



**Wetaskiwin Branch
Alberta Genealogical Society**

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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.

TOUR OF THE CITY OF WETASKIWIN ARCHIVES:

Alice Hoyle

On October 30TH, 2015 eight members of our branch of AGS, met at the City of Wetaskiwin Archives for a tour and information session, led by Archivist Rachel Knudsen.

Rachel explained the difference between an Archives and a Museum: that a Museum collects and documents ‘items’ but an Archives collects and documents photos and paper items important to the history of the region where the Archives is located.

We were given a list of the items that are located at the Wetaskiwin Archives. A highlight was a tour of the ‘cold room’ where historic items are kept in a temperature-controlled vault. Rachel explained how the items are preserved, how they are documented and showed us some of the important items that are housed there.

Rachel showed us some of the preservation projects she and the volunteers at the Archives are working on, and also explained the role of the Archives as it pertains to the special events/holidays: for example, she was working on several displays relating to Remembrance Day – these displays were going to be placed at several locations in the City.

The Archives welcomes new volunteers as there are several projects that need work, but she does not have the people to work on them. Following our tour, two of our Branch members have volunteered to work at the Archives!

The new address will be <http://www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch>

On Saturday, November 28, I attended the AGS Board Meeting in Edmonton. During lunch break, Lyn Meehan, the web designer, showed me her mock-up of our new website. Since our group is relatively small, as are our resources, she estimates that our new website will only be 7-10 pages (whatever that means in web language). She basically had taken what was on our original site and installed that information in the new site. The site seemed more flowing and not as "boxed" as our old site.

I showed her on my laptop some of the things I had been doing since I agreed to tackle the position of liaison between our group and Lyn. She gave me some useful tips on what to do. She said to avoid putting information on a website that could change without my control. As examples, no hours of operation controlled by others and no internet links that could disappear overnight. Those kinds of things the webmaster needs to always check on an ongoing basis to make sure everything is still correct.

In preparing information to be included in our new website, my biggest challenge was our library and what to do with the resources we have. Bob Maynard & I spent a whole day at the library culling all material that we thought was of little use or way out of date. I tried to run several CD's on my laptop running Windows 10, and found that I needed DOS or an earlier version of Windows. I believe DOS went the way of the dinosaur back in the days of the XP computer operating system. We salvaged 4 CD's to do with Alberta cemeteries. All newsletters and "how to do genealogy" booklets dated by more than 10 years were recycled. Our own newsletter is on our website back to November 2009, so why have hardcopies in the library?

Basically, what was left were the library books and material of definite value for doing research. It was decided to revamp the library holdings list so it would be more manageable and easier to use on the website. Six categories were created: Wetaskiwin, City and County; Alberta, Other Counties; Canada, Other Provinces; USA & International; Maps; and, Guides. This required looking at each item on the shelves, comparing it to the original holdings list, and determining what category it should be in. Transferring the original holdings list to an excel spreadsheet allowed for an easier task. Currently the books are on the shelves in Dewey decimal numerical order. Later, perhaps the books could be rearranged by categories.

I have tried to update our Members' Surname Research List, with limited success. I believe it beneficial for others to know where our members' expertise lies. Supplying your great grandparents' names, countries of birth and applicable years gives readers of the website an indication of where possible help lies.

Lyn Meehan wanted a section on successful research stories from our members. I decided to search our own newsletters on our website. Believe it or not, there were 20 such stories. Most were done by Alice Hoyle, but Jean Browse, Claudia Malloch, Don Brosius, Sharon Aney and Myrick Rosser also contributed. Well done!

I have also digitized the name indexes for all 3 of the Siding 16 books to be used on our website. Rachel Knudsen from the city archives said it was ok for me to do so under the Fair Dealing clause of Section 29 of the Canadian Copyright Act.

I have contacted personnel at the Wetaskiwin Public Library, Wetaskiwin City Archives, Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum, Canadian Legion and Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame for verification of what was on our old website. I have retooled the information gathered together by Sharon Aney and Elaine Young back in 2009.

Searching for possible photos to be used on the new website is next!

Possibly the new site will be up around the end of February...I will keep you advised.

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### **OCTOBER: 2015 PROGRAM:**

#### THE WRITE STUFF: DIFFERENT METHODS OF RECORDING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Dan DeWolf presented a video from the above session from the Roots Tech conference (2015) in Salt Lake City. Valerie Elkins stressed that "The Life You Save May Be Your Own". Her presentation gave us several options to record our own history: writing in journals, diaries, etc., creating a blog, writing and keeping letters, creating digital history & storing it in the 'cloud', writing 'chapter books', etc. She continually stressed that we should have a backup of all our recorded memories, whether they were hand written or in digital form. A very interesting presentation!

Dan DeWolf also told us that we could view all the Roots Tech 2015 presentations by doing an online search for RootsTech 2015 Archives.

### **NOVEMBER**

#### HOW ARE YOU PRESERVING AND SHARING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY?

Several branch members brought items to show us, highlighting the various ways in which they are preserving and sharing the history of their families.

### **BRANCH PROJECT:**

Sharon Aney

The *School Memories* book that our branch members undertook in 2015 is now complete. Congratulations to all of you who participated!

Eleven member/authors have their education experiences recorded as part of Canada's history. For some it is the first "chapter" of your personal history...I hope that you will be encouraged to write more, for your own satisfaction as well as to preserve the story for your children that you wished that your parents had written for you.

I found it quite interesting that although we all were writing about experiences in roughly the same time frame, we came from six provinces of Canada and from England, so everyone had a different "take" on what they wanted to share.

One copy is in our own genealogy library, and one will be deposited with AGS. The authors have received a .pdf copy. Any further distribution will be decided upon at the upcoming branch meeting.

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*On the grave of Ezekial Aikle
In East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia:
Here lies Ezekial Aikle, Age 102. Only the good die young*

THE FUN OF FAMILY REUNIONS

Carole M. Koop

The present format of our family reunion has evolved since the first one in 1980. A large family of ten sons and two daughters enjoyed each other's company but seldom got together in the years following their mother's death in 1971. These siblings all were married, had good jobs, and families of their own but were spread across the country. In this article these twelve siblings and their spouses are referred to as the 1st Generation. Their children are the 2nd Generation and that's where I fit in. My second youngest uncle spearheaded the first reunion along with a couple of my cousins. My oldest uncle and his wife visited Norway and Sweden; the homeland of his father and mother respectively. They gathered much genealogical information. A reunion was the perfect place to share their neatly typed research and charts.

The distance to be travelled and the numbers coming dictated that a weekend event was not enough. Thus, a one-week seven-day reunion was launched. The first venue for the first reunion was at a lakeside resort which had enough cabins, a large lodge and recreation areas. When this resort converted to timeshare units, a new similar venue was found and the last seven reunions have been held at BB Resort. So far, gathering for one week every four years has remained popular. Why? It's fun, the food is good and plentiful, there are activities for every age group, and it's all very well organized. Families within the whole family get to spend quality time with each other. The reunion committee cannot dictate where people stay but at least one cabin for each of the twelve families is allotted. There is a campground for tenting and RV's nearby. There are a couple motels near as well. The committee does no bookings for those but provides contact information. BB Resort is reserved for us well in advance and no non-family are allowed during our week in July. We do our own

housekeeping, changing towels etc. as needed.

The reunion treasurer collects a sum of money per person for food six months in advance. This also gives an approximate head count. The menu and the meat selection for the evening meals are pre-determined. Meat and condiments are purchased. Meals are prepared on site; meat is cooked on barbeques or on a large rented grill. The grill is also perfect for bacon, eggs, hashed browns, and pancakes. A cousin designates himself as chef! Breakfast and the evening meal are communal. Everybody's on their own at lunchtime sometimes enjoying leftovers doled out after the evening meal the previous day. An early riser gets the coffee-making duties. Attendees are asked to contribute their favourite spreads for toast. A daily sign-up sheet is posted asking for 6-8 salads of 10-15 portions each. We're instructed via the newsletter to "Bring your own large Tupperware bowl and salad recipe." These salads provide enough vegetables to satisfy everyone and the vegetarians are happy.

The cabins circle a central courtyard where the cooking is done. Picnic tables scattered throughout can easily be re-arranged as needed. The attendees who are able bring lawn chairs. The 1st Generation used to set aside one evening to go beyond the venue and dine out so that they could visit, reminisce, and eat in quiet and comfort. As their numbers sadly dwindled and these seniors required assistance with mobility this outing was discontinued. This generation needs extra comfort. To be able to speak, hear, and see each other easily a cosy cluster of comfy chairs is placed in the courtyard; strategically placed so that anyone passing by can easily share time with our elders. Also, the elders can experience the activity going on around them.

Routinely, a catered buffet dinner mid-week within walking distance at a nearby hotel is arranged for the whole family

(approx. 100). The money for this dress-up dinner is collected a couple days in advance and each participant is issued a ticket. This occasion provides the perfect environment for making special announcements. We also reflect on those who have passed on since the last reunion. An updated album (Book of Memorial) with write-ups and portrait pictures is on display. With the help of printed sheets, we sing a couple songs and then before the meal we repeat the unique Norwegian/Swedish table grace the twelve siblings knew in childhood.

The week seems over loaded with optional activities. The huge bulletin board needs to be checked often throughout the day. It is filled with sign-up sheets: a Cribbage tournament, Horseshoes, and Beanbag Toss. Individuals can recruit a team and go off for a round of golf. Arrangements can be made with a local ranch for a trail ride and/or a horse-pulled wagon ride. BB Resort is near a good beach and if weather permits a beach volleyball game may rapidly get organized. The younger ones with a partner and a beach towel like the water balloon toss game. At a recent reunion a Swedish stick throwing game called KUBB was introduced. Ultimate (Frisbee golf) is also new. The resort town has lawn bowling greens and a tournament there is always well attended with each of us paying our own entrance fee. An afternoon is set aside for the softball games; one for the youth and one for the not-so young. The majority show up to play and/or cheer. For those too young to participate, face painting gives them pleasure. The evenings, and well into the night for some, are spent around a campfire. The management of BB Resort allow us a bonfire on the premises. A farmer in the family provides the large metal antique tractor wheel for the fire pit as well as a load of firewood. All this needs to be cleaned up before we leave at the end.

Over the years, trophies have been donated in honour of a loved one. On the

last full day together right after breakfast we have "Awards". Winners of the above-mentioned sports or tournaments will get their names engraved on a trophy and get to pick a prize from a table full of donated items. If anyone is near the date of a special anniversary or milestone birthday, singing and a cake with candles is shared. In case anyone has any spare time, filling out the Family Quiz Booklet is fun. The purpose is to encourage us to remember family history and histrionics! Also, it's to encourage new attendees to ask questions, to get to know one another, and have fun!

Recording the family members' births, marriages, and deaths was started right about the time of the first reunion. Keeping the computer-generated lists current is fairly easy now with everyone connected by e-mail. All direct-line descendants of my grandparents are listed using a designated letter/number system. Booklets containing the B,M,D's of each of the twelve families are updated and distributed at each reunion. However, it is anticipated that at the 2016 reunion the information will be shared by uploading information onto individually owned USB memory sticks.



We also record ourselves with photos. The formal family dinner is preceded by a group photo with everyone gathering punctually at 4 PM. A friend of a cousin who is a professional photographer does the group shot, then one of the 1st Generation, then one of the 2nd Generation. These are for sale later in the summer.

The memorabilia for sale at the reunions has varied over the years. Sometimes there's a raffle for items made and donated by family e.g.: original oil painting, blue jean car blanket/quilt, crocheted afghan. The souvenirs imprinted with our family logo are on sale for about an hour each day just before supper. Pens, notepads, tote bags, beer steins, insulated H2O bottles, coffee mugs, baseball caps, T-shirts, can wraps, and frisbees are some of the most notable. I was told, "The idea isn't to make money, but to break even."



During the pre-dinner relaxation time a cousin with balloon

art talent makes creations for the young and young at heart.

Young children also gather right after breakfast daily for craft time. Mothers of the youngest ones join me under the craft canopy and help as needed. Then the 6-9 year olds have a turn to make something

then finally the 10-12 year olds. Occasionally, a teenager will beg to make something. Thus, the children have their own handmade souvenir (craft) to take home. The younger half of the children participate blindfolded in smashing a homemade candy-filled piñata on the last evening with the after dinner crowd watching and cheering.

The name badges which everyone is encouraged to wear are turned in at the end. Each of the twelve families has its own colour of ribbon pinned into the badge. Posted on the bulletin board is the "Ribbon Colour Legend". The Lost n Found bin is checked, tearful good-byes and genuine hugs are dispatched and off we go home. It's a lot of work for some to make a reunion of this size and duration work. Delegating jobs as the need arises works well with family. I'm the craft lady and I say my job is a "labour of love" and "many hands make light work". In closing, the newsletters from the committee keep everyone informed well in advance of dates and requirements then follow up with a post reunion meeting and photo sales.

We're a great bunch! See you next time!

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## REMEMBERING THE BRITISH MONARCHS, FROM 1066 TO THE PRESENT

Thanks, Bob Maynard

Willie, Willie, Harry, Stee, Harry, Dick, John, Harry three  
 One to three Neds, Richard two, Harrys four, five, six, then who?  
 Edwards four, five, Dick the Bad, Harrys (twain), Ned six (the lad)  
 Mary, Bessie, James you ken. Then Charlie, Charlie, James again  
 Will and Mary, Anna Gloria, Georges four, Will four, Victoria.  
 Edward Seven next, and then came George the Fifth in 1910.  
 Ned the eighth soon abdicated. Then George Six was coronated.  
 After which Elizabeth.....And that's all folks, until her death.

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It doesn't matter what story we're telling ... we're telling the story of family."

Author: Erica Lorraine Scheidt

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**“THE FORGOTTEN????”**

“Proudly and diligently researched by  
Lorraine McKay and Robin Sheehan,  
Wetaskiwin Branch, Alberta Genealogical Society, November, 2015”

There is a small cemetery on Range Road 262, 5 miles south of Highway 13, Wetaskiwin County, with a legal land description of SE 1/4-22-45-26-W4. This tiny cemetery is right across the road from my farm and I, Robin, have looked at it from the road since 1989.



Curiosity finally got the best of us, so after obtaining permission from the landowner, Mr. Dietz, Lorraine and I crossed the barbed wire fence to check it out.

According to the local history book, 'Freeway West'; this quarter section has been owned by:

1. J. Johanson,
  2. C. Minni,
  3. A. Carlson,
  4. Arni Aro,
- and E. Dietz. It is now owned by C. Dietz.

Ref#2 - Ida Aro and John Johanson



**1. Johanson Family**

Attached to the back of the chain link fence is an old wire fence containing headstones: Ida Aro 1869 – 1916 and (according to research done at the Wetaskiwin Archives), John Johanson is also buried there. Possibly Johanson’s stone is the fallen headstone beside Ida Aro. A huge tree, which was at one time very small, has grown up and pushed the headstones around.

**Ref#10 - John Johanson's ownership**

**THE TWIN CREEK CEMETERY**

Ten acres of land on the northeast corner of the NE 1/4-15-45-26-W4 were donated by August Lilledahl for the Twin Creek Cemetery some time after 1906. Names of those buried there are:

|                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Hanson Sr.     | Mr. and Mrs. J. Myntti  |
| Oscar Hanson                      | Mattson child           |
| Mr. and Mrs. Kangas Sr.           | Mr. and Mrs. V. Tulokas |
| Nester Kangas                     | Mr. and Mrs. C. Virta   |
| Vern Hanson and daughter, Shirley | Mrs. Susan Tapio        |
| Mr. and Mrs. J. Mails             | Mrs. Emil Helin         |
| Eino Mails                        | Mrs. Christina Ikonen   |
| Mrs. Edith Schmidt                | Mr. and Mrs. J. Salo    |
| Mr. and Mrs. K. Kuori             | Mr. and Mrs. A. Westman |
| * Mr. and Mrs. F. Lammi           | Mr. H. Naslund          |
| Mr. and Mrs. W. Paananen          | Victor Naslund          |
| Julius Kangas                     | Howard Naslund          |
| John Hill Sr.                     | Gertrude Rauhala        |
| * Mr. and Mrs. H. Lammi           | Rauhala baby            |
| Mr. and Mrs. H. Kimmel            | Niemi baby              |
| Mr. and Mrs. A. Torvinen Sr.      | Kimmel babies           |
| Terho Torvinen                    | Peters boy              |
| Eino Maki                         | Uori girl               |
| Mr. ...                           | Greenlund boy           |

“Freeway West” relates that John Johanson was the owner of SE 1/4-22-45-26-W4 and that he was buried in this cemetery. “Another small graveyard lies north of the fence on the SE 1/4-22. This land was owned by Mr. John Johanson. Here he is buried as well as Mrs. A Aro, Mr. & Mrs. C. Minni & Karen Carlson.

According to the 1906 Canada census John Johanson was born in 1852 in Norway. He was married to Agnes and had 4 children, all of whom were born in Norway. (Ref #11 at the end of this article)

Another small graveyard lies north of the fence on the SE 1/4-22. This land was owned by Mr. John Johanson. Here he is buried as well as Mrs. A. Aro, Mr. and Mrs. C. Minni, and Karen Carlson.



## 2. Minni Family

Upon entering the quarter we found a chain link fence around three gravesites. There were two large cement flat stones covered with leaves, branches and debris. Since the chain link fence did not have a gate or entryway of any kind, Lorraine leaned over the fence, and with a stick brushed away the "stuff", and then with a leafy branch finally uncovered the inscriptions on the two graves.

They are the gravesites of Charles Gustav Minni 1867–1936 (ref #8) and Josefina (Lammi) Minni born January 20, 1888, died January 22, 1947 (Ref #9). These are the grandparents of Karen Darlene Carlson, whose was the first headstone that we saw upon approaching the cemetery.

Ref#8 - Charles Gustav Minni



Ref#9 - Josefina Minni



Ref#6 - Karen Darlene Carlson



## 3. Carlson Family

"Freeway West" included an article by Aili Minni Carlson: "Arthur and Aili Carlson .....I was born Aili Minni on my father's homestead on Oct. 15, 1913. .... Arthur and I were married on Oct. 20, 1939. We made our home here, and had two children, Delwyn and Karen. Karen passed away accidentally in November, 1943....." .... "The next spring (1946) we sold our farm to Arni Aro....." (See Ref #7 at the end of this article for Aili Carlson's complete story)

## 4. Aro Family

According to "Freeway West", Anton and Ida Aro emigrated from Finland in about 1900, with their two sons, Arvi and Arne. According to the 1901 Canada census, "Antoin", "Ada", "Arne", and "Arvey" are recorded as "Aro", living at NW ¼-2-46-26-W4. A third son, Arthur, was born in Canada in 1905. In our research we have not found anything further on Arvil or Arthur H. Aro.

Anton Aro sold the farm after his wife passed away in 1916. He moved to Wetaskiwin where he had a tailor shop. After retiring from that business he resided in BC until his passing (place unknown).

Anton Aro's son, Arni Ferdinand Aro attended School at Twin Creek, worked as a farm labourer and did trucking: hauling cream and grain for some years. He had a brush cutting and breaking

Ref#1 - Ida Aro Headstone



outfit as well and a threshing outfit for a while. In 1946 he bought the farm from Arthur and Aili Carlson, this same SE ¼-22-45-26-W4, where he farmed until his passing on February 10, 1972. His obituary in Wetaskiwin Times of Feb. 16, 1972 stated that he was survived only by a brother in California.

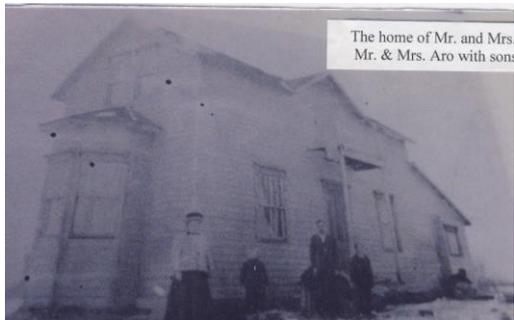
Pictures from "Freeway West": referring to Minni & Aro family activities (as captioned in the book)



**Anton Aro** threshing at Minni's, early 1900s



logs to lumber - Gus Hibak, **Anton Aro**, John Tapio on Hibak's homestead with Aro's mil



←-The home of **Mr. & Mrs. A. Aro** about 1912 with sons.

### #7 - Arthur and Aili Carlson

**Arthur and Aili Carlson** — by Aili Carlson  
Arthur was born in Anaconda, Montana, on April 17, 1907.  
 He moved to the Twin Creek district with his parents and

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attended school here. He farmed and broke land on the Carlson farm and for neighbors. He also ran a threshing machine for a number of years.

I was born Aili Minni on my father's homestead on Oct. 15, 1913, just after Mother had taken care of a crew of threshers that had been there for days. After selling the farm during World War I, we lived in Wetaskiwin and Bellevue, Alta., for a number of years, then we moved back to Twin Creek where I lived and worked on our farm until our marriage.

Arthur and I were married on Oct. 20, 1939, in Edmonton, Alta. We made our home here and had two children, Delwyn and Karen. Karen passed away accidentally in Nov., 1943. On April 11, 1945, we sold our belongings and moved to Anaconda, Montana. Derold was born shortly after.

The next spring we sold our farm to Arni Aro. Carla Jo was born within the next two years and then we moved to Gentry, Arkansas, where we tried to farm for a few years. Seeing it wouldn't work we decided to sell and move to Anacortes, Wash., in 1956. Here Kevin was born. Arthur worked in a plywood mill and I in the cannery. We are retired now since 1970 and figure we've had a full and exciting life having seen a lot of the States and Canada and even the Scandinavian countries, the home of my father and mother. At present we're enjoying five grandchildren.

### Ref#11 - 1906 Canada Census for John Johanson and family

Attach to Family Tree

#### John Johanson

No image available

|                                   |                                 |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Canada Census, 1906               |                                 |                     |
| Name                              | John Johanson                   | CANADA CENSUS, 1906 |
| Event Type                        | Census                          |                     |
| Event Date                        | 1906                            | Family Number55     |
| Event Place                       | 27, Strathcona, Alberta, Canada |                     |
| Gender                            | Male                            |                     |
| Marital Status                    | Married                         |                     |
| Relationship to Head of Household | Head                            |                     |
| Birthplace                        | Norway                          |                     |
| Birth Year (Estimated)            | 1852                            |                     |

|                    | HOUSEHOLD ROLE | GENDER | AGE | BIRTHPLACE |
|--------------------|----------------|--------|-----|------------|
| John Johanson      | Head           | M      | 54  | Norway     |
| Ragna Johanson     | Daughter       | F      | 7   | Norway     |
| Agnes Johanson     | Wife           | F      | 50  | Norway     |
| Gunnar Johanson    | Son            | M      | 15  | Norway     |
| Christina Johanson | Son            | M      | 14  | Norway     |
| Erick Johanson     | Son            | M      | 12  | Norway     |

#### CITING THIS RECORD

"Canada Census, 1906," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=1371000), John Johanson, 27, Strathcona, Alberta, Canada; Public Archives, Ottawa, Ontario.

#### CITING THIS RECORD

"Canada Census, 1906," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=1371000), John Johanson, 27, Strathcona, Alberta, Canada; Public Archives, Ottawa, Ontario.

*In a London, England cemetery:  
 Here lies Ann Mann, who lived an old maid  
 but died an old Mann. Dec. 8, 1767*

## **DUNCAN AND RUTH CLOSE – FROM SCOTLAND TO SASKATCHEWAN, AND ALBERTA**

Alice Hoyle

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, an email was sent to the Wetaskiwin Branch, AGS, asking for assistance in obtaining information about the great-Uncle of Ruth Close – a man named John Henry Leslie Turner. The email read as follows:

“Dear Sirs/Madam:

I note that you have information on burial places in Wetaskawin (sic). My wife’s great uncle died on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1956 and is buried at Wetaskawin (sic). His name was John Henry Leslie Turner and he was originally from England. (dob:16/01/1872). John Turner farmed in the Wetaskawin (sic) area around Labarynth (sic) Lake. In addition his father, George Turner, also from England, died whilst on a visit to him and the only information we have is that he died in October! (pre 1913).

My wife and I intend to visit Wetaskiwin on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015, and it would be greatly appreciated if we could find out where her great uncle is buried.

With Best Scottish Wishes,

Duncan and Ruth Close, (nee Turner)

Sanquhar, Scotland”

I received the above email on the Wetaskiwin Branch email – I knew that our Research Coordinator, Gary Rode, would be busy at this time of year so I decided to just look up the cemetery information and send it along to the Close family.

I checked the cemetery records for Wetaskiwin and found that both John Henry Leslie (J.H.L.) Turner and his father George Turner were buried in the ‘old’ Wetaskiwin cemetery. I noted the plot designations, and also noted that when John Turner bought the plot for his father George, he also bought an adjoining plot, where according to the City of Wetaskiwin records, a small grave was located. JHL, himself, was buried in a different location when he passed away in 1956.

In addition, I looked in the local history book “Pioneer Pathways” but did not find a listing for the Turners. I also looked in the “Freeway West” book, and struck out as well. Then, I decided to look in the Gwynne local history book, and was amazed to find a 2 column write-up about the Turners! According to the Gwynne book, the Turners took out a homestead: I decided to look at the AGS Homestead Records database, and was thrilled to find several listings for George and/or J.H.L.!

With this information in hand, I sent a lengthy email to Duncan and Ruth Close, advising them of what I had found. I also scanned the write-up from the Gwynne History Book and emailed that to them. In addition, I sent them the homestead data from the AGS website, and gave them detailed instructions about the site: how to search for the records, and how to order the documents if they so wished. Then, because they had advised that they would be in Wetaskiwin, I gave them instructions on how to find the cemetery where the two Turners were buried.

This was only the start of emails back and forth between Duncan and Ruth Close, and myself. They were completely amazed by the information contained in the Gwynne History Book: it was their understanding that J.H.L. Turner had ventured to Canada, and his father came after – actually, it was the other way around. There was such a lot of family information contained in the write-up – information that was completely new to Duncan and Ruth. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, they responded to my email from the previous day, telling me that they were “amazed to get such a speedy reply to our enquiries about my forebears”

As my curiosity and 'detective traits' don't allow me to just leave things without checking out the finer details, I decided to look at the County of Wetaskiwin map to determine exactly where George and J.H.L. Turner had been homesteading. According to the information contained in the Gwynne Local History Book, they had actually owned a minimum of 5 quarters of land – which in the early 1900's would have been quite astounding!

I checked out all the land locations: I found out that all of the land now lies within the County of Leduc. The County of Wetaskiwin map that we have does not extend beyond the limits of that county, and we did not have at our house, a map of the County of Leduc. Then, I remembered a very old map that we had, showing the land locations and ownership of land extending a considerable distance from the County of Wetaskiwin, in all directions. A magnifying glass and some patience soon produced positive results: I found all the land that the Turners had owned, and was able to get land locations. These land locations matched the ones that had been listed in the Gwynne Local History Book! Success.....

Having found out all this information, I decided to contact the Close family again. They had advised in an email that they were going to visit their daughter, her husband and their children in Saskatchewan prior to coming to Wetaskiwin. It occurred to me that perhaps they would like to drive out to the land where George and J.H.L. lived. When I broached the subject with them, they were quite excited about the prospect of seeing Ruth's ancestor's lands.

I set about creating a map of the area where the Turner family had homesteaded; after several attempts I managed to get one drawn that showed the area north of the County of Wetaskiwin where the land was located. Then, I photocopied a map of the Wetaskiwin to Gwynne area from the County of Wetaskiwin map. I made a detailed drawing, using arrows on the maps, showing how to drive from the Wayside Inn (where they were staying) to the various homesteads. Not being satisfied with just the maps, I also typed out more than a page of detailed instructions – advising exactly how to drive to the land locations. I scanned all this information and emailed it to them.

After creating and sending all the above, I began to wonder, "Is all this too confusing – should I just volunteer to pick them up at the Wayside Inn and take them to the land previously owned by George and J.H.L.?" At this point, Duncan and Ruth were already in Saskatchewan, visiting their family. I sent an email to them, hoping that they would be checking their email even though it was addressed to their Scottish address. I advised that, if they wished, I would be happy to pick them up and drive them to the various locations where George and J.H.L. Turner had owned land. Very quickly, they responded that they would be very grateful to have me drive them there: they had been looking at the maps and the instructions and wondering if they would be lost in the countryside somewhere! ☺

A plan was set: they would phone me when they arrived in Wetaskiwin; I would pick them up at the Wayside Inn and we would spend the afternoon driving out in the countryside.

At our October genealogy meeting, I conveyed the above information to the members: a day or two later, Carole Koop contacted me to advise she would be interested in joining us for the afternoon. The day arrived: we were lucky that the weather was perfect for a drive in the country. We all met at the Wayside Inn, and after introductions were made and a bit of chatting done, we all got into my vehicle and headed east.

Duncan and Ruth were so easy to talk to: Duncan is the President of their local Heritage Society and he has done a lot of volunteer research for people, so they did not need any introduction to the world of genealogical research!

Carole brought her camera and her photographic expertise: as we drove north from the bottom of the Gwynne Hill (secondary HWY.822) we pointed out various interesting sites along the way. At each of the land locations the Turners had owned Carole took pictures in order that she and Lee could email them back to the Close family once they returned to their home in Scotland. We were delighted at the second location, to see several deer hop across the road in front of us. Perhaps they were greeting the Scottish visitors?

Duncan and Ruth were so amazed to see the land where her ancestors had lived. They were quite surprised that the land holdings were so vast. Carole was able to take a picture of the County of Leduc "address" at the site where J.H.L. had lived after George died, and suggested to them that once they were back home they could use Google Maps to look at the land on a more detailed basis.



Carole had kindly planned for a picnic and had brought some tea, and some of her delicious baking. On the way back we stopped at the Coal Lake campsite and had an impromptu picnic – complete with muskrats swimming beside us, in the spillway from the dam at Coal Lake. We had a wonderful visit with Duncan and Ruth – we all felt like we had known each other for years, instead of hours! ☺

Duncan generously gave me a copy of a book he has written: a history of the Post Office in Sanquhar, Scotland – the World's Oldest Post Office. It has been continuously operating as a post office in the same location since 1712.

I drove Duncan and Ruth back to the Wayside Inn; they stayed overnight and then proceeded to Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise and the mountain areas before heading back to Saskatchewan to their family.

Thankfully, the weather held for them the whole time they were in Alberta. Once they were home, Lee Koop sent them, via email, a detailed map of the stops we made, along with the pictures of the lands accompanying the various locations. We also had some lovely pictures of Duncan and Ruth at the campsite, and these were sent to them by Lee and Carole, and myself.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Duncan and Ruth, and feel that I have made new friends in the process. I think this is one of the benefits of doing 'volunteer' research, and being willing to donate personal time in order to benefit others. Although the main research of the Turners has been done, I have to admit that I am continuing my sleuthing, in the hopes that I can shed more light on the mysteries of their lives here in Canada.

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Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York:

Born 1903 --Died 1942.

Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on the way down.

It was.

