

ALBERTA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Relatively Speaking

Journal of the Alberta Genealogical Society ® 1973

In This Issue: President's Message; Music and Dance in My Alberta Family; I Can Still Hear the Music; Moose Hunting in Early Alberta: Bragging rights, photographs and clippings; Camp Athlone; Wetaskiwin Branch Anniversary; Camrose Branch Anniversary; Pick a Name, Pick a Profession; The Hodgson Story; Genealogy Cautions: The Phony Inheritance Scam; A Bow Island Mystery! The Inexplicable Disappearance of Reverend Robert Earl Ross; August Theme; Spinning Webs; Index.



Eva and Irene Sattler, with fiddle and accordion respectively, playing with friends circa 1938-39. The two youngest daughters of John Althouse's grandfather, Eva and Irene played and sang with their father at the Sattler home in western Saskatchewan. Read about the Sattler and Althouse connections to music starting on page 50.

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RELATIVELY SPEAKING

Mission Statement

Relatively Speaking is the quarterly Journal of the Alberta Genealogical Society whose purpose is to support the goals of the Society by providing:

- a regular, attractive, high-quality periodical
- articles of genealogical and/or historical interest
- genealogical articles written by youth
- information on family history, genealogy resources, methodology, research tips and collaborative events
- timely information regarding major AGS events and Conferences

The Publication

RELATIVELY SPEAKING is produced by a team of volunteers, and uses contributions submitted by members and supporters of the Alberta Genealogical Society.

RELATIVELY SPEAKING is published and mailed on or about the 15th of February, May, August and November. Closing dates for receiving contributions are the 15th of December, March, June and September.

We accept contributions on a wide variety of topics that will be of interest to anyone researching their family history and that are appropriate to our Mission Statement and theme of the issue. We especially welcome those with an Alberta connection.

Final authority for acceptance or rejection of material rests with the Editor and Ad hoc Editorial Committee. Neither the Alberta Genealogical Society nor **RELATIVELY SPEAKING** assumes any responsibility for errors or opinions on the part of contributors.

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Contact Information:

Editor, **RELATIVELY SPEAKING**
Alberta Genealogical Society
#162, 14315 – 118 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5L 4S6
phone: (780) 423-8902
fax: (780) 423-8980
email: rseditor@abgenealogy.ca

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In This Issue . . .

With spring underway it's only natural to turn to the outdoors and celebration. But first, this issue's theme of music and dance is explored by two authors.

Marilyn Astle relates and cherishes the importance of music in her Alberta family, while John Althouse explores his family's ties to music through his early settler forebears who dealt with isolation and need for connection by listening to music – and as talented musicians.

Last issue's theme of food and sustenance is taken up by Denise Daubert as she relates her own and her cousins' foraging through black and white photographs from a family photo album – and newspaper clippings – to uncover their Juchli grandparents' prowess at hunting. Also lauding the great outdoors, Mary Leah Milligan de Zwart reminisces about free-spirited summers at a three-generational family cabin located on the shores of Mânitou Sâkhigan, also known as Lake of the Holy Spirit or Lac Ste. Anne.

Now let the celebrations begin. Three Alberta Genealogical Society branches are celebrating special anniversaries in 2025. Read about the Wetaskiwin Branch and Camrose Branch starting on page 64, and watch for Drayton Valley's story in our August issue.

In this issue's special exposé, we're publishing the winning articles for the Kenneth Young Newsletter Awards for 2024. They were announced at the April 26th AGS Gen Faire and annual general meeting. Alice Hoyle won Best Original Article for enthralling readers in her retelling of how a simple newspaper article dramatically changed her perspective of family dynamics, while Leroy Koop's article about the Wetaskiwin Branch being contacted to trace someone's great grandparents – and uncovering links to the early Duhamel settlement in central Alberta – won reader's hearts and Certificate for Best Local Content.

While Sharon Aney shares information about genealogy scams, we also have a submission from Bill Anhorn who sheds light on research findings from a request to the Medicine Hat Genealogical Society about the disappearance of Reverend Robert Earl Ross. What Bill and his team also uncovered was a story of survival and fortitude by the Reverend's wife and children left behind.

As always, and I'm sure *Relatively Speaking* readers will agree, the biggest celebration is for our volunteers and authors. Without their input, we wouldn't be sharing these inspirational stories of our ancestors' heritage.

Happy reading!

Kate Wilson, Editor

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President's Message

by Lianne Kruger



I am grateful for all our members. Everyone brings life into AGS with their interests, talents, questions, wants, curiosities, willingness to help and knowledge. All are important.

To show appreciation to our members, we have benefits. Members of Alberta Genealogical Society have access to all records and information on the MyHeritage Library Edition for free. The website has amazing records. If you do not know about this site or how it can benefit you, I suggest you watch a video we have on our YouTube channel.

The video was recorded for our society by Daniel Horowitz of MyHeritage. He shows what records are available and how to research using them, along with other MyHeritage sites. The video is located at <https://tinyurl.com/AGSMYHeritage>

Another benefit to members is free access to three databases which have amazing Alberta records. They are Alberta Records Name Index (ARNI), Alberta Name Index (ANI) and Alberta Homestead Index. If you are looking for someone in Alberta, these databases are a must. Les Campbell, an AGS member, has recorded a video on how to use these three useful databases. They are on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@AlbertaGenealogicalSociety as well at <https://tinyurl.com/AGSDatabases>.

I hope you will be able to use these resources to break down some walls. Also, do not be afraid to ask other members for help at AGS activities. One of the best things about our AGS members is their willingness to help others find their ancestors.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers in the variety of jobs you help with to make AGS successful.

Good luck finding your ancestors!

Come help at the Casino

Sunday Sept 28 & Monday Sept 29, 2025

@ - Century Casino in Edmonton

****over 50 volunteers needed**



Contact Laura Turnbull
AGS Casino Chairperson
Email: ljturnbl@telus.net
Phone 780-498-0605



Marilyn Astle has been a member of AGS since 2007. Since moving from Lethbridge back to the Edmonton area in 2022 to be nearer family, she has been a member of both Edmonton and Lethbridge branches. Marilyn is past president of the Lethbridge Branch and a member of the *Relatively Speaking* editorial committee. She also belongs to several other genealogical organizations. A retired psychologist and post-secondary education counsellor who has worked in Alberta and the United Arab Emirates, Marilyn continues learning through her twin passions of genealogy and travel.

Music and Dance in My Alberta Family

by Marilyn M. Astle

(with input from Marilyn's siblings)

On first reflection I didn't think music and dance played much of a role in my family. I certainly have no talent for either.

However, my parents met at a dance in the Sangudo area where they were both living in the post World War II period. Dances in rural community halls would have been one of the main sources of entertainment at the time. One dance they attended was a costume ball when my mother dressed as a Spanish lady and my father borrowed his future father-in-law's Black Watch kilt. Once married and raising a family, my parents didn't get out to many dances—the weddings of relatives would have been the main opportunity.

Country weddings always had a dance where the community was welcome. In my high school years I attended some of those dances in halls at Sangudo, Peavine and Meadowview.

There were school dances too – certainly always one for graduation. In junior high we had sock hops in the gym Fridays at noon, sometimes even with Beatles music. Social dance was part of the physical education program, not that it did me a lot of good. I could sort of follow a partner who knew what he was doing. I recall one fellow student hauling me around many a circuit of the gym during his frenzied version of the polka. Waltz, polka and schottische are the dances I remember. In our area the schottische was done in groups of four dancers. Then there was the jive and the twist.



The author's parents, Betty Galbraith and Ron Astle, pose in their costumes for a 1947 costume ball near Cosmo, Alberta.

Did my parents have much exposure to music and dance while growing up? Mum's Galbraith family was the only one on their page of the 1931 census with a radio.

She was a year old at the time so over the years, in addition to the King's Christmas speech, news and perhaps a few hockey games, they may have heard some music. As this was before the farm was electrified, the radio would have been battery powered and its use rationed. Mum talked about a neighbour having an old-style, windup gramophone.



Above: The author's grandmother Annie Whitehead, 10 years old in London, UK, poses on the front of a postcard.

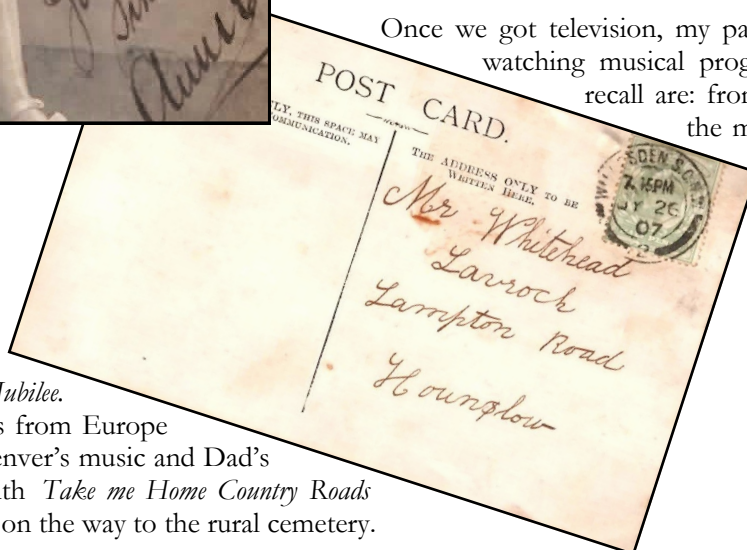
Right: The back of the postcard, sent by the author's grandmother to her grandfather.

She taught herself to play guitar as a teen but sadly didn't keep it up. Mum said she learned to dance at Cosmo School, taught by a neighbour who had immigrated from Hungary. Mum's mother may have had ballet lessons as a child in London, England, as shown by a postcard 10-year-old Annie Whitehead sent to her grandfather.

Where Dad learned to dance I never thought to ask. He likely inherited some genes for it though. His father, Jack Astle from New Brunswick, was a good step dancer in the Maritime tradition. Whether that came from his Irish or his Acadian heritage is unknown—maybe from both. My last surviving uncle confirmed his dad's talent for this dance form and I have a vague memory from my childhood of seeing Grandpa step dancing at a family wedding. One sister recalls Grandpa dancing with his grandchildren at family weddings.

While searching old newspapers online I happened on a small item about a benefit dance held for my parents after our home was lost to fire in 1956. I am sure there were many other benefit dances in Alberta over the years.

Once we got television, my parents enjoyed watching musical programs. Two I recall are: from Edmonton, the music of Gaby



Haas and The Barndance Gang, and from the Maritimes, *Don Messer's Jubilee*. In later years André Rieu's concerts from Europe were a favourite. Dad liked John Denver's music and Dad's Celebration of Life concluded with *Take me Home Country Roads* before the hearse drove by the farm on the way to the rural cemetery.

At Mum's Celebration of Life, we selected various songs to represent different periods of her life. She liked CFCW radio, various country and folk singers and traditional music from Scotland and Newfoundland. When my parents lived in Stony Plain for a time after I had left home, Mum sang in a choir.

Speaking of genes, I have one brother and one sister who are good ballroom dancers. This sister even taught dance at the Fred Astaire Studio in Edmonton. Another sister sang in the choir with Mum and played the guitar, something she would like to start again. She is also contemplating learning the banjo. One brother volunteered for many years at the Edmonton Folk Festival.

When we come to my parents' grandchildren, who are all adults now, there is a considerable amount of music and dance in their lives. One granddaughter mastered various dance forms including Ukrainian dance and belly dance and danced professionally for a time. Two more granddaughters did traditional Philippine dance, part of their maternal heritage. One of these girls played violin, banduria (a Philippine instrument) and piano, while her sister played piano and guitar. One grandson learned Métis dance and to this day remembers and uses some of the steps. He loves dancing and encouraging others to join him. Another grandson and his bride, of Sri Lankan heritage, along with their attendants delighted the wedding guests with a performance of Bollywood dancing. One grandson played piano and string bass during his school years. A granddaughter wants to learn the banjo and her brother has tried out the guitar.

My favourite music is folk, blue grass and traditional Scottish and Irish tunes. During my working years in Lethbridge, I occasionally went out with colleagues when line dancing was the rage. I could follow those in front but suddenly everyone turned and I was in front – what to do then? I remain one who appreciates the talents others have for music and dance.

One sister sums it up well when she says she can't imagine living without music. I think that would apply to all my family, and likely to most of the readers as well.

RS

How does an AGS membership work for you?

- Find your local Branch • Get our quarterly journal *Relatively Speaking* • Access over 40 years of back issues • Attend one of our many Special Interest Groups (SIGs) • Get volunteer help at AGS and Branch Libraries • Access the AGS Cemetery Database • Request the AGS Genealogy 4 Children and Youth series • Submit 'surname queries' to our free online database • Enroll in one-day workshops and seminars • Receive the New Member Kit with useful resources and a Society pin!

Always giving you a leg up!

To find out more, visit www.abgenealogy.ca/membership



John Althouse was born in Canora, Saskatchewan but moved with his parents and brothers to Edmonton in 1956. After graduating from University of Alberta he was a teacher for Edmonton Catholic Schools for nearly 35 years. In retirement, he was able to begin seriously researching his family roots in Canada, the USA, Germany, Volga German Russia and Ukraine. John presents for AGS and other groups and has been a regular contributor to *Relatively Speaking*, the *Saskatchewan Genealogical Society Bulletin* and other genealogical publications. In Edmonton, he has moderated the *German and Post Scripts* [family history writing] *Special Interest Groups* and is an instructor in the *Tracing Your Family Tree* courses. His true love is experiencing and writing about the history of our Prairie Provinces.

I Can Still Hear the Music

by John H. Althouse

The settling of Western Canada was a complicated process in many ways. Settlers were faced with isolation, sometimes being quite distant from their nearest neighbours and even further from the nearest settlement. In such isolation it was necessary, no – essential, for the settlers to mingle with people nearby in what little leisure time they had.

There were two main sources of leisure for the individuals living in this self-imposed isolation—reading and music. The latter provided the best opportunities to escape isolation and loneliness by socializing with those who dwelt nearby. Guitars, fiddles, harmonicas, and other smaller musical instruments were portable, requiring little room.

Where two or more musicians gathered, there were the basic components for a band. These bands, when available, supported impromptu dances, group singing and concerts, all of which provided welcome opportunities for residents on the frontier to come together and socialize. As more people arrived to settle, this initial period marked by loneliness slowly began to fade as neighbours moved ever nearer and communities developed. However, music continued to be an essential component of life. For many religious denominations, music formed a central component of their worship services and other rites.

Worldly, more flamboyant music also continued to serve the leisure needs of the residents, where the farmers and their families needed a release and time away from this work and all thoughts about it. Those residents who could play instruments helped provide this at community dances held in schoolhouses, large barns, community halls and other large venues in the area. The best bands were much in demand for dances, which families sometimes traveled miles to attend.

Crop at Sandwith Damaged by Hail

**40 Per Cent Loss in Storm
On Friday; Harvesting
Now General**

Special to the Star-Phoenix
GLENBUSH, Aug. 14.—About 40 per cent damage to wheat and heavy damage to oats was the result of a 10-minute hail storm in the Sandwith district, nine miles south of here Friday. This occurred at about 6 o'clock in the evening.

Harvesting is general now although cutting was halted several times last week due to rainfall. Farmers expect to commence threshing at about August 20.

Grasshoppers are fairly plentiful with a steady increasing influx indicated. However, no damage has been reported so far.

Many farmers in the district reported that horses are ill with encephalomyelitis and several deaths from this disease are also reported.

*Farming was an uncertain and lonely venture, 15
August 1938.*



A large battery powered radio much like this was the focus of the Althouse living room.

My paternal Althouse and maternal Sattler families show just how diversified a family's musical experience could be. In each case, there was a significant clue to their musical odyssey centrally located in the parlor of my grandparents' homes. In the Althouse home in the town of Canora, Saskatchewan, there was a large wooden veneer encased radio. As the Althouse home was not electrified until 1953, it was powered by large batteries which were costly to replace. This radio's use was limited to a few hours each day, much for newscasts. However, some time was allotted to music. The family's preferred genre was the twangy country and western music heard on "The Grand Ole Opry" and similar shows of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Once the appointed hour for one of these shows arrived, those family members present in our home would huddle around the massive radio much as ancestors in the distant past had gathered near a fire on a cold winter night.

One trusted family member was charged with the delicate responsibility of turning the radio on and orienting the dial to the proper station to access the desired musical entertainment. Tuning was not an easy process; it required a deft and gentle touch. The radio would utter protests in bursts of static as it was being tuned. This sound was reminiscent of the sound produced by a theremin played by someone who had no training. There was no guarantee that even once tuned the sound quality would be good. Atmospheric conditions played an important role in the quality of the broadcast sound. However, when these conditions were optimal,

the tuner might pick up music from stations in the most distant corners of the USA.

Once the station was found and the show had begun, there was silence from those assembled as they heard old favourites as well as future hits. After the program was over and the radio returned to its hibernation, there was an animated and opinionated discussion about the merits of the music just heard.

Certainly, music provided pleasure for the Althouse family. While our family enjoyed music, no one displayed any musical talent, played a musical instrument, or was even noted to sing. I can only recall one occasion when there were musical instruments in the Althouse home. Two travelers from Germany had stopped in Canora on their way to some greater destination. My grandfather offered them a meal and bed for a night. In return the duo took out their musical instruments, a fiddle and small accordion, and played a selection of pieces, mainly lively polkas. For my Althouse kin, music was a "spectator sport". They were an audience rather than participants.

In my maternal grandfather John Sattler's home on the farm near Sandwith, Saskatchewan and later in nearby Medstead, a large, black, pedal bellows pump organ was a central piece of furniture in the parlor. A member of our family whose identity is no longer recalled once played it. But when it was purchased and who it initially was purchased for, have long ago faded from our family's collective memory. My sense is that it had been in the family home for some time, since it no longer worked, as its bellows needed repair. Hymns were the family's first musical fare, but soon a variety of other genres of music including the country music of the day also crept into their repertoire. So, my maternal Sattler family was quite different regarding music. In addition, many of the members of the Sattler family living in or near the family home and elsewhere were not just an audience but also musicians, who played and sang.



A black pump bellows organ that no longer worked was in the Sattler parlor.

Sandwith and Medstead were remote, located about 60 km north of North Battleford and linked to it by roads that were unreliable as recently as 50 years ago. The land there is poor and near the northern limit for land suited for farming. Today, it is only years away from being frontier land. Some of my Sattler kin came to that area by horse drawn wagons, built and lived in log houses, struggled to tame the virgin land without the benefit of tractors, wresting innumerable rocks from their home quarters and working away from their farms to supplement their meagre income. In such a remote, rural, frontier setting, inhabitants were again called upon to create their own entertainment in their few leisure hours. A skilled musician was an asset here.

As noted, some members of the Sattler family were quite talented as musicians. They played one and, in several cases, multiple instruments, and regularly displayed beautiful singing voices. Many, especially those in the earlier generations here in Canada, learned largely by ear, trial and error. Sadly, circumstances intervened, and my mother was not one of those who developed any musical talents. My mother's eldest brother Alex played several instruments, including the fiddle. Alex was much in demand for playing at local dances. He was versatile, as he also taught his youngest sister Irene to dance by having her stand on his feet and leading her about the floor while she stood on them. However, Alex constantly struggled with isolation and depression like many earlier settlers; his music sometimes helped ease these personal struggles.

Like his elder brother Alex, Fred – the youngest brother – was a skilled musician who was also self-taught. He also could skillfully play several instruments. He also enjoyed singing. He could entertain any group of people who might drop by the farm or play for the occasional dance. His older sisters were reputed to have beautiful singing voices, but their choral efforts appear to have been reserved exclusively for church and home. Eva and Irene, the two youngest sisters, also played and sang but largely at home. The two sisters could sing beautifully together. Irene once noted that their father also had a beautiful singing voice, and that she and Eva would sing beautiful three-part harmonies with him. Irene would continue playing the guitar and singing for the joy it brought for most of her life.

However, the most musically talented branch of the Sattler family was Aunt Lydia's family, the Bezo family. Their talent came in part from their mother. Lydia entered music largely later in her life. In her grief after the death of her husband Ed at the age of 56 years in 1957, Lydia wrote a western love ballad and even had a demo record of it made. She played it for us when she came for a visit shortly after completing it, and to this untrained observer it



Uncle Fred strumming his guitar.



Uncle Alex Sattler with his fiddle.



Eva Sattler with fiddle, Irene Sattler with accordion, and friends.

sounded very good. This, I believe, was a necessary part of her grieving process. A few years later, Aunt Lydia also bought and learned to play a small portable electric organ so she could play the organ in her church.

However, several of her children and grandchildren had the most recognized musical talent and were involved in various bands. The children began their musical journey when they were young, largely with the encouragement of Ed, their father. They initially learned by ear and by practicing often. They were exposed to entertaining by playing and singing for company at home on weekends. This would eventually lead to some of the Bezo family members

playing in dance bands in three provinces: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and

Ontario,

in local bars,

playing at music festivals, and

much more. In my cousin

Lawrence Bezo's home, a framed

poster of a dance date played by his

Uncle Alex Sattler and nephew Eric Bezo

Memorial Service
For
Katherine Elizabeth (Kay) Houston
August 30, 2005 – 11 a.m.
St. Luke's Zion Lutheran Church
2903 McPhillips Street
Winnipeg, MB R2P 0H3

Introduction & Greeting
Obituary
Words of Remembrance
Solo: "The Wind Beneath My Wings"
Prayer - p. 207 (LBV)
Readings: Psalm 23
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18
Gospel: John 14:1-6
Sermon
Duet: "Amazing Grace"
Apostles' Creed - p. 209
The Prayers
The Lord's Prayer - p. 211
Commendation

All are invited downstairs following the service for a luncheon. Interment at Brookside Cemetery will take place following the luncheon.

Officiating: Pastor Lynne H. Moore
Musicians: Lawrence Bezo, Lorelei Ellis, Debbie Bernhard
Words of Remembrance: Ella McGuinness, Jack Donetz, Lee Houston
The Lord's Prayer in German: Jack Rupert

KATHERINE E. (KAY) HOUSTON

Kay was born in Winnipeg on September 16, 1915. She worked as a hairdresser at T. Eaton Co. In 1957 she moved to Inglis and ran her own hairdressing business. She moved to Van Nuys, California at age 50 where she worked in the nursing profession and retired at age 62 from the Motion Picture Hospital in Calabasas, California. Kay passed away at age 89 in Encino, in the San Fernando Valley.

Predeceased by her son, Dick, she will be forever remembered and loved by her daughters Ella McGuinness (Barrie) of Winnetka, California; Wanda Moirar (Doug) of Ottawa; daughter-in-law Lee; sisters Eva, Pauline, Irene; brother Fred; seven grandchildren; seventeen great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."
— John 14:6

Members of the Bezo family often provided music for family events as Lawrence and two of his daughters did for his Aunt Kay née Sattler's funeral as shown on her funeral card.

July 28th. - 31st.
Entertainment with –
"Niagara Blue - Bio"



"A group I'm sure everyone will enjoy, NIAGARA BLUE features a traditional Bluegrass music instrumentation of guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin and bass. Blended in with this instrumentation is a country music sound provided by the smooth and mellow vocal harmonies of family members. Eric Bezo and nephews Jim and Reg Titian.

The boys in NIAGARA BLUE currently hail from Niagara Peninsula, cities of Hamilton and St. Catharines, Ontario. They have performed throughout southern Ontario at festivals and concerts for the past year. Currently the group has just released their first single record, which is available from the group and plans to release an album next spring.

In a way this is a homecoming of sorts for Reg and Jim Titian with their uncle Eric Bezo who originally come from Inglis, Manitoba. Understandably they are enthused and excited about performing for you."

The Central INN
Russell, Manitoba
(\$1.00 Cover Charge Friday and Saturday)

After the reunion, Reg Titian, Jim Titian, and Eric Bezo are family members.

band in Gorlitz, Saskatchewan long ago was displayed prominently. Lawrence appeared in it dressed in an ornate western shirt and Stetson—appearing every bit a Western music star. Ragna, Lawrence's wife, served as manager for his band. Lawrence and Ragna's daughters, who had beautiful singing voices, could be counted on for providing music at family events including funerals and weddings, and set the mood for other family events. Lawrence also ran a farm while sometimes working at other jobs. This may have limited his musical career to a part-time one.

Lydia's youngest son Eric was also a member of several local dance bands including The Country Gentlemen, The B & B Ranch Boys, and Niagara Blue. From Inglis, Eric and his family moved to Dauphin so that Eric could play live music on the radio station with the B & B Ranch Boys. After moving to Ontario, Eric became a member of Niagara Blue, a bluegrass band. In it, Eric played guitar, fiddle and sang lead vocals. This bluegrass band gained recognition in Ontario and New York State. In 1983, Niagara Blue performed at Bluegrass Canada, a national competition, winning the coveted 1983 Bluegrass trophy. This award served as the proudest moment in Eric's musical career. The band recorded a CD as well as a 45 rpm record. Eric's two daughters learned many of the finer points of music from him and often sang with their dad.



Several generations of Bezo Family musicians play at a family reunion.

I attended two family reunions held on the Bezo family farm in the 1970s and 1980s. These two events were organized by Aunt Lydia and included her immediate family as well as many members of her Sattler brothers and sisters, as well as some members of their families. I had attended other family reunions but these two had something that the others lacked. As one highlight of family reunions on the Bezo farm, there was music, fantastic covers of familiar country and blue grass tunes played by a band featuring some of Aunt Lydia's children and grandchildren. After playing through the day at the second of these family reunions, the feature band also played away the evening at the bar in The Central Inn in Russell, Manitoba.

Bezo - Sattler family re-union

Distant relatives attending the Bezo family reunion on July 31 and August 1st were: James and Margaret Titian, Puslinch, Ont.; Reg and Mary Titian and family, Dundas, Ont.; Pete and Sharon Radanovich and family, Hamilton, Ont.; Terry and Brenda Titian and family, Sarnia, Ont.; Theresa and Tammy Boyd, Thorald, Ont.; Jimmy and Roxane and Nicole Titian, Hamilton, Ont.; Joe and Doreen Bezo, St. Catharines, Ont.; Randy and Linda and Greg Bezo, Thorald, Ont.; Ed Bezo, Winnipeg.

From, Portage la Prairie; James and Lorraine Henderson, Rathwell, Man.; Jim and Colleen Crewson and family, Poplar Point; Carl, Mary and John Althouse, Edmonton; Kay Houston, Woodland Hills, Calif.; Dick and Lee Houston, Winnipeg; Karen McGinness Canoga Park, Calif.; Doug, Wanda and Brian Molnar, Ottawa; Eva McPherson, Toronto; Bob and Irene Kraft, Medstead, Sask.; Jack and Elsie Donetz, Stony Mountain; Ale and Ruth Shaver, Stonewall.

The reunion was an enjoyable occasion being held at the Lawrence Bezo farm. Many met for the first time. The Sunday noon meal was catered to by Chicken Delight, Roblin, which was very delicious.

Friends from far and near who dropped in were: Bernadette and Catherine Pognat, Paris, France; Wally and Leona Knash, St. Catharines, Ont.; Ron and Cecelle Knash, St. Catharines; Lule and Doris Germain, Roblin; Charles and Mary Bernhard, Dropmore.

Sattler distant relatives attending the Bezo family reunion were: Fred and Dorothy Sattler, Meota, Sask.; Dave and Pauline



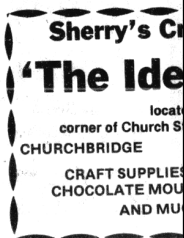
Aunt Lydia Bezo is seated with her children (l to r) Margaret, Lawrence, Diane, Irene, Joe, Eddy, and Eric at the family reunion.

Many members of the Sattler and Bezo families sang and played musical instruments. Some of their members played informally while others used their talent to entertain, contributing regularly to the enjoyment of others, or used their gifts for worship. It was evident that the members of both the Sattler and Bezo families were participants when it came to music.

My paternal and maternal families once lived within miles of each other. Each family enjoyed music but did so in very different ways. What contributed to this difference?

I believe the answer may relate to religion. The Althouses were Roman Catholic in a time prior to Vatican II. At this time, there was limited singing within the rites of the church including Mass. What singing took place was most often done by a choir. The religious singing of that time was predominately in Latin which made it less natural and familiar to many members of the congregations of rural and small-town Saskatchewan. For the most part, the congregation did not sing hymns. Many of the hymns performed tended to be rather dirge-like, lacking in joy. Both my father and I were in church choirs. However, neither of us remained in one long. I know that neither of us felt comfortable singing in the choir. My father's reprieve came when he moved to Alberta in search of work. Once we moved to Edmonton, I was enlisted as a

Bezo Sattler Reunion from Russell Banner, August 25, 1982



member of an all-boys choir at St. Alphonsus Church. At the second Mass at which we were to sing, my velvety tones abandoned me and were replaced by a rather deep base, effectively ending my career in the boys' choir.

The Sattler and Bezo families were Protestant—Lutheran to be precise. Members of Lutheran congregations are encouraged to sing hymns at their services. Their hymns are powerful and inspiring. Their hymns were sung in the vernacular, and English today. There were two Lutheran churches in Inglis, Manitoba. The congregation of one had originally been composed of the German settlers from the area and the congregation of the other from the Polish settlers of the area. So, in the past, services and hymns were in German or Polish. In all three cases, lyrics to these hymns would have been understood and therefore more meaningful to those who sang them. Many of these hymns are powerful and often sung with great enthusiasm. It is in the Protestant church milieu that many congregation members were introduced to music and saw it as a gift that needed to be fostered and shared. This may have led to many of our Lutheran families taking their musical gifts beyond the church and sharing them with the community in other genres of music and in various venues there. However, some family members continued to use their God-given, musical gift solely for worship within their church.

Another factor which contributed to each family's musical journey may have been the community in which they lived and its isolation. The Althouse family lived in Canora, Saskatchewan, a town of 1,563 (in 1951) people. Canora had many opportunities for entertainment, including the Royal (later the Roxy) Theater which had a movie each day and Sunday and Saturday matinees, as well as several halls in town and several in the rural area around it where dances, concerts, plays and banquets could be held, and a band shell in King George Park. In addition, it had pool rooms, a bowling lane, a curling rink, a library and a skating arena. In the early 1950s, Wilf Carter and his daughters performed in the arena. There were music teachers in town and many of their students did well at provincial music festivals for years. The town had an annual agricultural fair with all the usual attractions. It was only about 50 km away on a generally passable highway from Yorkton, a major city of 7,074 people (in 1951). It offered even more possibilities for those wishing for entertainment and ways to fill their limited leisure time.



Amalia Sattler sang hymns at church.

The situation was very different for the Sattler family near Sandwith and later Medstead, Saskatchewan. Sandwith was a small community of never more than 100 people. While it was a mere 60 km from North Battleford, the roads to Sandwith and Medstead, especially after one left the highway, were poor at the best of times. There were few venues for entertainment, such as large barns, schools and halls where dances and other events might be held. By the 1950s, a rather dated movie would be shown in the community hall in Medstead, a few evenings a week. The hamlet also could boast a small curling rink, billiard room and sports teams. So, residents relied on their own limited resources for much of their entertainment. Those who were gifted with musical instruments were in ready demand in this more isolated and remote area.

How each person develops is often largely shaped by the characteristics and practices of our families. I have made attempts to become a musician like many of my Sattler relatives, but like my choir experience these attempts have gone awry. Perhaps I too might have lacked the drive and dedication needed to master a musical instrument. However, I do enjoy good music and appreciate an artist who performs it well. Over several decades, at the end of a hard and busy day I have found it rewarding to sit back and listen to music from my stereo to simply relax. I have rather eclectic tastes when it comes to music—pop, rock, country and blue grass, jazz, blues and even classical. It all provides me with a way to unwind late in the day.

Yes, family has shaped my attitude to music. However, I find that my musical journey has been largely shaped by my Althouse kin who, as I have, experienced music as a listener not as a musician.

RS



Denise (Juchli) Daubert is a member of the AGS Edmonton Branch and volunteers on the Relatively Speaking ad hoc committee. She has been actively involved in genealogy for the past 18 or so years. Denise enjoys "telling the stories" of both her and her husband's ancestors ... with the hope that these stories will become special to children and grandchildren and the generations that follow them. Denise and her husband live on an acreage east of Edmonton in the Ardrossan area.

Moose Hunting in Early Alberta: Bragging rights, photographs and clippings

by Denise (Juchli) Daubert

An assortment of black and white photographs from a Juchli photo album that belonged to my dad held intriguing images of hunting trips taken by his father. One of my cousins had a book kept by his dad with newspaper articles about his father's teenage-years hunting adventures, and another cousin had some paperwork about the huge moose our grandfather shot in 1931 in the Fawcett area, northwest of Edmonton. So between us, we had some great items of family history to study and details to share about our grandpa Charles Juchli's love of hunting.

There is no doubt whatsoever that family photograph albums and newspaper articles – those set aside by family members or those discovered at an archive or on-line through a database – are true treasures for genealogists by offering up historical clues and facts. Combine these and research skills, and those interested in genealogy have the basis for a story like this one you are reading.

Cousins sharing

Sharing genealogy "finds" amongst the group of the eleven first cousins in our Juchli family has been a project the past few years. Those of us residing in Edmonton have been meeting every couple of months for lunch. Oftentimes one or more of us will bring along photographs, certificates or newspaper clippings to show and share with the other cousins – these types of items are our "shared heritage."

My oldest Juchli cousin was born nine years following the 1939 death of the grandfather this article is about. Our grandfather passed away from cancer at the age of 50, leaving our grandma with four children to finish raising and a large greenhouse business to run. The four sons of Charles and Augustine have also passed on, meaning we cannot ask them any questions about details of the "huge moose" our grandfather was known to have shot. Even the exact date was unsure, but research would help with those pieces of the puzzle.

Immigrating to Canada

Grandma Juchli used to talk to us about our grandfather. We learned that he immigrated from Switzerland to Canada in 1912. He then went back to his homeland to serve one year in the Swiss Border Patrol. Upon making Edmonton his home in 1912, he and his brother Peter started up a very successful greenhouse business called Bonnie Doon French Gardens, on the southside of Edmonton. His brother Peter



Horns were hung on the outbuildings at the Juchli greenhouse property.

looked after the business while our grandfather was back in Switzerland serving; but eventually and not long after his return, he and his brother ceased being business partners.

Our grandfather then opened his own greenhouse business, also located on Edmonton's south side, (Highland Park Greenhouses). In 1920, Charles Juchli married Augustine Accarias. She had come to Edmonton from French Algeria with her family. They were major vendors at the Edmonton City Market downtown, selling vegetables and plants and were well known for their hardy pansies.

Four sons were born to Charles and Augustine: Marcel, Andre, Armand and Maurice. It was a busy family, between raising four boys and running the greenhouse business.



Clockwise from top left: In 1931, Charles and Augustine's sons Marcel (left) 10 years old and Andre (right) eight years old, pose with their younger brother, six-year-old Armand who is the author's father.

The huge 1931 moose on Charles Juchli's truck shown ready for transport to Edmonton.

Charles Juchli ready for the hunt – which was both a hobby and a means of feeding his family in the 1920s and 1930s.

Charles Juchli poses with two moose and two deer.

Hunting as a sport and hunting for food

For those of you who have ancestors who were hunters, you probably know that when calendars turned to autumn each year, big game hunters in early Alberta anticipated good times ahead! Some, like our grandpa, hunted large game such as moose and also deer and elk. Some hunters hunted birds such as ducks or geese.

In those early years in Canada, having just started a business, getting married and starting a family, I don't imagine our grandfather had a lot of free time to take up hunting. But when he took an interest in it, it was a

perfect fit because from morning to night and for seven days a week from March to September, he would be immersed in his greenhouse business, but then virtually “off work” from the start of October to the beginning of February – a time frame matching hunting season.

Working with the website newspapers.com and entering the phrase “Juchli hunting,” then concentrating on the 1920s and the 1930s, I was able to pinpoint articles to search for. Then, off with my list to the Provincial Archives of Alberta to find on microfilm these articles which had appeared in a variety of newspapers, including the *Edmonton Journal* and *The Edmonton Bulletin*.

One newspaper clipping surprised me completely! I had no idea that our grandmother hunted (and accompanied her husband on some trips) and I loved reading and learning about that! One article in the *Edmonton Journal* (December 4, 1934) carried a headline *Hunters Secure Large Game Bag – Mr. and Mrs. C. Juchli Find Hunting Excellent Near Wildwood*. On that particular trip, as per the newspaper article, our grandparents reported “*excellent hunting*” and came home with an elk, two moose, two deer, one duck and a hawk. Grandma had never really told us when we were little, or shared family stories, that she hunted – how neat! When our grandparents hunted as a duo, their sons would have been looked after by the family nanny or perhaps by their aunt.

1931 “bragging rights”

All of we Juchli cousins knew about our grandfather’s award-winning moose that he shot in the early 1930s. What we did not know was the exact day or exact year (sources had different information but newspaper articles helped sort the mystery out).

From our research, we learned that this moose was shot on one of the last days of November 1931 in the Fawcett/Westlock area northwest of Edmonton. There had been some confusion about the year being 1933, but research proved the year was 1931. Between newspaper accounts and paperwork submitted for awards some 27 years later, this moose was described in a newspaper article as “huge”. In one of the articles, the horns were described as looking like a “hayrack.”

Details about the moose were plentiful and the headline on another of the articles proclaimed: *Knocked For Row of Roasts*. The moose was described as a “monarch of a moose” in that same December 3rd, 1931 article. And yet another article provided these details: moose weight 980 lbs. and horns – spread of 65 inches and 28 pts. on horns. Huge for sure! There is a bit of discrepancy on the weight, as one source listed its weight at 1,000 lbs. and a spread of 55 inches. Either way, it was a very big moose!

The moose head was taxidermied and mounted onto a wooden backpiece the year following (so 1932). I could only find one taxidermist listed in the *1931 Edmonton Henderson’s Directory* on page 756: a Wm. Wolfe at two locations in the city at 9601-100 Street and 10165-102 Street. So that is where we think the huge moose head was most probably taxidermied. It was quite the conversation piece! We don’t know if our grandpa took the meat to a butcher or butchered it himself.

Hunters Secure Large Game Bag

Dec. 4, 1934 *Edmonton Journal* Pg. 15
Mr. and Mrs. C. Juchli
Find Hunting Excellent Near Wildwood

Returning from an extensive big game hunting trip with a full bag, Charles Juchli, 8840 87 st., market gardener, reported excellent hunting in the area west of Drayton Valley, and south of Wildwood.

He returned over the week-end with a fine elk weighing 600 pounds, two moose, two deer, duck and to top it off a large savage-looking hawk.

Starting out with the opening of the season he shot a moose and deer, returned to Edmonton and made a second trip accompanied by his wife, who is also adept with a rifle. They brought the full kill back to Edmonton over the week-end—enough to keep themselves and a few friends “in meat” for the winter.

Insufficient snow is hampering big game hunting in the district west of Edmonton, he reported.

This December 1934 Edmonton Journal article shows that the wife of Charles Juchli, our grandmother, also did some hunting.

Can You Beat It?

A moose with 28-points on its five-foot antlers and weighing nearly half a ton, was shot last week by Charles Juchli, Highland park huntsman, who stalked the elephantine beast near Flatbush. Mr. Juchli, a veteran hunter, reported to the Journal that it took three shots to stop the huge animal.

F. Bertiaume, Graininia, reported to the Journal that he had seen a mallard duck in a stubble-field near his farm late last week. Unless Professor Rowan has gone into the duck business, that is quite late in the year for mallards to be mallarding so far north.

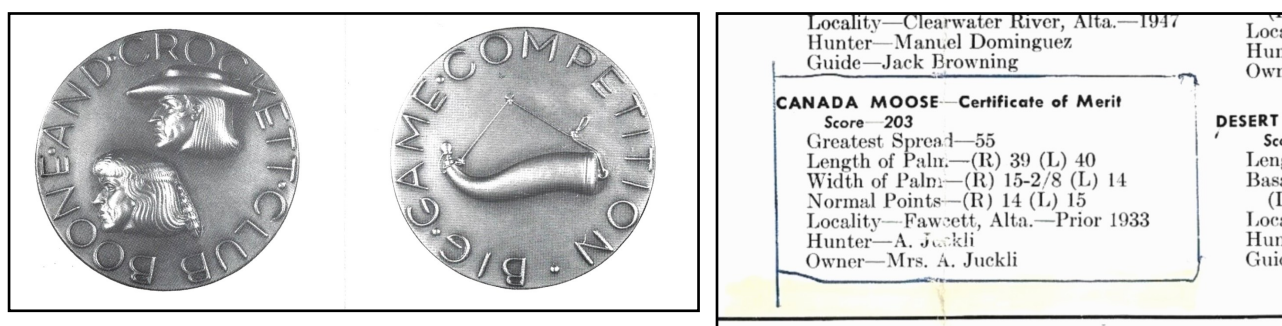
Charles Juchli contacted a reporter at The Edmonton Journal near the end of November 1931, to say he was successful in bagging a moose with 28 points on five-foot antlers.

Awards and accolades for the 1931 moose

We're sure our grandfather would have been elated his moose won in two categories with two associations. For whatever reason, it was not he who submitted data about the moose to two wildlife associations (one Canadian and one American). It was our grandmother!

In 1958 she submitted the details of the 1931 moose to The Alberta Fish & Wildlife Association and it made their records book, as a moose with a score of 203 taken at Fawcett, Alberta, and was awarded a rank of 59th. However, some of the details were recorded incorrectly, as to the year the moose was killed being 1933, and the Juchli surname being spelled incorrectly. We have a photocopy of the page from the book where our grandpa's name and the rank of his moose appears.

The other award came about when Grandma Juchli at the same time submitted information to The Boone and Crockett Club (*Records of North American Big Game*) in the United States.

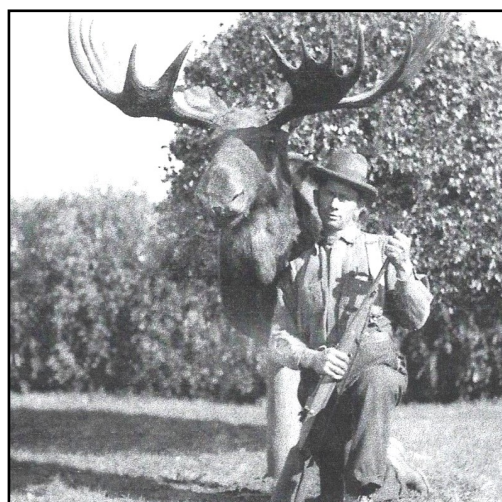


In 1958 our grandmother decided to submit information on Charles' 1931 moose to the Boone & Crockett Club Competition, winning a Certificate of Merit. Charles had died in 1939, 27 years prior.

Putting two and two together, we realized our grandmother had moved off the huge greenhouse property around 1958, as it had been sold for housing in Bonnie Doon, and moved nearby into the recently developed Strathearn neighbourhood. We ascertained that when she moved, she came across data, paperwork and photographs packed away in some of the moving boxes about the huge 1931 moose her husband had shot and decided to submit the information for award consideration after the passing of a full 27 years!

When one of my cousins made a request to obtain written records from The Boone and Crockett Club (archives) they thought the moose had been shot later than 1931. The good piece of news is that they indicated for sure that it was our grandma who made the application about the certificate. We had no paperwork showing any information received from the club back in 1958. When I contacted the Club and learned they had no photographs, I scanned and sent some to them for their archives and asked whether we could receive a photocopy of our grandmother's application from 1958.

Meanwhile, my cousin had come across a two-sided poster from The Boone and Crockett Club in a file folder which listed our grandfather in the Canada Moose Category – receiving a Certificate of Merit – so we did have that poster as proof.



In the spring of 1932 Charles Juchli posed with the Fawcett area moose head. It would hang at the Edmonton City Market downtown for many years.

Where was the moose head displayed over the years?

The moose head had a unique “first placement” – and it was in that same spot from 1932 to the late 1950s/early 1960s. Listed in the book titled *Memories of Bonnie Doon, Our Stories, Our History* (2019) and authored by Kathryn Chase Merrett, this is an excerpt from page 63 of that book: *It was Charles Juchli who donated to the market the one decorative feature remembered by patrons and vendors. In the early 1930s he shot a moose in the Fawcett area, just north of Westlock. A much larger moose than he could mount as a trophy at home, it presided over the farmer's hall – first from over the south door and then from a spot over the higher ceilinged north door – long after Juchli himself had retired from his market stall.*

Then, when the original Edmonton City Market closed, the moose head was given back to Marcel Juchli (the eldest son of Charles and Augustine) and hung in a covered breezeway between their house and garage. They had put a little bell on a ribbon around the neck of the moose head and would reach up to touch the bell and ring it as they walked through the breezeway!

In 2003, following the death of this eldest son of Charles and Augustine, his children/my cousins had an engraved plaque made and put onto a backing of beautiful wood crafted by one of the Juchli cousins, who was a very talented woodworker. The plaque and moose head were first offered to The Provincial Museum of Alberta, but the family was encouraged to instead to consider donating it to The Bennett Environmental Resource Centre (formerly Bennett School) in the river valley due to the centre's purpose of “learning about the environment”. The centre was most pleased to accept the taxidermied moose head. Interestingly enough, the day the plaque and moose head were delivered to the centre (and carried in by a great grandson of Charles Juchli), an *Edmonton Sun* photographer happened to be there and took a photo of the moose head being carried in. The photograph appeared in the next day's edition. The headline over the article/photograph was *Moose on the move* – how perfect!

Some years later, the same cousin who had coordinated the donation of the moose head happened to hear that the facility was being re-purposed in scope and did some research. In 2022, the center was redeveloped into a specialized Edmonton Public Schools Centre for K-12 with child and adult programs that focus on leadership, development and reconciliation and was now called The Bennett-Argyll-Metro Centre. She enquired as to where the taxidermied Juchli moose head and plaque were, and a return e-mail made mention they were not absolutely sure but believe they may have gone into storage. So, the days of the huge moose head being displayed were sadly over.

Other hunting adventures over the years

As teens, sometimes the two eldest sons of Charles went hunting with their father. The other two sons were just too young to do so. Photographs exist wherein all the boys would pose in their yard with whatever game was brought home from their father's hunting forays.

It was fortunate that one of the newspaper articles I came across related the fact that Charles was one of the first Edmontonians to charter a plane flight to the north for hunting in wintertime. How neat is that?

Interestingly, none of the other heads of wildlife our grandfather shot were taxidermied. However, the antlers of multiple animals were displayed outside on garage exteriors on the greenhouse property.

Local Big Game Hunter Returns With Bag Limit

Few big game hunters are fortunate enough to abandon their quest for monarchs of the wilds because they have obtained the bag-limit allowed by law. But Charles Juchli, 8840 87 street, of this city, is one who has entered the charmed circle. He now takes his place among the envied gentry, the same as a golfer who gets a hole in one or a baseball pitcher who hurls a no-hit, no-run game.

Returning on Monday from a hunting trip to the south-west of this city, Mr. Juchli proudly displayed two handsome moose, two deer and one elk. Three years ago he went out and shot a splendid moose, the head of which now hangs in the Market building.

Most of the hunt was carried out in the vicinity of Drayton Valley on the North Saskatchewan.

Among the pleasant experiences enjoyed by Mr. Juchli, who was accompanied by his wife, was crashing through the ice into the chilled waters of the river. On another occasion they slept under the stars with no protection other than some straw. M. Brown, outfitter of Rocky Rapids, was with the party some of the time.

The specimens of wild life bagged are splendid in every way, and excited much interest as Mr. Juchli drove along Jasper on Monday morning.

Edmonton Journal 1934 article about Charles' successful hunt in Drayton Valley, and driving down Jasper Avenue with the animals.

An *Edmonton Journal* article which appeared in autumn 1934 outlined that Charles Juchli had obtained the bag limit allowed by law for 1934's hunting season. It also reported that most of the hunting was carried out in the Drayton Valley vicinity, southwest of Edmonton. The last paragraph said it all though: *"The specimens of wildlife bagged are splendid in every way, and excited much interest as Mr. Juchli drove along Jasper (Avenue) on Monday morning."* Can't you just envision that?

Wild meat and meat lockers

Meat from various hunting trips over the years not only fed our grandparents and their family of four sons but fed their hired hands and their nanny as well. We have no way of knowing whether our grandparents butchered meat from their hunts themselves, or whether they had a butcher undertake the work.

People back then didn't have home freezers like we do today. In early Edmonton, ice was harvested from the North Saskatchewan River in large blocks and transported downtown to brick ice houses which served as meat lockers. In this way, our grandparents would have paid to have their meat stored and could go and retrieve what they needed at the ice locker. An example of one such facility was The Arctic Ice Co. Ltd. with lockers for rent. I found out that the Edmonton Archives has photos of ice harvesting on the North Saskatchewan River in their collection and did look at them online.



Thomas, son of Denise and Rick Daubert and great grandson of Charles Juchli, poses with his first moose in the fall of 2023, west of Edmonton.

Down through the generations

As adults, surprisingly none of Charles and Augustine's sons took up hunting. When it came to the next generation – the seven grandsons – it was solely my brother Lorne who took an interest in hunting, and one animal he has to this point never gotten, is a moose. And the next generation after that?

My and my husband's son, Thomas, is a great grandchild of Charles and Augustine. This son was on a hunting trip with friends west of Edmonton near the Tomahawk area in November 2023. Although he didn't bag a moose as large as his great grandfathers in 1931, he did bag a nice one! I know his great grandfather would be proud of him.

In closing ...

Our grandfather's notoriety and skill in hunting continued through his life. I loved the fact that he was so proud of his hunting accomplishments – he would phone information to the newspapers about his hunting adventures himself! As cousins, we are proud that we had such an interesting grandfather with love of hunting ... a story for each of us to cherish.

RS



Mary Leah Milligan de Zwart is from Sturgeon County, the daughter of homesteaders. Mary learned almost everything she needed to know for life in the Bon Accord 4-H Garden Club. She obtained her BSc in Household Economics and was an extension home economist in Ontario for five years. After marrying a Dutchman who loved the mountains, they moved to British Columbia. She earned her PhD in Curriculum and Pedagogy from UBC and taught in public and post-secondary education. Mary has two children whom she loves dearly, and has not forgotten her Alberta roots or the meaning of family.

Camp Athlone

by Mary Leah Milligan de Zwart

In 1920, Vorley (Henry William) and Kitty (Kate Elizabeth Butterworth) White, my grandparents, bought a lake-front lot from the Canadian National Railway in the newly incorporated summer village of Alberta Beach on the shores of Mânitou Sâkhigan, an historic Métis community. Kitty named the cottage Camp Athlone after Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria and vice-regal consort to the Governor General of Canada 1940-46.

Mânitou Sâkhigan, Lake of the Holy Spirit (Lac Ste. Anne), is a 15-kilometer by seven-kilometer lake about 50 kilometers west of Edmonton. It's no comparison to the rock-bottomed lakes around Lake Superior or clear northern lakes; its main fish are boney northern pike, it gets green algal bloom in the late summer, and its sense of community has lessened with the arrival of large summer homes and the biker bar (although the biker bar food is good). Alberta Beach still offers proximity to a large city and a chance for a breath of fresh air.

Cree and other First Nations peoples viewed Mânitou Sâkhigan as a sacred site with healing waters for many years before Christianity was introduced. The Roman Catholic Church sent missionaries, and in 1843 Father Thibault renamed the lake after his patron saint, Anne.

When the Canadian National Railway (CNR) opened train access to the country west of Edmonton in 1920, newcomers took summer lots and the Summer Village of Alberta Beach was created. Among the first summer residents were Henry William White and Kate Elizabeth (Kitty) Butterworth White. They had immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba from London, England in 1904 and they often took their five children to Grand Beach on Lake Winnipeg.



Henry William White and Kate Elizabeth (Kitty) and family at Grand Beach on Lake Winnipeg, circa 1919.

This photo was taken at Grand Beach, about 1919. In front are Hilda Mabel and her brother Travis Malcolm, younger by two years (known as Bob in the family). Henry William, known as Vorley, Frank (the baby) and Kitty are in the back row. Two older children, Kathleen Mary (known as Lassie in the family) and John are not in the snap.

In 1920 Vorley was hired as accountant for the CNR and posted to Edmonton. He became the paymaster eventually, and he and Kitty bought a lakefront lot at Alberta Beach in June of 1920.

At first the family had a tent to sleep in – then it was upgraded to a canvas-walled tent and a frame cottage in the 1940s-50s.



Top Left: Grandpa Vorley, in front row, Kitty, front centre, and Lassie, kneeling, pose for a photo with Bill Spalding at Lac Ste. Anne. The other three swimmers are unidentified.

Centre: The cottage in its prime in the 1950s at Camp Athlone, Alberta Beach, where the author spent time as a child.

Bottom: The author (far right) and her cousin Barb Jones (centre) pose for a photo with a neighbour at the cottage.

The photo at top left shows Vorley (Grandpa), Kitty (Granny) and Lassie (Kathleen) with Bill Spalding above Granny, plus three unidentified people. Granny loved swimming and took a daily summer dip in the lake until she was 85.

When Vorley and Kitty moved to Victoria in about 1942, they decided to sell the cottage. They offered it to their daughter Hilda and son-in-law Jack Milligan, and when Jack couldn't see any reason to own a cottage, their son Bob and daughter-in-law Jessie stepped up. Jack loaned Bob the money. Thanks to that loan, the cottage was made available to the Milligan family for the first two weeks of July, starting in the 1950s.

This extended to the next generations. The grandchildren of Hilda and Jack – Hilda and Jack being my parents – were able to spend a week at the cottage for a few years in the 1980s.

Times change: the cottage is still in the family, but no longer available. I miss it though.

RS

Anniversaries celebrated in 2025

Three Alberta Genealogical Society branches have special anniversaries in 2025! They are Wetaskiwin Branch, Camrose Branch and Drayton Valley Branch. We're helping celebrate with an exposé of the three branches in the May and August issues of Relatively Speaking.. Read the Wetaskiwin and Camrose Branch stories below.

Wetaskiwin Branch

supplied by the Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society

Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2025. The Wetaskiwin Branch was formed in 2000, and as of March 2025 we have 22 members.



The Wetaskiwin Branch Board, 2023

Back row, l to r: Pam Cook – Secretary; Bob Maynard; Mavis Nelson; Lee Koop – Treasurer, Membership Chairperson, Website Chairperson, Volunteer Researcher; Sharon Aney –Newsletter Editor and a Past-President; Claudia Malloch – Meeting Presentations Chairperson and a Past-President; Don Brosius – a Past-President.

Front Row: Carole Koop, Alice Hoyle – President, Volunteer Researcher; Robin Sheehan.

Our story

In early 2000, two ladies who worked together at CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) in Wetaskiwin came up with the idea of forming a branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society in Wetaskiwin. They were both interested in researching their family history. They spoke to Alice Hoyle personally when she was in the bank.

Alice had been researching her ancestors off and on since the early 1970s and was very interested in this possibility. An ad was put in the paper by the two ladies. They booked a room at the local library for a meeting and contacted AGS (Alberta Genealogical Society) to ask whether a representative could come speak to the attendees. The President of AGS at the time, Ian Holmes, came to tell us what was involved in forming a branch. On October 4, 2000 a letter was written to AGS advising that 16 people had signed up to join the proposed Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS. That's how our branch got started.

Our branch promotes and encourages our members to search for family history by providing meetings that offer an exchange of information and open group discussion: by providing a library collection that contains print resources; and by offering events for continuing education where professionals and experienced speakers present the how's and where's of genealogical research.

Some milestones

In our fifth year of existence, we bravely agreed to host GenFair in Wetaskiwin. We booked Norquest College and arranged for multiple speakers with multiple sessions during the day. Apparently ignorance is bliss because it turned out to be a fantastic event, with each session full of attendees and lots of positive feedback.

Wetaskiwin Branch held Genealogy Workshops in October of each year for several years. We invited guest speakers, both locally and within Alberta, and always had a large group of interested genealogy enthusiasts. When the local Family Search Centre opened at the Church of Latter-Day Saints in Wetaskiwin, the first director was a member of our branch. She recruited several members of our Society to assist as consultants. We have consistently had the honour of having Wetaskiwin Branch members as Directors of the Family Search Centre in Wetaskiwin.

We have been advocating for the preservation of the City of Wetaskiwin Archives. To this end, we have made two formal presentations to the City of Wetaskiwin. Our work – with the support of many residents of Wetaskiwin and the surrounding area – outlined to City Council how important we all felt it was that the Archives continued to be a viable entity.

Our anniversary plans

On May 31, 2025 we will be hosting a special anniversary celebration at the Senior Citizens' Centre in Wetaskiwin. We have booked Bob Layton, a very engaging speaker and dedicated family historian, as our guest speaker. The day will be a free event, with pre-registration required.

- 5216 - 54 Street, Wetaskiwin
- Doors open at 10:30 a.m.
- Display tables highlighting opportunities to learn about genealogical research, preserving our memories, research in specific areas of the world and local resources

Wetaskiwin Branch meetings

- Virtually during the months of November, January, February and March
- In person in April, May, June, September and October at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: 5410 - 36 Avenue, Wetaskiwin
- Virtual meetings at 7:00 pm; in-person meetings vary 2:00 pm or 7:00 pm (contact the President to confirm time)

Visit the Wetaskiwin Branch online at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch>

Our newsletter

- Roots & Branches
- Editor, Sharon Aney
- Members receive digital copies of each issue, and our editor sends copies of each issue to the local museum, library, and required recipients (Library and Archives Canada, AGS library, etc.)

RS

Camrose Branch

supplied by the Camrose Genealogical Society

AGS Camrose is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2025. Our branch joined the Alberta Genealogical Society in January 2000. The current membership is 20 primary members and four secondary members.

Our story



Camrose Branch Board: Standing (l to r) are Maureen Scrutton, Alora Nelson, Lilyon Luntz, Deb Trout and Janine Carroll. Inserts (l t r) Cindy Mailer, Wendy Roth and Bev Webster.

has evolved into a group called Members Helping Members. Members can bring an assortment of inquiries to their group, such as computer questions, brick walls, etc.

Some milestones

In 2006, with the permission of *The Camrose Canadian* newspaper, Bev Webster organized a massive Branch project—transcribing birth, marriage and death records from the beginning of publication in 1908. Members contributed to the project by searching every page of the *Canadian*, first by microfilm and later using the *Our Future, Our Past* website.

In 1999, a genealogy club with approximately 59 members existed in Camrose. The local newspaper published an article inviting interested parties to join an AGS-affiliated group.

Our affiliation was formed from about 13 – 18 members, with Norm Prestage as its first President. Founding members included Fay Carlson, Norm Prestage, Judy Anderson, and Jack and Sheila Cunningham.

Our mission is to help others trace their ancestors while searching for our own, to use and learn to use the latest tools available, and to have fun overall.

We are continually looking for ways to make the research journey easier. Two years ago, we created three special interest groups to help members focus on certain aspects of their research. One is dedicated to Writing Family History.

We also have a Researching Military Ancestors group, and the third started as an organizing group but

As of 2025, we have three volumes completed: 1908 – 1929, 1930 – 1940 and 1941 – 1945.

Another milestone was the annual partnership with City of Camrose event, called Founders Days, a celebration of the City's founding pioneers from 2004 to 2018. Our members researched the family trees of the honoured Founders and were part of the organizing board. We hosted an information booth at the event.

In 2022, the Alberta Genealogical Society President's Award was awarded to Camrose Branch in recognition of the innovation and engagement of Branch members with the Writer's Special Interest Group, planned digitization of the Camrose Newspaper and other Branch activities, especially in the last two years during COVID-19.

Our anniversary plans

We have lots of celebrating coming up. At our Spring Workshop, Gordon McBean will present *Where Have All the Obits Gone?* Charlotte Curtis will present her obituary project and Adele Goa will present *Researching in Norway*.

- April 12, 2025
- 11:30 a.m. – 3 pm
- Camrose Public Library

September 21st is our Anniversary Dinner, where current and past members will gather for a celebratory dinner.

- September 21, 2025
- 1 pm
- Camrose Senior Centre

October 4th is the date for our Fall Workshop: Thomas MacEntee will present *Creating an Ancestor Sketch*, and Janine Carroll and Linda Simpson will discuss the topic of organizing photos.

Camrose Branch meetings

- 2nd Thursday of the month
- Camrose County Agricultural Services, 4238 37 Street, Camrose

The Camrose Branch does not yet have a website, but is working on one. Learn more by visiting the AGS website: www.abgenealogy.ca/camrose

Our newsletter

- Roots and Shoots
- Editor, Maureen Scrutton
- Published three times a year

Subscribe by emailing camrosegeneo@gmail.com

RS

Kenneth Young Newsletter Award 2024

The following article is the winning entry for **Certificate for Best Original Article** (Kenneth Young Newsletter Awards – Excellence in Branch Newsletters) awarded to Alice Hoyle at the Alberta Genealogical Society AGM, held April 26, 2025 in Red Deer.

The judging committee of Lynn Fogwill, Pamela Forsythe and Susan Waters offered these comments about Alice Hoyle's story.

"The article was a page turner. It could almost be an excellent short story or movie with all the twists and turns. It gives readers a sense of how unexpected information can pop up and lead to an interesting genealogical search. It is a gripping, personal story with excellent illustration of how to access and pursue multiple resources to locate documents to break through a genealogical brick wall." – Lynn Fogwill, Pamela Forsythe and Susan Waters

Alice's article is re-printed with permission by the Wetaskiwin Branch, from their newsletter *Roots & Branches*, January 2024, Vol 22, No 1, p 5.



Alice Hoyle was born in Wetaskiwin, Alberta and except for three years, has lived all her life in the County or City of Wetaskiwin. Her parents were born in the County of Wetaskiwin; their parents having arrived in Alberta in the late 1800s and early 1900s. After her husband passed away in 2022, she moved to Lacombe, Alberta to be closer to family. Alice has served eight years as President of Wetaskiwin Branch. She enjoys the detective work involved with genealogy, as well as reading, knitting, Brazilian embroidery, Norwegian hardanger, quilting and fibre pursuits. Alice is one of the founding members of Wetaskiwin Branch.

Pick a Name, Pick a Profession

by Alice Hoyle

Have you ever wondered how a very simple newspaper article could change a person's whole perspective about their family dynamics? Perhaps you've never really thought about it. I know I certainly didn't until it happened to me and to my siblings. So, what was this article and how could a few lines in a 1934 newspaper article make all of us sit up and take notice?

In order to answer this, I need to go back in time. I grew up in a loving family that consisted of my mom, my dad, and my five sisters. A brother had been born to my parents but sadly he died at five months of age. So, in essence we were a family of six girls and my parents. Unlike some families where the children didn't know their parents' birthdates or perhaps the year their parents got married, this sort of information was always available to us. We did not have any secrets where those vital statistics were concerned.

With the exception of one sister who disputed this, I and the rest of my sisters said we grew up poor, but we didn't know we were poor because we always had food on the table, a home, clothing to wear – and our home was filled with love.

In 1986 tragedy struck when my father died suddenly – one month before his 75th birthday and just a few months after my parents had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

In the late 1980s my mother paid me a visit, and during that visit she said she had

applied for a job that required her to give detailed information about her birth, any marriages, etc. and she revealed that she had been married before she and my dad got married. WHAT??? To say I was gobsmacked would be an understatement.

I asked her for details and I “think” she told me the name of the person she was married to. I say “think” because I was so shocked, I barely remember any of the details she told me. I did remember that she said the marriage had been annulled and that *‘he was a very bad person.’* End of story.

Fast forward 24 years: the president of the Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society had attended a provincial meeting and as arranged beforehand, had purchased copies of the latest publications from the Camrose Branch of Alberta Genealogical Society (AGS). She brought the copies to our June meeting and asked me to take them home with me for future inclusion in our Wetaskiwin branch resource centre.

I was reluctant to take them home, as I was not the committee chairperson for the resource centre. I conveyed this to her but she said *“you should take them home over the summer – who knows, you might find some of your family in there.”* Of course, I silently doubted this as none of my family lived in Camrose or in the Camrose area. So, the books came home with me, and they sat on a chair in our dining room for weeks.

At the end of summer, I decided to browse through the books – a compilation of Births, Marriages and Deaths as recorded in the *Camrose Canadian* newspaper. As genealogists, I’m sure we all do the same thing: search the index for the family surnames we are researching. I looked for my maiden name: nothing there. I looked for all the surnames relating to my dad’s family – nothing. So then I thought I’d see if there were any listings for my mom’s maiden name. My heart skipped a beat when I saw my mom’s name under ‘marriages’. What on earth was this about?

There, in black and white, was a marriage record for my mother and a man named Arthur Gordon. I could not dispute that this was my mother because her mother and step-father were named and it was my grandparents’ names. My world tilted sideways and I knew I had to do some digging.

I had a marriage date of November 8, 1934. I filled out a request with Alberta Vital Statistics to get a copy of the marriage certificate. The application came back, saying they could not find any record of the marriage. They supplied me with a 2-page questionnaire asking me to provide further information that might help with their search. I filled out the questionnaire and provided Alberta Vital Statistics with the information from the newspaper. A few weeks later I got a reply, advising that a manual search of the records could not find a record of the marriage. Very strange: after seeing the information in the Camrose Branch publication, I had searched online and found the original article, and that named the minister who had performed the ceremony and that it had been performed by a United Church clergy.

Why wasn’t there a record of this at Alberta Vital Statistics? A hand-written note with the response from Alberta Vital Statistics suggested that because the marriage was performed by a United Church clergy, I should consider contacting the United Church Archives at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA).

A phone call to the United Church Archives only yielded a message machine telling me that if this was a research question, I should contact the PAA. I then phoned the PAA, only to once again get a recorded message. I did leave a message, briefly outlining why I was calling and giving them a brief outline of the information I was looking for. The very next day, I got a call back and the person asked for more information. I told her the story, relating what we knew (or thought we knew) – she said she would see what she could find.

The same day, I got a call from PAA telling me they had found a record of the marriage and the divorce. What a surprise: I was not even looking for divorce records.

As luck would have it, Wetaskiwin branch member Carole Koop had arranged for a tour of the PAA for branch members the very next day.

I told the person at the PAA that I would be there the following day, and she said she would leave the file at the front desk for me. I scarcely slept that night, anticipating what I would find in the files.

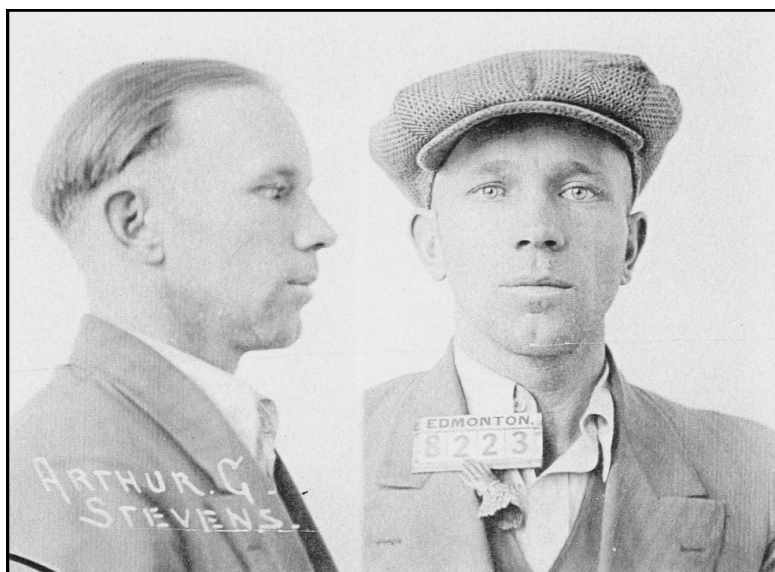
As I started looking through the file handed to me by PAA staff, I became quite confused. The documents listed a man named Richard Thomas Thompson. Who was this? Did I get handed the wrong file?

No, Alice . . . read on.

The file contained an affidavit issued by my mother. Some of the relevant points in the affidavit were: the marriage took place on the 8th day of November, 1934. My mother hadn't known him very long: he was in the area where my grandparents and my mom and her siblings lived, working on a threshing crew that had moved into the region. On or about the 12th of December, 1934 he disappeared.

The RCMP were contacted and a result of this contact revealed that the 'groom' had resided in the province since 1932. In fact, he married another woman on the 30th of November, 1932 and was still legally married to her!

Information revealed: first marriage was conducted at Westlock, Alberta, 30th November 1932. According to the information on the Certificate of Marriage issued by the Province of Alberta at that time, the groom was Arthur Garry Stevens. He said he was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, USA. His parents were: Thomas L. Stevens and Fannie T. Buschoik. The groom's occupation at time of marriage was – Mechanic, and he says he is a Bachelor.



The 'Mystery Man', Provincial Archives of Alberta photo.

When he married my mother, he was now Aurthur (sic) Eugene Gordon. He was born in Langdon, North Dakota, USA. His parents were: Edward Earnest Gordon and Mabel Helene Stapleton! The groom says he is a Bachelor, and his occupation at time of this marriage was – Electrical Engineer! A big step up in career status from two years prior.

After my mother filed the paperwork, the RCMP started searching for this Mystery Man. It wasn't until 7th October, 1935 that he was found residing near Regina, Saskatchewan. At that time, he was known to the Commissioner of Oaths in Holden, Alberta as Arthur Gordon Stevens. However, the affidavit served on him listed his name as Richard Thomas Thompson!

Now you know why I gave this article the title "*Pick a Name, Pick a Profession*". Obviously, as a genealogy person, I have tried to find out more information about this mystery man. But where do I look?

Do I look at information relating to any of the multiple fake names he used? I can't even try to dig deeper into this using his parents' names because those names also appear to be a figment of his imagination. I did order copies of both marriage registrations: although the 'groom' used different names, the one common denominator was that the

letter “G” appeared at the start of either the first, middle or last name.

When he signed the marriage licenses, he wrote the “G” in a very distinctive way. This allowed me to confirm that the same person signed both marriage licenses. The PAA did have notations in the file about the court case, and I do have a photo of Mr. Mystery Man. He has a very nice number pinned to his jacket: 8223!

A few years after finding out all this information, I had a ‘lightbulb moment’. When my mother passed away, her collection of photos and photo albums came to me for archiving. I removed all photos from the sticky pages in early photo albums and created brand new albums, complete with identifying labels. My mother had written very detailed information in her original albums: names, events, etc. However, there was one picture that always puzzled me: it was a picture of my mother and a man, standing in front of a farmhouse. Under the photo, my mother had written “Me and ?”

It never made sense to me: why did all the other photos have such good captioning but she didn’t know who was in the picture with her? It all made sense now: she literally did not know who he was. What name could she possibly have put under the photo?



Alice’s mother and “Mystery Man”.

This whole revelation caused such sadness for me: to think that my mother had to go through all this ordeal just before Christmas – a holiday that was always celebrated fully in our family. I cannot imagine the strength and determination she must have had in later years, making sure that the days and weeks leading up to Christmas were happy memories for her family.

I’m also sad that I didn’t know any of this until after my mother had passed away. I wish I could have given her a big hug and told her none of this was her fault. She had shown amazing strength and resilience in the face of this betrayal.

RS

There’s some amazing genealogical websites in Alberta

Trace your family history, your Métis or French Canadian roots, your Mennonite heritage and much more. Find them listed on the AGS website

abgenealogy.ca/links-to-other-resources



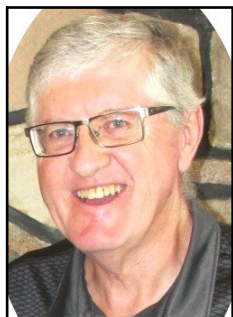
Kenneth Young Newsletter Award 2024

The following story is the winning entry for **Certificate for Best Local Content** (Kenneth Young Newsletter Awards – Excellence in Branch Newsletters) awarded to Leroy Koop at the Alberta Genealogical Society AGM, held April 26, 2025 in Red Deer.

The judging committee of Lynn Fogwill, Pamela Forsythe and Susan Waters offered these comments about Leroy Koop's article.

"This story took the readers on the journey that most genealogists face. One clue leads to another and uses many resources to answer the questions. A complex story and a good example of how the research team at the Branch handled a query. The story is very well written and the author carries the reader along. An accounting of how a Branch research committee can respond to a request from the public in such a way as to hopefully entice them to join AGS. The illustrations "prove" the findings and illustrate how local resources such as funeral home records can prove incredibly useful in genealogical research." – Lynn Fogwill, Pamela Forsythe and Susan Waters

Leroy's article is re-printed with permission from the Wetaskiwin Branch, from their newsletter *Roots & Branches*, January 2024, Vol 22 No 1, p 9.



Leroy (Lee) Koop was born into a Mennonite family in southern Manitoba. After his honours BSc degree, he had a 34-year career in the airline passenger service industry. Lee and his wife, Carole, moved to their acreage in the County of Wetaskiwin in 1978 where they raised two sons, and he began genealogy research in 1995, digitally recording Carole's family research and his mother's family history collection. Joining the AGS Wetaskiwin Branch in 2008, Lee has served on the Membership and Research Committees, including research for the branch's new website. His personal research has focused on Mennonites from Russia arriving in Manitoba, Ontario, PEI and Alberta.

The Hodgson Story

by Leroy Koop

The Wetaskiwin Branch was contacted on August 12 via its website, by Marie L. She wrote:

"My Great Grand Parents and some of their children are buried in the Duhamel Cemetery. There are no records of where they are buried. A fire burned all the wooden crosses. Would the funeral home keep records on where people are buried? Duhamel does not have these records. You can email me or phone. My great Grand Parents are Kathleen & John Hodgson both their names are misspelled on the Stone Monument at the Cemetery, I would like to find their graves and put a marker on their graves."

Since Marie specifically asked about funeral homes, the Moore's Funeral Home of Wetaskiwin Records were the first to be checked. Here is what was found:

FUNERAL RECORD AND LEDGER				15
Ordered by <i>Wm Hodgson</i>		Charged to <i>Wm Hodgson</i>		Residence <i>Wetaskiwin</i>
Place of Death <i>near Wetaskiwin</i>	Casket, +	Box,	Plate,	<i>Jan 4/32</i> By <i>Grav. dig.</i> <i>40.00</i> <i>40.00</i> <i>40.00</i>
Cause of Death <i>Cancer</i>	Hearse,			
Name, <i>Kathleen Hodgson</i>		Automobiles,		
Age, <i>73</i>		Crape, Gloves, Ribbon,		
Died, <i>Jan 3 1932</i>	Embalming,			
Where Born, <i>Asch. approx</i>	Grave, Digging, Trimming,			
Occupation, <i>-</i>	Printing,			
Residence, <i>Wet</i>	Attendance,			
Where Buried, <i>Duhamel</i>	Shroud,			
Date of Funeral, <i>Jan 8/32</i>	Chairs,			
Minister, <i>R.C. Church</i>				
Physician, <i>Dr. Shellenbarger</i>				
Style, <i>6.00 full py</i>				

32

FUNERAL RECORD AND LEDGER

Ordered by Wm Hodgson Charged to Wm Hodgson Residence P.A. 2 Wetaskiwin

Place of Death <u>Duhamel</u>	Casket, + Box, Plate, <u>40.00</u>	Oct 24/33	By Cash, <u>10.00</u>
Cause of Death <u>Smelly</u>	Hearse,	Nov 16/38 chgo. m. Simpson	<u>5.22</u>
Name, <u>John Hodgson</u>	Automobiles,		
Age, <u>81-7-26</u>	Crape, Gloves, Ribbon,		
Died, <u>Oct 26 1933</u>	Embalming,		
Where Born, <u>Alberta</u>	Grave, Digging, Trimming,		
Occupation, <u>Farmer</u>	Printing,		
Residence, <u>Duhamel</u>	Attendance,		
Where Buried, <u>Duhamel</u>	Shroud,		
Date of Funeral, <u>Oct 28/33</u>	Chairs,		
Minister,			
Physician, <u>Rosher</u>			
Style, <u>6.0 - 00 py</u>			

40.00
15.22
24.78

Kathleen Hodgson died on January 3, 1933 at the age of 73 years, and the funeral was on January 5. She resided in Wetaskiwin (city or county?) and was buried in Duhamel. John died on October 26, 1933 at the age of 81+ years, and the funeral was on October 28. He resided in Duhamel at the time of his death and was buried there as well.

DEATH OF KATHLEEN HODGSON

We report the death of Kathleen beloved wife of John Hodgson, of the Duhamel district, who passed out of this life from cancer, at the age of 73 years—Deceased had been a resident of the place for a considerable period—She leaves to mourn her departure a husband and grown up family. Her end came January 3rd and interment was made January 5th in the Roman Catholic cemetery at Duhamel. JAN 11, 1933

DUHAMEL

One of the earliest settlers of this district passed away on Tuesday in the person of Kathleen, beloved wife of John Hodgson, at the age of 73 years. She had been a patient sufferer with cancer for some time. Deceased was born in Saskatchewan and came to the Duhamel district about forty years ago with her husband. She leaves to mourn her demise a sorrowing husband, and one son, besides a host of friends in the community. The funeral takes place on Thursday, the interment taking place in the Roman Catholic cemetery at New Norway.

Two newspaper obituaries were found for Kathleen. One was found in the Wetaskiwin Archives' collection:

The other one was from the Peel Collection, the *Wetaskiwin Times*, January 5, 1933.

The Death Registrations for both Kathleen and John were ordered from the Provincial Archives of Alberta, in part to determine where they were born.

Form 1
This form, if placed in an envelope marked "Death Registration," must be forwarded to the Registrar of the Division of Vital Statistics of the Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6K6.

CANADA
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

Record No. 8 of 1933

REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Name of Deceased Kathleen Hodgson

Date of Death 3 day of Jan 1933

Place of Death Wetaskiwin Municipality

Regular Residence of Deceased Wetaskiwin

Length of Time 40 yrs

Sex Female Married Yes

Age 73 Years 7 Months 26 Days

Place of Birth St. Paul, Sask

Last Occupation Farmer

Country of Birth England

Name of Physician Dr. Rosher

Name and Address of Undertaker or Person in charge of Funeral Wetaskiwin

I certify the foregoing to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Given under my hand at Wetaskiwin this 4 day of Jan 1933

I hereby certify the above return was made to me at Wetaskiwin on the 4th day of January 1933

Registrar's Record No. 1933

Form 1
This form, if placed in an envelope marked "Death Registration," must be forwarded to the Registrar of the Division of Vital Statistics of the Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6K6.

CANADA
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

Record No. 2318 of 1933

REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Name of Deceased John Hodgson

Date of Death 26 day of October 1933

Place of Death Wetaskiwin Municipality

Regular Residence of Deceased Wetaskiwin

Length of Time 40 yrs

Sex Male Married Widower

Age 81 Years 7 Months 26 Days

Place of Birth St. Paul, Sask

Last Occupation Farmer

Country of Birth England

Name of Physician Dr. Rosher

Name and Address of Undertaker or Person in charge of Funeral Duhamel

I certify the foregoing to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Given under my hand at Wetaskiwin this 27 day of Oct 1933

I hereby certify the above return was made to me at Wetaskiwin on the 27th day of October 1933

Registrar's Record No. 1933

Top left: Obituary for Kathleen, *Wetaskiwin Archives*.

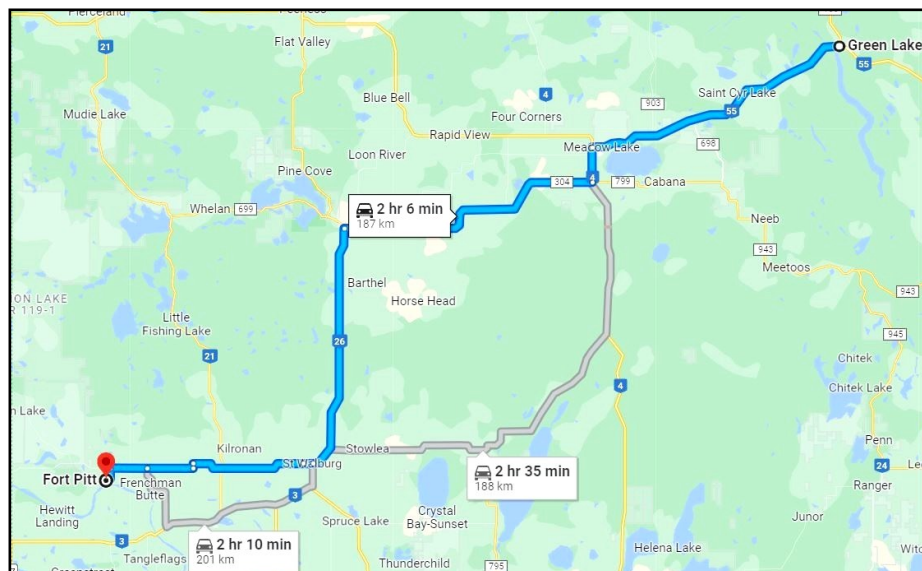
Top Right: Obituary for Kathleen, *Peel Collection, Wetaskiwin Times*.

Bottom Left: Death Registration Kathleen Hodgson.

Bottom Right: Death Registration, John Hodgson.

The registration for Kathleen confirmed the death date and the place of burial, with Moore's in Wetaskiwin in charge of the burial. She was born at Fort Pitt, Saskatchewan. John's registration confirmed his death date, and that Moore's in Wetaskiwin was in charge of the burial in Duhamel. John was born in Green Lake, Saskatchewan.

Here's the GOOGLE map which shows Fort Pitt and Green Lake in Saskatchewan.

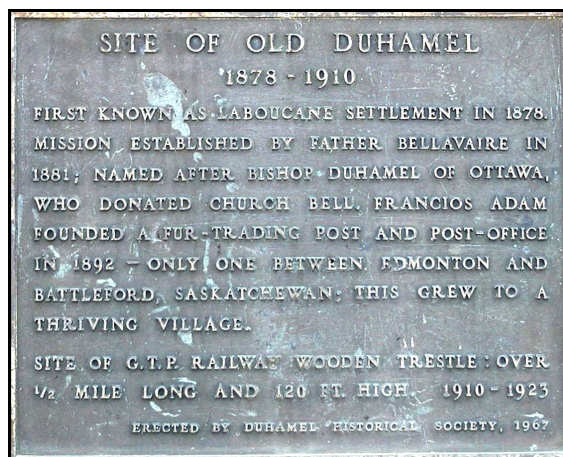


Both places are well north of North Battleford. In modern times, with a fast car, it would take over two hours to get from one to the other. Amazing that Kathleen and John would have met in the 1870s and begun a family.

It was easy to discover that Kathleen and John were buried in the St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church Cemetery a few miles north of the present hamlet of Duhamel. The Alberta Government designated the Church a Historical Site in 1980.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton was contacted to find out about this church. This is part of what was passed on:

"Because of its history and antiquity, the 1883 Duhamel St. Thomas Church has now been taken over by the Duhamel Historical Society. It is now a museum in memory of Father Hippolyte Beillevaire who is remembered primarily for his ministerial work with the Indigenous community initially, and in later years, with the white settlers who came to Battle River Settlement. The responsibility of the cemetery was transferred to the Duhamel Historical Society 31 May 1990."



Trying to contact the Duhamel Historical Society via email and phone didn't result in any communications. It was discovered, though, that no plot map existed for this cemetery. Where John and Kathleen Hodgson were buried is, and will always be, a mystery. It has been reported that the wooden crosses and

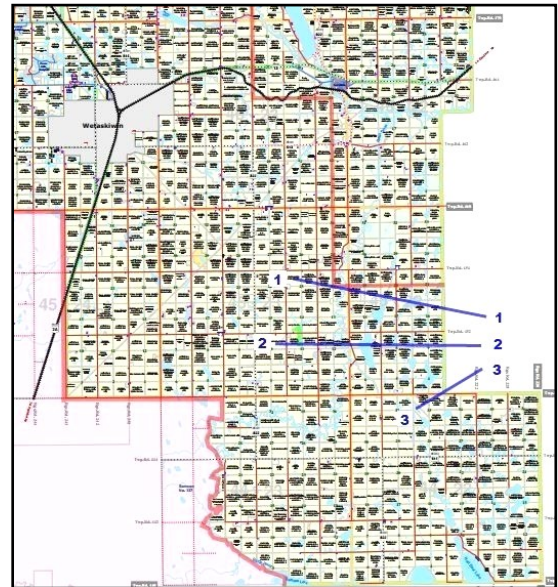
fences that originally marked the graves were either destroyed by fire or the passage of time. The Archdiocese further stated that *"Sacramental burial records do not include the plot location of the grave."*

The Society did erect a two-sided Memorial Wall with names and years of the death of all persons buried at this cemetery. John and Kathleen Hodgson are both listed under 1933 on the panel to the left. Further research showed that Kathleen's name was really Catherine and John's surname, Jodgson, was obviously misread from the church records.

Although the research didn't conclude with what Marie L. was looking for, other interesting questions materialized—questions such as:

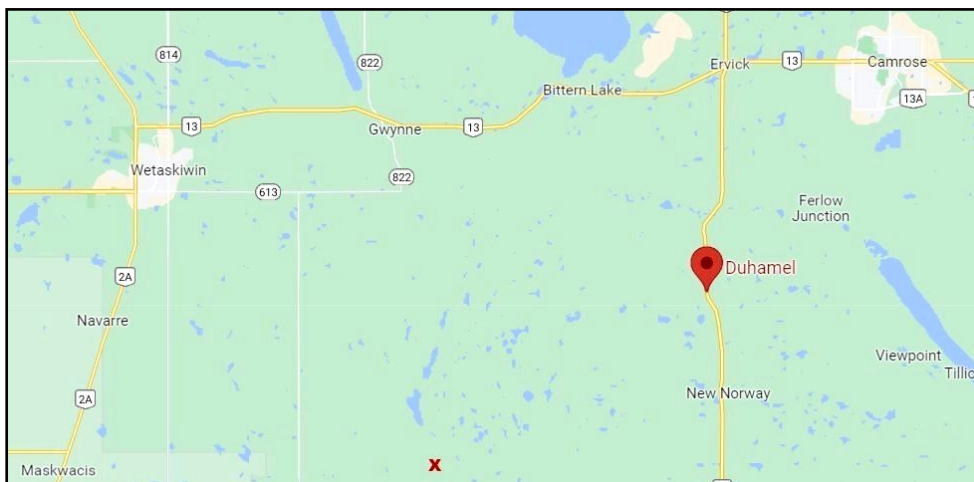
- 1) Why were John and Kathleen (Catherine) Hodgson's bodies prepared for burial in Wetaskiwin but buried in Duhamel?
- 2) Where were they living at the time of their deaths?

The 1931 Canadian Census shows that John and Catherine were residing at a farm at 32-44-22-4. The head of the household was William Hodgson, John and Catherine's son. The 1921 Canada Census showed that John and Kath were operating this farm. Homestead records were searched. John and Catherine were involved in at least three homestead applications under the Scrip rules. In 1894 they applied for NE22-45-23-4 (#1 on map). In 1895 they were dealing with NW10-45-23-4 (#2 on map). In 1896 they applied for SE32-44-22-4 (#3 on Map), the farm where they resided when they passed away.



Homestead record applications can provide much more than just locations. In the 1894 homestead application it stated that John's parents were George Hodgson and Mary Rowland, and that he was born at Green Lake, Saskatchewan. John was married about 1877 to Catherine Dumont (maiden surname) in Red Deer, Alberta. John listed six children on the application, two with birth years only, the other four with birth dates. John also stated that he lived in Montana from 1880 to 1890 and his job was that of a buffalo hunter.

It should be noted that all three homesteads are in the County of Wetaskiwin, and that it is probably the reason why hospital and funeral home services were used in Wetaskiwin and not in, say, Camrose.



The **red pointer** on this map shows the approximate location of the Hodgson farm. The farm is definitely closer to Wetaskiwin than Camrose.

But now comes a third question:

- 3) Why did the burials of John and Catherine take place in Duhamel?

The site of Duhamel was originally named the Laboucane Settlement in 1878. The plaque on the right is on the monument which is located

just off Hwy 21 and Twp Road 461 advertising the historical site, which includes the St. Thomas RC Church. Another big display billboard at this site states: "*Before the disappearance of the buffalo in the 1880s, this land had long been used by the First Nations people as a staging point for engaging in the buffalo hunt.*"

Although it is an assumption, one can probably say that John Hodgson, a buffalo hunter, met with many friends, fellow hunters and even other family members on a yearly basis in the Laboucane Settlement, later known as Duhamel. Perhaps this was the "home" congregation for John and Catherine Hodgson, John, apparently, being a "*staunch Catholic*". A visit to the St. Thomas Church Cemetery showed monuments placed along the long pathway and only a few (probably more current burials) further out. It may be that families have erected monuments to honour the family members, even though the exact locations of burial sites are unknown.

It was suggested to Marie L. that she might want to contact the Duhamel Historical Society with a paper letter delivered by postal mail and ask whether monuments can be placed in the cemetery to honour family members, even if plot locations are unknown. Since several of John and Catherine's children are also buried here, it was further suggested to place one monument with all family names and birth and death dates, if known.

¹ Peel's Prairie Provinces collection, University of Alberta Library, <https://library.ualberta.ca/peel>

RS

***Relatively Speaking* Guidelines for Authors 2025**

We prefer original articles, never-before published, but we do accept articles previously posted on an author's blog or website or previously published in a genealogy newsletter, journal or magazine provided they meet the following criteria (#2-10).

We will accept submissions in the following order: 1. Members, 2. Youth, 3. Non-members.

Articles should be in Garamond font, in a digital Word format, 1000-2500 words maximum except for the rare, longer article which will be serialized and is published in two parts.

A maximum of 4-6 photos/illustrations submitted in JPEG format will be accepted. Do not send original photo or documents. Please include information about the photos: who, what, where, when.

We request a 100-word maximum biography and an author photo. We cannot be responsible for outdated author information that we keep on file. Please ensure your bio is up-to-date.

We try not to publish the same author in two consecutive issues except for our regular columns such as: *Spinning Webs*, *Finding Alberta's Past* and *Youth Write On*.

We reserve the right to edit and select the articles on basis of relevance, quality, and space using *The Canadian Style – A Guide to Writing and Editing* and the *Oxford Canadian Dictionary of Current English*. We will acknowledge that an article was previously published in another publication, in a blog or on a website.

Articles and biographies must contain no promotion of author's products or services.

Due to privacy and protection of personal information, we will not publish exact birth dates of people still living. A month and year are acceptable.

For reader friendly formatting, we request that long web addresses be a shortened link within the article, and the full web address be listed at the end of the article.

Due to space restrictions, we do not publish footnotes/references except in exceptional cases. We do state that "references are available upon request from rseditor@abgenealogy.ca" if references have been provided with the article.



Sharon Aney has been a charter member of AGS Wetaskiwin Branch since 2000, and editor of its newsletter, *Roots & Branches*, since 2010. She was an advocate for the City Council to re-open the City of Wetaskiwin Archives, which had been closed since 2019. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Sharon has lived in Wetaskiwin for 56 years, where she and her husband raised two daughters, are proud grandparents of five young men, and delighted with their one great grand-daughter. Sharon is a firm believer that the stories of our ancestors should be written down and shared with family and community.

This article is re-printed from Roots & Branches newsletter, September 2024, with permission from AGS Wetaskiwin Branch. It has a small update by the author.

Genealogy Cautions: The Phony Inheritance Scam

by 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 to 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 bensonworth03@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 Aney 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 my technical support person advised me to ignore and delete unsolicited emails, I did not.

His 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.



William J. Anhorn was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta and graduated with a BA Political Science from the University of Calgary and Bachelor of Laws from the University of Alberta. He practiced law for over 35 years with Pritchard and Company and retired in 2012. He and his wife Joan Elaine Anhorn (Medlicott), a retired teacher, continue to reside there. Having a keen interest in history and recently genealogy, William has researched and written a series of articles on his family and extended family, a series on the Canadian visitor to the United States, and several articles on local history. He is a member of the Medicine Hat Genealogical Society and former Chair of the Historical and Heritage Resource Management Committee of the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Company.

A Bow Island Mystery! The Inexplicable Disappearance of Reverend Robert Earl Ross and the Story of His Wife and Her Young Family

by William J Anhorn

One of the many pitfalls that the amateur genealogist encounters is going down the proverbial rabbit hole. An obscure or mysterious family “secret” or interesting family photo or a unique family heirloom will often lead to a circuitous exploration, much like *Alice in Wonderland*.

This is the case here, as I went down a huge rabbit hole.

Let me explain.

Medicine Hat Genealogical Society

A recent inquiry to the Medicine Hat Genealogical Society (MHGS) website requesting assistance was directed to my attention as Chairman of the Family History Research Group.

The inquiry was interesting, as the email came from Belfast, Northern Ireland and the request was for assistance in finding out the whereabouts or any information relating to Robert Earl Ross (b.1879-), an ordained Presbyterian Church Minister from Ireland, who disappeared from Bow Island, Alberta in 1910 or thereabouts.

A cursory examination led to the interesting and compelling story about the minister's wife and her three children, and their own story of resilience and fortitude in the face of the inexplicable disappearance of their husband and father.

It was obvious from the email that exhaustive research had been undertaken to solve the mystery of his disappearance, using all the search engines and tools now readily available through the internet, and that reaching out to the MHGS was more or less a last-ditch effort.

Despite this exhaustive effort, it appears that the Reverend Robert Earl Ross has vanished without a trace! And his mysterious disappearance continues to remain unsolved to this day.

As one might imagine, for this amateur genealogist and local historian this became an interesting project. This is that story! But let's start at the beginning.

His Irish Roots

Robert Earl Ross was born May 29, 1879 in Ireland, the son of Samuel Ross (1833-1907) and Margaret Ann Ross (nee Forsythe) [1841-1919]. Together they had eight

children, including Robert Earl Ross (1879–) who married Minnie Alice Pearl Shearer on November 15, 1905 in Renville, Bottineau, North Dakota, USA.

There were three children of the marriage; Robert Earl¹ (Earl) and Alton James (Alton) had both been born in the United States in North Dakota. The third child, Wesley Samuel Ross, was born in Walsh, Alberta shortly after their arrival.²

By all accounts, Rev. Robert Ross was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church and he found himself, along with his wife and their three children, in Bow Island, Alberta in mid to late 1908 or early 1909.³

It is here that the mystery begins. But first a backdrop.

The Bow Island Family Connections – Egan and Shearer

The surname Egan is a well-known name in Bow Island, and it is of some historical significance to note that there is a direct family connection to Robert Earl Ross.

In 1880 at the young age of 16, Allen Egan emigrated from Dublin, Ireland to Peoria, Illinois to stay with a cousin and learn the carpentry and bricklaying trades. In 1886, he went back to Ireland to marry his first wife, Phoebe McAuley, and brought her back to the United States, where their son was born in 1887.

That same year, his wife was diagnosed with tuberculosis and the decision was made to return to Ireland in order to have greater family support and better treatment. Unfortunately, she passed away.

In 1893, Allen Egan married Margaret “Maggie” Ann Ross, sister of Robert Earl Ross in Ireland, and together they had 11 children, including Alfred Egan (1902–1992).

In 1898, Allen decided to return to the United States with his new family. He worked as a carpenter in New York before deciding to go to the Canadian West, arriving in Bow Island in 1908, having left his wife and young family in the Bronx, New York. He sought out a quarter section of land and made a claim under the Homestead Act.

The land was located a few miles north of Bow Island, and he named it Spring Coulee Farm. The legal description was the SE 1/4 24-11-11-W4.

After getting his homestead registered, Allen returned to New York, leaving his cousin Hugh Moore to break the land, and returned to Bow Island bringing four of his children John, James, Alfred and Evelyn. To make a living, Allen worked as a carpenter and assisted in building the Myrtle Hotel and the Presbyterian Church. In 1910 both John and Alfred came down with scarlet fever with only Alfred⁴ surviving the epidemic.

In the summer of 1910, Mrs. Margaret Egan came out with the rest of the family. More children followed: twins John and Hugh in 1911 and Phoebe in 1912.

Allen and Margaret took an active part in the Presbyterian Church, and Allen was on the Courtland Hill School Board and a member of the Orange Lodge. In 1934, Allen and Margaret rented their farm to their twin sons. Margaret died in 1946 and Allen in 1954, at the age of 90 years.



Robert Earl Ross and Minnie Pearl Shearer.

It is likely that in the brief period when the Egan family and Ross family resided in Bow Island there would have been a close family relationship between brother and sister and their respective spouses and their children.

Likewise, the Shearer family, also well known in the community.

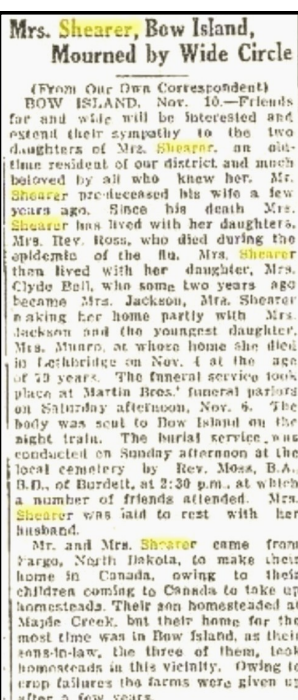
Minnie Alice Pearl Shearer was born November 15, 1883 in Clayton, Mower, Minnesota, the daughter of James Knox Shearer (1848-1920) and Rebecca Shearer (née Masters) (1847-1926). The Shearers came to Canada around 1900, first farming in the Etzikom area and later moving to Bow Island, around 1910. Mr. Shearer was a carpenter and maintenance worker for the school authority. They both were residents of Bow Island from approximately 1910 to the date of death of each of them. Both were interred in the Bow Island Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Shearer were both born in the United States and resided in Pennsylvania, Minnesota and North Dakota before taking up residence in Canada. Both were very religious and proud of their Pennsylvania Dutch heritage.



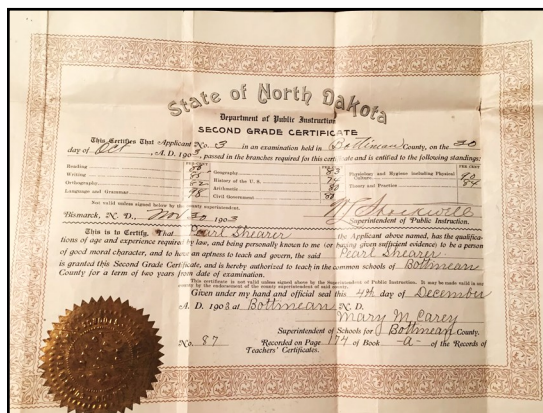
Mr. and Mrs. James Knox Shearer and family, circa 1890

Obituary for Mrs. Shearer, mother of Minnie Pearl, Bow Island. It indicates that crop failures were common among early settlers of the Bow Island area.



Minnie, Daisy and Nellie Shearer, circa 1895

At right, Minnie Alice Pearl Shearer, circa 1895.



Certificate for Minnie Pearl Shearer to teach Grade 2. Two years later she would become the wife of Rev. Robert Ross.

It was in Minnesota that their daughter Minnie Alice Pearl⁵ was born. She was followed by two sisters, Daisy (1885) and Nellie (1886). The couple had three earlier children, a girl and two boys but all died as a result of a diphtheria epidemic in the U.S.⁶

Pearl attended grade school in Minnesota, and then following the family move to North Dakota (1902), she attended teacher college, graduating with a certification in October 1903.

She became a schoolteacher in North Dakota. It is reported that she was a gifted pianist.⁷

Two years later she married Rev. Robert Ross on November 15, 1905 in Renville, Bottineau, North Dakota. Anecdotal evidence

would suggest that the couple met while she was attending teacher college or while she was teaching in Renville, Bottineau, North Dakota.

The academic background of Robert Ross is unknown and his call to the ministry remains undocumented. There is evidence to suggest that he was a pastor at a church in North Dakota, prior to the couple emigrating to Canada.

In the meantime, Pearl's parents emigrated to Canada, around 1900. As noted, the couple Pearl and Rev. Ross emigrated to Walsh, Alberta in early 1907-08 and here the birth of their third child, Wesley Samuel Ross occurred.

Their time in Walsh, near the Alberta and Saskatchewan border,⁸ was short-lived.

The Bow Island Homestead and the Mysterious Disappearance of Rev. Robert Earl Ross

After leaving Walsh, Alberta – considering that both had immediate family members in Bow Island – it is understandable that Rev. Robert Ross, his wife and three infant children would find themselves in Bow Island in mid to late 1909.



BOW ISLAND, ALBERTA, 1909

Bow Island Alberta, 1909.

birth of Wesley Samuel Ross. This is supported by handwritten notations indicating his age (29), the age of his wife (23) and ages of the two children, one years old and two and a half.

Being an ordained Presbyterian Church Minister, he was able to carry out his “calling” in the small community. There is some evidence that he and his wife and children moved into the Presbyterian Church manse. It is of some interest to note that in his application for a homestead under ‘occupation’, he described himself as a “Minister of the Gospel”!

A family historian reports that Rev. Ross was noted as having conducted Sunday services at the church in 1909-1910, as evidenced by local newspaper clippings and church minutes and records, which had been obtained from the church archives. These records indicate that he disappeared between Sunday, December 11, 1910 and Sunday December 18, 1910.

Minutes of a meeting on Monday, December 19, 1910 stated that “*he had deserted his mission*” and quite amazingly, his wife Pearl Ross had offered to take his place and continue in her role as church organist and member of the church choir!

Despite an exhaustive and diligent search by the family historian and other family members over the years, Rev. Robert Ross disappeared without any trace, notwithstanding the more recent availability of the internet and

genealogy search engines like ancestry.ca and family search.org. Newspaper archives throughout Ireland and North America have been scoured for any evidence of his whereabouts without success.

Passenger manifests from passenger ships from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have been examined, but to no avail. Even with the recent advances of DNA profiling, there has been no evidence whatsoever as to his whereabouts for well over 100 years.

It is as though he had vanished from the face of the earth!

The Aftermath – A Story of Fortitude and Resilience and Unmistakable Family Tragedy

Pearl Ross was left behind to tend to three children ages 4 and 3, and an infant of only one and a half years. The explanation given to the infant children about the sudden disappearance of their father was that he had “left to find work”.

Such circumstances would test anyone’s faith. But by all accounts, Pearl Ross persevered, no doubt as a result of her deep religious conviction and faith in God, which likely sustained her through these very difficult times.

She remained on the homestead and did what was required – no doubt with the help of family members – to satisfy the requirements under the Homestead Act.

It is reported that she established a boarding house or rooming house in Bow Island (or perhaps on the farm) to supplement her income. She continued to attend church regularly and serve as church organist and was a valued member of the church choir. She also taught Sunday School and volunteered with the Church Ladies Aid committee.

In 1914 she applied for title to the land, and a certificate of title was issued in her name on June 26, 1914.

But conditions in Southern Alberta were harsh, and successive crop failures and drought resulted in many farmers in the area forfeiting their investment and selling off their land. Pearl Ross was no exception.

Nonetheless, she became a dedicated member of the Bow Island community and was recognized as having a pleasant disposition, “*always being bright and cheerful, ever ready to offer a helping hand for those that needed it, whenever possible*”, despite her trials and tribulations.

The physical and emotional stress nonetheless took its toll and the early financial hardship she endured was best evidenced by the fact that she was unable to properly care for her youngest child. Regrettably, she placed the infant child up for adoption. At a tender age, Wesley Samuel Ross was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Gysbers from Klamath Falls, Oregon and they raised him as their own, taking the child away from the family environment in Bow Island.

Yet a more tragic circumstance was that neither of his two brothers (Earl and Alton) during their lifetime had any information about the adoption or about the adoptive parents or Wesley’s whereabouts, or anything about his personal circumstances including the fact of his untimely death at age nine. Earl Ross, in the interview conducted in 1983, offered the following in relation to that unfortunate circumstance.

"Well, I had 2 brothers. One was a year younger than me, and the other was 2 years younger than me. When Father was gone, Mother couldn't take care of all of us. She had to let one boy be adopted, and I haven't been able to find him yet. He would be about 72 now, or 71. I've checked all over and I couldn't find any trace of him at all. I've checked with people in Bow Island and they don't seem to know, either. I don't know if I'll ever find him now. He could have passed away by now."

The remaining two boys were cared for by their mother and with the support of the extended family grew up in Bow Island, except for one year when Pearl, after selling the farm accompanied her sister to Spokane, Washington. But she soon returned to Bow Island to be again close to family and friends. She became a pillar of the community.

On April 1, 1918 Pearl Ross was stricken with influenza, an epidemic in Canada and throughout the world following the First World War. Every effort was made to treat the disease but her weak (and perhaps broken) heart did not allow her to recover and she died on April 9, 1918. She was survived by her parents and extended family and her two children Earl, age 11 and Alton, aged 10. The whole community of Bow Island mourned her passing, and she was laid to rest in the Bow Island Cemetery on April 13, 1918. Earl Ross, in recounting that day, stated in his interview 75 years later that the “fateful day” was forever etched in his mind as if it was yesterday.

He stated, “I can remember yet, going out to the graveyard in a snowstorm—it was in April when she died---and the snow was falling down on her grave. It was terrible. I can see that yet. I was 11 at the time, and I can remember that as plain as if it was yesterday. Poor mother! She had quite a time after Father was gone.”

**DEATH OF POPULAR
BOW ISLAND LADY**

(From Our Own Correspondent.)
Bow Island, April 13.—On Wednesday morning of last week the whole town was saddened by the news that Mrs. Pearl Ross had passed to the great beyond.

The late Mrs. Ross was well known here, having come to Bow Island in 1900 and since that time has made this her home. Those who knew her best loved her the best. She was always bright and cheerful, ever ready to lend the helping hand to those who needed it when at all possible. The church will greatly miss her, as she has so freely given of her talent as organist and in singing in the choir. There, too, she has been a good worker in the Ladies Aid, often taking those places when her strength was scarcely equal to the task.

The late Mrs. Ross was taken ill on Tuesday, April 1st, with influenza. Everything was done to stop the ravages of the disease but her weak heart would not hold out; she passed away peacefully on Wednesday the 9th and on the 11th inst. the body was laid to rest.

The funeral service was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Shearer, parents of the late Mrs. Ross, where she with her two sons had lived for some few months.

The service was in charge of Rev. V. M. Gilbert, who took for his scripture lesson the 23rd Psalm. Mrs. Stone and Miss Calder sang very feelingly “Hold Thou My Hand”—a favorite hymn of the deceased.

After the service the funeral cortege formed and passed along to the cemetery, where the body found its last resting place.

Mrs. Ross leaves to mourn her loss her two sons, Earl and Elton, her father and mother—Mr. and Mrs. Shearer; two sisters, Mrs. C. H. Bell and Mrs. James Munroe, all of this place, and a brother, Mr. P. Shearer of Maple Creek, Sask., besides a host of friends.

Bow Island obituary of April 13, 1918 for Mrs. Pearl Ross.



The gravestone of Pearl Ross, located in the Bow Island Cemetery.

A Sole Survivor and Another Lost Soul

The story of Pearl Ross and her children is a real-life story of survival, and the life and times of each of the Ross boys and their stunning contrast is worthy of a brief examination. Earl Ross recounts that after his father left, his mother did her best and that she was a “good mother”.

Following her death, he was raised by his aunt and uncle in Bow Island and he attended school through to grade 11. In the summer months and after finishing school, he would work as a farm labourer.

In 1922/23 he applied for a job with the Union Bank in Bow Island. He was transferred to Cardston and soon met a young woman at a local dance. Her name was Verda Elien Dowdle (1907-1968).

She and her family were strong, fervent members of the Church of Latter Day Saints. He recalled when he first met her that his immediate thought was that *"I am going to marry her someday"*. This intuition soon came to pass, as they were married on the 10th of May 1927 at Great Falls, Montana.

He quit his job at the Union bank and became employed with a car dealership and garage in Cardston, from 1925 until 1942. He then moved to Lethbridge as a parts manager for A.G. Baalim who had established a General Motors Dealership, one of the first in Western Canada.

Verda and Earl Ross had one son, Alton John Ross, who attended university in Utah, graduated from medical school and practiced medicine for many years in Great Falls, Montana. Earl Ross passed away on February 5th, 1993 at Lethbridge, Alberta. His was a life well lived.

In stark contrast, Earl's brother Alton James Ross lived a life of crime. The criminal record of Alton James Ross began within a few years of his mother's death. The psychological trauma and hardships he endured growing up no doubt played a significant role.

He was arrested for numerous petty crimes, including theft, burglary and vagrancy and served several different prison sentences. He was described at times in various police reports as a petty thief, burglar, and gambler.

He died in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1968.



Earl Ross (1907–1983)



Alton James Ross was arrested for petty crimes. His sentencing was handed down in 1930.

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance and encouragement of Kristina McGuire, granddaughter of Earl Ross of Cedar City, Utah in the United States of America, and her cousin, Lynn Coles from Belfast, Northern Ireland, whose research and assistance was invaluable in writing this article.

Footnotes

¹ In order to avoid confusion I will hereafter refer to Rev Robert Earl Ross as Rev. Robert Ross or Robert Ross and his son, as “Earl Ross”, the name he used most often in his adult life.

² See #6

³ Historical records indicate that there were only two churches in existence in 1909 in Bow Island. They were: All Saints Anglican Church built in 1909 and Methodist Presbyterian Church built in 1907 (the first church in Bow Island). Later, St Andrew’s Church was built.

⁴ Alfred Egan became a prominent member of the Community of Bow Island with 42 years of public service including reeve of Bow Island Municipality no. 94; Alberta Wheat Pool delegate; Mayor of Bow Island; Bow Island Hospital Board and countless hours in the construction of the Bow Island Arena. He received the Centennial Community service medal in 1967 and the Queen’s Jubilee medal in 1977. The Bow Island Arena was named in his honour as well as the Alfred Egan home – a hospital in Bow Island for the severely handicapped, now an assisted living facility.

⁵ Most historical records reference her by Pearl, her third given name.

⁶ Source: Earl Ross was interviewed on November 19, 1983 in Lethbridge, Alberta as part of the Oral History Program of the Church of Latter Day Saints Historical Department. A transcript of the interview was graciously provided by his granddaughter and became a valuable source of information for this article.

⁷ Pearl Shearer at the age of 12 became a member of the Evangelical Church afterwards transferring to the Methodist Church. At the time of her death (1918), she had become an active member of the St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Bow Island. Religion was clearly an important part of her life and she devoted a great deal of her life in service to God as church organist, member of the church choir, teaching Sunday school classes and later, presenting occasional sermons to the congregation when no minister was available.

⁸ Prior to 1905 Walsh was in the District of Assiniboia in the Northwest Territories, but in 1905 both Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces in the Dominion of Canada, along with a realignment of the boundaries between the Northwest Territories and the two new provinces, for which boundaries continue to the present.

RS

Alberta Genealogical Society

Relatively Speaking

Submissions Requested

Deadline – July 1, 2025

August 2025 Themes

Home and Travel



What were the traditional house construction styles in your ancestry? Any particular architectural type? Did anyone in your family ever build a Sears Mail Order House or Eaton's Catalogue home, attend a barn raising?



What are your memories of urban streets or rural homesteads? Or travel away from home, such as vacations or family trips, annual excursions or visiting relatives? Have you made any trips to research your roots? How about researching the history of a particular house? What resources did you use? Were there any surprises?



Send these or other family history stories
Max. 2500 words (Word Doc), 4-6 pictures (JPEG) to:

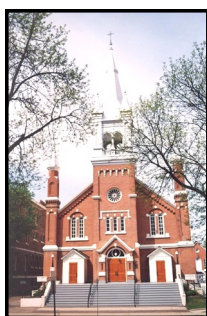
rseditor@abgenealogy.ca

Spinning Webs

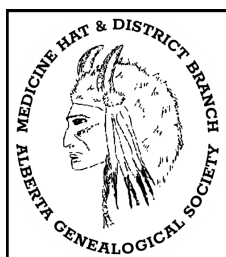
by Denise Daubert



nantongrainelevators.com/about How would you like to travel back to the time of the late 1920s and early 1930s Alberta? Grain elevators dotted the Alberta landscape and were integral to small and medium sized towns across the province, and The Nanton Grain Elevators (Canadian Grain Elevator Discovery Centre) allows visitors to do just that! Marvel at the centre's three grain elevators, built between 1927 and 1929. You can take a guided tour and see interactive displays. Interestingly, this Discovery Centre was recognized by the Alberta Government as a Provincial Historic Resource. Check on the website for opening months and events they have planned.



paroissesaintjoachim.com and **caedm.ca** Do you perchance have ancestors who attended St. Joachim's Catholic Church in downtown Edmonton? Just marked in December 2024 was this parish's 125th Anniversary, which was celebrated in various ways. If you check the Catholic Archdioceses website and the church website you can view photographs and read media stories of this historical accomplishment for this French language/culture parish. Of interest, this parish has been designated as both a Provincial Historic Resource and a Municipal Historic Site.



mhdgs.ca/historical-records/phone-books Were you aware that the Medicine Hat Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society has a real treasure on their website – in the form of digitized Alberta telephone books. For those researching within Alberta for people's surnames, businesses etc. this is an awesome resource. Be sure to check it out!



churches/cemeteries and 103 videos. Certainly a wonderful resource and one to spend more than one afternoon with!

pioneerchurches.ca For the pioneers who settled the rural areas on the prairies in Western Canada, building churches was an important priority. On this amazing website, there are descriptions of 118 churches, an amazing 3,675 photographs of



library.ulethbridge.ca/newspapers/historical-newspapers This is a great collection focusing on Alberta and Canadian newspapers. Of special interest is the "Southern Alberta Newspapers Collection" of digitized issues. These digitized newspapers open up information pertaining to "times of the past" for you to explore.

RS

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Office: #162 - 14315 - 118 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5L 4S6

Telephone: 780-423-8902

Email: agsoffice@abgenealogy.ca

Website: <http://www.abgenealogy.ca/>

1. Brooks & District Branch

President : David Clarke
Box 1538, Brooks, AB T1R 1C4
email: brooksags@gmail.com
website: <https://agsbrooks.ca>
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Public Presentations selected Saturdays*
Brooks Public Library, 323 1st Street East,
Brooks, Alberta

*Email for more information

2. AGS Calgary

President: Susan Haga
c/o 7834 21st St SE
Calgary, AB T2C 1Y7
email: agscalgarybranch@gmail.com
website: www.abgenealogy.ca/calgary
Meets 4th Thursday of month, 7:00 PM*

*Email for location

3. Camrose Branch

c/o 6130 39 Avenue, Camrose, AB
T4V 3B1 phone: 780-781-5100
email: camrosegeneo@gmail.com
www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com
Facebook: Camrose & District Branch –
Alberta Genealogical Society
Meets 2nd. Tuesday of the month
except January & February, 7 PM,
Camrose County Agricultural Services
Building, Camrose, Alberta

4. Drayton Valley Branch

President: Connie Stuhl
Box 115, Rocky Rapids, AB, T0E 1Z0
email: ags.dvbranch@gmail.com
website: <http://www.abgenealogy.ca/drayton-valley-branch/>
Meets 3rd Wednesday of month - 6:00 PM
Drayton Valley Library,
5120 52 Street, Drayton Valley, AB

5. Edmonton Branch

President: Kurt Paterson
Unit 162, 14315-118 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5L 4S6
phone: 780-424-4429
email: president@edmontongenealogy.ca
website: <http://www.edmontongenealogy.ca/>
Meets 4th. Thursday, 7:00 PM,
162, 14315-118 Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta



6. Grande Prairie & District Branch

President: Maxine Maxwell
Box 1257, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 4Z1
phone: 780-512-6427
email: president@grpr-abgenealogy.ca
website: <https://www.gp.abgenealogy.ca/>
Meets 3rd. Wednesday of month, 7:00 PM,
Grande Prairie Public Library
101, 9839-103 Avenue,
Grande Prairie, Alberta

7. Lethbridge & District Branch

President: Barry Simmonds
Rm. 128, 909-3rd Avenue North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 0H5
phone: 403 328 9564
email: lethags@theboss.net
website: <http://lethbridgeags.theboss.net/>
Meets 3rd. Thursday of month 7:00 PM,
Provincial Administration Building,
909-3rd Avenue North,
Lethbridge, Alberta

8. Medicine Hat & District Branch

President: Deb Wickham
Box 971, Medicine Hat, AB
T1A 7G8
email: mhgs@shaw.ca
website: <http://mhds.ca/>
Meets 1st. Wednesday of month, 7:00 PM,
Medicine Hat Monumental Co. Ltd.
974-13th Street SW.
Medicine Hat, Alberta

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President: Jessie Dial
email: rdbags@gmail.com
website: <http://www.abgenealogy.ca/red-deer-district-branch>
Meets 3rd Thursday of month 7:00 PM,
LDS Church, 3002-47 Avenue
Red Deer, AB

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email: wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca
website: <http://www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch>
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LDS Church, 5410-36 Avenue
Wetaskiwin, AB

