



Roots & Branches

Vol. 11 No. 3

May 2013

BRANCH MEETINGS

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joan Krueger

Congratulations to Sharon Aney on receiving the Kenneth Young Award for Best Original Article. Great Job Sharon! *(Thank you, Joan. It was "Sheepskin Coats on the Prairies" in the May 2012 issue. SA.)*

Six members of the Wetaskiwin Branch attended the AGS Conference in Edmonton and I am sure they are putting what they learned to good use.

I had the pleasure of meeting Joan Conley from Camrose (newsletter editor) at the conference. She said Camrose Branch has a couple of volumes done of Births, Deaths and Marriages. I told her my mom was from a place called Diant and I could not find their marriage listed. I had a nice surprise yesterday when I checked my e-mail. Not only did she tell me where mom and dad were married but found also my birth announcement. So I am not adopted after all! As a child I was sure I was adopted because I didn't have a brother or sister. So you never know who will be sitting to next to at a workshop and how you will connect.

Alice and Claudia have been preparing the meeting programs and have done an excellent job. As well they are co-chairing the fall workshop. Thank you very much! Have a great summer!

Save the Date

October 19, 2013

"From Stump to Tree – Explore your Family History"

Presentations by
Lyn Meehan and John Althouse

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LIBRARY

Located at

City of Wetaskiwin Archives

Open: Tuesdays 1 – 3 pm

(Branch volunteers at library)

Library resources available during regular
Archives hours

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~ ~

WETASKIWIN FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

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

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ROOTS & BRANCHES is

published three times per year by
and for the members of Wetaskiwin
Branch of AGS. Back issues can
be viewed on our website.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

The theme of this issue seems to have become
"Stories our Grandmothers Told Us".

Many thanks to **Leroy Koop** for following up his
presentation at the February meeting by sharing
his grandmother Koop's memoirs of efforts to find
a permanent home. What a wise woman to have
written it those years ago. We learned that there
were many hard decisions, heartbreaks,
heartaches and hard times behind the words:
"They immigrated to Canada".

The story about my husband's great-
grandmother's journey from Wisconsin to Dakota
Territory in 1881 resulted from the compulsion of
saving everything and the virtue of de-cluttering.
We received it from my husband's distant cousin
in about 1989 and, not yet having been bitten by
the genealogy bug, I just packed it away.

Many years later I was delighted to find the story.
Even allowing for the exaggeration that comes
with looking back fondly, it brings to life her
experience of a long-ago trek the family made to
establish a new home.

PLUS this story told me to look in South Dakota
for the Urich family after their disappearance from
Wisconsin records. Down went a brick wall!

~ ~ ~

I was interested to hear **Dave Obee** tell us at the
AGS conference that we should not sell ourselves
short by describing our genealogy research
activities as "only family history" thus qualifying
our research as somehow less than legitimate.

We are historians! We research the times, lives,
circumstances of our ancestors and the places
where they lived. Stand tall and proclaim your
talent and your historical discoveries to the world.

~ ~ ~

Also announced at the AGS conference:
FamilySearch.org will soon be putting many new
Canadian records onto its website. ..FREE!

~ ~

RECAP OF MEETING PRESENTATIONS

FEBRUARY 2013

Our February meeting presentation was entitled "**Family Memories**". We were asked to tell about our memories relating to family. We heard of * finding treasured photos and documents that they didn't know existed; * of the love of photography that their father had and how that has been passed down to his daughter; * of the discovery of a huge number of painstakingly kept personal journals: a record of her daily life that is now being sorted by the daughter; * of the struggles that ancestors from Siberia had to endure in order to get their family out of Russia and safely to Canada; * of the hardships encountered by a wife and mother of 4 young children when her husband was sent overseas with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces in WWI; * of the gift given to one of our branch members– a beautiful scrapbook created by his sister, and filled with family pictures and memories; * that a branch member is writing a book about his family, their experiences and achievements; and * of the work already done by an extended family member who has created a tribute to family by producing a book of photos, memories and history.

MARCH 2013

Our March presentation was entitled "**Did you Know?**" Members were asked to share with everyone, some bit of information, a website, a resource, book, etc. that they find useful for their genealogical research. We were shown * how to access military records on the LAC site; * how to view maps of Ontario and actually view the land our ancestors owned; * how to access and use the resources of the updated familysearch.org website, especially the Family Tree module; * how to use some of the lesser-known resources on the public library website, including genealogy research, searching for books at all Alberta libraries, and * learning a language using the tracpac website.

APRIL 2013

- Our 11th annual workshop date was set as October 19, 2013 again to be at Norquest College. Co-chairs Alice Hoyle & Claudia Malloch are arranging committees, speakers and topics.
- Bob Maynard reported that ancestry.com is no longer available at the Millet Library, but they do have a good selection of genealogy resources on the shelves.
- For the program Alice presented "**Bits and Pieces**" that informed or reminded us of several websites and non-internet resources for delving further into family history. A very handy hand-out!
- Claudia demonstrated how to add sources to the Familysearch.org Family Tree program.

LIBRARY

Alice Hoyle

- New additions to the library Periodicals:–Internet Genealogy, October/November 2012 issue and June/July 2012 issue; also Family Tree (UK edition) – October, 2012 issue; Who Do You Think You Are (UK) – December, 2012 issue. Thank you, Bob (Maynard) for your generous donations.
- We have also received newsletters from various branches within AGS, and the AFHS newsletter. These have been added to our collection at the resource centre.
- Our willing volunteers are very much appreciated: Syl Gauvreau, Bob Maynard and Bobbie MacPherson! They consistently show up for their shifts and I am very grateful for their assistance.

"DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE IT TOUGH?"

by Leroy Koop

THE LIFE TRAVELS OF JACOB H. KOOP & KATHARINA REIMER

Preface:

During the mid-1960's while I was attending high school in Morris, Manitoba, my grandmother Koop lived with my family. She spent hours at the dining room table writing in her German Gothic script. Asked what she was doing, she replied that she was writing about her life travels; a copy (no photo copier around) for each of her eight surviving children. I later found and collected 4 of the "stories", had them translated, compiled and then wrote her story for all to read.

This life story is about my paternal grandparents, Jacob H. Koop and Katharina Reimer; from their birth places in Ukraine, to growing giant water melons in Siberia & finally to farming and retirement in southern Manitoba. Both grew up in the Mennonite faith.

Jacob H. Koop was born on May 4, 1881 in the village of Karassan, Crimea, Ukraine. In 1903 he began his compulsory four year service for the Russian government. Because of his faith, Jacob was a conscientious objector to military service; he worked as a civilian labourer; planting trees and cultivating government gardens. During this service, he became very sick with asthma, and was discharged from his obligation after only one year and eight months.

Katharina Reimer was born on November 21, 1881 in the #13 village of Schoenau, Sagraadowka Colony, Ukraine, or South Russia as some sources cite. On May 31, 1905 Jacob and Katharina were married in Kleefeld, Molotschna, South Russia at Katharina's parents' place.

Three days after the wedding, Jacob and Katharina moved to Karassan, Crimea where Jacob became the manager of the farm owned by his mother (his father was deceased). Jacob and Katharina lived in the Crimea for about three years during which time 3 children were born; Katherine (April 11, 1906), Anna (April 25, 1907) and Jacob (August 9, 1908).

Jacob and his family moved back to Molotschna in 1908, and Jacob became a manager of a large farm (vineyard) owned by a wealthy landowner. There were seven German families and about a hundred Russian workers living on this farm. While employed at this farm a son Henry was born (1910) but died in infancy.

In 1911, after three years at this vineyard, Jacob and family moved onto Katharina's parents' yard in Kleefeld in preparation for their emigration to Siberia. The Russian government was offering cheap land in Siberia to farming people in hopes of producing more food for the Russian population, and at the same time educating Russian peasants in the art of farming. While in Kleefeld their son, Peter (April 13, 1911) was born.

On May 5, 1911, with Peter but three weeks old, they began the trek of about 4500 km. to Siberia. It took five days by train via Moscow and three days by horses and carriage to reach Omsk, where Jacob's uncle and aunt, and Katharina's brother, Gerhard, lived. After a few days the horses and carriage trip resumed. Two additional horses were purchased and a Russian guide was hired for the three day trip to Orloff where two of Katharina's half-brothers lived.

En route bread and milk was purchased from Russian settlements. The Russian guide always set up night camp by the river. The mosquitoes were so bad that Katharina's face became so swollen that she could hardly see.

They rested in Orloff for two days and since this settlement of about sixty-five German villages was already full, Jacob and family continued on to a new settlement some fifty "werst" (1 werst = 1.0668 kilometres = .663 miles) from Orloff. This took a further two days with horses. Jacob and Katharina initially arrived at village #81 (name unknown) and finally settled in Silberfeld #86.

Jacob and Katharina owned a large farm in Silberfeld. Jacob became the secretary-treasurer for seven neighbouring German villages. Each winter Jacob would load up his sleigh with hams, eggs, butter, flour, etc. and travel to Slavgorod, about forty "werst" from the settlement. There he would "negotiate" with the Russian officials for lower taxes for the German villages.

While in Silberfeld seven more children were born: John (July 22, 1913), Gerhard (George) (March 26, 1915), Aganetha (July 28, 1917), twins Margaret (1919-1925) and Lena (1919-1920), Helena (February 18, 1921) and Henry (1922). Lena passed away as a one year old and Henry in infancy.

Because of the wars, World War I and more so the Russian Revolution, the Mennonite lifestyle was being threatened and the decision to get out of Russia was made in 1925. The villagers from surrounding settlements paid two men to go to Moscow to arrange for passports for all those who wanted to leave Russia. The two men were gone for several months and when they returned to Siberia, they told the villagers to sell everything quickly and go to Moscow to pick up the passports. Jacob and Katharina sold everything they couldn't carry with them.

On October 23, 1925 Jacob, Katharina and nine children started on yet another trek; this one would lead some of them to Canada. They left Silberfeld in a horse drawn hayrack to the Russian city of Slavgorod. Katharina, at this time already well into her pregnancy with their last child Henry, was sitting on a rocking chair. Daughter Margaret was dancing and singing so wildly that her mother, Katharina, told her to calm down or something dreadful would happen to her.

On October 25, 1925 the family left Slavgorod by train en route to Moscow, arriving there on October 31. Here the villagers, including Jacob, paid off the two men who had supposedly arranged for passports. The villagers were told where to go for their passports and the two men left. Alas! There were no passports!

Jacob's family stayed in a refugee camp in the middle of Moscow for over a month. Jacob had to scrounge together money for the passports and the ship transportation. Receiving financial assistance from fellow villagers and from friends and relatives back in the settlement, Jacob was able to gather enough funds to cover all but one ticket for the ship transportation.

The family made the difficult decision that the oldest son, Jacob, age 17, would remain behind, and that Peter, age 14, should also stay behind to keep Jacob company and so that they could look after each other. They went to stay with their mother's sisters' families in Friedensfeld #3 and Neu-Schoensee #2 in the Sagradowka Colony, respectively. In 1929 Jacob and Peter started their own emigration saga to Paraguay, South America, arriving there in 1930.

On December 7, 1925 Jacob and Katharina's family, now minus Jacob and Peter, left Moscow by train. On December 8 they passed through the Red Gate (triumphal arches built

to commemorate battles and this one was on the Russian-Latvia border), and in the morning of December 9, they arrived in Riga, Latvia.

There Jacob and Katharina experienced another terrible heartache. On December 10 they had to take their daughter, Margaret, 6 1/2 years old, to the hospital, and during the night she died. Early in the morning Jacob went to the hospital and was met by a nurse carrying Margaret's clothes. Jacob was able to see Margaret, but time did not allow Katharina to do so. By noon they had to be on the ship, the last ship to leave that winter. Katharina in her memoirs wrote "Oh, that was a hard blow for us!" The ministers came to console the family and to pray with them. The ministers promised that they would bury Margaret and would also have a service for her. (Jacob and Katharina learned later that this indeed did happen.)

In the evening of December 17, the eight remaining family members arrived in London, England. After a 4 1/2 hour train ride, they arrived in Liverpool and on December 18 they boarded the ship Montrose for the journey to Canada. The sailors on the ship made Christmas Day special for the children. The crew threw candies and nuts across a rough table and the children were all wearing pointed paper hats.

The Montrose arrived at Saint John, New Brunswick on December 27. Here there was more heartache for Jacob and Katharina. Son, John (my dad), age 12, had an eye infection and was not allowed to continue on with the rest of the family. The oldest daughter, Katherine, age 19, stayed with John. Back on a train, the remaining six family members arrived in Montreal, Quebec on December 28 and finally in Winnipeg, Manitoba on December 30. Again on a train the family arrived in Morden, Manitoba on January 1, 1926. They were met by Katharina's sister Margaret and her husband Heinrich Wiens. Jacob and Katharina's journey from central Siberia to central Canada had taken 2 months and 9 days. One week later Katherine and John also arrived in Morden.

Jacob rented a small house in Morden where the family lived for about 14 months. Their son Henry was born on January 21, 1926. While in Morden Jacob apparently earned a living by sawing wood for someone for \$1 per day, with no coffee breaks.

In 1927 Jacob purchased a farm in the Grunthal, Manitoba area and in May 1937 moved to a farm in the McCreary, Man. area. In 1949 Jacob and Katharina retired in Steinbach, Man.

On January 5, 1952 sons Jacob and Peter, the two left behind in Russia in 1925, with their families (now numbering 19 persons), emigrated to Manitoba from Paraguay, South America, finally re-uniting the family after 27 years.

In her memoirs Katharina wrote, "Yes, many prayers were said and many tears shed until the time finally came when we could put our arms around our dear children and grandchildren and see them face to face."

In the late 1990's after several years of looking for ancestors, I decided to look for descendants instead. To commemorate the 1952 reunion of my grandmother's family, the first cousins held a reunion in the summer of 2002 celebrating the 50th anniversary of that important reunion of the Koop family.

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A clear conscience is the sign of a fuzzy memory.

## **PIONEERING IN DAKOTA TERRITORY 1881** ( George & Wilmina Aney Story)

Written by Averill Amsden Ross, May 13, 1953 using information supplied by Wilmina Aney's daughters: Harriet Aney Laird & Edith Aney Osborne  
submitted by Sharon Aney

Willmina Urich was born in Tomah, Wisconsin in 1858. In 1877 she married George Aney who was born in 1857, also in Tomah. He was one of seven brothers. They all came to Wilmot, Dakota Territory (later South Dakota) to homestead.

At the time the Aneys came to Dakota Territory they had a two-year old son, Earl. They formed part of a wagon train from Tomah, WI to the Dakota prairies in May 1881. The train consisted of five covered wagons. The people coming with the Aneys were Willmina's parents, John & Harriet Urich, two brothers, Emery and Charles, a married sister, Mrs Clark Hebard, her husband and baby daughter and George's parents and six brothers. So this Aney – Urich wagon train was composed of many relatives.

George was too proud-spirited to drive open hitched to his covered wagon but rather had a team of horses heavy enough to do farm work. Willmina said that many times in the river bottoms the native spring grass was so high that the following wagons could not be seen but were located by the waving grass.

George led the train since he drove horses. The wagon contained the small cook stove, bed, table, heavy bureau of walnut. The other furniture was also walnut. Besides this there was a feather bed, baby crib, quilts, dishes, candle molds, cooking utensils, etc. On the side of the wagon were the plow, tools, tub and all extra necessities.

Behind George was his father's wagon driven by a brother. Since there were seven brothers, two wagons were needed for the rest of the Aney family. Then came Willmina's sister in the Clark Hebard wagon and last was the Urich wagon driven by their son, Charles.

The trail taken was the foot of Big Stone Lake through Ortonville and Milbank. Land was purchased from the government at \$5.00 an acre with a limit of 160 acres per man and also a 40 acres tree claim if certain conditions were agreed upon. The relatives each bought a quarter-section beginning four miles north of Wilmot – not then in existence. All farms were adjoining.

Immediately upon reaching their land the plows were scoured and put into the virgin soil to turn sod for the houses. The grass was fairly alive with fleas. Willmina was very allergic to flea bites and suffered much from them so my father (George) took the cover off his wagon and drove three trips to Milbank to purchase lumber for a house. Milbank was thirty miles away with no road. He hauled enough lumber to build a one room cabin. Thus Willmina had the only frame house in all that region of sod houses. The one room later became part of their house.

These sod huts contained all of the families' possessions. Those not fortunate enough to have an oak or black walnut table made one of boards fastened to the wall with leather hinges. Sod barns were erected after the seed, which had been brought in the covered wagon, had been planted in the new soil.

When winter came the men worked together and made a bob sled for each family. In some evenings, several families would meet at one cabin. They would bring stewed rabbit sandwiches, pies of dried berries or pumpkin, wild plum preserves. Many of the women were excellent cooks.

One of the men would have a fiddle or mouth organ, one would "call off" and the fun would begin with dancing and singing, making a room full of happy people. The bed was often moved out and the wall table dropped and people sat on the floor.

When a blizzard was over everyone who could get out his own door or a high window would get out and look across the prairie drifts in his neighbour's direction to see whether there was smoke from the chimney. If he saw none he took his shovel, as did everyone else who could get out. There were always some who could. Amid much shouting and joking all of the houses and barns were shovelled out or tunnelled into.

In the winter of 1883 there was much snow and blizzard after blizzard. The flour in the Aney home was gone and the near relatives had little. So George took a hand sled and walked over the drifts to Brown's Valley, Minnesota, a distance of 10 miles to get a sack of flour. He could not drive the horses since their weight would have broken through the crust on top of the snow, and as the snow was deeper than the length of their legs, horses were useless.

In those early days Indians usually walked in groups toward the lake for fishing or travelled into the Dakota Hills where they lived in tents. Willmina had such great fear of the Indians that if they stopped for a drink at the well she gave them all the food she had and the family had biscuits for supper.

When George took trips in the fall with wheat to be traded for the winter's supply of flour he met a man named Dittis who had a flour mill at a town called Travarre. It was located 2 miles west of Browns Valley and on the bank of the Little Minnesota River which flowed into the north source of Big Stone Lake. George became miller there.

The mill was run by water power made by a dam across the stream. Edith says, "My earliest recollections are of that dam and playing Hide and Seek around sacks of flour in the mill store room and playing along the river. As agriculture advanced the stream dried up and now even local residents would never suspect that there had been a mill there which was run by water power. Now there are level fields of grain which are grown and harvested".

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VOLUNTEER RESEARCH:

Alice Hoyle

Quigley: In February, our branch received a request for assistance from Ian Quigley. He was looking for information regarding his grandmother and his mother's adoption. This was responded to by Don Brosius and Claudia Malloch who were also contacted by Mr. Quigley and they were able to find considerable information. Mr. Quigley's reply was very positive and he praised their helpfulness and was very grateful for the information provided to him.

I have forwarded to the **gentleman from Venezuela**, a long list of possible websites, etc. that he could use to attempt to locate living relatives. I also advised him about the 411canada site and gave him the URL's of various message boards, etc.

Dufva: Recently, I was contacted by someone wanting an obituary for Albert Dufva who died in 1949 and is buried in the Water Glen Cemetery near Ferintosh. She had the obituary for Mrs. Dufva (Elvira). In doing my research I found that Albert actually died in Vancouver. I gave the researcher all the BC Archives data numbers, etc. so she could request the death certificate if she desired.

I checked the City of Wetaskiwin Archives' obituary file but there isn't one for Albert Dufva (Elvira's is there). I did see on the 1940 voters list that the Dufva family was living at R. R. 2, Wetaskiwin. They obviously moved to Vancouver between 1940 and 1949 when he died. I also found that Albert was drafted in 1918, in Calgary. He was single, 22 years of age, and listed his mother as his next of kin. I sent the researcher all this information along with his regimental number and the information on how she could look up the records. (in the Ferintosh book, Albert Dufva is listed as a local man who served in WWI). The Dufva family does NOT show up in the following local history books: Pioneer Pathways; Gwynne; Bittern Lake; Lewisville; Ferintosh

Motuz: I received a request for information about a Metro Motuz who was born in 1919 in Manitoba. Approximately 1949, after his marriage to Helene Tanguay ended, he moved to Alberta, working in the oil fields.

He may have remarried someone with the first name of Alexandra. The Calmar Community Cemetery Association shows a headstone with Metro Motuz, born in 1919 and died in 1974. The researcher is trying to get confirmation that this is the same person, and she would like to find an obituary for them. She also contacted various other sources, and she advised me later that she had been sent an obituary for Metro Motuz – this from the Edmonton paper. A phone call to the City of Wetaskiwin Archives confirmed that the researcher has also asked them for the same information, and they have advised her that there isn't an obituary for any Motuz family member in their records.

Our branch member Jean Browse, who assists with research, advised me that there is a Motuz living in Devon – possibly the son of Metro. Jean gave me the person's name and phone number and I have passed this along to the researcher. Further to this, Jean Browse searched the Calmar Local History book and there is no mention there of a Motuz family.

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## **FAMILYSEARCH FAN CHART**

Claudia Malloch

If you enter your family information on FamilyTree (available as part of FamilySearch) you will see your populated fan chart when you click on Family Tree. It's a very impressive chart but it was very frustrating to me to find that it couldn't be saved or printed from that screen.

Recently I watched a very informative Webinar entitled "What's New at FamilySearch" available on an ongoing basis at <http://www.familytreewebinars.com/>

One of the useful things I learned on that webinar was that you can print the fan chart by going to <https://createfan.com/> and logging in with your FamilySearch user name and password. You are then able to create and save your fan chart as a PDF file and print it on your own printer. This definitely works because I did it. The colours on the chart are vivid but the print is quite small and I haven't found a cure for that yet.

Give it a try; it's very impressive.

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*Our most treasured family heirlooms are our sweet
family memories.*

Unknown

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