



# ROOTS & BRANCHES

**WETASKIWIN BRANCH**

**Alberta Genealogical Society**

*BRINGING THE PAST .....  
TO THE PRESENT .....  
FOR THE FUTURE! ©*

**Website:** [www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch](http://www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch)

**Email:** [wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca)

**SEPTEMBER, 2024**

**VOL. 22 #3**

## **EXECUTIVE**

**President:** Alice Hoyle  
**Vice President:** Nelda Layton  
**Secretary:** Pam Cooke  
**Treasurer:** Leroy Koop

## **BRANCH MEETINGS**

Third Tuesday of the Month.  
Except July, August, December

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## **ROOTS & BRANCHES**

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

## **COMMITTEES**

- **Newsletter**  
Sharon Aney  
sharonaney@gmail.com
- **Webmaster**  
Leroy Koop
- **Volunteer Research**  
Alice Hoyle  
Leroy Koop
- **Membership**  
Leroy Koop
- **Programs**  
Claudia Malloch
- **Publicity**  
Alice Hoyle
- **Historian**  
Rosella Plaquin

## **BRANCH LIBRARY**

Located at City Archives

For access call 780-352-0227  
(Heritage Museum)

If a local researcher is required contact  
[wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca)

## **LDS FAMILYSEARCH CENTER**

Wednesdays: 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm  
Thursdays: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

## **PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS**

Alice Hoyle

September: a time of seasons changing. I'm reminded of the words in a song: "seasons change and so do I – we need not wonder why".

Perhaps it's because of the school memories: September always signaled the start of a new year. For many, September signals the end: the end of summer, the end of the gardening season, the end of school holidays, etc.

What does September mean to you?

There have been some changes within the AGS executive. You may recall that at the April AGM held in Red Deer, the incoming President withdrew her name. With no other candidates at that time, the AGS Board had a decision to make. In the meantime, Les Campbell, an Edmonton branch member and former President of that branch, stepped forward and put his name into the options. As well, another Edmonton branch member, Sheila Genaille, put her name forward.

The Board had a special meeting, voted on the two options, and Les Campbell was chosen as AGS President. Unfortunately, after only a short time in office, Les resigned, leaving AGS without a President, once again. Over the summer, the Board paused meetings. In August, Board members were advised that Sheila Genaille had allowed her name to stand for President; and then a second name was added – Lianne Kruger. The Board had a special meeting on August 27 to give the 2 candidates a chance to speak to us, and after voting, Lianne Kruger was the successful candidate.

Long story.....so AGS now has a new President and hopefully we can move forward after 4 months of uncertainty.

I hope you had a relaxing, rewarding summer. Perhaps you travelled for fun or genealogical adventures; perhaps you had family reunions, or maybe you just relaxed at home and didn't have to worry about the traffic on the highways, airline delays and strikes, lineups at border crossings, etc.

## Ponderings continued...

Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our branch. In the next couple of months, we will need to work on plans for celebrating our milestone. Think about how you would like us to celebrate this occasion and please bring your ideas to our September meeting.

I and the other branch members look forward to hearing about your summer. Looking forward to seeing you at our September meeting and catching up on your news.

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## EDITORS COMMENTS Sharon Aney

While on a family visit, we congratulated our grand-nephew on his decision to attend University in the fall and discussed his housing arrangements (sharing a condo with friends).

Immediately, we and his grandparents began reminiscing about our U of S experiences in the 1960s: the single room that was shared with a stranger on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a 1920s house, the \$25.00 per month room that provided just what the cost indicated, amazingly poor boarding house meals etc.

Matthew's eyes were rolling!

Having come from modest farm families, our expectations and the times were different 65 years ago! Lifestyles have been improving for the general public since the industrial revolution, especially in cities. Creature comforts, personal space, communication options, travel opportunities for all, are relatively new.

Do we take into account the times and places in which our ancestors lived when we describe and interpret their lives?

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## MEETING PROGRAMS

### May 2024 Sharing Goals

**Alma:** is planning a trip to West Kilbride in western Scotland and is mindful to share family history with next generations.

**Rosella:** is exploring her Knox family history, she wants to find out if John Knox, founder of the Presbyterian Church is an ancestor.

**Alice:** In conversation with former branch member, they discovered that their ancestors came to Canada from Scotland on the same ship in 1825!

**Bob:** is transcribing his family tree, which he handwrote in the early 80's. The original tree with 980 people goes back to 1427 and so far, he has verified back to 1750. He has found *theweald.com* site useful.

### June, 2024 Sharing Interesting finds.

**Bob:** in a parish record of 1789 he found reference to his ancestor being "buried in woolens". Research uncovered that England had laws in place since 1666 to protect the woolen industry, including the mandate that corpses must be buried in woolen shrouds.

**Nelda:** Newspapers.com allowed her to find several sensational stories, written over one week, about her great-grandmother, age 15, and a 16 year old friend who ran away from home in Kansas in 1901.

**Alice:** Tested an AI site... **transkribus.ai** to translate an old marriage document written in "High German". Although not 100% accurate, she was impressed with the result.

She spoke of "Investigative Genetic Genealogy" as a means of solving "cold cases" and recommended the book "*I Know Who You Are, the Golden State Killer*", by Barbara Rae-Venter.

**Pam:** emailed a relative of her paternal great grandfather, found in a family DNA connection. They sent her a family genealogy document from 1896. She also received a phone call from a "probate genealogist" at Andriveau, Paris France.

**Carole** came across information from "heir tracers" that added information to family trees. She used it as leads to independent confirmation.



Created by branch member Bob Maynal  
The walnut plaque hangs on the door to  
branch's resource library housed in the  
of Wetaskiwin Archives.

*Thank you, Bob.* ~~~~



### **THIS YOUNG EDMONTON ENTREPRENEUR IS HELPING TO REUNITE FAMILIES WITH DNA GENEALOGY**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/investigative-genetic-genoalogy-1.7309928>  
[Emilie Rubayita](#) · **CBC News** · Posted: Sep 01, 2024 5:00 AM MDT

A 25-year-old Edmonton entrepreneur is using genetic genealogy technology to track the DNA of unidentified victims in cold cases. Bradley Pierson started his company Trouvay in 2022 to help people identify their families and is now expanding his work to help law enforcement services solve crimes. "I realized there was a huge crisis of unidentified human remains and unsolved violent crime cases, and this technology had emerged that allowed us to solve them finally," Pierson told CBC in an interview.

Pierson's journey into genetic genealogy began with a personal interest in family history. At the age of 13, he started tracing family trees. Ten years later he realized he could help people who were adopted to find their birth parents. He made 100 identifications and realized he could use the same technology to solve cold cases. Volunteers like Pierson were vital to the solving of this case, Toronto forensic genealogist James Atkinson said in an interview.

Atkinson said investigative genetic genealogy is a technology that uses DNA testing in combination with research methods and historical records to determine biological relationships. In 2023, Pierson collaborated as a volunteer under Det. James Atkinson on an Ontario case that was being handled by the Toronto Police Service. Known as the [Deep River John Doe](#), the case involved a man from Drumheller, Alta., who was found dead in 2001 on a bench in the Laurentian Hills, near Deep River, Ont. Over the summer, Pierson worked alongside Atkinson and other volunteers to identify the man using investigative genetic genealogy. Twenty years after the man died, the team was able to bring closure to his family. The man's name was withheld from the public per his family's request.

*Note by SEA: I have edited this article for length.*

## MARY JANE "MOLLIE" FAIRFIELD NEE SMALL

Leroy Koop

On April 24, 2024, 2 years and 2 days after I sent my last report to Judy H. from Lethbridge, granddaughter of Mollie, (Mary Jane Fairfield, nee Small) I received the following email:

*"It's been a long time since you did that marvelous genealogy work for our family (Fairfield and Small). Since then, we've taken some action with our grandmother's grave in Ponoka-- Mary Jane Small Fairfield. We've had a small monument made and installed, and we will travel to Ponoka to have a tiny graveside service May 28 at 2 pm.... I thought you might be interested to know I didn't just let this "die"-- and that we will honour the woman who had such a difficult life in Canada. We would love it if you could attend, but if not, I thought you might like to know about our follow-up to all your hard work. We wouldn't be doing this if we hadn't had your help, and you know I'll be forever grateful."*

Wow! That is the first and only time that a client of a research project of mine actually let me know what happened after the project. My wife and I immediately put the service date on our calendar. No way were we going to miss that service.

May 28 was a beautiful day in many ways. Nine people were at the graveside service; Judy and her two brothers, all from Alberta, and their only first cousin from British Columbia, along with a minister, two representatives from the town of Ponoka and the two of us. All were given the opportunity to say a few words. My words were directed at Mollie, saying how honoured I was to have been able to find her for her family which then led to this great event. My research found Mollie's resting place in the Forest Home Cemetery in Ponoka.



The family honoured Mollie with a plaque



After the service the four grandchildren, my wife and I visited for two hours in a quiet room, getting to know each other, viewing the few photos the family had and discussing the research project. Discussion also took place about what to do about David, the grandfather, and Isabella, the aunt, who drowned in 1926 in the Battle River near Fabyan and are buried in the Wainwright Cemetery.

A very meaningful and emotional day!

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*Note: Lee's original research report was published in the September, 2022 issue of Roots and Branches, available on our website.*

## NAKONESHNY / HARASYM --- WHO KNEW?

Sharon Aney

In April 2024 my cousin's daughter-in-law, "G" Nakoneshny, contacted me with a question.

Her co-worker, "V" Harasym had a photo of her father, Bill Harasym with his aunt Frances Nakoneshny Harasym, and another man she identified as her great-uncle Peter.

"V"s father, Bill, had died several years ago and she now wondered how the Nakoneshny and Harasym families were connected.

The answer was in the family history that I had compiled in the early 2000s, some information from historic documents and some as remembered by my father, a nephew of Frances.

Frances Nakoneshny was born on August 1, 1885 in Ukraine and came to Canada with her parents, Daniel and Anna, in 1897. She married Wasyl (Bill) Harasym at Sifton, Manitoba in 1906. In 1907 the Harasym's homesteaded on SW36-33-22 W2M in the R.M. of Osborne, north of Lanigan, near the homesteads of her father Daniel, her sister Mary Lukianchuk, and brother Andrew.



Oral history from my father: *They later left this land and moved south-east of Guernsey, Sask. They did not have any children of their own. In the 1920's they adopted the five children of Bill's brother, John Harasym, because their mother had died. Many years later, after Wasyl Harasym died, Frances re-married and moved away. Frances died in 1972 at Wadena, Sask. At the time of my writing (early 2000s) according to my father, "The childrens' father, John, was very poor and although he came to visit them, he never brought them anything. The oldest of these children (William Harasym) still lives south east of Guernsey."*

To answer the question posed by "V" ... Frances Harasym was the aunt-by-marriage who raised "V"s father, Bill and his siblings.

Frances, by her maiden name, Nakoneshny, is connected to "G" as the great-great aunt to "G"s husband.

Keeping in mind that documentation did not always record early, unofficial family adoptions, oral histories do sometimes have an important place in our family research.

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*Those who believe they can do something are usually right.  
So are they who believe they can't!*

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## THE WOMEN OF ASPENLAND

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Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum  
<http://www.wetaskiwinmuseum.com/>

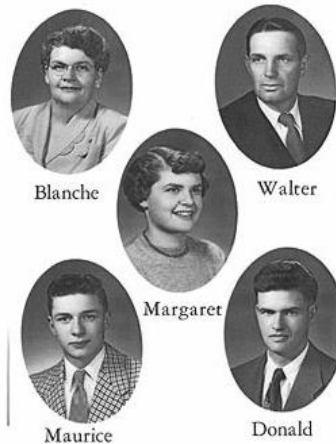
### BLANCHE (BROWN) RECKNAGLE



Blanche was born in Bradwardine, Manitoba on May 27, 1905. She was the eldest child of Theresa Maud Green and Robert Allen Brown. From Manitoba the family moved to Ontario and then back out west to Daysland, Alberta. Her father was convinced by his brother Harry to make this move and become a farmer. When her mother became ill, they left Daysland and moved back east. Her mother passed away at the age of thirty, leaving Blanche at the age of five and her brother at the age of three years.

After her mother's passing, the family moved back out west to Daysland where Blanche continued her education. Blanche then moved to Edmonton to train as a nurse at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. In 1927, Blanche came to Wetaskiwin and joined the nursing staff at the Wetaskiwin Hospital (the Wales Hotel). Here she became good friends with Florence Recknagle.

Through this friendship, Blanche met and married Walter, on June 16, 1930.



Together they had three children: Maurice, Margaret and Donald.

Blanche and Walter had a wonderful and happy life together. In 1982, Walter became very ill and Blanche looked after him in their home for as long as she was capable. Walter passed away December 14, 1984. After being together for almost fifty-five years, it was quite an adjustment for Blanche to live alone.

Blanche's involvement in the community seemed endless. As an avid reader she joined the Wetaskiwin Library in 1927 (the year it opened) and was given a Life Membership for her continued support. She also served as president of the Angus Ridge Women's Institute, which she joined in 1950. As a member, she was also a convention delegate and prior to 1967, a

constituency convener. For a number of years, Blanche was the Health and Welfare Convener and often brought in speakers on relevant health issues.

In Red Cross work Blanche's activities have been numerous. She served on the executive for more than forty years, was a delegate to Red Cross conventions, did considerable knitting and packaging and was always on hand at the Blood Donor Clinics. Blanche was always willing to do more than her share of work. For as long as her health permitted, she continued to canvas for the Annual Red Cross Campaign. In May 1999, she became a member of the Order of the Red Cross, the highest award given out by the Canadian Red Cross Society for 'exceptional dedication and outstanding service'.

Blanche took an active interest in church work as well and for many years was a member of First United Church. She was a faithful member of the choir for over twenty-five years. She served as president and secretary at various times for the Womens' Association and as a group leader for many years. In 1953, she was president of the Red Deer Presbytery Women's Association. As a member of the executive for the first Womens' Association of Alberta Conference and U.C. of Calgary, she traveled to many areas of the province. Blanche served as secretary treasurer of the Wayside Chapel for three years. She always assisted with the annual Tea and Bake Sale.

Some of Blanche's leisure time was spent playing bridge with the local ladies bridge club and later at the seniors' center. She also liked to try and win at bingo.

Blanche has had the pleasure of seeing three of her grandchildren marry, and welcome the addition of two great granddaughters, seven grandsons and a great grandson. At the age of ninety-one, Blanche decided to give up some of her independence and finally relinquished her driver's license. Until that time, she was always giving people rides to their destination.

Throughout her lifetime, she had a habit of clipping interesting bits and pieces seen in magazines, newspapers. Blanche would use one or two of these thoughts or ideas (appropriate to the season or to the theme of the meeting) as part of an opening at one of the Women's Institute meetings or for the devotional at a Wayside Chapel's Womens' meeting.

On January 14, 1999, Blanche left her home on the farm for a new life at Madyson Manor, a seniors' residence in Wetaskiwin. This was quite a change, leaving a ten-room house to live in one room and have twenty-eight "roommates". However, she reacquainted with some of her old friends: Mary Meraw, Kay Law, Rose Fonteyne, and Mae Astle. As she did most of her life, Blanche continued to knit for the Red Cross making afghans for cribs. In May 2001, she attended the annual Royal Alexandra alumnae banquet for the nursing graduation class of 1926. This was to commemorate her seventy-five years as a graduate. In January 2002, Blanche moved to Unit 33 Long Term Care at the Crossroads Regional Health Authority in Wetaskiwin.

Blanche's home was an "open house" to all which included many transients in the depression years. During World War II, many young men in training made the Recknagles' a "second home." As the soldiers would march by, Blanche would often turn the radio up so they could hear it. There was no prejudice toward others in the Recknagle home.



Blanche, in spite of being a farmer's wife and raising a family, always found time to serve others. All her community work was done voluntarily. She was very concerned for the senior citizens and used her nursing skills as she went from home to home to see that they were cared for, day after day and even on Christmas day. She was called upon often. In one sense time was never her own. All this was done quietly and unobtrusively, for Blanche has never done this for personal glory.

Information compiled in 2002. Blanche passed away on June 17, 2002

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## **GENEALOGY CAUTIONS: THE PHONY INHERITANCE SCAM**

Sharon Aney

This genealogy scam trips up would-be heirs by appealing to their interest in family history. A letter or email informs you that an unclaimed inheritance connected to your family has been located. After they reel you in with dreams of a far-off rich relative, they relieve you of your money in the form of various "fees" which are supposedly necessary to settle the estate—an estate which never existed begin with.

A number of years ago a relative forwarded to me an email that he received,

*I am Dr Benson Worth, the Auditor General, All Standard Securities Limited. In the course of my auditing, I discovered a floating fund in an account which was opened in 1990 belonging to a dead foreigner Late **Mr. Gaynor Aney**, a national of your country I decided to track his last name over the Internet to locate any member of his family hence I got in contact with you. I want to move the sum of \$18.5M from All Standard Securities Limited in his account to abroad. I am therefore write to ask you that you **quietly partner with me** and providing an account or setting up a new one that will serve the purpose of receiving this fund. Even an empty account can also serve as long as there will be honesty to me till the end of the deal and I hope you will never let me down. After going through late Gaynor's records and files, I discovered that: (1) No one has operated this account since 1993; (2) He died without a heir, hence the money has been floating. (3) No other person knows about this account and there was known beneficiary. **AND IF I DO NOT REMIT THIS MONEY URGENTLY, IT WOULD BE FORFEITED FOR NOTHING.***

*This money can only be approved to you legally as you has the same **LAST NAME** as Late Gaynor. Hence I am contacting you. It is based on this impossibility of any one coming for the claim for the past years that I contacted you so that we can have this fund transferred to our benefit. I will require your urgent reply so that I give you the next step.*

*Kindly forward your telephone and fax numbers. I am ready to give you the sum of \$7,500,000 (\$7.5M) for your assistance and partnering with me. I look forward to your prompt reply.*

*Best Regards. please contact me*

*Dr Benson Worth. the Auditor General All Standard Securities Limited.*

*email][benworth03@yahoo.com]*

**"quietly partner with me"** ...sounds shady already!! This sounds to me like he is saying, "Why don't we take this money and run?"

Then a few months ago this email showed up:

*Subject: Harry Anney*

*Hi Sharon,*

*I hope this email finds you well. My name is Aleksy Inglut. I am a representative of **Harry Aney's estate in Poland**. Unfortunately, he passed away leaving no will. As a custodian to the deceased affairs, I am committed to ensure that his assets are distributed according to the law. I found your email address by luck through my searches to locate the deceased family and I believe you might be interested to know more about this matter. I look forward to your response but you can disregard my information if you are not the actual owner of this email address.*

*Best wishes, Aleksy Inglut.*

At least this person seems to want to act **"according to the law"**.

I was tempted to reply, just to see what "Aleksy" had to say.

But remembering that Dan DeWolf advised me to ignore and delete unsolicited emails, I did not. Dan's comment was that if we reply or "Unsubscribe" to such emails, it indicates to the sender that this is an active email account, and scammers will continue to pursue us.

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## **FREE CANADIAN GENEALOGY WEBSITES**

Elizabeth Lapoint

runs the blog [GenealogyCanada](http://GenealogyCanada) in which she posts genealogy, heritage, and history news daily.

### **TONI**

The free database of the Ontario Genealogical Society, called The Ontario Name Index (TONI), contains more than 3 million names and is always growing. All you need to place in the search box is the first name and surname, and where those you are searching for were from. Most of the records provided are taken from gravestones and cemeteries, but there is a table which tells you where the record came from for ease of use.

### **Peel's Prairie Provinces**

The prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta of Canada are represented by 7,500 digitized books, over 66,000 newspaper issues (4.8 million articles), 16,000 postcards, and 1,000 maps. You can search all of these holdings if you have ancestors who emigrated out west.

Many of the items date back to the earliest days of exploration in the region, and include a vast range of material dealing with every aspect of the settlement and development of the Canadian West.

### **OurOntario**

If you want to research newspapers in Ontario, this is the spot for you. They are also expanding into the United States with webpages covering Illinois and Michigan right now, but they do have dreams about going global in the future. Right now though, you can search newspapers from all over Ontario.

### **Automated Genealogy**

This site has been around for a number of years, but it is still useful in searching 1851, 1901, and 1911 Canadian census, and the 1906 census, which covers the prairie provinces. What I like about the site is that it has alternative ways of spelling of surnames that other sites do not have, and is particularly helpful when you can't find a name in the census.

### **Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM)**

This is a registry of the more than 118,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who have given their lives serving Canada or the United Kingdom. It was established to allow all Canadians the opportunity to honour and remember their sacrifices.

### **Home Children**

This is a major immigrant group, especially to Ontario, because between 1869 to the early 1930s, 100,000 British, Scottish and Irish children came to Canada to work as farm labourers, or in the case of girls, as domestics, and they were called Home Children.

### **The Canadian County Atlas Digital Program**

This project was started by McGill university in Montreal in 1998 and mainly covers Ontario. These are property owners who appeared on the township atlases.

### **Passenger List Indexing Project**

This project was carried out by the Nanaimo Family History Society of British Columbia and they have recorded 757, 749 passengers from 31 Jul 1903 to 13 Oct 1910 going to Montreal and Quebec City. Many people who eventually ended up in the United States came from the old country on these ships. A website which is well worth research for those hard to find ancestors.

### **Library and Archives Canada**

The official archives of Canada includes a huge wealth of information and searchable databases — including marriage, census, land, and military records, directories, additional resources, guides and much more.

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**GENEALOGY TIP OF THE DAY** by Michael John Neill August 30, 2024

### **Dealing with Brick Walls**

An excellent problem-solving technique is to write up your "problem" as if you were explaining it to someone totally unfamiliar with the time period, the family, and the location. Organizing your thoughts and your current research for someone else to read and to follow may give you additional insight into where you appear to be stumbling. Gaps are easier to notice when we try and clearly explain our problem completely to someone else. You may be able to "write over" your brick wall!

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