

Luther B. McShane Report by Leroy Koop

On January 26, 2023 the Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS received the following research request:

I would like information on a Luther Burchnall McShane who is buried in Wetaskiwin City Cemetery, he died in 1914. I am hoping to find out if he is the same Luther Burchnall McShane who was married to a Sinia Jane Farmer. Are obituaries available for this time period? Death Certificates? Trying to figure out where the family lived and why they went to Canada. Family story is that he was in trouble with the law. Another story is about an arson at a nearby reservation. Thank you for your assistance. I understand and agree to that fees may be incurred and I am willing to pay for the above information. Thank you

The Wetaskiwin Archive Obituary Collection was the first resource that was searched. A full obituary article for L. B. McShane and what appears to be a partial one for a Lina McShane were found. L. B. was described as "*one of the pioneer settlers of the Angus Ridge district.....a resident of the Angus Ridge district about nine years.....an affectionate husband and kind and loving father.*" He was the father of eleven. Since some family members had a distance to travel, a funeral date was unavailable at the time, nor was a cemetery mentioned for the interment. His death was calculated to be March 1, 1914.

The obituary for a Lina McShane stated that she resided with her son in Mayerthorpe, died in the Edmonton Hospital on November 14 (1929), the funeral was held in Wetaskiwin on November 18, and the interment took place in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery. The fact that the first name was Lina instead of Sina wasn't a concern as many persons' written capital "L" can be someone else's capital "S".

The search in AGS Name Database for cemeteries for the name McShane resulted in this:

Name	Dates	Age	Plot No.	Area	Land Description	Name 1	Name 2
MCSHANE, Luther B	- 01 Mar 1914	58y	C 77 2b	Wetaskiwin	NW-14-046-24-W4	Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery	

File No.: 1663 Record type: Cemetery

No Lina or Sina McShane?

From the Moore's Funeral Burial Records index found on the Wetaskiwin Branch website Lina was found.

Name	Date of Death	Age
McShane, Lina	14-Nov-1929	63 yrs

So, Lina or Sina McShane was brought back to Wetskiwin after her death. Since Moore's index is between 1924 - 1937, it is not surprising that L. B. McShane doesn't appear.

The Moore's record is also in the branch's resources. Here is what it stated about Lina:

Name: Lina McShane
 Ordered by: McShane Brothers
 Charged to: Lina McShane Estate
 Residence: Mayerthorpe
 Place of Death: Edmonton
 Age 63 years
 Died: Nov. 14, 1929
 Where Buried: Wetaskiwin
 Date of Funeral: Nov. 18, 1929 @
 2:30

136 FUNERAL RECORD AND LEDGER

Ordered by *McShane Bros* Charged to *Lina McShane* *Wetaskiwin Mayerthorpe*

Place of Death <i>Edmonton</i>	Casket	Box	Flain	By Cash
Cause of Death	Hearse, <i>+</i>			15.00
Name <i>Lina McShane</i>	Cerriage			
Age <i>63 years</i>	Crape, Crown, Ribbon			
Died <i>Nov 14 1929</i>	Embalming			
Where Buried	Grave, Digging, <i>+</i> Trimming			10.00
Occupation	Printing			5.00
Residence <i>Mayerthorpe</i>	Attendance			
Where Buried <i>Wetaskiwin</i>	Shroud			
Date of Funeral <i>2.30 Nov 1929</i>	Chain			30.00
Minister <i>Rev Elliott</i>	Physician			

Shipped from Connolly

Minister: Rev. Elliott
 Style of Casket: "Shipped from Connolly, Edmonton"
 Cost: \$15.00 for hearse; \$10.00 for digging; \$5.00 for services and auto: total cost \$30.00
 NOTE: Connolly-McKinley Ltd was the funeral home in Edmonton listed on the Death Registration.

Both L. B. & Sina McShane seem to be buried in Wetaskiwin, but where? From the Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery list of 2004 the following was discovered:

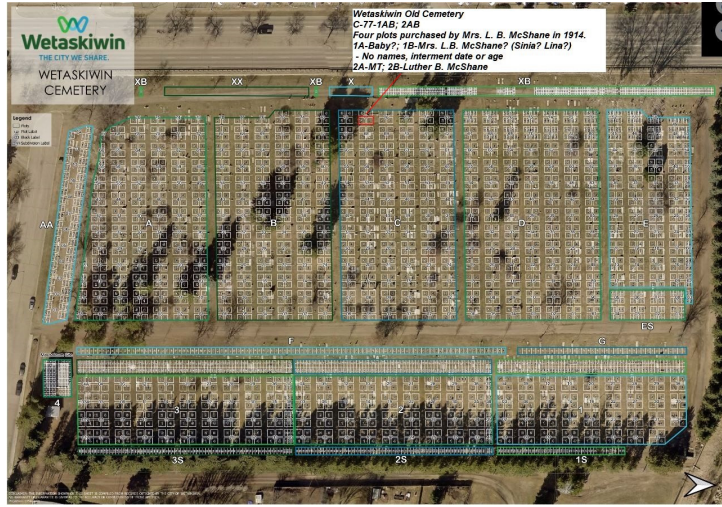
Sub Plot Number	Name	RSVD	EMPTY	FULL	CREMAINS	BABY	DOUBLEDEEP	Interment Date	AGE	REMARKS
C-77-1-A	MCSHANE	OCUPIED	OCU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO RECORD		Lot purchased by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates a small grave in middle of lot is occupied - possibly ?BABY?, but no record of name of deceased.
C-77-1-B	MCSHANE	OCUPIED	OCU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO RECORD		Lot purchased by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is occupied with a full body burial, but no record of name of deceased.
C-77-2-A	MCSHANE,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			RSVD by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is vacant.
C-77-2-B	MCSHANE, LUTHER B.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	01 MAR 1914	58	DIED Mar. 1, 1914 (Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is occupied with a full body burial)

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According to the information within the red square on the right, Mrs. L. B. McShane purchased 4 plots in the cemetery in 1914. In 2002 a "witching technique" was used to discover a "baby" body in C-77-1A; an adult body in C-77-1B, both without full names; no body in C-77-2A; and a full body in C-77-2B, that of Luther B. McShane.

Here's the location of the McShane plots:

Here's L. B. McShane's monument from Find a Grave:



Two things came to mind; why were persons buried without names and what about a "*witching technique*" in 2002? Wasn't witching a process of long ago used in searching for underground water for well digging using a "Y" shaped wooden stick? But bones? Would "*witching technique*" in 2002 not be more like depth penetrating radar?

Although the research thus far would indicate that the adult bodies in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery are that of Luther B. and Sina McShane, further research was performed to determine that the Lina (Sina) McShane from the Mayerthorpe district was the spouse of L. B. McShane buried in Wetaskiwin. The Peel's Prairie Provinces website was searched for the name McShane. A couple of local district articles came to light.

The Edmonton Bulletin, April 24, 1918
(CITY EDITION), Page 2, Item Ar00224

A newspaper clipping from the Edmonton Bulletin, April 24, 1918. The text reads: "Mrs. McShane shipped from Wetaskiwin a carload of household effects and one of stock to Sangudo. And Mrs. McShane and family are living on their farm near Green Court. A ... has purchased the Mc..."

Green Court is 145 km
NW from Edmonton along
Hwy 43.
Mayerthorpe is 136 km.
Sangudo is 118 km.

The Edmonton Bulletin, October 9, 1918
(CITY EDITION), Page 2, Item Ar00222

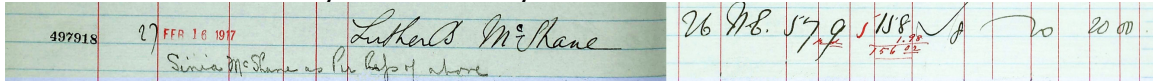
A newspaper clipping from the Edmonton Bulletin, October 9, 1918. The title is "A New Member". The text is a letter to the editor from Vecta McShane, dated Greencourt, Oct., 1918. The letter describes her family, including her brothers in England and her children Madge and Diamond, and mentions her school experience in Wetaskiwin.

Uncle Tom seems to be a letter to the editor type of newspaper article. The author's name didn't at first register, but the fact that she states that she lived in Wetaskiwin for 12 years and that she was 10 years old was interesting. A later letter to the editor in 1922 showed her name, not as Vecta, but as Veda.

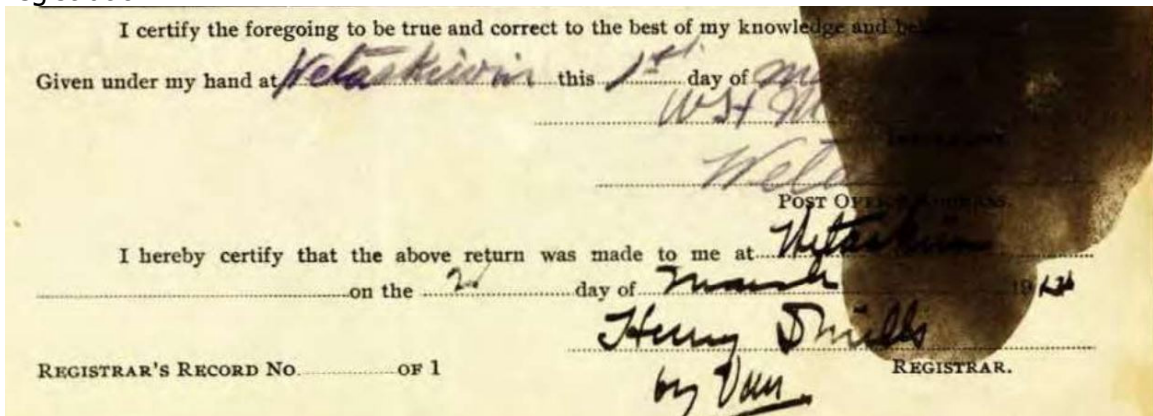
The 1916 Canadian Census shows a McShane family living in the Angus Ridge district with Sina as head and a daughter born in Alberta in 1908 or 1909 by the name of Ada. Looking at the census image, it is possible and probably correct in saying her name

was Veda. Others who have researched this family show the name as Veda Alverta McShane. She appears to be the only L. B. McShane child born in Canada. It is possible that Veda's handwriting of her name looked like "ct" instead of a simple "d". According to the Alberta Death Index Veda passed away on February 28, 1925 in Mayerthorpe. Is she the small body buried in C-77-1A, next to her dad?

The 1926 Canadian Census shows Sina McShane as head of the household on a farm west of Mayerthorpe on section 26-57-9-W5. Homestead records show that Luther B. McShane applied for the 1/4 section NE26 on June 27, 1913 and it was granted on February 16, 1917 to "*Sinia McShane as per Rep of above*" (Luther). Luther died in 1914. Sinia was obviously his beneficiary.

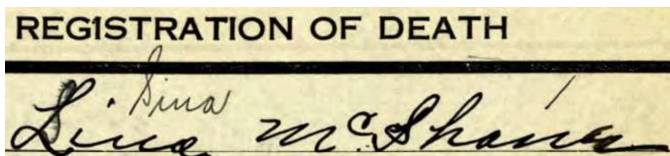


Death Registrations were ordered from the Provincial Archives of Alberta for Luther B., Sina and Veda McShane. The registration numbers were obtained from Ancestry.com. Luther died March 1, 1914 at Angus Ridge of apoplexy. The registration was filled out in Wetaskiwin. The hope was to find out who the informant was for Luther. With fingers crossed, here is what was found upon opening the digital copy of Luther's death registration:



It just proves one should not drink coffee at the same time as doing research with paper, or keyboard even. The best one can conclude is that the informant was Mrs. McShane?

The Death Registration of Sina McShane states that she died on November 14, 1929 at the Edmonton General Hospital of inanition and nephritis. She resided in Mayerthorpe. Connelly-McKinley Ltd. was the undertaker in charge and Sina was interred in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery.



Here's an example of people's writing skills and why the names Sina and Lina can lead to confusion.

The Death Registration of Veda Alverta McShane states that she died on February 28, 1925 on the farm near Mayerthorpe of lobar pneumonia. She was interred in Green Court. Her brother George McShane looked after the funeral arrangements. Veda's age at the time of death was 16 years 7 months 11 days. Using Legacy Family Tree her birth date was calculated as being July 17, 1908. She was born in Wetaskiwin.

The research seems to indicate that Sina and Luther are family, with both being interred in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery. Luther's plot is know for sure as C-77-2B. Although no conclusive proof, Sina may be interred in plot C-77-1B. Veda's Death Registration states her place of interment as being Green Court, so who is buried between Luther and Sina

in plot C-77-1A? An infant? Whose? Did Sina give birth in 1914 at the age of 47 and the baby died?

Apparently the Wetaskiwin Archive has gravediggers' records which may prove that Sina McShane is the spouse of the Luther B. McShane buried in Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery, and in fact is buried one plot to the north of him with an infant in between.

Too bad the archive is still closed.

Now for the part in the request about "*Family story is that he was in trouble with the law.*" What led the research on this topic was AGS's Name Database on Homesteads.

Surname	Given Name	Sec.	Twsp.	Rge.	W_of the	Placename	PAA Ref.	Film	File
MCSHANE	Florence	3	57	9	5		Acc. 1970.313	2461	3246981
MCSHANE	George	3	57	9	5		Acc. 1970.313	2461	3246981

What was interesting was the fact that both names were for the same homestead; all information identical except for the first name. If both were filing for entry to the same land at the same time, one would think that both names would be recorded on one line. Ancestry.com had 13 pages of documentation on this homestead. To make things easier to follow and to keep oneself organized in research projects, make timelines. Here's the timeline for the George and Florence McShane's homestead SE3-57-9-W5.

Timeline Homestead SE3-57-9-W5 George McShane + Florence Cherrill

- 1926 - April - Marriage of George McShane & Florence Cherrill
- 1926 - June 11 - George McShane Homestead entry application for SE3-57-9-W5 (Mayerthorpe, AB area)
- 1926 - October 20 - a lien on homestead by H. Keeley & Sons who supplied the lumber for the house construction
- 1926 - November 27 - Birth of Reginald George McShane at Balm, AB (George's newspaper obituary in 1973 revealed son's name Reginald; border crossing in 1943 his full name as Reginald George going to live with his mother Florence Bell in Washington State, USA)
- 1928 - June 27 - George McShane sentenced to 2 years imprisonment at Prince Albert, SK + 20 lashes for molesting 9 year old girl
- 1928 - June 28 - Geo. H. Cherrill, Florence's father, writes a letter explaining his involvement in establishing the homestead; lien against the lumber; George very shiftless; George infected Florence with a loathsome disease; requests that Florence take over homestead under her name

- 1928 - August 13 - Florence resided on homestead from August 1926 to April 1928; from then on with her father on SE4-57-9-W5, Balm, AB
- 1928 - December 5 - George McShane's homestead entry from June 11, 1926 cancelled & Florence given permission to continue development
- 1929 - February 1 - Florence secured a divorce from George McShane
- 1929 - September 23 - Decree of Divorce made absolute; Florence received alimony of \$30/month for herself & \$15/month for her child; Florence still living with father
- 1930 - January 14 - Homestead entry granted to Florence Cherrill for SE3-57-9-W5
- 1930 - April - Florence married James Bell; living in Ronan, AB (unable to find marriage index information)
- 1930 - July 10 - Florence Bell claimed a patent for the homestead
- 1930 - September 16 - Florence Bell received patent for SE3-57-9-W5, 158 acres
- 1931 - December 17 - Lawyer P.C. Thomson representing H. Keeley & Sons writes a letter to Department of Interior regarding the lien on the property for payment of the lumber supplied in 1926; George McShane only paid \$14 & approximately \$450 was still owed; Mrs. Bell to pay?
- 1931 - December 31 - Reply to Thomson's letter from Dominion Lands Administration; Mrs. Florence Bell paid the outstanding \$15 when George McShane's entry was cancelled; no money for H. Keeley & Sons was collected

Did further law actions evolve regarding the lien? More research required?

Both George and Florence emigrated to Washington State, USA, but not together. This timeline was sent to the client with George's incarceration in 1928 as the possible "*trouble with the law*" issue.

Now for the last comment from the request: "*Another story is about an arson at a nearby reservation.*" Luther McShane and family resided in the Angus Ridge area southeast of Wetaskiwin and only a few miles east of Maskwacis. Did indigenous people in the past use ritual fires for any reason which may have been considered arson at the nearby reservation? A fellow member of the Wetaskiwin Branch directed me to the following:

[The art of fire: reviving the Indigenous craft of cultural burning | The Narwhal.](#)

The first line of the article is:

"Indigenous Peoples have managed their lands with fire since time immemorial".

It goes on to say:

"Cultural burns are different from planned and controlled burns called "prescribed fires," which are executed by government forest managers. Prescribed fires are primarily done to get rid of built-up "fuel" — from needles, grasses and twigs to shrubs, fallen branches and downed trees — and reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfires.

Cultural burns, on the other hand, are done to fortify the land. Reducing the risk of wildfires is but one of the benefits of cultural burns, which aim to promote the growth of medicinal and food plants, such as mushrooms, berries and wild onions, and maintain the landscape for all species.

Cultural burns are different depending on the objective, but most are low intensity, slow burns that are conducted when the wildfire risk is low, generally the spring or summer."

So, indigenous people practiced cultural burning to improve their food supply, both in vegetation and wildlife. The white man came along and pretty well put a stop to cultural burning, even applying fines. Indigenous people are now trying to bring this burning back, as they strongly believe that cultural burning will lessen the wildfires we in North America have experienced in the last 5 years.

Farmers in the vicinity east of the reservation south of Wetaskiwin in the early 1900's may have witnessed a lot of smoke and flames. It would have scared many, not knowing what cultural burning was all about. Now **you** know!