



& BRANC HES ROOTS

WETASKIWIN BRANCH

Alberta Genealogical Society

Website: www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

Email: wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca

BRINGING THE PAST

TO THE PRESENT

FOR THE FUTURE

“SPECIAL EDITION”

25TH ANNIVERSARY

May 31, 2025

Compiled by Sharon Aney

MAY 31, 2025
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!!
SENIORS CENTRE
5216 – 54 Street, Wetaskiwin, AB

10:30 am *Welcome*

11:00 am : *KEYNOTE SPEAKER*

BOB LAYTON!!



Bob Layton is an avid advocate of preserving your family stories. He will encourage you to write your stories in an entertaining and informative presentation.

Mr. Layton's presentation will be followed by lunch and a short program.

Our Branch, some branch members and other organizations will have displays to showcase their accomplishments and resources.

*MESSAGE FROM ALICE HOYLE, CHARTER MEMBER,
PRESIDENT, 2006 – 2008 & 2018 – 2026*

In 2000 Marilyn Valkenburg and Denise Franklin had been talking amongst themselves about researching their family history. They spoke to several people (I was one of them) and decided that there was support in the community to establish a genealogy society. They contacted the Alberta Genealogical Society's office in Edmonton.

A room at Wetaskiwin Public Library was booked; Ian Holmes, President of the Alberta Genealogical Society (AGS) at that time, came to Wetaskiwin to tell us about what was required to form a branch. Following the meeting, 16 people signed up and paid the required fees.

On October 4, 2000, a letter was sent to Mr. Holmes advising that the 16 wanted to form a branch of AGS. We had filled four executive positions and were set to go. That was the start of Wetaskiwin branch, and we haven't looked back.

We have been dedicated to providing information, training, guidance and research opportunities for our branch members or anyone who contacts us. Our membership has been encouraged to forge ahead with our own research while being available to assist others with their research. We look forward to the future and the interesting challenges ahead.

*MESSAGE FROM SHARON ANEY, CHARTER MEMBER
NEWSLETTER EDITOR 2010 – 2026*

As I got into gathering information for our 25th anniversary newsletter, I became more impressed with the accomplishments of our organization and those of our members. Our individual skills have grown and our branch has enabled and fostered that growth.

A major reason for doing genealogy is to find our ancestors' names and to preserve and share their stories with our community and our families. Each article we write is a chapter in our family history.

Genealogists are historians. We research to find our family's origins in other times and other countries. Contrary to public opinion, much of the information we need to find is not found online. So we search for information in archives, historical societies, communities, and organizations our ancestors might have belonged to.

Our branch has been able to add resources to Wetaskiwin City Archives by donating the booklets we have written, as described on page 9.

3

*APPLICATION
TO JOIN ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY* October

4, 2000

Ian Holmes, President
Alberta Genealogical Society
Rm 116, 10440 – 108 Avenue
Edmonton, Ab
T5H 3Z9

Attention Mr. Holmes:

It is the desire of the following people to form a branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society in Wetaskiwin, Alberta.

Denise Franklin Wetaskiwin, Ab. Jean Browse MaMeO Beach, Ab.
Sharon Aney 143 Willow Drive, Wetaskiwin, Ab. Leah Jaburek 105
Garnet Crescent Wetaskiwin, Ab. Arwyn Adam
Marlene Scheffler 5718 Garden Meadows Drive Wetaskiwin, Ab.
Myrick Rosser R.R.#2 Wetaskiwin, Ab Pat Ware Box 6371
Wetaskiwin, Ab. Clare Garland 5323 – 36 Avenue Wetaskiwin, Ab.
Tena Bannerman #17, 5206 – 53 Street Wetaskiwin, Ab. Alice
Hoyle R.R.#3 Wetaskiwin, Ab. Betty Jean Killaly 177 Garnet
Crescent Wetaskiwin, Ab.
Isabel Didrickson Gwynne, Ab. Marilyn Valkenburg R.R.#3
Wetaskiwin, Ab. Hazel Mitchler R.R.#3 Wetaskiwin, Ab. Bernice
Wright 4404 – 46A Street Wetaskiwin, Ab.

The Branch will be called "Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society".

The following people will be the Executive members:

President – Leah Jaburek
Vice-President – Denise Franklin
Secretary – Sharon Aney
Treasurer – Marilyn Valkenburg

Yours truly,
Leah Jaburek, President



PRESIDENTS OF WETASKIWIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2000 - 2002 LEAH JABUREK
 2002 – 2004 SHARON ANEY
 2004 – 2006 DON BROSIUS
 2006 – 2008 ALICE HOYLE
 2008 – 2010 CLAUDIA MALLOCH / DON BROSIUS
 2010 – 2012 ANNE WILDCAT / SYL GAUVREAU
 2012 – 2014 JOAN KRUGER
 2014 – 2018 DIANE STROHSCHIEIN / LORRAINE MCKAY 2018 –
 2020 ALICE HOYLE
 2020 – 2022 ALICE HOYLE
 2022 – 2024 ALICE HOYLE
 2024 – 2026 ALICE HOYLE

MEETINGS

From the beginning, our meetings have been enthusiastic celebrations of discoveries that our members have made:

- How to use libraries and archives for research
- Using the LDS Family History Library catalogue to order microfilms and microfiche
- Visiting the Provincial Archives in Edmonton and the Bonnie Doon Family History Library for valuable data.
- Using genealogy programs to organize our family trees •
Backing up our programs on floppy discs and CDs
- Researching online...thinking that Ancestry had all the answers •
By 2003 we were anxious to share new genealogical skills and began putting on annual workshops.
- 10 years later (2013) we used Norquest College for its AV capabilities, and invited genealogists from across the province to make presentations.
- Over time our members became very proficient in online research

ZOOM During the Covid-19 pandemic isolation our President, Alice Hoyle, learned how to use Zoom as a meeting platform. In that way we were able to keep our branch connected and viable. We continue to use Zoom as an optional meeting platform during winter months.

Our **Resource Library** has remained at the City Archives

5

COMMUNICATIONS

1. ROOTS AND BRANCHES



2002 – 2008 Claudia Malloch, Editor
She designed the logo of our Branch
Newsletter

2008 – 2011 Alice Hoyle, Editor

2011 – 2025 - Sharon Aney, Editor

From the first issue, our editors have encouraged our members to write articles about their genealogical and family history discoveries as content for the newsletter. This has made for interesting and varied publications.

Roots and Branches is posted on our website for free access to all. Roots and Branches is submitted to Library and Archives Canada for posterity.

AGS - KENNETH YOUNG AWARD FOR BEST OVERALL NEWSLETTER

2016 In general

2021 September 2021 issue

2022 January 2022 issue

2025 January 2024 issue

2. WEBSITE – WEBMASTER: LEROY KOOP www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

The website contains comprehensive look at branch activities and accomplishments:

- Roots & Branches newsletters from October 2010 – April 2025
- Outreach
- Community involvement
- Awards

- Youth Projects
- Archives
- Heritage Museum

AGS AWARDS:

KENNETH YOUNG NEWSLETTER

"BEST ARTICLE"

appearing in branch newsletters:

- 2009 – Best Local Content - Alice Hoyle
- 2012 – Sheepskin Coats on the Prairies – Sharon Aney
- 2014 – Inspector Maigret, Hercule Poirot, Step Aside – Alice Hoyle
- 2016 – Pedigree of a Book – Lee Koop
- 2019 – Using Newspapers – Sharon Aney
- 2025 - Pick A Name, Pick A Profession – Alice Hoyle

KENNETH YOUNG

BEST LOCAL CONTENT

- 2020 – Our Covid-19 Pandemic Experience – 8 Branch members
- 2023 – Research Report, Luther B. McShane – Lee Koop
- 2025 - "The Hodgson Story" – Lee Koop

PETER STAVELY AWARD

"Best Article In Relatively Speaking"

- 2019 Lee Koop Cemetery Bankruptcy Leads to Exhumation 2021 John Althouse Vanishing Prairie Icons, Where Main Street Meets Railway Avenue

SPECIAL MENTION AWARD

- 2021 Alice Hoyle & Wetaskiwin Branch
 *"In recognition of organizing GenFair 2020
 which was cancelled due Covid-19,
 and GenFair 2021 'A Virtual Affair'"*

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

- 2025 Alice Hoyle

"In appreciation for Exceptional Volunteerism
in Service to the Society"

7

BRANCH MEMBERS' WRITING

Alberta Genealogical Society has recognized our authors by printing articles by Wetaskiwin Branch members in its journal, **Relatively Speaking**:

May 2004 – Sharon Aney Are Your Ancestors Still Talking to You? May
2005 – Betty Scharff A Child's Curiosity – Her Family Roots
Aug 2005 – Sharon Aney Family History Gems in Sask. Homestead Records May
2006 - Don Brosius GenFair 2006 Report
May 2010 – Sharon Aney It's All Relative, My Experience with a Polish Genealogist Aug
2013 – Sharon Aney Sheepskin Coats on the Prairies
May 2014 – Mavis Nelson The A-Mavis Race, An Adventure in Living History Aug 2014
– Mavis Nelson The Sinking of the Empress of Ireland 100 Years Ago Feb 2015 –
Sharon Aney The Legend of Jean Cadieux
Aug 2015 – Alice Hoyle Inspector Maigret, Hercule Poirot – Step Aside! Nov
2017 – Lee Koop Pedigree of a Book
Aug 2019 - Sharon Aney Grandmothers on the Homestead
Feb 2019 - Lee Koop Cemetery Bankruptcy Leads to Exhumation Nov 2019 -
Pam Cooke Deconstructing a Family Story, In Search of My Grandfather, Pt 1
Feb 2020 - Pam Cooke In Search of My Grandfather, Pt 2
Aug 2020 – Rudi Grab Erika and Waldemar Grab Emigrate To Canada Nov 2020 - Sharon
Aney A Virtual Tour of LaRocheville During the Covid-19 Pandemic Nov 2021 - Denise
Montour Private Joe Montour
Aug 2022 - Sharon Aney Farming in Saskatchewan in the 1930s Feb 2023 – Denise Montour
1948 - An Arranged Marriage - George and Helen Montour Aug 2023 - Sharon Aney
Elmsville, My First School
Feb 2024 - Lee Koop Researching Jonas Nillson, 1871 -1954 Aug 2024 -Lee Koop The Saga of
David Alexander Fairfield and Mary Jane Small Feb 2025 –Sharon Aney Ukrainian Feasts
Feb 2025 – Pam Cooke Why Did they Let the Turkey Join the Band May 2025 -
Alice Hoyle Pick A Name, Pick A Profession
May 2025 – Sharon Aney Genealogy Cautions
May 2025 – Lee Koop The Hodgson Story

*Some of these articles were reprinted
from our own newsletter, Roots & Branches,
and can be accessed on our website.*

www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

*If you wish to read all of these articles contact me at
sharonaney@gmail.com*

and I will endeavor to send you a PDF document.

BRANCH PUBLICATIONS

"CANADA 150" - 2017

In recognition of Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation members of the Wetaskiwin Branch of Alberta Genealogical Society have recorded memories of our school days, and of Christmas celebrations in the homes of our childhoods.



These events occurred by and large in the 1950s and early 1960s, and so provide a glimpse of our experiences some 60 years ago.



COVID - 19 PANDEMIC – 2020-2021

Members of our genealogy society had been dealing with the "Covid 19 Pandemic" for over fifteen months. We felt that it was important to record the emotional and mental reactions, and societal changes that we had endured.

We hope that these insights will be of interest and value to future generations.

AGS PROJECTS

2006 GENFAIR Wetaskiwin branch hosted AGS members from across the province! The event began with a mixer / registration on Friday evening at the Heritage Museum. Norquest College was the venue for Saturday's conference. Four classrooms, a computer lab and well qualified speakers enabled us to cover almost all aspects of genealogy. 72 people enjoyed a banquet where Sylvia Larson gave an address on Hutterite history and lifestyle.

2010 - CEMETERY RECORDING Mavis and Neil Nelson transcribed information from almost 500 grave markers in the New Sweden, Nashville and Lone Ridge cemeteries. Don Brosius transcribed those names and dates onto an AGS template and sent it to Edmonton to be entered into the computer program. Don also photographed the grave markers.

GENEALOGY FOR YOUTH

2017 - Chaired by Patty Caputo, several young people researched how their ancestors came to Canada. They prepared display boards which they shared, along with some Christmas traditions at branch meetings.

2019 - John Althouse, a member of our branch for many years, developed a guide for Unit 2 of AGS's Genealogy for Youth project: "In Search of Your Immigrant Ancestor", which included a case study based upon the research by Mavis Nelson re: Agnes Desideria Anderson. (May 2014 Roots & Branches).

In the **April, 2019** issue of "Roots and Branches" John wrote about how he worked with Mavis to shape the plan that students could use in researching the immigration of their ancestors.

2020 - Patty Caputo created a Genealogy Escape Room activity. She presented it to twelve young people at the public library and later to branch members.

2020 GENFAIR The venue was rented for April 25, the speakers and caterer were lined up, and we were ready to welcome Alberta's genealogists to celebrate our 20th anniversary. But because of the Covid pandemic shutdown it was cancelled only days ahead of the date.

2021 VIRTUAL GENFAIR Our committee was able to reschedule the speakers who had been lined up for the 2020 GenFair, and to arrange that they could make their presentations via Zoom.

This was the first time an AGS GenFair and / or Annual General Meeting was held in a virtual format and it was deemed very successful. A record number of AGS members were in attendance for the AGM.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LDS FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER / FAMILY SEARCH CENTRE

When our branch was formed in 2000, the major source of genealogical information was the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. At that time, accessing its resources required traveling to Edmonton. Recognizing the need for a more accessible local resource, the Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society encouraged our LDS members to approach their church leaders in Wetaskiwin. Their efforts bore fruit in the spring of 2004 when a Family History Center was established within their church building, with Claudia Malloch appointed as Director.

The official Grand Opening of the Family History Center took place in October 2004. This local center made it significantly easier to borrow microfilms and conduct research without the need for long-distance travel. Our members emerged as some of the early major volunteers, dedicating their time and expertise to assist the public in their genealogical pursuits. This volunteerism continued until the center was temporarily closed during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Since January 2023 the website "FamilySearch.org" is the primary tool used to aid patrons in their family history endeavors. Additionally, several other genealogical websites are available free of charge via the "FamilySearch Portal", further enhancing the resources available to the community.

VOLUNTEER RESEARCH

Alice Hoyle has answered requests for genealogical research from outside our branch since our beginning, later joined by Lee Koop. Some requests have taken many hours, and all have been answered free of charge.

Their efforts are greatly appreciated and they often receive letters of thanks, but occasionally something special results:

Alice was contacted by people from Scotland who were on vacation and she was able to show them the ancestral lands near Gwynne.

Lee was invited by a family to the unveiling of a memorial to their grandmother, which they were able to place because of his research. Both researchers write of their "projects" for our newsletter. Lee, in particular, occasionally researches beyond the original request, and has had two of his reports awarded the Kenneth Young Award by AGS.

Arising from this, noting the value of obituaries, Lee Koop has undertaken to compile an extensive **collection of obituaries** from local archives, funeral homes, newspapers and funeral card collections.

CITY OF WETASKIWIN ARCHIVES

In February 2018 a "For Sale" sign was erected at the City of Wetaskiwin Civic Building, location of the City of Wetaskiwin Archives. This caused great concern to members of our Branch.

On June 25, 2018 twelve Wetaskiwin Branch members, attended the City of Wetaskiwin's council meeting. Alice Hoyle and Sharon Aney expressed concerns about the future of the City Archives, and stressed the importance of keeping this facility open to the public.

City of Wetaskiwin Archives was officially closed on November 27, 2020. From December 10, 2020 to December 22, 2021 four branch members participated in nine ZOOM meetings with other concerned citizen groups and the City's General Manager of Community and Protective Services to determine the viability of the Archives.

On June 13, 2022 eight branch members attended the City council meeting and made representations that the Archives should be preserved and re-opened. Several branch members wrote letters or emails to City councilors.

The Civic Building was sold in November 2022. Some space was leased back to the City for the Archives. On December 12, 2022 the City approved a memorandum of understanding with the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum for the management of the City of Wetaskiwin Archives. In the spring of 2024 Museum staff began taking inventory of the Archives. Several Branch members have been volunteering their time to assist.

COLLECTIBLES MARKET

Since our branch had been advocating for the preservation of the City Archives for several years, we felt that we should also provide some financial support to the Heritage Museum. In April 2024 we arranged a sale at the Museum of "collectibles", which were donated by our members. It realized over \$900.00.

SPEAKING TO INTERESTED GROUPS

□ Alice Hoyle and Claudia Malloch have spoken about genealogy and family history to several groups at area libraries and seniors residences. □ Bob Maynard responded to interested people in Leduc and has mentored an informal genealogy group there for several years.



*TO THE WETASKIWIN
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
ON 25*

*HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
YEARS!
TO THE WETASKIWIN*