



Wetaskiwin Branch
Alberta Genealogical Society

Roots & Branches

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ROOTS & BRANCHES

is published three times per year
by and for the members of
Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS.
It is emailed to members
and posted on our website.

PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES for 2015/16

Claudia Malloch

This list is by no means exhaustive. It is being put in the Newsletter so you can share with us what you might like to have as programs over the next few months. As a slight guide I've put notes by some titles that I made after watching the presentations.

Please go over the possibilities and send an email to register your preference of topics: as many as interest you. Also, please add any ideas you might have thought of over the summer.

Finding Your Family on Newspapers by Peter Drinkwater - well presented information by a good presenter, mostly on US newspapers. It also gives useful ideas to those of us who live elsewhere.

Family History on the go - Using Phones and Tablets. Amazing, overwhelming but very interesting and useful. A blog address with videos for how to use the various apps they showed is available. We may be able to have this topic done live.

Getting the Most out of ancestry.com: Crista Cowan, Juliana Szucs - very useful; there's so much information that it's worth watching more than once.

Personal History Triage - How to Tell the Best Ten Stories of your Life: by Allison Taylor: - Excellent. She helps with what to tell, how to tell it and where to tell it. Blog: picturesandstories.com

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BRANCH MEETINGS

**3rd Tuesday of the month,
7:00 pm at LDS CHURCH
5410 – 36 Ave
except Dec., July & Aug.**

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WETASKWIN BRANCH: AGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

Located at
City of Wetaskiwin Archives
4904 – 51 Street
Resources available "On call"
Branch Library co-ordinator
Contact: Bob Maynard
780-387-4187
maynard@persona.ca

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WETASKIWIN FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day
Saints,
5410 – 36 Avenue, Wetaskiwin
Wednesdays: 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Thursdays: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

Since last summer I have been working off and on to re-create a list of people buried in the Old Catholic Cemetery on Airport Road (45th Avenue) at the request of the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish. Apparently there never was a plot plan, or, if so, it is long lost. There are only about 100 tombstones still standing. Were there ever more? Many of the stones are almost unreadable now, and will only deteriorate further.

The list is based on the Parish register of funeral Masses from 1909 onward and many are confirmed by information found in the following places: the cemetery recording done by AGS in the 1990s, the City Archives file of obituaries, Wetaskiwin newspapers online and the Moore Funeral Home records in our own branch library.

I was surprised to discover that although there had been an active Catholic community since 1892, for 17 years Wetaskiwin was served by missionary priests. Records of the sacraments stayed with the priest, not the local community. I am still looking for pre-1909 records and will add more information if and when I find it.

Where possible I have co-ordinated information from the above sources and reconciled discrepancies. For example the Church register may have recorded married women by their maiden names, (a French Catholic practice reflecting Wetaskiwin's Catholic population of earlier times) but tombstones and obituaries used their married names. When a child's death was recorded, his/her father's surname was not written (being the same as the child) and the mother's maiden name was included.

This document has been deposited with Sacred Heart Church and with City of Wetaskiwin Archives.

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The May 2015 issue generated a lot of interest in voice recognition programs. Providentially, an article by Barry Ewell arrived in my email inbox. It is included in this issue, on page 5, with his permission. I hope that it will give the necessary guidance to the several of you who were excited to learn of a different way to preserve your family mementoes. SA.

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Program possibilities continued from P. 1

The Write Stuff: Valerie Elkins -Leaving a Recorded Legacy. Personal Histories, Journals, Diaries and Letters. Very good ideas and covers everything from pen and paper to digital.

Building a Genealogy Research Toolbox: Thomas MacEntee: Comprehensive and helpful; he's always good.

Getting Started in Genetic Genealogy 44 by Diahhan Southard

This is the best presentation I've ever seen for really understanding DNA research and being easy to watch. If you're interested, this is where to start.

RootsTech wasn't the only source of possibilities; here are some more:

Flip-Pal Mobile Scanner: Legacy Webinar on youtube - well done, a good introduction. It also shows how to use this scanner for several things and how to care for it.

Organizing Your Family History - What to do with all the "stuff" you're collecting...and keeping it findable.

Creating a Book Yourself on Bookmaking Software or from Your Family History Software Program

Genealogy 101: A 3 part course in Beginning Genealogy - from the ground up. Very basic but we could start on part 2 or 3 if you wished. The basics always bear repeating.

Inspiring Youth About Family History

Assuring that Your Family History Work Survives

Enie Meenie Miney Mo! So much to learn...I just don't know...!!

This was how it felt to put programs together for our upcoming meetings. There are so many options, so little time.

In late spring, Gary Rode and I were asked to be members of a committee organizing a Family History Discovery Day for all ages to be held on November 14 in Edmonton. This is an offshoot of RootsTech 2015, the huge genealogy conference in Salt Lake City early in the year and should be a very interesting and enjoyable day.

One of my duties was to determine which of the RootsTech recorded presentations we should use as part of our Discovery Day. That assignment proved to be a goldmine for presentations we could also use.

Do you find any of these topics as exciting as I did? I'll be waiting for your input to prepare the programs for the coming months.

You can reach me at claudiamalloch@me.com or 780-352-0685.

Welcome to Fall and the Joy that is Genealogy!



"Summer should be given a speeding ticket"...a piece of wisdom gleaned from Facebook today, but sadly true. It has flown by and now we are back to the really important work of locating our ancestors and compiling our family history.

My grandson, Luca, has become a real enthusiast and, as you can see from the photo of this T shirt, has learned way too much about his tree. It is very gratifying when our descendants take an interest in something dear to us.

Claudia.

MEETING PRESENTATIONS

MAY

CSI FAMILY HISTORY, PT 7 CITING YOUR SOURCES

This webinar was a very in-depth presentation on the importance of Citing Your Sources. Thomas McEntee explained the different methods, his personal preferences (including a database that he has created) and the different ways in which this can be used. This was a very informative presentation, and although most of us grimace about citing our sources, Thomas explained why we should be doing this.

JUNE

As in past years, the branch members shared what they had learned/found out/researched, etc. during the past year. What an amazing collection of stories: found relatives; photos identified; some mysteries solved; other stories unearthed, which in turn created more mysteries – it was so interesting hearing about the different family revelations.

In addition we had a “Show and Tell” – members shared the various ways in which they had collected, preserved and shared the family archives, trees and stories in their care. The ideas, work, and end results of our members were just mind-boggling!

Many of the branch members thanked Claudia for all her work, creating and presenting the CSI Family History program that has provided the incentive for many of us to ‘zero in’ on a family ancestor, with the results being rewarding.

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WRITING PROJECT **Re: CANADA’S UPCOMING 150TH BIRTHDAY (2017)**

As Canada’s 150th birthday approaches our Branch members have decided to contribute to the history of our country by writing memories of our own school days. We have attended various kinds of schools in the Wetaskiwin area, other parts of Alberta, other provinces, and even other countries, typically in the 1950s and 1960s. These stories will be compiled and kept in our library.

Where possible, if we so desire, we may include histories of our schools and/or recount stories of other of our family members’ school experiences. The point of this exercise, and that of Canada 150, is to record our personal histories so that future generations will be able to learn what our lives were like in various periods of the 20th century. As well, by doing so, this exercise becomes a memoir for us to share with our children and grandchildren.

We invite all members, even if you are not able to attend meetings, to join in this project. I encourage everyone to submit their stories to me before October 20 (regular meeting date) so that they can be compiled. (If you need more time or assistance, just let me know) Sharon Aney 780-352-2156 or sharonaney@gmail.com .

For members who wish to undertake a second memoir to be included. I have suggested memories of holiday traditions (Christmas, Easter, summer vacations, etc.), but any topics are welcome.

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“Norwegian” medical terms: G.I. Series - Soldier's ball game

Outpatient - Person who has fainted

USING VOICE RECOGNITION TO DIGITIZE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Posted on [March 1, 2014](#)

By Barry J. Ewell

Recently when my father passed away, he left an extensive collection of hand written material in the form of a journal, letters, and thoughts. While the material contains extensive history of our family, few others will have a desire to read the many hand-written pages. Voice recognition software has substantially simplified and reduced the time needed to manage the collection. My process is as follows:

1. Scan each page of the collection for digital preservation.
2. Using speech recognition software (such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking 10), I am able to read the handwritten text directly into a Word document (with the aid of microphone connected into USB port) with all the correct punctuation and formatting. The software recognizes over 98% of what I read. I am able to read at normal speeds exceeding 100 words a minute.
3. Once the text is captured, I make any editing changes and the text is now ready for further research. I can search the document with key words, cut and paste information, and so forth.

What is voice recognition?

Voice or speech recognition is the ability of a machine or program to receive and interpret dictation, or to understand and carry out spoken commands.

For use with computers, analog audio must be converted into digital signals. This requires analog-to-digital conversion. For a computer to decipher the signal, it must have a digital database (or vocabulary) of words or syllables, and a speedy means of comparing this data with signals. The speech patterns are stored on the hard drive and loaded into memory when the program starts. A comparator checks these stored patterns against the output of the A/D converter.

In practice, the size of a voice-recognition program's effective vocabulary is directly related to the random access memory capacity of the computer in which it is installed. A voice-recognition program runs many times faster if the entire vocabulary can be loaded into RAM, as compared with searching the hard drive for some of the matches. Processing speed is critical as well, because it affects how fast the computer can search the RAM for matches.

All voice-recognition systems or programs make errors. Screaming children, barking dogs, and loud external conversations can produce false input. (Much of this can be avoided by

using the system in a quiet room.) There is also a problem with words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings—for example, “hear” and “here.”

Tips on using speech recognition

These tips are based on my experience with Nuance Dragon NaturallySpeaking 9:

1. Ensure that your computer meets the hardware specifications.
2. Use the latest version of the software Dragon NaturallySpeaking.
3. Install Dragon NaturallySpeaking after you have installed Microsoft Office.
4. Make sure that you have selected the U.S. vocabulary when you setup your user. Sometimes people mistakenly install the UK or Australian English model. This will cause many problems.
5. Ensure that you have selected the correct microphone type when setting up your user specifications. If you are using a digital microphone then select it; if you’re using a desktop array microphone then select it, and so on.
6. When completing the initial training period, speak in a consistent and even tone of voice. Do not speak too softly or loudly and do not speak too fast or slow.
7. If the program is not responding well after you complete the first session of general training then do additional training. Ensure that your hardware is setup properly before you conduct the additional training.
8. Run the audio setup wizard once a week or when you find that the program is not responding well to your voice.
9. Ensure that the microphone is positioned consistently at the same distance from your mouth. The microphone should be positioned approximately 3 to 4 cm from your mouth and slightly below your bottom lip.
10. You must make corrections with Dragon every time it makes a mistake. If you do not make the proper corrections with Dragon Natural Speaking it will not improve. The ability for the program to become more accurate entirely depends upon you making the corrections.
11. In order to correct, you must say either “correct that” or “correct the wrong words.”
12. You are not making corrections if you select incorrect words with the mouse and then type over them. You are only making an edit. Dragon will never remember this is a correction and will never improve as a consequence.
13. Dragon is optimized for Microsoft Word and Microsoft Outlook. It will work in other applications with various degrees of success. It does not work well with Microsoft Excel.
14. The key to getting good accuracy from speech recognition is to think about a sentence before you say it, and then speak in phrases or sentences at a time. Do –

not – speak – each – word. All language programs need words to be spoken as sentences, not as individual words.

15. If you purchase a new microphone, especially if you are going from an analogue to a digital microphone, it is best to complete a short general training session to start a new user. This is because different microphones sound differently to the program.
16. Dragon NaturallySpeaking (version 10) has some inbuilt tolerance for “UM” and “AH’s” but it is not really capable of telling the difference between words and utterances. Again, think of a sentence carefully before you pronounce it to the program. This will help enormously.
17. Back up your speech files to another medium every few months. With Dragon NaturallySpeaking this is called the USER file and is located in the Dragon NaturallySpeaking program directory. This will save you a lot of heartache if something goes wrong with your computer. Speech files can become corrupted quite easily.

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## **NEWSPAPERS AS A FAMILY HISTORY RESOURCE**

Sharon Aney

When I discover where an ancestral family lived I always wonder what role they may have played in that community, or how affairs in the community may have affected their lives. Unfortunately I have yet to find an ancestor who has kept a journal, but some interesting information has come to light in newspapers.

Obituaries and birth announcements have listed family members to be investigated further. Sports pages have chronicled the achievements of local prominent athletes. Business advertising told of business affairs, but notices of an auction on the courthouse steps told of financial disaster! Court trials and accident reports recounted other misfortunes. Stories of weather events have told me what my ancestors had to deal with in times of extreme winter conditions, or of drought. In some cases “my people” were involved in spearheading community groups, events, or even public building projects.

I have used these online sources, as well as microfilms obtained through interlibrary loan

<https://news.google.com/newspapers>

<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/index.html>

<http://www.cangenealogy.com/>

More newspaper back issues are being placed on the Internet every year. If you search for them, or contact a local library to see if the local paper has been microfilmed or placed on the website of the local library or historical society, you may find a chapter for your family story that surprises you.

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Note to new readers: if you wish to read back issues of this newsletter, all issues since 2009 are posted on our website.

THE RED BARN

Sharon Aney

In the middle 50 years of the 20th century an iconic red barn marked the miles on almost every country road in western Canada and the USA. When a pioneer farmer ...whether he was a homesteader or had purchased his land...began to see that his hard work had produced income enough to upgrade his original buildings, the first replacement building was usually a big barn painted red.

Why red? I found the following explanation online

"Why are barns usually painted red?"

14 May 2001. HowStuffWorks.com. <<http://home.howstuffworks.com/question635.htm>> 02 May 2015.

In historically accurate terms, "barn red" is not the bright, [fire-engine](#) red that we often see today, but more of a burnt-orange red. As to how the oil mixture became traditionally red, there are two predominant theories: *Wealthy farmers added **blood** from a recent slaughter to the oil mixture. As the paint dried, it turned from a bright red to a darker, burnt red.

*Farmers added **ferrous oxide**, otherwise known as **rust**, to the oil mixture. Rust was plentiful on farms and is a poison to many fungi, including mold and moss, which were known to grow on barns. These fungi would trap moisture in the wood, increasing decay.

Regardless of how the farmer tinted his paint, having a red barn became a fashionable thing. They were a sharp contrast to the traditional white farmhouse.

As European settlers crossed over to America, they brought with them the tradition of red barns. In the mid to late 1800s, as paints began to be produced with chemical pigments, red paint was the most inexpensive to buy.

The barn housed the most valuable of a farmers' assets: his livestock. As a good steward he would care for the animals that worked for him and ensured his livelihood. He would have had several teams of horses to provide power for the seeders, tillers, mowers, rakes, reapers, wagons and racks used in the farming activities, plus family transportation. The other essential animals on early farms were cattle that provided his family with milk for drinking, making butter and cheese, meat for eating, and cash when animals were sold.

Commonly, on the Canadian prairies, the barn was a hip-roof style, with a peak at the front to accommodate a rail for the hay sling that ran along the interior peak of the hayloft, which was where the summer crop of fresh hay was stored for winter feed.



During the hot, dry, summer haying season the floor of the hay rack was covered by an empty sling, made up of ropes and wood slats, to receive the hay that was pitched from the field onto it. At half capacity of the hay rack a second empty sling was laid down and the farmer completed filling the load.

Nakoneshny farm near Lanigan, SK

On arrival at the barn, the horses were unhitched from the hay rack and hitched to the rope hanging from the rail. The farmer attached the rope to both ends of the sling. The horses moved ahead and the rope tightened, bringing the ends of the sling together to form a large bale. Pulleys were

engaged to lift the bale up to the rail at the front door of the loft and pull it along the rail as far back into the loft as the farmer wished.

The farmer then went up into the loft to pull the release cord that opened the sling at the bottom and the hay fell out. (His children enjoyed the thrill of scrambling out of the way of the falling hay if we were the ones sent up to trip the rope...not a practice to be recommended!) A lighter rope allowed him to pull the sling back to the open door and pull (or ride) it back down. The second sling-full of hay was lifted from hay rack to the loft in the same manner.



This arrangement enabled one man to do the work of several and in less time. Otherwise one person would have to pitch the hay high overhead into the barn, another would move it from the doorway back, and a third would have to move it further back and stack it. Or he would need to take the extra time to do it himself. The sling was a real labour-saving device.

As farms became mechanized and specialized to growing more grain and fewer cattle, the need for these barns decreased. They were used for other storage purposes, were razed to prevent an invasion by vermin, were moved away, or they finally decayed and collapsed.

Nelson farm near Wetaskiwin, AB

As we drive down the country roads today the red barns are a rather rare sight.

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June 4, 2015



### **Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants Commemorates its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015**

Are you a descendant of a Mayflower passenger? Consider joining the Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants (CSMD). This year, the CSMD marks its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The CSMD is the only recognized society of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants outside the United States.

Many early Mayflower descendants made their way to Nova Scotia individually or as part of the New England Planters migration before the War of Independence, and many more followed as Loyalists to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Upper and Lower Canada.

Membership in the Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants is open to any person over the age of 18 who can document their direct bloodline descent back to a Mayflower passenger. The CSMD welcomes membership inquiries. Take the first step today: obtain a worksheet from our co-historian at [cohistorian@csmd.org](mailto:cohistorian@csmd.org)

More information: [csmd.org](http://csmd.org)  
Twitter: @CanMayflower

Facebook: Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants  
Contact: Margaret Dougherty [deputygovernor@csmd.org](mailto:deputygovernor@csmd.org)

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