her I that I had phoned Jim Blower, she said she is having as much difficulty figuring out the convoluted relationships in the family as I am. The stories do not match either, in "To Trail's End" it has a story about Mrs Pickavance getting married to John Markham in 1916, then in 1917 Mrs Markham became the first person to die in the area giving birth to a child. There are discrepancies in the stories the family told, Mrs Mary Collier's daughter Betty wrote in a letter to Brendan O'Brien's grandfather William Brownbill, stating that Elizabeth Pickavance died in 1918.- the flu epidemic went through at that time and hit hard.

In the 1916 Canadian census the family were at Section 9, Township49, Range 7 West of the 5th Meridian, the municipality was Rocky Rapids not Power House.

Name	Military Service	Canton	Rge	Mer.	Munic	Rel	Age	When Emigrated	Where Born	Occ
(The people below reside in residence 46 I have not included all the headings in the census.)										
Pickavance Wm	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	son	10	1913	Eng	None
Pickavance Mary	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	Daug	15	1913	Eng	None
Brownbill James	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	Head	42	1911	Eng	Farmr
Brownbill Wm.	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	Son	11	1911	Eng	None
Blower Annie	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	sister	28	1912	Eng.	None
Blower Elise W.	x	49	7	5	R.Rapids	Daug	1	x	Canada	None
Pilkington Wm.	x	49	7	5	R. Rapids	Bro in law	30	1911	England	None

In Residence 46

Markham John	49	7	5	R. Rapids	Single	40	1912	USA	Farmer
Pickavance Eliz	49	7	5	R. Rapids	Widow	42	1913	England	Housekeeper


By 1921 Only James Brownbill, William Brownbill and William Pickavance were together at the same address. I could not find William Pilkington on the census.

There are Brownbills, Pickavances, Pilkingtons and Colliers in the family, which need more information to unravel the relationships. Colleen sent the stories from TLHO and the Western Review to Brendan O'Brien.

I received an email from Jim Blower, he is very interested in the family history and would like to buy both books mentioned in the story, he is also interested in making contact with Brendan O'Brien. His mother is still alive and he says she writes to Mary Collier's (nee Brownbill) descendants, so hopefully the families can get in touch with each other. He mentions that William Pilkington died in the 1918 'flu epidemic. I have sent him Brendan's email address, and the letters received from Brendan. It will be up to him to continue with the query to make a connection to a living relative.

Colleen received an email from Brendan O'Brien after sending him the photograph of their ranch, Brendan said the photograph was stunning and he sent the photograph of St. Helens, he also said, "What a change and what a great decision they made to strike out as pioneers in Alberta". Brendan had heard from Jim Blower, and he thanks us for the information and he is finding it to be fascinating. It makes a rewarding end to a query.

Funeral Card that Colleen Andersen sent to Brendan O'Brien



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MR. WILLIAM "CHUB" BROWNBILL

BORN
November 9, 1905
Lancaster, England

PASSED AWAY
December 24, 1996
Drayton Valley, Ab.

FUNERAL SERVICES
Drayton Valley Funeral Chapel
Monday December 30, 1996
at 1:00 P.M.
Officiating - Rev. Keith Denman
Organist - Mrs. Marie Cornelison

HONORARY PALLBEARERS
Jason Blower Martin Blower
Aaron Blower Ted Tucker
Chris Blower Les Tucker

Everyone is cordially invited for
lunch and fellowship at the
Drop - In - Center following
the service.

DRAYTON VALLEY FUNERAL SERVICES
TINANT FUNERAL DIRECTORS

As I was making a trip to Edmonton, I delivered the two Drayton Valley History books to Jim Blower, he was pleased to receive them, as we visited for a short time he recalled going to Drayton Valley when he was seven years old in the early 1950s, he said it took two days to travel one way which now takes about two hours. Jim also said it was like going to the end of the world, and remembers Chub and Stan in their home which was very basic, but he remembers them being very charitable to people less fortunate than themselves, who came to the Drayton Valley area.

"There's No Cure For Birth And Death Save To Enjoy The Interval" –George Santayana. (From The Edmonton Journal July 29, 2015)

Glossary of Symbols and Terms for Studying Cemeteries

Symbols	Possible Interpretation	Terms	Definitions
Angel, flying	Rebirth; Trumpeting-call to the Resurrection; Weeping-grief	AE	An abbreviation for Aetatis, or years of life Aetatis, or years of life
Arch	Victory of life over death, or victory in death	B.P.O.E.	Benevolent Protective Order of Elks
Bird	Eternal life. Birds in flight-flight of the soul.	Catacomb	An underground network of chambers with recesses in which to place the dead
Candle, flame	Life	Cemetery	A place for burying the dead.
Columns, Doors	Heavenly entrance	Columbarium	A vault with niches for urns, containing ashes of the dead.
Crown	Glory of life after death.	Consort	A husband alive at the time of his wife's death.
Dove	Purity, devotion	C.S.A	Confederate States Army
Figs, Pineapple	Prosperity, eternal life	D.S.P. (Latin)	Died without children
Flower	Frailty of life. Severed blossom-mortality.	D.V.P (Latin)	Died in father's lifetime
Garland	Victory	D.Y.	Died young
Hand pointing	Heavenly reward	Epitaph	An Inscription on a tombstone or monument in memory of the person buried.
Heart	Love, mortality, love of God	Footstone	A stone marking the foot of a grave.
Hourglass	Time's inevitable passing	G.A.R.	Grand Army of the Republic.
Lamb	Innocence	Gravestone	A stone that marks a grave.
Pail, Pick, Spade	Mortality	Headstone	A memorial stone set at the head of a grave.
Rooster	Awakening, the Resurrection	H.S. (Latin)	Here is buried
Scythe	Deaths; the divine harvest	I.H.S.	Greek Spelling of Christ
Shell	The Resurrection, life everlasting	Inter	To bury or put a dead body into a grave.
Skull, skeleton	Mortality	I.O.O.F	Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Sun setting	Death	Mausoleum	A large stately tomb
Sun shining/ rising	Renewed life	O.E.S.	Order of Eastern Star
Thistle	Of Scottish descent	Obit	Died
Tree	Life. Tree sprouting-Life ever-lasting. Severed Branch-Mortality	Obit Sine	Died without children
Vine	The Sacraments	Prole plat/plot	A small piece of ground
Weeping Willow	Nature's lament	Potter's Field	A place where unknown persons are buried
Winged Face	Effigy of the soul of the deceased	Relict	A widow
Winged Skull	Flight of the soul from mortal man.	Sarcophagus	A stone coffin, often ornamental.
Wreath	Victory	Sepulcher	A place of burial
Wheat Sheaves	The divine harvest	V.F.W.	Veterans of Foreign Wars

Queries We Have Replied To

Apart from the article about the Brownbills we have answered three other queries. We have used the "The Index of Births, Marriages and Deaths of Drayton Valley and Surrounding Area in Alberta" for two other queries.

Colleen Andersen answered a query from Heather Marshall looking for a death for Leonore Ostermiller. After finding her death in the book of indexes she took three photographs of the grave and sent them to Heather for which the Drayton Valley of AGS received a \$20 donation.

The second query we used the above book for was a query about Floyd and Reta Morrill. Miriam Roberts sent in memoriams, obituaries and birth information from the same book. This query was made to the Western Review and the staff there gave Colleen's phone number to be contacted. Colleen looked for graves without any luck, but she did send some information she received from the Western Review that was indexed by email and she also sent a story by regular mail from the Western Review. We have been promised a donation for this query.

The book of indexes roughly covers the area from Wabamun Alberta to Wildwood, south to Alder Flats, and east to Winfield, then north to Warburg/Thorsby and Wabamun. We do have some of these books available for \$55.00 plus postage and handling and a CD for \$25.00.

Miriam Roberts received \$50 donation for doing a query on the Betton Family. Ancestry.ca was used for that query.

Submitted by Miriam Roberts

Definition of First Nations

Aboriginal Canadians who are neither Inuit nor Metis – in the united States they'd be called Native Americans – are the many First Nations band of Canada: Haida, Salish, Blackfoot, Athabaskan, Cree, Ojibwa, Iroquois and others.

From the book of Extraordinary Facts – Publications International Ltd.