



Wetaskiwin Branch
Alberta Genealogical Society

Roots & Branches

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CONTENTS

President's Message	p.1
Editor's Corner	p.2
Meeting recaps	p.3
Kieltyka – S. Aney	p.4
Wehrpass – C. Malloch	p.7
Canadian Gen. webpages	p.11

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ROOTS & BRANCHES

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Diane Strohschein

The Annual Meeting will mark the first anniversary of my presidency. I think that it has been a positive year, and I thank those who have worked hard to make it so: especially Claudia and Carole on the program committee, Alice for so competently doing secretary & treasurer duties, Rosella for keeping up the history book and Sharon for continuing to issue the newsletter.

It has been encouraging to have several guests at our meetings this year. I have to give credit to Claudia Malloch for developing and presenting her CSI course. It has been a big attraction. It has also rekindled our members' interest in our own research, as we get better at it. Don't forget to renew your membership!

At the January meeting we discussed the Canada 150 project, set up to celebrate Canada's 150 Anniversary in 2017. Sharon Aney will coordinate the project when she returns this spring.

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*The 2015 Alberta Genealogical Society Conference, hosted by the AGS Edmonton Branch, will be bringing you the most electrifying and diverse international, regional and local speakers to maximize your learning experience. April 18 & 19, 2015 at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre, Edmonton, Alberta.*

## COMMITTEES

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## BRANCH MEETINGS

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

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## WETASKWIN BRANCH: AGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

Located at  
City of Wetaskiwin Archives  
4904 – 51 Street  
Resources available "On call"  
Branch Library co-ordinator  
Contact: Bob Maynard  
780-387-4187  
[maynard@persona.ca](mailto:maynard@persona.ca)

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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

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

"Tradition!" proclaimed the Fiddler on the Roof.

As we look back on Christmas 2014 what do we consider as our Christmas traditions? They can be as varied as the families involved: recipes & cooking bees, decorations, delivering for Secret Santa, walking, skiing, skating, singing, church services, visiting, and the list goes on.....

Whatever we choose to repeat from time to time can become a tradition for us if we make a positive emotional connection between the occasion, the activity, and people involved.

Traditions do not always have to come from our ancestors ...to our grandchildren we may be the ancestors! ☺ And they do not always have to be like the Hallmark cards.

Every season of our lives can be an occasion for developing traditions; some that already exist, or some that we have yet to develop. Think about the possibilities that occur at any time of year in your family.

Some that I know of include:

- Our Thanksgiving is at our cabin and grandchildren look forward to leaf fights with Grandpa. Turkey dinner might be a picnic on the deck.
- Easter egg & birthday party treasure hunts
- 20+ years of summer vacations at the same lake.
- Re-gifting an amusing item (such as an anniversary plate, ceramic duck, etc) at "significant" occasions
- A game or activity whenever the family gathers: scrabble, card games, singing carols before opening gifts or feasting .....

If we make an effort to develop, share and value such repeated activities and occasions with our younger generations, it may be no surprise that they will come to regard them as "what we do" in our family story.

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## RECAP OF MEETING PRESENTATIONS

### OCTOBER 2014

#### **CSI FAMILY HISTORY I – Claudia Malloch**

Claudia started us off on our investigative journey by presenting the introduction to a new research program called "CSI – Family History", which is aimed at improving / developing our research skills. Each participant has chosen an ancestor to research. Claudia will be available to provide assistance as new research techniques are tried out each month. We were all very eager to begin our journey into the world of genealogical mystery solving!

### NOVEMBER 2014

#### **BANTAM BATTALIONS – Sandi Ratch**

She began researching this topic because while researching her great-grandfather's history she found out that he had tried to enlist in WWI, but had been refused because he was deemed too short to be accepted in the Expeditionary Forces. Later, he found out that a battalion had been formed, consisting of men who were shorter than the military standard. He once again attempted to enlist, and this time was accepted. Sandi has done extensive research on these battalions: their training, their service records, the history of the camps where they trained, the men who belonged to the battalions, etc. Her research, knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject kept us all intrigued.

#### **CSI FAMILY HISTORY II– Claudia Malloch**

Claudia presented session #2 of this ongoing project. Claudia demonstrated various ways of researching our ancestors and gave in-depth information about the familysearch.org website. She advised the branch members that on the website was a section called "5 minute genealogy" – a training section that we could all access from our home computers. In addition, she showed us the information we could find using the 'wiki' area of the familysearch.org website, and once again reminded us that by entering our family members into the Family Tree module at the above website, we could easily record our sources. Claudia's knowledge of the subject, and her excellent presentation provoked some interesting discussions.

### JANUARY 2015 – Claudia Malloch

#### **CSI Family History III**

Claudia presented session #3 of this ongoing project. Using the data available to us on the familysearch.org website, Claudia showed us a learning module about "Organization" and gave us some good hints about using the Family Search website. We were then treated to a session in the Family History Centre, with branch members having the opportunity to try out what they had learned! Claudia advised that there were multiple hand-outs related to her training session, and she will be forwarding this information to everyone who requested it, via email.

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Just a Note: Be careful using "average life expectancy" figures from the past. Remember that infant and early child mortality was much higher in the old days, which affects the "average." Many people in those days still reached their seventies and eighties.

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*One reason for emigration in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> century:  
In feudalism your count votes. In democracy your vote counts.*

## **BARTHOLOMEW KIELTYKA: A BIRD OF PASSAGE?**

Sharon Aney

*In my mind*, the stereotypical Eastern European immigrant to North America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the impoverished peasant. He had to scrimp and save, sell all possessions that would be too inconvenient to carry, say a tearful farewell to family and home, and make the long, uncomfortable journey into an unknown future.

I recently began to think of my maternal grandfather's story, and the phrase "bird of passage" popped into my mind ...

"Birds of passage" are mentioned on the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History website:

*Many millions of immigrants who arrived in the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries did so with the intentions of returning to their villages in the Old Country. Known as "birds of passage" many of these eastern and southern European migrants were peasants who had lost their property as a result of the commercialization of agriculture. They came to America to earn enough money to allow them to return home and purchase a piece of land. Many of these immigrants came to America alone, expecting to re-join their families in Europe within a few years. For southern and eastern Europe approximately 44 of every 100 who arrived returned back home.*

Whether or not that explanation accurately described my grandfather, I do not know, but he did make several voyages across the Atlantic.

Bartłomej Kieltyka was born in 1881, the third son of four children to Lawrenti and Katarzyna (Kochanowicz) Kieltyka at Wyszatyce, Przemyśl, Poland. Following the death of their father, Katarzyna re-married and their step-father, Antoni Szpik, raised the children from the time that Bartholomew was 6 years old.

His first venture to the USA was in 1902 at the age of 21. He met up with several friends and relatives from Wyszatyce in Chicago, and two of his siblings were married there. His sister, Mary married Thomas Muzak on July 15, 1903 and his brother Antoni married Katarzyna Fraczak on October 18, 1903. They took advantage of that occasion for a family photo.

While the others remained in the USA, Bartholomew returned to Poland in 1904 (according to his response to questions on enlistment papers in 1918). On October 15, 1907 he married Maria Kuczerepa and on February 12, 1909 their first daughter, Anna was born.

Barely three months later, on May 25, 1909, Bartholomew departed from the port of Bremen on the SS Krosnprinz Wilhelm, which arrived at New York on June 2. He advised officials that his destination was Omaha, Nebraska, where his brother Antoni and sister, Mary were now living. Meanwhile at home, his baby, Anna, was three months old and Mary was pregnant with their second daughter, Marie, who would be born on December 17, 1909.

Why did he leave Mary in these circumstances? Was Bartholomew restless? Irresponsible? Unrealistic? Why did **she** not accompany him to the country where his siblings had made a new home? Was Mary afraid? Stubborn? Ill? Could they not afford two passages? I don't know the answers.

The 1910 census of Douglas County, Nebraska records Bartholomew living in the household of Thomas and Mary Muzak. Family lore is that he was at his mother's deathbed. She died on Nov 22, 1911 in her home at Wyszatyce. Fifteen months later Bartholomew was on board the Kaiser Wilhelm II which sailed from Bremen on February 4, 1913 and arrived at New York on February 12. He was 31 years old and destined for Chicago again.



Mary was again pregnant. Katherine's birthdate is unknown to me. Perhaps this photo was a memento for Bartholomew as he was away? It does indicate that Mary had 3 little girls dependent upon her, when, a year and a half later, World War I began on July 28, 1914.

Mary's village of Wyszatyce was destroyed, by its own Austrian army, in an attempt to defend against a Russian troop invasion against Fortress Przemysl. The village residents were relocated to a refugee camp in Czechoslovakia.

Anna, about five years old at the time, remembered, "..... We were crowded into boxcars and when we got there found large buildings and large rooms where many families stayed together. There were only women, children and old people in the camp. Our mother had to go work in the fields with the other women. They were growing sugar beets. The older people in the camp looked after us kids until mother came back. .... I remember the times that we were so hungry we cried while Mom stood in line to get coupons to get us food. We were usually cold, too. Many children died in the camps. One of these was our little sister, Katherine."

Bartholomew was still in Chicago. He had been working as a carpenter. The wings of this bird of passage had been clipped by war measures. He was unable to return to Poland.



Bartholomew (on the left) was a member of the Polish Falcons, a para-military group in the USA, dedicated to maintaining Polish nationalism and physical fitness.

Polish national spirit began to rise with the hope that Polish independence from Austria could be established during the hostilities in Europe. The French supported the establishment of an army of Polish nationalists, (called The Polish Army in France, or Haller's Army after General Haller, or The Blue Army, after the colour of their uniforms). In October of 1917 recruitment began in the United States. Bartholomew enlisted in Chicago on November 15, 1918. He was immediately sent to Camp Niagara at Niagara on the Lake, Ontario, and shortly thereafter embarked for Europe.

*"Subsequent to the armistice of November 11, 1918, soldiers of The Blue Army were combined into Polish Regiments #43, 44, and 45 of Borderland Riflemen under command of Joseph Pidsudski. These three regiments saw most of their fighting after the Armistice, and not for the cause of establishing Poland's western borders, but in the fight against the rising Bolshevik menace in the East, and the struggle to establish Poland's eastern borders. This war, known as the "Russo – Polish War" and the "Polish Soviet War" went on through 1920, until fighting was ended by the Treaty of Riga in 1921.*

*Many of these Polish-American men found themselves fighting in Ukraine and Volhynia. Some soldiers reached as far as the capital city, Kiev, but they returned to Poland and a restored nation.” From “Haller’s Polish Army in France”, by Paul S. Valasek, publ. 2006 by Whitehall Printing.*

After his discharge from the army Bartholomew made his way to Wyszatyce. He found his family living in a rough barracks, as the refugees had been returned from their displacement. Anna remembered that conditions improved somewhat with her father on the scene.

During the next 4 years three more little girls were born, two surviving, one being my mother, Aniela, on October 26, 1921, and Michalena born on January 6, 1924. Bartholomew’s dream to live in America was strengthened by the harsh post-war circumstances, but he could not get permission to re-enter the USA.



On July 21, 1925, the KIELTYKA family, all of them this time: Bartholomew, Mary, Anna, Marie, Aniela and Michalena, departed from the port of Danzig aboard the S. S. Estonia (East Asiatic Co. Ltd., Baltic America Line), arriving at Halifax, Canada on August 1.

Bartholomew was 43 years old. This was his 4<sup>th</sup> landing in North America, 23 years after his first arrival at New York.

Mary & Bartholomew KIELTYKA’s passport photo. 1925 Aniela (my mother) on her father’s knee, Michalena on her mother’s.

They ended up on a farm at Kuroki Saskatchewan. It required hard physical work, by Mary and their daughters, as well as Bartholomew, to break the land and make a living from the crops and dairy

Was this the fulfilment of his dream? Or was it second best? This bird of passage became a Canadian citizen in 1934. He developed health issues and sold the farm in 1945. Mary died on April 25, 1952. Bartholomew died on January 1, 1953. He was 71.



1948 Bartholomew & Mary KIELTYKA at the home of Aniela (Nellie) Nakoneshny Lanigan, Sask.

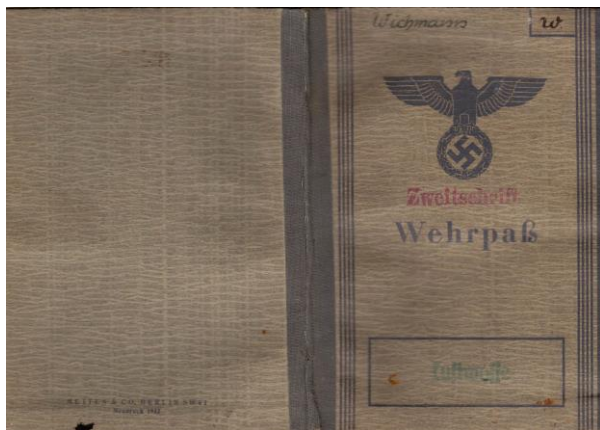
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THE WEHRPASS SAGA- HOW A GENEALOGY SOCIETY CAN HELP YOU

by Claudia Malloch

Several months ago, our son-in-law, Jay, in BC, asked me to help him locate the family of a man who had been in the German Luftwaffe during World War II. Jay's grandfather had left him some German artifacts obtained when our military were refurbishing air force bases in Germany for use by the allies. One of these items was a "Wehrpass" for a Luftwaffe Major named Heinrich Wiechmann. Jay really wanted to return it to the Major's family but had no idea how to go about that.

"The Wehrpass shows Major Wiechmann's birth date and place but I may have read it incorrectly because I was unable to locate it. If anyone is interested, I have attached a copy of the cover and identity page of the pass. Maybe someone reading this will know where Heinrich was born."



Really, what were the chances of me being able to help? Pretty slim, I thought.

In order to translate the document he sent, I used FamilySearch Wiki and was so impressed with the amount of assistance I received there that I wrote an article on the Research Wiki Tool for Wetaskiwin Branch newsletter, Roots & Branches, (February 2013, available on the Wetaskiwin Branch website. Ed) which is also distributed to the Alberta Genealogy Society and all of its branches.

John Althouse of the Edmonton Branch read the article from our newsletter and obtained my permission to have it printed in the August issue of "My German Roots / Meine Deutschen Wurzeln", the newsletter of AGS Edmonton Branch's German Special Interest Group.

The story of the Wehrpass is probably best told through the correspondence which ensued.

Peter Von Lipinsky, a member of the German Special Interest group read the article. His email of July 13, 2014 explains to John what happened then.

"I have been corresponding with a fellow in Germany. I send the latest issue of the German newsletter to this fellow, so he has something to read. Today, I received an answer from Karl - Ulrich, giving me all the details to the question you had published in the newsletter about where Heinrich was born."

This was the email Peter received from his friend in Germany.

"Dear Peter.

A quick response to the question in regards to the place mentioned in the soldiers ID card. The soldier comes from a place called Icker, a small village that now has been annexed by the larger place called (postal code 49191) Belm. Both of them are located on the outskirts of the city of Osnabrück, a large city in lower Saxony. Best regards, Karl - Ulrich."

On July 14, 2014 this correspondence arrived. The fellow writes: (translation):

I called a nephew from Heinrich Wiechmann . On account of a mistake made by the civil registration authorities, he writes his name only with an " i", as in Wichmann, and he know about his uncle, which is Heinrich Wiechmann, who lived until very recently. But the cousin would see that a contact will be made and the Wehrpass will be returned to the son of Heinrich Wiechmann.

From Peter to John:

According to my friend, Karl Ulrich in Germany, he thinks that the son and the daughter of Heinrich Wiechmann are in their late 70's. The daughter would see to it that the right descendant of Heinrich Wiechmann would get the Wehrpass.

Peter provided Elke's address which I passed on to Jay.

A letter from Peter to John (asking that it be forwarded to me)

"Hi John.

I just received an e-mail from Germany. To be more precise, the e-mail is from the youngest daughter of Mr. Heinrich Wiechmann, who in 1945 had the old German Wehrpass. The lady wrote, that she would love to receive the Wehrpass

This is the translated letter from Mrs. Elke Brinkmann, the youngest daughter from Mr. Heinrich Wiechmann, the former owner of the old German Wehrpass (German Army I.D. card) to Peter von Lipinsky, of Edmonton,AB.

Dear Mr. von Lipinsky.

Many thanks for your letter. First of all I would like to inform you, that I most certainly have an interest in the Wehrpass. (Army I.D. card)

I'm the youngest daughter of Mr. Heinrich Wiechmann and I'm sorry to say, that in my younger years (I'm 56 years old now) I never paid much attention to the war time stories (world war II)and my father never spoke about that time. My father passed away over 10 years ago. I only know a few details, for instance that my father was a prisoner in a Russian POW camp. He also was for period of time in Greece and he was also stationed for some time in the Crimea.

When Mr. Otto called me and told me that the Wehrpass from my father is now in Canada. I could not explain this, simply because of my father being in a Russian POW camp. I would be very happy, if you could arrange to have the original Wehrpass delivered send to me. I will of course reimburse you for any expenses you may have.

Signed: Elke Brinkmann

My nephew responded to Elke's request for more information on how the Wehrpass arrived in Canada with this email:

"Hello Mrs. Brinkmann

... I'll try and tell you as much as I can about the Wehrpass. I inherited it from my grandfather several years ago and always had a desire to return it to Mr. Wiechmann's family. My Grandfather was part of a unit in WWII that repaired airfields that were captured by the British. During the repairs they often found items from German soldiers and sent them home as souvenirs, which was a common thing during the war. I don't believe my Grandfather would have had any contact with your father during the war.

I always wondered about the fate of this mysterious soldier. I was so excited when the connection to you was made, and I was also very pleased to learn that he survived the war and went on to have a family.

I will shortly be sending to the Wehrpass to you.

Jason

Several emails were exchanged over the next while. On January 2, 2015, I received this request from Jay's aunt, Bev:

"We all discussed the Wehrpass over Christmas. I now have it in my possession. The outcome of the talk is that we would like a picture of Heinrich Wiechmann to show us that he is the actual match to the Wehrpass. Also we thought there should be proof that the existing family are his children

From: PETER VON LIPINSKY

Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2015 10:41 AM

To: Bev ____

I'm forwarding the mail from Mrs. E. Brinkmann with the attached pictures to you. The pictures where Heinrich W. is in uniform with his newly wed wife, (wedding was in 1942) definitely is Mr. Heinrich Wiechmann. In some of the other pictures you can see the resemblance to the picture in the Wehrpass. (I had only seen the picture of Mr. Heinrich W. in the Wehrpass in a picture which appeared in the society newsletter story).



I was a little disappointed that Elke Brinkmann did not send us a copy of her civil registration birth certificate. However, in this day and age, everybody is super careful with giving anybody any personal information. That's the times we are living in.

Hello Mr. v. Lipinsky

*Today in the afternoon, (that would be Monday afternoon, Feb.2.) I received the Wehrpass from my deceased father. My two sons were at my place on a visit today and it was very interesting for them to read in the Wehrpass all the places their grandfather had been. Yes, after all this time, the Wehrpass is finally home and in the family again. The German Customs had kept the package because the official at the Customs thought that there has to be duty paid, because it was packed in a CD cover. I just had to open the package and everything was OK. We all say many thanks to everybody (in Canada). I will of course send the picture of me holding the Wehrpass soon. **(Note from Peter:** I had asked Mrs. E. B. to do this = send us the picture = to be used for our genealogical society newsletter) *I would like to show my appreciation to everybody, especially Mrs. Morrison. Many greetings from Germany and you still write a pretty good German even after being in Canada for 60 years. So long for now, Elke Brinkmann**

Note from Peter to Bev.

Well Bev, I guess the story of the German Wehrpass is finally over and it had a very happy ending. It all started with Claudia Malloch writing in our society newsletter about somebody trying to find the descendants from a Heinrich Wiechmann so that an old German document, a Wehrpass could return to these people.

So, as Peter suggested I am sharing with you the story of a lost document which crossed an ocean and eventually, because of a family's wishes and the help and determination of several other people, found its way back home.

Never underestimate the power of your genealogy society and its newsletter when you need assistance....ask in your newsletter...someone out there may be able to help you.

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*This packrat has learned that what the next generation will value most is not what we owned, but the evidence of who we were and the tales of how we loved. In the end, it's the family stories that are worth the storage.*

*Ellen Goodman*

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Cemetery: (n) A marble orchard not to be taken for granite.

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## **CANADIAN DIRECTORIES ONLINE**

Posted on **January 29, 2015**

Library and Archives Canada is pleased to announce the release of a new version of the online database Canadian Directories. An addition to the page includes full versions of the directories in PDF format, as well as newly digitized directories which are not available through the database.

These 152 new directories are for the Ontario cities of Hamilton, Kingston and London and for the counties of South western Ontario.

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EAST EUROPEAN GENEALOGY SOCIETY

<http://www.eegsociety.org/>

From the website a Frequently Asked Question:

Question: Where is Volhynia (or Galicia, Bukovina, Bohemia, Silesia, etc.)?

Answer: There are many names of areas in central and eastern Europe which are no longer used or official. These were mostly province names of the Russian (Volhynia, Bessarabia, etc.), Austrian (Galicia, Bukovina, etc.), and German (Prussia, Pommerania, etc.) empires prior to WWI. Other names sound more familiar but can be misleading. For example, 'Congress Poland' was part of the Russian empire but this land now only makes up part of Poland. The EEGS helps members identify these and other homeland areas. This is often the first step in pursuing your European genealogy. Maps showing pre-WWI empires and provinces are included in the *New Members Package*.

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## **WETASKIWIN BRANCH WEBSITE**

[www.wetaskiwin.abgensoc.ca](http://www.wetaskiwin.abgensoc.ca)

When you venture into the internet on genealogy business do you ever think to look at the website of our own branch? On the site you will find:

- Listing of the resources in our own Library: a collection that takes 12 pages to list! It contains community histories, journals from other genealogy societies in Canada, "How To" books and sources for documents in Canada and other countries.
- Our newsletter, "Roots & Branches": all issues published since Nov. 2009 are online
- Online resources:
  - A list of various Wetaskiwin locations for finding information on local families
  - Moore Funeral Home, 1925 – 1937 Index
  - Links to Wetaskiwin and area websites

Our webmistress, Laura Turnbull, does a great job of keeping the site up to date for us. We are particularly grateful since she is not even a member of our branch. But she is a long-standing and dedicated volunteer for AGS. We thank you, Laura.

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