



**Wetaskiwin Branch  
Alberta Genealogical Society**

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

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# Roots & Branches

Vol. 14 No. 2

September, 2016

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## BRANCH MEETINGS

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

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## BRANCH NEWS

**"SCHOOL DAYS MEMORIES" Project** is now posted on our branch website. I congratulate the eleven members who participated! For some, it is the first chapter in their personal history, and now that you know it can be done, I hope that you will feel confident in writing more chapters.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to our members, Mavis & Neil Nelson, and their son Dean & his wife Sonia on receiving an Alberta Century Farm Family Award. The story is on page 6.

**SEPTEMBER MEETING PROGRAM:** A special tour of the revised Wetaskiwin (LDS) Alberta Family History Centre, and its new focus as a Family Discovery Centre. We'll have consultants on hand to give you a tour and show you some of the new activities, classes and webinars. See page 5 for more information.

**ALSO AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING** a topic of discussion will be if our members (whether or not we attend meetings) wish to write and have collected and issued "Memories of My Childhood Christmases" as another personal history project.

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## COMMITTEES

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- **Historian** Rosella Plaquin

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## WETASKWIN BRANCH: AGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

Located at  
City of Wetaskiwin Archives  
4904 – 51 Street  
Available during Archives hours:  
T,W & Th: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Or contact Bob at  
[maynard@persona.ca](mailto:maynard@persona.ca)

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## WETASKIWIN FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

LDS Church  
5410 – 36 Avenue, Wetaskiwin  
Wednesday 6:15 - 8:15pm &  
Thursday from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

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## ROOTS & BRANCHES

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

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

I don't think that I was the only AGS member who was blindsided and dismayed by the word this summer that our Relatively Speaking Editor and Associate Editor had tendered their resignations.... followed by our Communications Director. I thank them all for their service to us.

Relatively Speaking has been the flagship publication of the AGS for many years. I wish the Board of Directors every success to bring into place the editorial captain and crew who will guide it into the future through what seem to have become stormy seas.

This situation brought to my mind some thoughts about volunteerism. People volunteer with organizations that are of interest or benefit to them. They step up because they feel they have an ability, a skill, some time to offer and that they can make a difference. Different backgrounds, priorities, experiences, visions and personalities provide an interesting and sometimes challenging mix to work with. But a successful project or a working organization results in a satisfied feeling of accomplishment.

I have worked alongside many people in organizations that ranged from school & sports based, civic committees, non-profit and church groups, and lately our branch of AGS for 16 years. Many members of our group offer time and skills to keep the organization going, and they freely share the benefit of their experience. Some assist others with research, finding and/or putting information online, and doing acts of genealogical kindness, and education.

I encourage all members of our branch to take the step, and incidentally, to reap the benefits to yourself, of volunteering in some aspect of our branch activities. (It is not like the long serving people *want* to hang on to their positions! ☺)

In stepping out of our comfort zones, we grow.

*Volunteers are seldom paid...  
not because they are worthless,  
but because they are priceless!*

## MEETING PRESENTATIONS

### MAY 2016: TAMING YOUR INNER PACKRAT – LISA ALZO

Claudia presented this webinar – a great reminder to all of us about how important it is to be organized, and to periodically examine the genealogical documents, paperwork, etc. that we have collected over the years.

Lisa gave us some tips about how to reduce the amount of paper we keep, and how to store valuable items that cannot be replaced. She gave us several examples of items that can be shredded, items that should always be saved, and how to determine which category our “treasures” fall into!

### JUNE 2016

#### TAMING YOUR INNER PACKRAT, PART 2, Digital Organization – LISA ALZO

On this webinar Lisa gave information and tips about how to organize documents, photos, files, etc. She also directed us to numerous websites that offered more information and suggested some very practical tips to keep in mind when we are working on our family history.

Some points she repeated several times were:

- a. Always back up digital files, using Cloud storage
- b. Keep current with your digital information by upgrading and converting to new technology as it becomes available
- c. Keep printed copies of very important/irreplaceable documents
- d. Use a research log/research planner so you don't duplicate your research
- e. If you are just beginning your genealogical research, start 'right' by citing sources, using a research log, creating files for each of your families so you don't become confused and jump from one family to another when you are researching
- f. Stay focused
- g. Set a goal: perhaps finding information on one family or organizing photos for one hour per day, as examples
- h. Don't be a digital hoarder; clear out your photo files, downloads, scans, etc. periodically from all of your devices.

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### MORE THAN JUST NAMES IN 1851, 1861 & 1871 CANADIAN CENSUS

Sharon Aney

Library & Archives Canada website offers comprehensive information about the Canada census. I was interested to see that in addition to the expected nominal census, there were Agricultural census schedules for 1851, 1861 & 1871.

Knowing that microfilms were available to search at the Provincial Archives in Edmonton, I found it interesting to follow one family's data over that 20 year period. The first census record in which I found Olivier Meunier and his family was the Canada East (now Quebec) census of 1851.

In 1851 twenty-year old Olivier worked as a day-labourer and lived in his father's home. Marcel Meunier was about sixty-five years old. According to the census taken that year, his household consisted of his wife Genevieve, and son, Olivier.

Marcel's property consisted of 84 arpents (1 arpent = .8 of an acre). Of this, 60 arpents were in cultivation and 24 arpents in standing wood. 46 arpents produced a harvest that year: 14 arpents of wheat produced 130 minots of milled grain, 8

arpents of peas produced 80 sacks of milled grain, 5½ arpents of oats produced 60 sacks of milled grain, 1/8 arpents of potatoes produced 20 sacks.

The farm also produced 7 tonnes of hay, 20 lbs. of flax, 35 lbs. of wool, 20 lbs. of dyed (woven?) fabric and 15 lbs. of flannel. Approximately ½ arpent was set aside for personal gardens and orchards. Marcel had 13½ arpents of pasture on which he kept 7 milk cows, 5 horses, 20 sheep and 2 pigs. The livestock produced 80 pounds of butter and 20 pounds of pork fat.

Ten years later, in 1861, 30 year old Olivier's name was as head of the household and his parents Marcel & Genevieve were living with him. Olivier and his wife Josephte (Cadieux) had 4 children.

Olivier owned 90 arpents and had 78 under cultivation, only 12 in standing wood. 59 arpents produced a harvest of: 60 minots of wheat, 72 minots of barley, 150 minots of peas, 150 minots of oats, and 30 minotss of potatoes. 1 arpent was used as personal garden.

I was disappointed that the census taker did not complete the census schedule pertaining to animals and animal products for the whole of Comte de Chateauguay. This serves as a caution that although in any census, specific information may be asked for, it is still up to humans of various competence and commitment to ensure that it happens.

Another ten years later, in 1871 Olivier and Josephte had nine children, his father had passed away, but Genevieve still lived with them.

Olivier owned 133 arpents, had 110 under cultivation, 23 in pasture. He harvested 23 minots of wheat, 200 minots of oats, 160 of peas, 15 of tobacco and 2700 of hay. His orchard produced 8 minots of apples, and 2 of other fruit.

His livestock inventory was 4 horses over 3 years of age and 3 colts or fillies, 9 milk cows and 6 other horned cattle, and 5 pigs. He had butchered 2 sheep and 4 pigs, made 350 pounds of butter and 32 yards of cloth or flannel.

In the Canada East return there was discrepancy in the French Seigneurial system of "arpents & minots" vs the English system of "acres and bushels" in terminology used in the three returns. But being a family historian, not an agricultural analyst, I noted instead what was produced and that there seemed to be a change in emphasis of farm products over time.

Library & Archives website gives the following summary of census schedules

- The 1851 and 1861 the census included urban and rural personal and agricultural schedules.
- The 1871 census included several more schedules: deaths, public institutions, real and personal estate, cultivated land and products, livestock, animal products, home-made fabrics and furs, industrial establishments, products of the forest, shipping and fisheries, mineral products.
- In 1881, 1891 and 1901 the enumeration data were also collected using several schedules. In all of them only Schedule 1, the nominal census has been preserved.

Unfortunately, as I noted above, only 3 censuses provide us with the peek into how our ancestors made their living. Please note that the 1871 schedules go beyond agriculture to include industry, forestry, fishing and mining assets, so your non-farming family should also be investigated. Those of us fortunate enough to have had family in Canada East, Canada West, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, during those years have a treasure to explore. With three schedules over 20 years it is possible to notice growth or decline of the property and assets, to compare with neighbours, and especially to get a glimpse of their lives.

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### IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FLOODING!

The phrase "***God willing and the creek don't rise***" means the speaker will arrive or complete a task if all goes well, hence the reference to ***God*** and the ***creek***. That being said, though, the creek in question isn't a small brook or stream. It's a reference to the ***Creek*** Indians.

American farmer, statesman, and Indian Agent, **Colonel Benjamin Hawkins** (1754 – 1816), hailed from North Carolina. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress and a United States Senator as well as the General Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

In 1812, aroused by the Shawnee warrior, **Tecumseh**, some members of the ***Upper Creek*** were in open revolt. In other words, the ***Creeks*** were rising. When Hawkins was asked to return to the nation's capital, his response was always, "***If God is willing and the Creek don't rise.***"

If the Creek rose, it was his job as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs to deal with the uprising and put an end to the rebellion.

Elyse Bruce's blog      "[Idiomation: Historically Speaking](#)"

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### WETASKIWIN FAMILY HISTORY DISCOVERY CENTER

Claudia Malloch

The change is well worth seeing. The focus is now on it being a Family History Discovery Center. It now consists of four rooms; ...that's right, 4 rooms!

One room, the previous Family History Center, has the computers and printers for use by patrons. You are welcome to bring your own laptop so that you can work on it with the help of consultants. The printer accesses FamilySearch directly for scanning photos and documents into your tree. The room just down the hall there has a computer with webinars available. If you would like to request a topic, contact the Director ahead of time and she will try to find what you would like.

Across the hall from the main computer room is a room with the microfiche and microfilm readers and a computer with internet access. This enables a quiet environment for those wishing to concentrate and be able to work on the readers without too much light. Next to that room is a room for activities should anyone have children with them. A consultant will assist in this room so the parent is able to do their family history work.

## NELSONS: CENTURY FARM FAMILY

Mavis Nelson



The Nelson family was honoured at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum on June 30, 2016 as one of the farm families that has continually owned and actively operated the same land for a minimum of 100 years. What an Honour! The Alberta Century Farm and Ranch Award is program was started in 1993 by the Alberta Department of Agriculture and Forestry. To date 1,600 families have received the Award.

Nels Jr. was born June 20, 1866 in Neavita, Viksjö, Västernorrland, Sweden. He was 16 years old when he sailed from Sweden to Glasgow, Scotland on May 31, 1882 and on to Castle

Garden, New York, with his parents, two sisters and a brother. The families all settled in the same area of Washburn, ND where Nels Jr. farmed with his dad. He married Christine (Andersson) Smith November 13, 1899 in Bismarck, ND

**Nels Nelson Jr.** moved his family and his parents to Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada and purchased land NW 15 46 23 W4<sup>th</sup> signing the papers **September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1915**. This would become the home quarter for the Nelson family for over 100 years.



Settling on their new land they built the house and barn in 1916. The hip roof barn was 36' x 72' and the house was 26' x 28' with four bedrooms on the second storey. They would

serve the families well for more than the next 100 years. There was already telephone service in the area with about 15 people on the same line. The Nelsons had a phone put in but soon took it out as there was no one they wanted to talk to by phone.

Nels Jr. and Christine Nelson lived and farmed east of Wetaskiwin on NW 15 46 23 W4 for 17 years. They farmed with horses and worked hard to get the farm set up. Nels Jr. stated in his income tax form at the end of 1919 that he had 9 horses, 20 dairy cattle, 3 pigs and 9 calves and he owned 465 acres with 150 under cultivation and 4 acres in summer fallow.

Nels Jr. & Christine had five children: Helen (Robert Johnson), Henry (Minnie Bergquist), William (Bill) (Harriet Kirkwold), Nels Vernor (Shorty) (Agnes Anderson), and Alice.

Nels Jr. died January 25, 1932 at the age of 65 and was buried at the Nashville cemetery. Christine moved to Wetaskiwin when Nels Jr. died. She died January 6, 1953 and was also buried at the Nashville cemetery.

His son **Vernor Nels (Shorty) Nelson** took over the farm in 1932 at the age of 26. Shorty and Agnes (Anderson) married on July 12, 1933; they also made their home at NW 15 46 23





W4<sup>th</sup>. Shorty started his farming days with horses as his father had. They were a mixed farm and over the years he changed from using horsepower to motor run equipment.

A big change came about 1939 when Shorty brought a McCormick Deering KC 101685 Tractor. What a big help that was with the farming but the horses were still used.

Around this time Shorty also brought for the household an International Maytag Model 31 washing machine with a Massy Harris 2 HP motor for pumping, a great help for Agnes on wash days.

In September 1951 the Nelsons got electric power at the farm. Among the many household appliances they purchased was a 5 cu ft. deep freeze for \$628.00. It had very thick walls and two compartments. This freezer lasted for 53 years with 3 generations of Nelsons using it.

Shorty and Agnes had three children: a boy who died when he was 2 days old, Lornadele (Norman Jacobsen) Lorna died 2010, and Neil Nels (Mavis Anderson). They had lived on the Nelson farm for 31 years from 1932 to 1965. Shorty and Agnes built a house in Wetaskiwin moving there in 1965 to retire. Shorty died in 1978 and Agnes died in 1993.

In the spring of 1963 **Neil Nels Nelson** came home to farm full time. In 1965 Neil purchased the machinery and cows from his folks. He married Mavis Anderson on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1965 and they moved into the farm house on the same day that Shorty's moved to Wetaskiwin. The house was heated with coal from a pit north of Camrose until July 1968 when Neil put in a natural gas line.

Neil purchased land from his aunt and had a hog herd. He continued with milking cows until he sold them 1967. He renovated the old barns to suit pigs and added to his hog herd. In 1969 Neil and Mavis put a gas furnace in the house, garage and pig barn, making things a lot cleaner. A big change was when Neil built a "finishing" hog barn to house 500 pigs in 1979 and in 1982 added a barn for farrowing and for weaner pigs.



In 1968 Neil changed the farming practices from 1/2 summer fallow and 1/2 crops to continuous cropping. His line of machinery became more modern as the industry developed.

Neil and Mavis lived on and farmed the land from 1963 to 1996. In their 33 years they changed the farm from a mixed farm to a pig farm. The house remained the same except that a fireplace was added and in 1974 the back porch was torn off and replaced with a bigger porch. The party phone line changed to only four people and "we only heard our own ring".

What big changes Neil witnessed, having lived in the same house for 56 years, as a child growing up, and then as the owner! They have two boys: Dean Nels (Sonia Rose Nauenburg) and Michael David (Selena Rachelle Friesen) and six grandchildren. In 1995 Neil and Mavis brought a house in Wetaskiwin and moved into it in March of 1996.

It was time for **Dean Nels Nelson** to make his changes. Dean had married Sonia Rose Nauenburg on June 15, 1991. The couple and their daughter Emily moved to the farm in 1996.

Dean is now crop rotating his crops of barley, canola, wheat and flaxseed, always looking at



new varieties. It is Dean's goal to be more proactive with the use of the farm land. Changes to fertilizer and herbicide use have taken place to push towards more sustainable farms and not wrecking the crops, but trying to preserve the land. In 2013 Dean and Sonia won the Agricultural Business of the Year from the Wetaskiwin Chamber of Commerce. They have changed the pig farm to one raising dogs and maintaining the crop land into good

productive soil.

Sonia and Dean started "HEARTYK9S" in 2004. Their first labradoodles were born in March 2004. By 2006, Sonia was raising goldendoodles, golden retrievers and poodles cross. This is a full time job for Sonia and the family.

Horses were used by Nels Jr. and by Shorty to help with the farming but were not on the farm when Neil lived there. Now horses are back at the farm but not for working..... these days they are ridden for pleasure.

The 100 year old house is still enjoyed by the family. Many layers of paint and wall paper have been removed and new paint added. Dean and Sonia did a major renovation to the bathroom. The kitchen got a new coat of paint and new flooring and new windows.

Dean and Sonia have lived on and farmed the land for 20 years now. They have three children: Emily, Ben and Sarah, who are still finishing their schooling. Perhaps another generation of Nelsons will continue the Nelson presence on NW 15 46 23 W of 4<sup>th</sup> well into the future.

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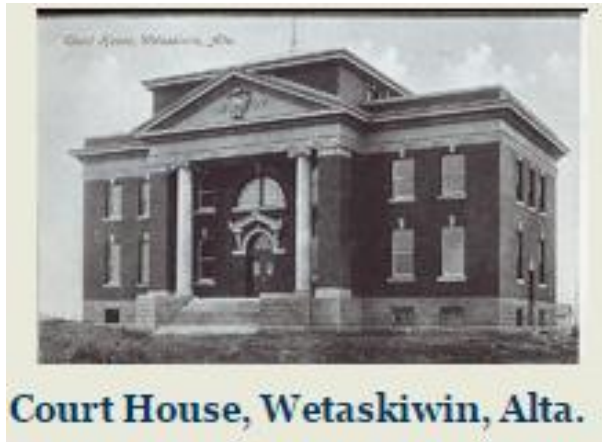
*"Not only will a family history book preserve your family legacy,  
but it will be your legacy".*



## **WETASKIWIN OF OLD...**

4705 – 50 Avenue

### **COURT HOUSE, 1908 – 1983**



Construction on the Wetaskiwin Court House began in 1907. It is a three-storey red brick building situated on a block of land east of the city's downtown. The building is circled by a galvanized iron cornice, frieze, and architrave and its main entrance features a projecting pediment supported by Ionic columns. The walls are 2 feet thick, and the basement contained 2 jail cells. The structure was completed in 1909.

Wetaskiwin's size and regional importance were recognized in the creation of the Wetaskiwin Judicial District to serve the surrounding area of central Alberta. The courthouse was built as the centre of this district.  
(from [www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca))

The first trial was held in 1908. The courthouse served the people of Wetaskiwin for 75 years until 1983.

It was declared a National Historic site in 1977. The grand old building sat vacant for some 20 years, but because of its historic designation it was maintained and heated.

## **.....IS RENEWED**

### **CITY HALL, 2007 ---→**



During 2005 - 2007, the building was renovated to serve as Wetaskiwin's new City Hall. Glass was used to frame the new areas of the building as the additions had to be sympathetic to but not similar to the original building exterior.

To maintain the integrity of the original building, the brick exterior of the Old Courthouse was left undisturbed. Strict requirements, as set out by Alberta Historical Resources, were followed when restoring and renovating the original courtroom, which now serves as Council Chambers. The wood panelling covering the lower half of the walls needed to remain intact.

The original cast iron radiators were part of the hot water heating system, and now tie in to the geothermal heating and cooling system.

The combination of historic and modern features provides employees and citizens the opportunity to use and enjoy this beautiful, historic structure.

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE - KUESTER

Sharon Aney



As a result of the compilation of a listing of people buried in the Old Sacred Heart Cemetery, Fr. Nilo Macipinlac held a special blessing ceremony at the cemetery site as part of the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June of 2016. He wished to recognize the pioneers of the Catholic parish.

At that ceremony I was approached by a lady who had made a special trip from Edmonton. Her Kuester family ancestors were buried there (the marker in the photo above) and she hoped to find further information that day. She and her husband came to my house to look through the copies of records, and we were able to find burial records and obituaries for her grandparents and several other relatives. One of the obituaries (found in City Archives) was of a child who died in 1903, before the Sacred Heart Parish was established. Another obituary from 1920, but not entered in the church register leads me to believe that a visiting priest may have recorded the event in the register of his home parish. She was delighted with the new knowledge of her family's past. *"It gives the death date of my great great aunt and where she died—at my grandmother's home, so that was interesting to find out."*

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

Alice Hoyle

In June, our branch member Syl Gauvreau contacted me, asking for assistance with some research. A person (name withheld for privacy) who wanted to apply for a Legion Bursary had asked for help – she had family information that her ancestor had been in the military during WWI. Syl had searched on the Library and Archives Canada website, but hadn't been able to locate him as a veteran of WWI. Syl had the man's name, and the year he died, information on the month the person was born, but not the year, and the name of the man's wife.

Syl asked for my assistance, knowing that in the past I had given presentations on "Using Library and Archives Canada for Genealogical Research". I looked at the LAC website, but because I did not know the birthplace (province) of the WWI Veteran, I could not confirm that one of the two possible WWI Veterans with a matching surname was the person Syl was looking for. I asked if Syl could get more information, specifically where the Veteran was born.

Syl called me back with further information: the family had lived in the Falun area. But none of the men listed on the LAC website matched this location. I decided to check the AGS database, to see if I could see where the Veteran was buried. This turned out to be a big clue: he was buried in the Lutheran cemetery near Falun. Since I have several Local History books I checked to see if there might be information in the "Freeway West" book.

Jackpot! There the family was....however, after reading the write-up, I had to phone Syl and tell him that he could stop trying to find this gentleman on the LAC Veterans website: the gentleman being researched had actually served in WWI, but for the Russian Army! ☺

He and his wife had emigrated to Canada in 1926, coming here from Bulgaria. I scanned the information and emailed it to Syl, who forwarded it to the family. A disappointment for the young lady who had hoped to apply for a Legion Bursary because she thought her ancestor had served in the Canadian military – but on the upside, the write-up in "Freeway West" provided almost a full page of family history!

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In July, I had an email from Wetaskiwin Branch Past-President, Joan Krueger, asking me if I would assist a person who had left a message on her answering machine, asking for assistance with a research request. I did so.

The person was trying to find out where his wife's great-grandmother was buried. The great-grandmother had passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1911, and his research had hit a roadblock. He had checked the Provincial Archives of Alberta; Alberta Vital Statistics; he had found an obituary in the Innisfail newspaper and he had checked the records at Innisfail – none of these sources had provided information about where she was buried.

I was a bit confused about this request, because she apparently died at Heath, which is near Wainwright. When I phoned the researcher, I asked why he thought she might be buried in the Wetaskiwin area. He confirmed that he was grasping at straws: checking all the central Alberta localities in the hope that something would show up.

In order to use due diligence, I did the following:

- Checked the AGS database – she was not listed there
- Looked at the Wetaskiwin cemetery database – she was not listed there
- Checked the Alberta Family History Society database – she was not listed there
- Checked the database Canadian Headstones.com – could not find her
- Did a "Google Search" and found that someone had listed her on their genealogy database

I emailed the researcher, asking

1) where this woman's husband was buried, as that would be the logical place to look for her burial record;

2) if she died near Wainwright, why was her funeral service held in Innisfail?

I also sent him the information about the genealogy database, listing his wife's great-grandmother's death, suggesting that he could try to contact the creator of the database.

A few days later, he emailed me the information from the Innisfail newspaper: it turns out that he hadn't fully examined the newspaper article – the article tells about the death of this lady,

but in the context of her having been a resident of the Innisfail area for a number of years. The article goes on to say that she and her husband had moved to the Wainwright area to be closer to family members!

This clarified a lot of things: I suggested to him that he contact the funeral home(s) in Wainwright, asking for information on funerals that took place in 1911. I also suggested that he contact the Wainwright newspaper to see if they had more information. He thanked me very much for my suggestions, and promised to follow up with me regarding what he eventually found out! A bit of a twist to the story, but in the end I am hopeful that he finds his wife's great-grandmother.

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*"I don't know who my grandfather was. I am much more concerned to know what his grandson will be." -- Abraham Lincoln*

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## **ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS**

Sharon Aney

How many times have we been delighted to find a crucial lead in our family history?

- Thanks to the LDS members who have filmed millions of records and open their family history centres to us?
- Thanks to those who organize genealogical societies and conferences?
- Thanks to assistance from another genealogist?
- Thanks to a family member who shared a story or photo?
- Thanks to an unknown person who answered a query online?
- Thanks to those who operate websites and post information online?
- Or thanks to a friend who showed how to dig into genealogy resources?

Even if we are unable to directly repay those who have helped us, there are many ways that we can return acts of genealogical kindness:

- Donate old local history books to a genealogical library or historical society.
- Answer a query in a website for the area that you are familiar with.
- Volunteer to index records for posting on familysearch.org
- Use your digital camera to photograph cemeteries in your area and post them online.
- Transcribe cemeteries, tax rolls or other genealogical data.
- Assist a genealogical beginner in your community
- Participate in your society meetings and share your experiences.
- Share whatever talents you have towards the operations of your society

I am sure that you will receive as much satisfaction from giving as you do in receiving.

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*Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present, and future.*

Gail Lumet Buckley

