



**Wetaskiwin Branch  
Alberta Genealogical Society**

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

**Email:** [wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca).

# Roots & Branches

Vol. 15 No. 2

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## EXECUTIVE

**President:** Vacant  
**Vice President:** Lorraine McKay  
[loriem@xplornet.ca](mailto:loriem@xplornet.ca)  
**Secretary:** Alice Hoyle  
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**Treasurer:** Gary Rode  
[sgrode@xplornet.ca](mailto:sgrode@xplornet.ca)

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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

### RESIGNATION

We were sorry to receive our President's resignation. We thank you for your service, Diane. We look forward to your continued involvement in genealogy.

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### ANNUAL MEETING, FEB. 21, 2017

President: Vacant  
Vice-President: Lorraine McKay  
Secretary: Alice Hoyle  
Treasurer: Gary Rode  
Membership: Lee Koop  
Library: Robin Sheehan  
Historian: Rosella Plaquin  
Newsletter: Sharon Aney  
Program Coordinator: Claudia Malloch  
Publicity: Alice Hoyle  
Website: Lee Koop  
Volunteer Research: Bob Maynard, Lee Koop, Alice Hoyle

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### CANADA 150

To commemorate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, several members are writing a second set of memoirs. This one is entitled "*Childhood Christmases*". The first booklet, "*School Days Memories*" is available to read on our website.

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## COMMITTEES

- **Library** Robin Sheehan  
[rksheehan@xplornet.com](mailto:rksheehan@xplornet.com)
- **Webmaster:** Lee Koop  
[leekoop@xplornet.com](mailto:leekoop@xplornet.com)
- **Volunteer Research**  
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- **Program** Claudia Malloch  
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- **Publicity** Alice Hoyle  
[alihoy@xplornet.com](mailto:alihoy@xplornet.com)
- **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:  
Tues. Wed. Thurs.  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

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## WETASKIWIN FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

LDS Church  
5410 – 36 Avenue, Wetaskiwin  
Wednesdays: 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Thursdays: 1:00 pm – 5:00 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.

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## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

We hear the monthly reminder to report to Gary the number of hours we spend on genealogy, other than our own research. We know that it is important because the grants supporting AGS operations depend upon the numbers of hours spent volunteering on AGS business.

Governments are more willing to fund agencies and facilities if they know that citizens are making use of them. As genealogists we can assist sites of other resources we rely on, especially Libraries and Archives.

I have recently read a few blogs and spoken with library directors. The request they make is that, as users of these resources, we genealogists can do something to help them maintain their presence and continue to be a community resource.

So I pass their requests on to you:

1. Please sign the sign-in book. The number of users is important to the budget committee.
2. Give the reason for your visit. It may influence the budget committee regarding resources and / or hours of operation.
3. If asked to NOT re-shelve books, do not try to be helpful and do it anyway. The librarian may need to count the books used, the number of times, and the topics they cover as part of the reporting and budget process.
4. If you cannot visit in person, do not shrug it off. Send a question by email, make a phone call or write a letter. Requests such as these also validate the existence of our archives and libraries.

We can so easily help our City of Wetaskiwin Archives, the Heritage Museum, as well as all the other Archives that we use to remain in operation and available for us. These are such small things to do.

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## MEETING PROGRAMS

### January 2017 : PHOTOMYNE

This video presentation showed us how to download the free app; how to scan photos – either loose photos or photos in albums (even photos in those dreadful ‘sticky’ albums), how to edit the photos, how to save them and share them, and also how to create books using a book-making program. There was a lot of interest in this, particularly from those who are trying to organize their photos and save some older photos whose quality is deteriorating. Dan DeWolf advised that by using this app on his phone, he was able to scan photos, edit them, and create an image that was far better than the original.

### February 2017 ORGANIZATION – PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Claudia gave an excellent presentation on organization: there were many useful suggestions, such as how to organize your data, photos, documents, etc. Several different methods were demonstrated: using binders, using files (either hard copy or digital), using online databases etc. The importance of preserving and sharing the information was also stressed: if you are the only one who has the information and something happens to your records, there may not be duplicates! Backups are essential, and photocopying original documents is very important. Several questions were asked, and those in attendance provided input on what works for them. A wealth of information was provided – no matter how many times we are given information on organizing our genealogy it seems we can always learn more! One thing that was stressed: if you are a beginning genealogist, start organizing your information the correct way and then you won't have a mountain of data to sort through later.

**DNA:** There was some discussion within the members, regarding results from DNA testing. Some of the members have done the testing and gotten the results back and are wondering what the next steps should be. A group discussion followed.

### March 2017

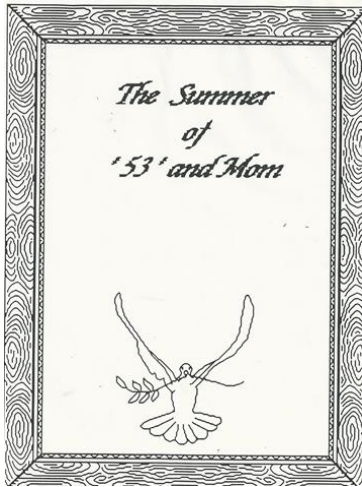
#### ANSWERS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT – USING WHAT YOU KNOW TO DISCOVER WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW –

A Webinar By Kathryn Grant, facilitated by Lisa DeWolf.

We were given a few case studies – each of them gave us clues about the person who was being researched, but it was necessary to ‘dig’ into the information further to really discover the missing data we needed. She gave us some very good clues about how to search ‘deeper’ into the data on census records, for instance, in order to reach a reasonable conclusion about the person we were researching. She also showed us her Timeline Grid and how she uses it to visually keep track of the information she has on each of the people she is researching.

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**Research Hint:** If your family is of French heritage or lived in a French community, you might consider looking for Catholic records of *female ancestors* by using their maiden names. It was law and custom in Quebec that French women retain their maiden names for legal purposes, and priests trained there may have continued the practice elsewhere. For example while you are looking for the burial record of the woman you knew of as "*Zelma Colleaux*", (*with the maiden name "deLagassy"*), she may be recorded as "*Marie Zelma deLagassy, note: married V.V. Colleaux*". Keep your options open, and be prepared to phrase your search by married name and maiden name, whether writing for information or searching online.



*I decided to write about the summer of '53 for two reasons. Firstly, that summer holds the fondest memories of my Mom. Secondly, I want to dedicate these writings to her".* Agnes Littlechild

For some reason we were let out of Ermineskin Residential School early that year. No one picked up my sister, Josephine, my brother David and me, so after supper Father Lateur, the Principal, took us home. We found Mom alone with the little ones. Our cottage style home was neat and clean, lots of wood and water. Thus, we settled down quietly, going about our chores, not knowing what the summer would bring. Eventually we did ask Mom where Dad was but she only shook her head.

The next day my brother David asked Mom if he could jog to the store. She said yes, providing he chopped wood first. Much later that evening David was brought home in a hauling truck by two of our cousins, Larry Hodgson and Percy Wolfe. He proudly announced to Mom, "I am going to be a movie star. I am going with a group of people from Hobbema to Banff to make a movie called 'Saskatchewan'. They were to leave in about a week. Since Chief Dan Minde, Jean, my eldest sister Kathleen and Willie were leaving as well, my mom gave

her blessings. This left Mom, Josephine, me, Jerry (who died in 1974), Danny Theresa, and Linda to fend for ourselves.

Mom had planted a huge garden in front of our house, facing the road south. A few days later, after being home, Josephine and I were pulling weeds in the garden when we heard 'The Singer', Gilbert Ermineskin, singing his songs as he passed by with his wagon team. We always knew it was him for he had a beautiful voice. He would be singing these songs, "Mawasakwatokeyaikanaï", a long word meaning when the sundance lodge is being built. Gilbert was obviously moving somewhere because he had all his family and tent poles sticking out of the wagon.

Soon another wagon passed by. This time it was Jim Ermineskin and family. This one looked a little sophisticated. He had tied a red bandana at the end of his tent poles.

Josephine and I ran inside. Mom was sewing at her usual west window. We asked her ..."Mom, where all these people going with their tent poles sticking out?" She said "There is a sundance going on at Riverside". We asked if we could go. We even offered to pack. "I don't know", Mom said, thinking out loud. "We don't have much grub and who is going to pitch up our tent?"

Finally we talked her into going. First she would make two veils and two bonnets and make bannock. She worked late into the night by the coal oil lamp. Josephine and I packed two sets of clothes each (that's all we had), plus we had to wash some clothes by tub and washboard that evening.

Early in the morning we got our two horses, Shorty and Frank, harnessed them, packed our tent, blankets and our grub box and headed off to Riverside. When we arrived we looked for Kokum and Mosom's tipi. It

was easy to find. Chief Dan Minde always had a Canadian flag on a pole in front of his tipi. His tipi was the one with horses drawn around it: very colourful.

My Mom's cousins, Fred and Bobby Bull were visiting Dan Minde and offered to put up our tent behind our grandparent's tipi. In no time our tent was neat and cosy. Those years the Sundance was carried on very traditionally. There were about 15 men and women riding abreast, singing the songs around the encampment. The lodge was being made; it would be up that evening and those participating would be going in.

Bobby Bull invited Mom to come and visit her sister-in-law, Lucy. There was a stick game, "Chika wonak" going on in their tent. Mom was so happy with the invite. I saw her taking her new bag of sewing. Josephine and I didn't mind watching the kids. Mom came back soon and said she made \$6.00 selling her work. We couldn't go back to the store, so we had to settle for the one and only store on the Sundance grounds.

Mom bought some ring bologna, bag of potatoes, oatmeal and goodies for us. She also bought a big jar of cream from Baby Saskatchewan. She had come by peddling her cream. Soon we were cooking supper by the open fire. Mom made tea for herself. Our dessert that night was each a bowl of cream with bannock. We sat around the campfire and listened to the singers on horseback. When it was time to retire Mom made us pray to Jesus on and Theresa for good luck. She didn't want to ask for money from her parents. They were too busy getting ready for a big giveaway for a horse dance.

The next day Mom was cooking the same menu: bologna, potatoes and tea. It was late in the afternoon when I saw a familiar figure coming towards our tent. It was my

uncle, Pete Wolfe. He had on his usual combination overall and he looked tired. Mom asked why he was walking. He said his hauling truck broke down in Ponoka. He had gotten a ride from Ponoka to the grounds and he was looking for a ride to Kramers. He said, "Sister, do you have anything to eat? I am so hungry". My Mom invited him to eat with us. He said it was a delicious meal. He then looked in his pocket and took out a crumpled \$5.00 bill and gave it to Mom. Mom told us to tidy up and change the kids. She went back to the Louis Bull encampment to peddle the last of her sewing. I know she had sewn herself a pretty dress, but she took it along.

She came back and told us, "Now we can go to the store". We had \$15.00 whole dollars! We hitched up our team again and rode to Kramer's. Out of \$15.00 we got a big box of groceries.

That particular sundance was the last time I had partially witnessed a horse dance. It happened right in front of Dan Minde's tipi. I remember two cars came to give lighting to where the drummers were. Mom said one car was Sam Minde's and the other was from the States. Dan Minde was a participant. He had on his chief's outfit. I remember his horse wearing some fancy pieces of beadwork on the halter and neck. I don't remember the ending part of that ceremony.

I never saw my grandparents for the rest of the summer but it was the beginning of a good summer for us. It was lonely at times, but only when it rained and we couldn't go to the store. Mom still sewed by the lamp. Whatever work she finished she would bring to the store on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month (family allowance day).

Also on that day we would come to Ermineskin School and Mom would faithfully pay Sister Alfred. Sister Alfred had a small

concession in the parlour of Ermineskin School where she sold peanuts, chips candy and toiletries. In the top shelf she had different rolls of broadcloth, lace, ribbon and paisley prints. Mom had a charge account here, where she bought materials for her bonnets, veils and dresses. The 20<sup>th</sup> of each month was a big day for us. We would pick up our cheque, come and pay Mom's bill at Sister Alfred's, then to Frank Bolt's to get groceries, then to the poker grounds.

Joe Kramer had a post pile near the bush where the Lightnings live today. By the big trees were the card circles. There were 5 cents games, 10 cents, 25 cents and the big time gamblers had dollar games. They mostly played 5 cent and 25 cent games. Josephine and I stayed in the wagon to mind the kids and we always had our grub box along.

Mom trained me early to be responsible. Sometimes when she pulled the pot she would give me money to go and buy sweets for the kids. Most times I kept that money in my petticoat pocket. If she lost money in the circle the money in my pocket was what she made. But I remember some summer evenings when she made good. Those times we would stop by Frank Bolt's. She would go to the back door and Mrs. Bolt would always open the door for us and we would shop. Mrs. Bolt kept cardboard boxes for us and we used them as throw rugs by the door at home.

One day Mom didn't have any start-up money, not even a quarter. But we still hitched up Shorty and Frank and went to the store. This sunny day I was sitting in front with Mom; I always had to carry the baby.

I glanced and Mom and she looked like she was praying. Just as we were passing by where Annie Oldpan's house is she suddenly

stopped the horses and told me to go pick up the money on the ground. I kept asking where. She got annoyed. Finally she used her whip and pointed to the ground. There was a neatly folded, but dirty \$5.00 bill. How she ever saw it, I don't know. She won \$31.00 that day.



*Agnes Littlechild in the flowered dress. Her mother, Justine holding baby Jerry, who died in 1974.*

Sometimes I found Mom very quiet. Did she miss Dad? Most times she would keep busy sewing and cooking.

Early one morning she told us to get ready. We thought we were going to the store. Instead we travelled about half a day. We turned into a farm yard. There was a new tent by some trees off to the side of the farm house. When we stopped in front of the tent my Uncle Leo and Aunt Isabelle Lynch came out. They were so happy to see us. Mom was crying as she hugged her sister-in-law. I guess Uncle Leo was working for these people who seemed very kind. We stayed overnight. When we were leaving the next day the farm lady gave us garden

vegetables. It seemed that Somebody up there was always watching over us. We started digging up our potatoes after our visit with Uncle Leo. Our meals consisted of fried potatoes, green onions, romaine lettuce and wild berries.

On Sundays we would go to church. After church Mom would charge a few treats on her account. One week day we came to the school. While Mom was getting her sewing supplies, Sister Yvonne came out from the kitchen and asked Mom if she wanted some cranberries. Mom was delighted, of course. Sister gave us two cardboard boxes of cranberries. She said some ladies from Samson came to sell them to Father Latour, but she did not have the time or energy to clean them.

We picked up a bag of sugar at Frank Bolt's and came right home. Once home we had to get our canning jars from the cellar. It was too hot to make a fire in the house so we made a fire outside and sterilized the jars there. Mom canned 24 jars of those cranberries; they came in handy during the winter months.

Mom gathered us one morning after breakfast and told us we all had to work our garden. We had to take out our vegetables before it got too cold. I noticed she was sewing more, and once in a while she would come and measure us. Josephine and I used to listen to our battery operated radio. We would find the station KMON from Great Falls. It was a country and western station. We gathered from the radio that it was back to school time. Our hearts sank.

We were out in the garden one afternoon when we saw a familiar team and buggy coming down the road. We started waving our arms and ran to tell Mom that Kokum and Mosum and Willie were coming. We could hardly see Willie, he was squeezed

between the old couple. Willie was so chubby and very tanned.

We saw that the back of the buggy was full of boxes. They told us stories about the making of the movie "Saskatchewan", and how there were poker games at night with Morley Indians (Stoney Indians) and the Crees from Hobbema. Grandpa said he even played cards with Allan Ladd and Shelly Winters. So it was not only Mom who played poker that summer of '53!

Chief Dan Minde gave lots of money for Mom to get us ready for school. In the three boxes were gifts: one box was full of groceries, one box full of new material and one box full of used winter coats. I remember Mom being so busy sewing that we quit going to the store. She undid the winter coats, washed them by hand and hung the pieces to dry. She made three quilts out of the coats. Then came our big trip to Wetaskiwin to shop for school clothes. We tied our horses and wagon by the card grounds and went by Greyhound bus.

We went back to boarding school very happy but Mom looked worried. Some weeks went by when Mom finally came to see us. She did look happy. She was with my Dad. They were in a hurry. She came to pay her bill to Sister Alfred. Mom and Dad told us to look forward to a family wedding.

So came the end of a memorable summer when Mom, me and Josephine were all best friends.

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Thank you to Pam Cooke for submitting this memoir written by Agnes Littlechild. In Pam's words: *"It was given to me over 15 years ago and I have always admired it. I like the elements of happiness, resilience and self reliance in it, and it is also a great period piece of Cree life and culture"*.



**Agnes Alice Littlechild 1939 – 2006**

submitted by Pam Cooke & Melody Littlechild,



Agnes was born and raised in Hobbema (Maskwacis). Her parents, Smith and Justine Littlechild, had a family of 13 children. She was a boarding student at the Ermineskin Indian Residential School, St Joseph’s Convent in Red Deer and graduated from Grade 12 at Blue Quills Indian Residential School in Saint Paul. She was raised as a Roman Catholic and was active in Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Church in Maskwacis throughout her life.

Agnes was married twice, to Johnny Ermineskin and Raymond Tootoosis. She raised a family of 5 sons from her first marriage and 2 daughters from her second marriage.

Agnes enjoyed volunteering, writing, canning, (especially the wild saskatoon berries and chokecherries that she liked to pick and garden produce), as well as doing hand work like crocheting, sewing and beadwork.

Agnes was proud of her history and culture, spoke fluent Cree, and believed in and practised her Cree traditions and ceremonies. She loved her community and believed in working to improve it. She served her community in many ways, by working for Ermineskin Cree Nation for many years, with membership, the Elder’s department and serving on boards and committees. Agnes was a gifted speaker and spokesperson and was frequently asked to represent her Band outside of Maskwacis, as an Elder offering a blessing, or as a committee member.

*"Any person can learn what they decide to learn.*

*It is what you do with learning that brings harmony, balance and peace in life."*

Agnes Littlechild, Elder, 2002

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**VOLUNTEER RESEARCH**

Lee Koop

We received a request through our website from Jan Krijff from the Netherlands for a photo of a Kathleen Wilkins married to Enest D.H. Wilkins. I discovered that Mr. Ernest D.H. Wilkins was a lawyer in Wetaskiwin & his wife was Katherine. The only Kathleen Wilkins I found was the daughter of Ernest & Katherine, a daughter who died at age 16 while living in Wetaskiwin.

The Wilkins family consisted of six children. A second daughter died at age 5 while living in Wetaskiwin. Of the 2 sons, one died in World War I at age 26. The other married at age 35 & died in Montreal. I was unable to find conclusively that he had any children. So unless the one who died in the war had an illegitimate child, say in the Netherlands, finding descendants with the surname Wilkins was going to be next to impossible. I emailed Jan on February 26 with the preliminary findings, asking him to clarify as to who he was interested in, the daughter Kathleen or the mother, Katherine. I further asked why he was interested in a photo. No reply from Jan.

I found 7 photos in City Archives which I scanned with my FlipPal. I sent a 2nd email to Jan to find out if he got my first email requesting clarification, as I may have additional information for him. No reply as of March 15, 2017. I have not forwarded any photos

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## IT WAS MY LUCKY DAY!

Sharon Aney

As the family story goes..... In April of 1897 (120 years ago this month) my great grandfather, Danylo Nakoneszny was at the port of Hamburg, Germany, ticket in hand to board the ship that would take him to a new life...in Brazil!

*From Wikipedia: During a period of time known as the "Brazilian fever", between 1895–1897, more than 20,000 small farmers and landless peasants from Galicia came to Brazil after having been lured by promises of cheap land with good black soil. The Brazilian government was interested in increasing European settlement, often paid for travel (thus enabling the poorest members of society to emigrate), and even promised to provide clothing and food to the settlers.*

For some reason he decided to trade his ticket with another Ukrainian emigrant .... who gave up his ticket to Canada. Danylo sailed from Hamburg on the steamship "S.S. Scotia" on April 15, 1897. He arrived in Halifax two weeks later, on April 30<sup>th</sup>. No one else from his village was on that ship (I wonder if some went to Brazil?). He was one of 445 passengers, mostly from "Austria", and most of them also were heading to Winnipeg. He was part of a group that settled near Dauphin, Manitoba.

His history continued to be like most of the other East European immigrants to Canada. He acquired a homestead. His children in turn acquired land, worked very hard, settled into communities and raised their families. Canada's democracy, educational opportunities and economic strength enabled them to succeed.

Some years ago I was visiting with a second cousin who is an international leader in the Ukrainian Catholic church. I asked him what he thought our life would have been like, had Danylo used his ticket to Brazil. His response was that we would not have been nearly as well off in several ways as we are in Canada.... similar to further information from Wikipedia:

*Soon after arriving, however, the settlers found that the promises were not kept. They were given plots of uncleared land far away from civilization and weren't given any assistance. The settlers were unfamiliar with the strange climate and how to cultivate it, succumbed to diseases without any medical help, and experienced many deaths. After news of their misfortune spread throughout western Ukraine, the flow of Ukrainian emigrants to Brazil decreased considerably, and Canada replaced Brazil as the main destination for Ukrainians leaving for the New World.*

Bishop Lawrence also told me that the Ukrainian communities in Brazil today still are poorer and more rural than those in other parts of North America. Because these colonies are isolated from modern areas of Brazil's economy and from non-Ukrainians, and because of efforts of Catholic nuns and priests, the Ukrainian cultural and Catholic traditions remain strong. A large majority live in agricultural communities known as "colonies" where they tend crops such as wheat, rye, buckwheat, rice, black beans, etc. Their economic situation is generally poorer than that of people in the rest of the country.

On that April day, 120 years ago, by trading his ticket, my great-grandfather came to Canada, a country that would become renowned for its freedoms, opportunities and natural beauty.

It was **my** Lucky Day!

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## WETASKIWIN OF OLD .....> WATER TOWER



The tower was erected during the building of boom 1906-1907, which saw Wetaskiwin grow from a tiny town to "the smallest city in the Empire". The Calgary division of the Dominion Bridge Co. was responsible for construction, while the Ontario Wind Engine and Pump Co. furnished the tower's equipment. The 42-metre-high structure towers above Wetaskiwin and holds 454,609 litres of water....enough to fill a 25m swimming pool. The Wetaskiwin water tower stood unconnected and unused for a year and a half following construction, as the town's water and sewage system didn't actually reach it until 1909.

*June 1910 meant a "great day for more than a few families when they realized they had made their last trip to their wells and outhouses out back. The Saturday night bath could be taken in a bathtub instead of a galvanized tin wash tub in front of the kitchen stove where anybody could walk in and send you flying for cover". (Siding 16 Vol 1)*

On a personal note, I remember opening my faucets on a spring morning in 1968 to be met by a gush of very muddy water. Apparently an uninformed City employee had opened the taps all the way to fill the outdoor swimming pool for the season and had drained the tower's tank.

## .....RENEWED



In 2004, Wetaskiwin City Council considered the possibility of demolishing the water tower, but concerned citizens convinced them the old tower was worth saving.

Work to refurbish the tower began in 2005, and by 2006 the water tower was completely restored.

The original wooden sheath protecting the tank from cold winter winds has been replaced by a steel enclosure, topped by a blue, octagonal peak, while steel tie rods and turnbuckles ensure the 45.72 m (150 ft) tall structure (54.86 m including the antennas on top) doesn't topple.

Today it primarily serves the western end of Wetaskiwin, drawing water from Coal Lake. Its new exterior, incorporating the official city colours as designed by local students in competition, will likely enable the tower to serve our community for many years.

Dominating the city skyline, visible for ten kilometres, it also stands as a striking reminder of the vital role water towers played in the survival of many prairie communities.

The Wetaskiwin Water Tower hasn't yet been added to the Canadian Register of Historic Places - probably because more than 100 years old, it remains a fully functioning component of the City's municipal infrastructure.

Thanks for most of this information to <http://writatlarge.blogspot.com/2009/10/wetaskiwin-water-tower.html>

